English: Translation Notes for 1 Corinthians, 1 John, 1 Peter, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Corinthians, 2 John, 2 Peter, 2 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy, 3 John, Acts, Colossians, Ephesians, Galatians, Hebrews, James, John, Jude, Luke, Mark, Matthew, Philemon, Philippians, Revelation, Romans, Titus

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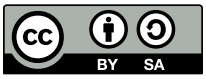

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Matthew

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

What is the book of Matthew about?

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

How should the title of this book be translated?

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

Who wrote the Book of Matthew?

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

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "kingdom of heaven?"

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

What were Jesus's teaching methods?

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

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 1

Matthew 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogy

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Use of the passive voice

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

Links:

Matthew 1:1 Matthew intro

Matthew 1:1

General Information:

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

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ

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

Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham

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

son of David

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

Matthew 1:2

Abraham was the father of Isaac

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

Isaac the father ... Jacob the father

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

Matthew 1:3

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

These are names of men.

Perez the father ... Hezron the father

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

Matthew 1:4

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Amminadab the father ... Nahshon the father

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

Matthew 1:5

Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab

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

Boaz the father ... Obed the father

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

Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth

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

Matthew 1:6

David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah

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

the wife of Uriah

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

Matthew 1:7

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa

The word "was" is understood in both of these phrases. Alternate translation: "Rehoboam was the father of Abijah, and Abijah was the father of Asa"

Matthew 1:8

Joram

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

Matthew 1:9

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew 1:10

Amon

Sometimes this is translated "Amos."

Matthew 1:11

Josiah was an ancestor of Jechoniah

A more specific term for "ancestor" can also be used, particularly if the word "ancestor" would only be used for

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someone who lived before one's grandparents. Alternate translation: "Josiah was a grandfather of Jechoniah"

at the time of the deportation to Babylon

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

Babylon

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

Matthew 1:12

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

After the deportation to Babylon

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

Shealtiel was an ancestor of Zerubbabel

Shealtiel was Zerubbabel's grandfather.

Matthew 1:13

General Information:

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Matthew 1:14

General Information:

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Matthew 1:15

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew 1:16

Connecting Statement:

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

Mary, by whom Jesus was born

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Mary, who gave birth to Jesus"

who is called Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom people call Christ"

Matthew 1:17

fourteen

"14"

deportation to Babylon

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

Matthew 1:18

General Information:

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

His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph

"His mother, Mary, was going to marry Joseph." Parents normally arranged the marriages of their children. Alternate translation: "The parents of Mary, the mother of Jesus, had promised her in marriage to Joseph"

His mother, Mary, was engaged

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

before they came together

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

she was found to be pregnant

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they realized that she was pregnant" or "it happened that she was pregnant"

to be pregnant

"to be carrying a child"

by the Holy Spirit

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

Matthew 1:19

Joseph, her husband

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

to divorce her quietly

"to quietly cancel their plans to get married"

Matthew 1:20

As he thought

"As Joseph thought"

appeared to him in a dream

"came to him while Joseph was dreaming"

son of David

Here "son" means "descendant."

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

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

Matthew 1:21

She will bear a son

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

you will call his name

"you must name him" or "you must give him the name." This is a command.

for he will save

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

his people

This refers to the Jews.

Matthew 1:22

General Information:

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

all this happened

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

what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord told the prophet to write long ago"

the prophet

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

Matthew 1:23

Behold ... Immanuel

Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah.

Behold, the virgin

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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

Immanuel

This is a male name.

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

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

Matthew 1:24

Connecting Statement:

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

as the angel of the Lord commanded

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

he took her as his wife

"he married Mary"

Matthew 1:25

he did not know her

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

to a son

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

Then he called his name Jesus

"Joseph named the child Jesus"

Chapter 2

Matthew 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

"His star"

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Learned men"

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

Links:

Matthew 2:1 Notes

Matthew 2:1

General Information:

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

Bethlehem of Judea

"the town of Bethlehem in the province of Judea"

in the days of Herod the king

"when Herod was king there"

Herod

This refers to Herod the Great.

learned men from the east

"men from the east who studied the stars"

from the east

"from a country far east of Judea"

Matthew 2:2

Where is he who was born King of the Jews?

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

his star

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

in the east

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

worship

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

Matthew 2:3

he was troubled

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

all Jerusalem

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

Matthew 2:4

General Information:

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Matthew 2:5

In Bethlehem of Judea

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

this is what was written by the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what the prophet wrote long ago"

Matthew 2:6

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
The chief priests and scribes of the people quote the prophet Micah to show that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
you, Bethlehem, ... are not the least among the rulers of Judah
Micah was speaking to the people of Bethlehem as if they were with him but they were not. Also, "are not the least" can be translated with a positive phrase. Alternate translation: "you, people of Bethlehem, ... your town is among the most important towns in Judah"
who will shepherd my people Israel
Micah speaks of this ruler as a shepherd. This means he will lead and care for the people. Alternate translation: "who will lead my people Israel as a shepherd leads his sheep"
Matthew 2:7
Herod secretly called the learned men
This means that Herod talked to the learned men without other people knowing.
men to ask them exactly what time the star had appeared.
This can be translated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "men, and he asked them, 'When exactly did this star appear?'"
what time the star had appeared
It is implied that the learned men told him when the star appeared. Alternate translation: "what time the star had appeared. The learned men told Herod when the star first appeared"
Matthew 2:8
young child
This refers to Jesus.
bring me a report
"report back to me" or "let me know"
worship him
See how you translated this in Matthew 2:2.
Matthew 2:9
After they
"After the learned men"
they had seen in the east
"they had seen come up in the east" or "they had seen in their country"
went before them
"guided them" or "led them"
stood still over
"stopped over"
where the young child was
"the place where the young child was staying"
Matthew 2:10
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 2:11
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to the house where Mary, Joseph, and the young Jesus were living.
They went
"The learned men went"
They fell down and worshiped him
"They knelt down and put their faces close to the ground." They did this to honor Jesus.
their treasures
Here "treasures" refers to the boxes or bags they used to carry their treasures. Alternate translation: "the containers that held their treasures"
Matthew 2:12
God warned them
"Afterwards, God warned the learned men." God knew that Herod wanted to harm the child.
dream not to return to Herod, so
This can be translated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "dream, saying, 'Do not go back to King Herod,' so"
Matthew 2:13
they had departed
"the learned men had departed"
appeared to Joseph in a dream
"came to Joseph while he was dreaming"
Get up, take ... flee ... Remain ... you
God is speaking to Joseph, so these should all be singular forms.
until I tell you
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "until I tell you it is safe to come back"
I tell you
Here "I" refers to God. The angel is speaking for God.
Matthew 2:14
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 2:15
General Information:
Matthew quotes the prophet Hosea to show that the Christ would spend time in Egypt.
He remained
It is implied that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt. Alternate translation: "They remained"
until the death of Herod
Herod does not die until Matthew 2:19. This statement describes the length of their stay in Egypt, and it does not say that Herod died at this time.
what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord had said through the prophet; he had said" or "what the Lord had told the prophet to tell the people; he had said"
Out of Egypt I have called my Son
"I have called my Son out of Egypt"
my Son
In Hosea this refers to the people of Israel. Matthew quoted it to say that this was true of God's Son, Jesus. Translate it using a word for son that could refer to the only son or the first son.
Matthew 2:16
General Information:
These events happen before Herod's death, which Matthew mentioned in [Matthew 2:15]
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts back to Herod and tells what he did when he learned that the learned men had deceived him.

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he had been mocked by the learned men
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the learned men had embarrassed him by tricking him"
He sent and killed all the male children
Herod did not kill the children himself. Alternate translation: "He gave orders for his soldiers to kill all the boys" or "He sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies"
two years old and under
"2 years old and younger"
according to the time
"based on the time"
Matthew 2:17
General Information:
Matthew quotes the prophet Jeremiah to show that the death of all of the male children in the region of Bethlehem was according to scripture.
Then was fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled" or "Herod's actions fulfilled"
what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophet Jeremiah"
Matthew 2:18
A voice was heard ... they were no more
Matthew is quoting the prophet Jeremiah.
A voice was heard
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People heard a voice" or "There was a loud sound"
Rachel weeping for her children
Rachel lived many years before this time. This prophecy shows Rachel, who has died, weeping for her descendants.
she refused to be comforted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one could comfort her"
because they were no more
"because the children were gone and would never return." Here "were no more" is a mild way of saying they are dead. Alternate translation: "because they were dead"
Matthew 2:19
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to Egypt, where Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus are living.
behold
This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.
Matthew 2:20
those who sought the child's life
Here "sought the child's life" is a way of saying they wanted to kill the child. "Alternate translation: "those who were looking for the child in order to kill him"
those who sought
This refers to King Herod and his advisors.
Matthew 2:21
General Information:
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Matthew 2:22
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 2:1 about Herod's attempt to kill the new King of the Jews.
But when he heard
"But when Joseph heard"
Archelaus
This is the name of Herod's son.
he was afraid
"Joseph was afraid"
Matthew 2:23
what had been spoken through the prophets
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophets"
he would be called a Nazarene
Here "he" refers to Jesus. The prophets before the time of Jesus would have referred to him as the Messiah or the Christ. Alternate translation: "people would say that the Christ is a Nazarene"

Chapter 3

Matthew 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

"Bear fruit worthy of repentance"

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of heaven is near"

No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

Matthew 3:1 Notes

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Matthew 3:1

General Information:

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

In those days

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

Matthew 3:2

Repent

This is plural in form. John is speaking to the crowds.

the kingdom of heaven is near

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

Matthew 3:3

General Information:

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

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

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

The voice of one calling out in the wilderness

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

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

These two phrases mean the same thing.

Make ready the way of the Lord

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

Matthew 3:4

Now ... wild honey

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

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

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

Matthew 3:5

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region

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

Matthew 3:6

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

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John baptized them ... River after they confessed their sins"

They

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

Matthew 3:7

General Information:

John the Baptist begins to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees.

You offspring of vipers, who

This is a metaphor. Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of." Vipers are a kind of dangerous snakes and represent evil. This can be stated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "You evil poisonous snakes! Who" or "You are evil like poisonous snakes! Who"

who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming?

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

flee from the wrath that is coming

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

Matthew 3:8

Bear fruit worthy of repentance

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

Matthew 3:9

We have Abraham for our father

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

For I say to you

This adds emphasis to what John is about to say.

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

"God is able to make physical descendants out of even these stones and give them to Abraham"

Matthew 3:10

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist continues to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees.

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

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

Matthew 3:11

for repentance

"to show that you have repented"

But he who comes after me

Jesus is the person who comes after John.

is mightier than I

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"is more important than I am"

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire

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

Matthew 3:12

His winnowing fork is in his hand

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

His winnowing fork is in his hand

Here "in his hand" means the person is ready to act. Alternate translation: "Christ is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready"

winnowing fork

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

his threshing floor

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

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

This is a metaphor showing how God will separate righteous people from evil people. The righteous will go to heaven like wheat into a farmer's storehouse, and God will burn the people who are like chaff with a fire that will never be put out.

can never be put out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will never burn out"

Matthew 3:13

Connecting Statement:

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

to be baptized by John

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

Matthew 3:14

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

John uses a question to show his surprise at Jesus's request. Alternate translation: "You are more important than I am. I should not baptize you. You should baptize me."

Matthew 3:15

for us

Here "us" refers to Jesus and John.

John permitted him

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

Matthew 3:16

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about John the Baptist. It describes what happened after he baptized Jesus.

After he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After John baptized Jesus"

behold

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

the heavens were opened to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus saw the sky open" or "God opened the heavens to Jesus"

coming down like a dove

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

Matthew 3:17

a voice came out of the heavens saying

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

Son

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

Chapter 4

Matthew 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"the kingdom of heaven has come near"

No one knows for use whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when Jesus spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phase "is coming near" and "has come near."

"If you are the Son of God"

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

are the Son of God" (See: satan and sonofgod)

Links:

Matthew 4:1 Notes

Matthew 4:1

General Information:

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

Jesus was led up by the Spirit

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

to be tempted by the devil

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

Matthew 4:2

he had fasted ... he was hungry

These refer to Jesus.

forty days and forty nights

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

Matthew 4:3

The tempter

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

If you are the Son of God, command

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

the Son of God

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

command these stones to become bread.

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

bread

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

Matthew 4:4

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with a quotation from Deuteronomy.

It is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote this in the scriptures long ago"

Man does not live on bread alone

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

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

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

Matthew 4:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 4:6

General Information:

Satan quotes from the Psalms in order to tempt Jesus.

If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down

It is best to assume that Satan knew that Jesus is the Son of God. Possible meanings are 1) this is a temptation to do a miracle for Jesus's own benefit. Alternate translation: "Since you are truly the Son of God, you can throw yourself down" or 2) this is a challenge or accusation. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are truly the Son of God by throwing yourself down"

the Son of God

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

throw yourself down

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

for it is written

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

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

This can be translated with a direct quotation, and you can specify that it is God who will command. Alternate translation: "'God will say to his angels, "Take care of him,"' and" or "'God will command his angels to take care of you,' and"

They will carry you

"The angels will hold you"

Matthew 4:7

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

Again it is written

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

You must not test

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

Matthew 4:8

Again, the devil

"Next, the devil"

Matthew 4:9

He said to him

"The devil said to Jesus"

All these things I will give you

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

fall down

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

Matthew 4:10

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

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Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about how Satan tempted Jesus.
For it is written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses also wrote in the scriptures"
You will worship ... you will serve
Both instances of "you" are singular, a command to everyone who hears it.
Matthew 4:11
behold
The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the important new information that follows.
Matthew 4:12
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Matthew describes the beginning of Jesus's ministry in Galilee. These verses explain how Jesus came to be in Galilee.
Now
This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.
John had been handed over
This can be stated in active form and the information omitted from the euphemism can be stated. Alternate translation: "the king had handed John over to the prison" or "the king had arrested John"
Matthew 4:13
in the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali
"Zebulun" and "Naphtali" are the names of the tribes that lived in these territories many years earlier before foreigners took control of the land of Israel.
Matthew 4:14
This happened
This refers to Jesus's going to live in Capernaum.
what was said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God said"
Matthew 4:15
General Information:
Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of prophecy.
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali ... Galilee of the Gentiles!
These are two descriptions of the same territory.
toward the sea
This is the Sea of Galilee.
Matthew 4:16
General Information:
Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of prophecy.
The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light
Here "darkness" is a metaphor for not knowing the truth about God. And "light" is a metaphor for God's true message that saves people from their sin.
The people who sat
These words can be combined with the sentence beginning with "The land of Zebulun" (verse 15). Alternate translation: "In the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali ... where many Gentiles live, the people who sat"
who sat ... who sat
"who were living ... who were living." The word "sat" is an idiom for having lived for a long time in one place, not to sitting on the ground or a piece of furniture.
to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen
This basically has the same meaning as the first part of the sentence. Here "those who sat in the region and shadow of death" is a metaphor. It represents those who did not know God. These people were in danger of dying and being separated from God forever.
Matthew 4:17
the kingdom of heaven is near
The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, include a word that means "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2]
Matthew 4:18
General Information:
This begins a new scene within the part of the story about Jesus's ministry in Galilee. Here he begins to gather men to be his disciples.
casting a net into the sea
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to catch fish"
Matthew 4:19
Come, follow me
Jesus invites Simon and Andrew to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples. Alternate translation: "Be my disciples"
I will make you fishers of men
This metaphor means Simon and Andrew will teach people God's true message, so others will also follow Jesus. Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you used to gather fish"
Matthew 4:20
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 4:21
Connecting Statement:
Jesus calls more men to be his disciples.
He called them
"Jesus called John and James." This phrase also means that Jesus invited them to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples.
Matthew 4:22
they immediately left
"at that moment they left"
left the boat ... and followed him
It should be clear that they immediately put their nets down and left that place with Jesus. If your language requires you to tell whether they were leaving for the rest of the day or for a long time or for the rest of their lives, you should probably translate as they were leaving for the rest of their lives. It would be good to have a note saying that the Greek does not specify how long they would be gone.
Matthew 4:23

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Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about the beginning of Jesus's ministry in Galilee. The rest of this chapter summarizes what he did and how the people responded.
teaching in their synagogues
"teaching in the synagogues of the Galileans" or "teaching in the synagogues of those people"
preaching the gospel of the kingdom
Here "kingdom" refers to God's reign as king. Alternate translation: "preaching the good news that God will show himself as king"
every kind of disease and sickness
The words "disease" and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. "Disease" is what causes a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.
Matthew 4:24
those who were possessed by demons
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom demons controlled"
the epileptics
The word "epileptic" refers to people who have epilepsy and so sometimes become unconscious and move uncontrollably.
Matthew 4:25
the Decapolis
This name means "the Ten Towns." This is the name of a region to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

Chapter 5

Matthew 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.
Matthew 5:3-10, known as The Beatitudes or as The Blessings, has been set apart by being set farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text, with each line beginning with the word "blessed." This way of placing the words on the page highlights the poetic form of this teaching.
Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special concepts in this chapter

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

Links:

Matthew 5:1 Notes

Matthew 5:1
Connecting Statement:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Jesus begins to teach his disciples. This part continues through the end of chapter 7 and is frequently called the Sermon on the Mount.
Matthew 5:2
He opened his mouth
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Jesus began to speak"
taught them
The word "them" refers to his disciples.
Matthew 5:3
General Information:
Here, Jesus begins to describe the characteristics of people who are blessed.
the poor in spirit
This means people who are humble. Alternate translation: "those who know they need God"
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "for God in heaven will be their king"
Matthew 5:4
those who mourn
Possible reasons they are sad are 1) the sinfulness of the world or 2) their own sins or 3) the death of someone. Do not specify the reason for mourning unless your language requires it.
they will be comforted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will comfort them"
Matthew 5:5
the meek
"the gentle" or "those who do not rely on their own power"
they will inherit the earth
"God will give them the entire earth"
Matthew 5:6
those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
This metaphor describes people who strongly desire to do what is right. Alternate translation: "those who desire to live right as much as they desire food and drink"
they will be filled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will fill them" or "God will satisfy them"

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Matthew 5:7
General Information:
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Matthew 5:8
the pure in heart
"people whose hearts are pure." Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or intentions. Alternate translation: "those who only want to serve God"
they will see God
This means they will be able to live in God's presence. Alternate translation: "God will allow them to live with him"
Matthew 5:9
the peacemakers
These are the people who help others to have peace with one another.
for they will be called sons of God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God will call them his children" or "they will be children of God"
sons of God
It is best to translate "sons" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human son or child.
Matthew 5:10
those who have been persecuted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those people whom others treat unfairly"
for righteousness' sake
"because they do what God wants them to do"
theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:3]
Matthew 5:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes describing the characteristics of people who are blessed.
Blessed are you
The word "you" is plural.
say all kinds of evil things against you falsely
"say all kinds of evil lies about you" or "say bad things about you that are not true"
for my sake
"because you follow me" or because you believe in me"
Matthew 5:12
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 5:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about how his disciples are like salt and light.
You are the salt of the earth
Possible meanings are 1) just as salt makes food good, disciples of Jesus influence the people of the world so that they will be good. Alternate translation: "You are like salt for the people of the world" or 2) just as salt preserves food, disciples of Jesus keep people from becoming totally corrupt. Alternate translation: "As salt is for food, you are for the world"
if the salt has lost its taste
Possible meanings are 1) "if the salt has lost its power to do things that salt does" or 2) "if the salt has lost its flavor."
how can it be made salty again?
"how can it be made useful again?" Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. Alternate translation: "there is no way for it to become useful again."
except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "except for people to throw it out into the road and walk on it"
Matthew 5:14
You are the light of the world
This means Jesus's followers bring the message of God's truth to all the people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "You are like a light for the people of the world"
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden
At night when it is dark, people can see the city lights shining. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "During the night, no one can hide the lights that shine from a city on a hill" or "Everyone sees the lights of a city on a hill"
Matthew 5:15
Neither do people light a lamp
"People do not light a lamp"
put it under a basket
"place the lamp under a basket." This is saying it is foolish to create light only to hide it so people do not see the light of the lamp.
Matthew 5:16
Let your light shine before people
This means a disciple of Jesus should live in such a way that others can learn about God's truth. Alternate translation: "Let your lives be like a light that shines before people"
your Father who is in heaven
It is best to translate "Father" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human father.
Matthew 5:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law.
the prophets
This refers to what the prophets wrote in the scriptures.
Matthew 5:18
truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
until heaven and earth pass away
Here "heaven" and "earth" refer to the entire universe. Alternate translation: "as long as the universe lasts"
all things have been accomplished
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all things have happened" or "God causes all things to happen"
all things
The phrase "all things" refers to everything in the law. Alternate translation: "everything in the law" or "all that is written in the law"

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Matthew 5:19
whoever breaks
Possible meanings are 1) "whoever disobeys" or 2) "whoever ignores."
the least one of these commandments and teaches
"any of these commandments, even the least important one, and teaches"
whoever ... teaches others to do so will be called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if anyone ... teaches others to do so, God will call that person"
least in the kingdom of heaven
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in Matthew. If possible use "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important in his heavenly kingdom" or "the least important under the rule of our God in heaven"
keeps them and teaches them
"obeys all these commandments and teaches others to do the same"
great
most important
Matthew 5:20
For I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
you ... your ... you
These are plural.
that unless your righteousness exceeds ... Pharisees, you will in no way enter
This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "that your righteousness must exceed ... Pharisees in order to enter"
Matthew 5:21
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The understood "you" is singular in "Do not murder," but in some languages it may need to be translated as plural.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about murder and anger.
it was said to them in ancient times
This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God said to those who lived long ago" or "Moses said to your ancestors long ago"
will be subject to judgment
Possible meanings are 1) "will have to go to the judge" or 2) "will be in danger of punishment."
Matthew 5:22
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "I say to you."
But I say
Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis.
brother
This refers to a fellow believer, not to a literal brother or a neighbor.
worthless person ... fool
Both of these insults represent a person who cannot think correctly. "Worthless person" is close to "brainless," where "fool" adds the idea of disobedience to God.
council
This was likely a local council, not the main Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.
Matthew 5:23
you
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.
offering your gift
"giving your gift" or "bringing your gift"
at the altar
It is implied that this is God's altar at the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "to God at the altar in the temple"
there remember
"while you are standing at the altar you remember"
your brother has anything against you
"another person is angry with you because of something you did"
Matthew 5:24
First be reconciled with your brother
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "First make peace with the person"
Matthew 5:25
Agree with your
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.
your adversary
This is a person who takes someone to court for doing something wrong to accuse him before a judge.
may hand you over to the judge
Here "hand you over" means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: "will let the judge deal with you"
the judge may hand you over to the officer
Here "hand you over" means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: "the judge will give you over to the officer"
officer
a person who has authority to carry out the decisions of a judge
you may be thrown into prison
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the officer might put you in prison"
Matthew 5:26
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

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from there
"from prison"
Matthew 5:27
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The understood "you" is singular in "Do not commit adultery," but in some languages it may need to be translated as plural.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about adultery and lust.
that it was said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God said" or "that Moses said"
commit
This word means to act out or do something.
Matthew 5:28
But I say
Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.
everyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart
This metaphor indicates that a man who lusts after a woman is as guilty of adultery as a man who actually commits the act of adultery.
to lust after her
"and lusts after her" or "and desires to sleep with her"
in his heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "in his mind" or "in his thoughts"
Matthew 5:29
If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you
The irony here is that people use their eyes in part to keep from stumbling. Here "eye" is a metonym for what a person chooses to look at or learn about, "stumble" is a metaphor for "sin," and "pluck it out and throw it away from you" is a hyperbolic metaphor for doing everything possible to avoid sinning. Alternate translation: "if what you are interested in causes you to want to sin, do everything you can to stay away from it"
If your
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be translated as plural.
right eye
This refers to the eye on the right-hand side of the face. The Jews thought of the right hand as more important than the left, so the phrase "right eye" was a metaphor for the most important eye. You may need to translate "right" as "better" or "stronger."
pluck it out
This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning. It means "forcefully remove it" or "destroy it." If the right eye is not specifically mentioned, you may need to translate this "destroy your eyes." If eyes have been mentioned, you may need to translate this "destroy them."
throw it away from you
"get rid of it"
one of your members should perish
"you should lose one part of your body"
than that your whole body should be thrown into hell
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "than for God to throw your whole body into hell"
Matthew 5:30
If your right hand causes
In this metonymy, the hand stands for the actions of the whole person.
right hand
This means the most important hand, as opposed to the left hand. You may need to translate "right" as "better" or "stronger."
cut it off
This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning.
Matthew 5:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about divorce.
It was also said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also said" or "Moses also said"
sends his wife away
This is a euphemism for "divorces his wife."
let him give
"he must give"
Matthew 5:32
But I say
Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.
makes her an adulteress
It is the man who divorces the woman improperly who "causes her to commit adultery." In many cultures it would be normal for her to remarry, but if the divorce is improper, such a remarriage is adultery.
her after she has been divorced
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "her after her husband has divorced her" or "the divorced woman"
Matthew 5:33
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The "you" and "your" are singular in "Do not swear" and "carry out your oaths," but in some

languages they may need to be translated as plural.

Connecting Statement:

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

Again, you

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

it was said to those in ancient times

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

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

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

Matthew 5:34

But I say

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

swear not at all

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

it is the throne of God

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

Matthew 5:35

Connecting Statement:

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

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

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

it is the footstool for his feet

This metaphor means the earth also belongs to God. Alternate translation: "it is like a footstool where a king rests his feet"

for it is the city of the great King

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

Matthew 5:36

General Information:

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

your ... you

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

swear

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

Matthew 5:37

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

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

Matthew 5:38

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

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

that it was said

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

eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth

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

Matthew 5:39

General Information:

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

But I say

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

one who is evil

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

strikes ... your right cheek

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

strikes

hits with the back of an open hand

turn to him the other also

"let him hit your other cheek also"

Matthew 5:40

General Information:

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

tunic ... cloak

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

let that person also have

"give also to that person"

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Matthew 5:41

General Information:

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

Whoever

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

one mile

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

with him

This refers to the one who compels you to go.

go with him two

"go the mile he forces you to go, and then go another mile." If "mile" is confusing, you can translate it as "two kilometers" or "twice as far."

Matthew 5:42

do not turn away from

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

Matthew 5:43

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

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

that it was said

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

your neighbor

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

Matthew 5:44

General Information:

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

But I say

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

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

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

Matthew 5:45

you may be sons of your Father

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

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 5:46

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

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

what reward do you get?

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

Do not even the tax collectors do the same thing?

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

Matthew 5:47

what do you do more than others?

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

greet

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

Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing?

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

Matthew 5:48

Father

This is an important title for God.

Chapter 6

Matthew 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

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

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

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Links:

Matthew 6:1 Notes

Matthew 6:1

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

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

Watch out

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

before people to be seen by them

It is implied that those who see the person will honor him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in front of people just so that they can see you and give you honor for what you have done"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 6:2

do not sound a trumpet before yourself

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

Truly I say to you

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

Matthew 6:3

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about alms.

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

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

Matthew 6:4

your alms may be given in secret

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you can give to the poor without other people knowing"

Matthew 6:5

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about prayer.

so that they may be seen by people

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

Truly I say to you

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

Matthew 6:6

General Information:

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

enter your inner chamber. Shut the door

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

Father, who is in secret

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

Father

This is an important title for God.

your Father who sees in secret

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

Matthew 6:7

General Information:

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

do not make useless repetitions

Possible meanings are 1) the repetitions are useless. Alternate translation: "do not keep uselessly saying things over and over again" or 2) the words or sentences are meaningless. Alternate translation: "do not keeping repeating meaningless words"

they will be heard

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

Matthew 6:8

General Information:

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

Father

This is an important title for God.

you ask him

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

Matthew 6:9

Our Father in heaven

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

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may your name be honored as holy
Here "your name" refers to God himself. This can also be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "may people honor you as holy" or "may people honor you because you are holy"
may your name be honored as holy
By saying this, people show that they want to honor God as holy. Alternate translation: "help us to honor your name as holy" or "we want to honor you as holy"
Matthew 6:10
May your kingdom come
Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "May you rule over everyone and everything completely"
May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything on earth happen in accordance with your will, just as everything in heaven does"
Matthew 6:11
General Information:
This is part of a prayer that Jesus was teaching the people. All instances of "we," "us," and "our" refer only to those who would pray this prayer. Those words do not also refer to God, to whom they would be praying.
daily bread
Here "bread" refers to food in general.
Matthew 6:12
debts
A debt is what one person owes another. This is a metaphor for sins.
our debtors
A debtor is a person who owes a debt to another person. This is a metaphor for those who have sinned against us.
Matthew 6:13
Do not bring us into temptation
The word "temptation," an abstract noun, can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "Do not let anything tempt us" or "Do not let anything cause us to desire to sin"
Matthew 6:14
General Information:
All instances of "you" and "your" are plural. However, Jesus is telling his hearers what will happen to them as individuals if each person does not forgive others.
their trespasses
The abstract noun "trespasses" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "when they trespass against you"
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 6:15
their trespasses ... your trespasses
The abstract noun "trespasses" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "them when they trespass against you ... you when you trespass against God" or "them when they do things that harm you ... you when you do things that make your Father angry"
Matthew 6:16
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurences of "you" are plural.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about fasting.
they disfigure their faces
The hypocrites would not wash their faces and would not comb their hair. They did this purposely to draw attention to themselves so that people would see them and give them honor for fasting.
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
Matthew 6:17
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, though in some languages they may also need to be translated as plural.
anoint your head
"put oil in your hair" or "groom your hair." To "anoint" the head here is to take normal care of one's hair. It has nothing to do with "Christ" meaning "anointed one." Jesus means that people should look the same whether they are fasting or not.
Matthew 6:18
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, though in some languages they may also need to be translated as plural.
Father who is in secret
Possible meanings are 1) no one can see God. Alternate translation: "Father, who is invisible" or 2) God is with that person who fasts secretly. Alternate translation: "Father, who is with you in private" See how you translated this in Matthew 6:6.
Father
This is an important title for God.
who sees in secret
"who sees what you do in private." See how you translated this in Matthew 6:6.
Matthew 6:19
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are plural.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about money and possessions.
treasures
riches, the things to which a person gives the most value
where moth and rust destroy
"where moth and rust ruin treasures"
moth
a small, flying insect that destroys cloth
rust
a brown substance that forms on metals
Matthew 6:20
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do.

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store up for yourselves treasures in heaven

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

Matthew 6:21

General Information:

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

there will your heart be also

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

Matthew 6:22

General Information:

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

The eye is the lamp of the body

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

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

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

if your eye is good

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

your whole body is filled with light

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

eye is

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

Matthew 6:23

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

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

if your eye is bad

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

if your eye is bad

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

your whole body is full of darkness

Possible meanings are "you are full of evil" or 2) "you will understand nothing about what is right."

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

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

Matthew 6:24

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

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

You cannot serve God and wealth

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

Matthew 6:25

General Information:

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

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you

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

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

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

Matthew 6:26

barns

places to store crops

Father

This is an important title for God.

Are you not more valuable than they are?

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

Matthew 6:27

General Information:

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

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

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

one cubit

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

Matthew 6:28

Why are you anxious about clothing?

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

Think about

"Consider"

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

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

lilies

A lily is a kind of wild flower.

Matthew 6:29

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

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

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

was not clothed like one of these

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

Matthew 6:30

so clothes the grass in the fields

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

grass

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

is thrown into the oven

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

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

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

you of little faith

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

Matthew 6:31

Therefore

"Because of all of this,"

What clothes will we wear

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

Matthew 6:32

For the Gentiles search for these things

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

your heavenly Father knows that you need them

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

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 6:33

seek first his kingdom and his righteousness

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

all these things will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will provide all these things for you"

Matthew 6:34

Therefore

"Because of all this"

tomorrow will be anxious for itself

Jesus speaks of "tomorrow" as if it were a person who could worry. Jesus means that a person will have enough to worry about when the next day comes.

Chapter 7

Matthew 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Matthew 5-7

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

"By their fruits you will know them"

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

Links:

Matthew 7:1 Notes

Matthew 7:1

General Information:

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

Connecting Statement:

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

Do not judge

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

you will not be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not condemn you harshly"

Matthew 7:2

For

Be sure the reader understands the statement in 7:2 is

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based on what Jesus said in 7:1.

with the judgment you judge, you will be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will condemn you in the same way you condemn others"

measure

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

it will be measured out to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will measure it out to you"

Matthew 7:3

General Information:

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

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

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the people for paying attention to other people's sins and ignoring their own. Alternate translation: "You look ... brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye." or "Do not look ... brother's eye and ignore the log that is in your own eye."

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

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

tiny piece of straw

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

brother

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

the log that is in your own eye

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

log

the largest part of a tree that someone has cut down

Matthew 7:4

How can you say ... your own eye?

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

Matthew 7:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 7:6

General Information:

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

dogs ... pigs

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

pearls

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

they may trample

"the pigs may trample"

then turn and tear

"the dogs will then turn and tear"

Matthew 7:7

General Information:

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

Ask ... Seek ... Knock

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

Ask

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

it will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will give you what you need"

Seek

look for someone, in this case God

Knock

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

it will be opened to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will open it for you"

Matthew 7:8

who ... asks

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

Matthew 7:9

Or which one of you ... a stone?

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

son asks

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

a loaf of bread

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

stone

This noun should be translated literally.

Matthew 7:10

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

Jesus asks another question to teach the people. It is understood that Jesus is still referring to a man and his son. Alternate translation: "And there is not one person among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake."

he asks

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

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fish ... snake
These nouns should be translated literally.
Matthew 7:11
General Information:
Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are plural.
how much more will your Father in heaven give ... him?
Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "then your Father in heaven will most certainly give ... him."
Father
This is an important title for God.
ask him
See how you translated "asks" in Matthew 5:42.
Matthew 7:12
whatever things you want people to do to you
"whatever way you want others to act toward you"
for this is the law and the prophets
Here "law" and "prophets" refer to what Moses and the prophets wrote. Alternate translation: "for this is what Moses and the prophets teach in the scriptures"
Matthew 7:13
General Information:
This image of walking through a wide gate to destruction or a narrow gate to life represents how people live and the results of how they live. When you translate, use appropriate words for "wide" and "broad" that are as different as possible from "narrow" in order to emphasize the differences between the two sets of gates and ways.
Enter through the narrow gate ... many people who go through it
This is an image of people traveling on a road and going through a gate into a kingdom. One kingdom is easy to enter; the other is hard to enter.
Enter through the narrow gate
You may need to move this to the end of verse 14: "Therefore, enter through the narrow gate."
the gate ... the way
Possible meanings are 1) "the way" refers to the road that leads to the gate of a kingdom, or 2) the "the gate" and "the way" both refer to the entrance to the kingdom.
to destruction
This abstract noun can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "to the place where people die"
Matthew 7:14
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to speak of people choosing how they are going to live as if they are choosing whether to go on one path or another.
to life
The abstract noun "life" can be translated using the verb "live." Alternate translation: "to the place where people live"
Matthew 7:15
Beware of
"Be on guard against"
who come to you in sheep's clothing but are truly ravenous wolves
This metaphor means that false prophets will pretend they they are good and want to help people, but they are really evil and will do people harm.
ravenous wolves
wolves that are extremely hungry and that consume or destroy everything they touch
Matthew 7:16
By their fruits you will know them
This metaphor refers to a person's actions. Alternate translation: "Just as you know a tree by the fruit that grows on it, you will know false prophets by how they act"
Do people gather ... thistles?
Jesus uses a question to teach the people. The people would have known that the answer is no. Alternate translation: "People do not gather ... thistles."
Matthew 7:17
every good tree produces good fruit
Jesus continues to use the metaphor of fruit to refer to good prophets who produce good works or words.
the bad tree produces bad fruit
Jesus continues to use the metaphor of fruit to refer to bad prophets who produce evil works.
Matthew 7:18
General Information:
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Matthew 7:19
Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire
Jesus continues to use fruit trees as a metaphor to refer to false prophets. Here, he only states what will happen to the bad trees. It is implied that the same thing will happen to the false prophets.
is chopped down and thrown into the fire
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people chop down and burn"
chopped down
See how you translated this in Matthew 3:10
Matthew 7:20
you will recognize them by their fruits
The word "their" can refer to either the prophets or the trees. This metaphor implies that the fruit of trees and the deeds of prophets both reveal whether they are good or bad. If possible, translate this in a way so that it can refer to both trees and prophets.
Matthew 7:21
will enter into the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "will live with God in heaven when he shows himself to be king"
those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven
"whoever does what my Father in heaven desires"
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 7:22
in that day
Jesus said "that day" knowing his hearers would understand he was referring to the day of judgment. You should include "the day of judgment" only if your readers would not understand otherwise.

did we not prophesy ... drive out demons ... do many miracles?
The people use a question to emphasize that they did these things. Alternate translation: "we prophesied ... we drove out demons ... we did many miracles."
we
This "we" does not include Jesus.
in your name
Possible meanings are 1) "by your authority" or "by your power" or 2) "because we were doing what you wanted us to do" or 3) "because we asked you for the power to do it"
Matthew 7:23
I never knew you
This means the person does not belong to Jesus. Alternate translation: "You are not my follower" or "I have nothing to do with you"
Matthew 7:24
Therefore
"For that reason"
my words
Here "words" refers to what Jesus says.
like a wise man who built his house upon a rock
Jesus compares those who obey his words to a person who builds his house where nothing can harm it.
rock
This is the bedrock below the topsoil and clay, not a large stone or boulder above the ground.
Matthew 7:25
it was founded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he put its foundation"
Matthew 7:26
like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand
Jesus continues the simile from the previous verse. He compares those who do not obey his words to foolish house-builders. Only a fool would build a house on a sandy place where rain, floods, and wind can sweep the sand away.
Matthew 7:27
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew 5:3.
fell
Use the general word in your language that describes what happens when a house falls down.
its destruction was complete
The rain, floods, and wind completely destroyed the house.
Matthew 7:28
General Information:
These verses describe how the people in the crowds reacted to Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.
It came about that when
This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "When" or "After"
were astonished by his teaching
It is clear in 7:29 that they were amazed not just at what Jesus taught but also the way he taught it. Alternate translation: "were amazed by the way he taught"
Matthew 7:29
General Information:
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Chapter 8

Matthew 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a new section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracles

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

Links:

Matthew 8:1 Notes

Matthew 8:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story that contains several accounts of Jesus healing people. This theme continues through Matthew 9:35.
When Jesus had come down from the hill, large crowds followed him
"After Jesus came down from the hill, a large crowd followed him." The crowd may have included both people who had been with him on the mountain and people who had not been with him.
Matthew 8:2
Behold
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
a leper
"a man who had leprosy" or "a man who had a skin disease"
bowed before him
This is a sign of humble respect before Jesus.
if you are willing
"if you want to" or "if you desire." The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him, but he did not know if Jesus would want to touch him.
you can make me clean
Here "clean" means to be healed and to be able to live in the community again. Alternate translation: "you can heal me" or "please heal me"
Matthew 8:3
Be clean
By saying this, Jesus healed the man.

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Immediately he was cleansed
"At that moment he was cleansed"
he was cleansed of his leprosy
The result of Jesus saying "Be clean" was that the man was healed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he was well" or "the leprosy left him" or "the leprosy ended"
Matthew 8:4
to him
This refers to the man that Jesus just healed.
say nothing to any man
"do not say anything to anyone" or "do not tell anyone I healed you"
show yourself to the priest
Jewish law required that the person show his healed skin to the priest, who would then allow him or her to return to the community, to be with other people.
offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them
The law of Moses required that someone healed of leprosy give a thanksgiving offering to the priest. When the priest accepted the gift, people would know that the man had been healed. Lepers were ostracized, banned from the community, until they had proof of their healing.
to them
This can possibly refer to 1) the priests or 2) all the people or 3) the critics of Jesus. If possible, use a pronoun that could refer to any of these groups.
Matthew 8:5
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells about Jesus healing another person.
When he was coming into Capernaum
"When Jesus was coming into Capernaum"
Matthew 8:6
paralyzed
unable to move because of disease or stroke
Matthew 8:7
Jesus said to him
"Jesus said to the centurion"
I will come and heal him
"I will come to your house and make your servant well"
Matthew 8:8
under my roof
This is an idiom that refers to inside the house. Alternate translation: "into my house"
say the word
Here "word" represents a command. Alternate translation: "give the command"
will be healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will become well"
Matthew 8:9
under authority ... under me
To be "under" someone means to be less important and to obey the commands of someone more important.
Matthew 8:10
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
I have not found anyone with such faith in Israel
Jesus's hearers would have thought that the Jews in Israel, who claim to be children of God, would have greater faith than anyone. Jesus is saying they are wrong and that the centurion's faith was greater.
Matthew 8:11
you
Here "you" is plural and refers to "those who were following him" in [Matthew 8:10]
from the east and the west
Using the opposites "east" and "west" is a way of saying "everywhere." Alternate translation: "from everywhere" or "from far away in every direction"
recline at the table
People in that culture would lie down beside the table while eating. This phrase indicates that all those at the table are family and close friends. The joy in the kingdom of God is frequently spoken of as if the people there were feasting. Alternate translation: "live as family and friends"
in the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "when our God in heaven shows that he is king"
Matthew 8:12
sons of the kingdom will be cast out
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will cast the sons of the kingdom out"
the sons of the kingdom
The phrase "the sons of the kingdom" is a metonym, referring to the unbelieving Jews of the kingdom of Judea. There is also irony here because the "sons" will be thrown out while the strangers will be welcomed. Alternate translation: "those who should have allowed God to rule over them"
the outer darkness
Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. Alternate translation: "the dark place away from God"
weeping and grinding of teeth
"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. Alternate translation: "weeping and showing their extreme suffering"
Matthew 8:13
so may it be done for you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so I will do it for you"
the servant was healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed the servant"
at that very hour
"at the exact time Jesus said he would heal the servant"
Matthew 8:14
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells of Jesus healing another person.
Jesus had come

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The disciples were probably with Jesus, but the focus of the story is on what Jesus said and did, so introduce the disciples only if needed to avoid wrong meaning.

Peter's mother-in-law

"the mother of Peter's wife"

Matthew 8:15

the fever left her

If your language would understand this personification to mean that the fever could think and act on its own, this can be translated as "she became better" or "Jesus healed her."

got up

"got out of bed"

Matthew 8:16

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to later that evening and tells of Jesus healing more people and casting out demons.

When evening had come

Because Jews did not work or travel on the Sabbath, "evening" may imply after the Sabbath. They waited until evening to bring people to Jesus. You do not need to mention the Sabbath unless you need to avoid wrong meaning.

many who were possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many people whom demons possessed" or "many people whom demons controlled"

He drove out the spirits with a word

Here "word" stands for a command. Alternate translation: "He commanded the spirits to leave"

Matthew 8:17

This was to fulfill

"Jesus did this to fulfill"

what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Isaiah the prophet had spoken"

He took our illnesses and bore our diseases

Matthew is quoting the prophet Isaiah to show that when Jesus healed people, he fulfilled what Isaiah had said would happen. These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Jesus truly did this. Alternate translation: "Truly he took our illnesses"

Matthew 8:18

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts and tells about Jesus's response to some people who wanted to follow him.

Now

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

he gave instructions

"he told his disciples"

Matthew 8:19

Then

This means after Jesus "gave instructions" but before he could get into the boat.

wherever

to any place

Matthew 8:20

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests

Jesus answers with this proverb. This means even wild animals have somewhere to rest.

Foxes

Foxes are animals like dogs. They eat nesting birds and other small animals. If foxes are unknown in your area, use a general term for dog-like creatures or other furry animals.

holes

Foxes make holes in the ground to live in. Use the appropriate word for the place where the animal you use for "foxes" lives.

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

nowhere to lay his head

This refers to a place to sleep. Alternate translation: "no place of his own to sleep"

Matthew 8:21

allow me first to go and bury my father

It is unclear whether the man's father has died and he will bury him immediately, or if the man wants to stay for a longer amount of time until his father dies so he can bury him then. The main point is that the man wants to do something else first before he follows Jesus.

Matthew 8:22

leave the dead to bury their own dead

Jesus does not mean literally that dead people will bury other dead people. Possible meanings of "the dead": 1) it is a metaphor for those who will soon die, or 2) it is a metaphor for those who do not follow Jesus and are spiritually dead. The main point is that a disciple must not let anything delay him from following Jesus.

Matthew 8:23

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the account of Jesus calming a storm as he and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee.

entered a boat

"got onto a boat"

his disciples followed him

Try to use the same words for "disciple" and "follow" that you used in (Matthew 8:21-22).

Matthew 8:24

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this. Alternate translation: "Suddenly" or "Without warning"

there arose a great storm on the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a powerful storm arose on the sea"

so that the boat was covered with the waves

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the waves covered the boat"

Matthew 8:25

General Information:

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

woke him up, saying, "Save us

Possible meanings are 1) they first woke Jesus and then they said, "Save us" or 2) as they were waking Jesus up, they were saying "Save us."

us ... we

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If you need to translate these words as inclusive or exclusive, then inclusive is best. The disciples probably meant they wanted Jesus to save the disciples and himself from drowning.

we are perishing

"we are going to die very soon." The word "perishing" is a strong word for "dying."

Matthew 8:26

to them

"to the disciples"

Why are you afraid ... faith?

Jesus was rebuking the disciples with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "You should not be afraid ... faith!" or "There is nothing for you to be afraid of ... faith!"

you of little faith

"you who have such little faith." Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their anxiety about the storm shows they have little faith in him to control it. See how you translated this in Matthew 6:30.

Matthew 8:27

What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

"Even the winds and the sea obey him! What sort of man is this?" This rhetorical question shows that the disciples were surprised. Alternate translation: "This man is unlike any man we have ever seen! Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

even the winds and the sea obey him

For people or animals to obey or disobey is not surprising, but for wind and water to obey is very surprising. This personification describes the natural elements as being able to hear and respond like people.

Matthew 8:28

Connecting Statement:

Here the author returns to the theme of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

to the other side

"to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

the Gadarenes

This name refers to theo people who lived in the town of Gadara.

two men who were possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "two men whom demons possessed" or "two men whom demons were controlling"

They ... were very violent, so that no traveler could pass that way

The demons that were controlling these two men were so dangerous that no one could go through that area.

Matthew 8:29

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this.

What do we have to do with you, Son of God?

The demons use a question but they are being hostile toward Jesus. Alternate translation: "Do not bother us, Son of God!"

Son of God

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

Have you come here to torment us before the set time?

Again, the demons use a question in a hostile way. Alternate translation: "You should not disobey God by punishing us before the specific time God has set when he will punish us!"

Matthew 8:30

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew tells background information about a herd of pigs that had been there before Jesus arrived.

Matthew 8:31

If you cast us out

It is implied that the demons knew that Jesus was going to cast them out. Alternate translation: "Because you are going to cast us out"

us

This is exclusive, meaning the demons only.

Matthew 8:32

to them

This refers to the demons inside the men.

The demons came out and went into the pigs

"The demons left the men and entered the pigs"

behold

This alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

rushed down the steep hill

"ran quickly down the steep slope"

they died in the water

"they fell into the water and drowned"

Matthew 8:33

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

tending the pigs

"taking care of the pigs"

what had happened to the men who had been possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Jesus did to help the men whom demons had controlled"

Matthew 8:34

Behold

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

all the city

The word "city" is a metonym for the people of the city. The word "all" is probably an exaggeration to emphasize how very many people came out. Not necessarily every person came out.

their region

"their area"

Chapter 9

Matthew 9 General Notes

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Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinners"

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as "sinners." (See: sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action.

Rhetorical questions

Speakers in this chapter asked questions to which they already knew the answer. They asked the questions to show that they were not happy with the hearers or to teach them or to get them to think. Your language may have another way of doing this.

Proverbs

Proverbs are very short sentences that use words that are easy to remember. They teach about something that is generally true. People who understand proverbs usually have to know much about the language and culture of the speaker. When you translate the proverbs in this chapter, you may have to use many more words than the speakers used so that your readers can understand things that the original audiences understood.

Links:

Matthew 9:1 Notes

Matthew 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Matthew returns to the theme, which he began in Matthew 8:1, of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man.

Jesus entered a boat

It is implied that the disciples were with Jesus.

a boat

This is probably the same boat as in Matthew 8:23. You only need to specify this if needed to avoid confusion.

into his own city

"to the town where he lived." This refers to Capernaum.

Matthew 9:2

Behold

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

they brought

"some men from the city brought"

their faith

This refers to the faith of the men and may also include the faith of the paralyzed man.

Son

The man was not Jesus's real son. Jesus was speaking to him politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "My friend" or "Young man" or even omitted.

Your sins have been forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven your sins"

Matthew 9:3

Behold

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

among themselves

Possible meanings are 1) each one was thinking to himself, or 2) they were speaking among themselves.

blaspheming

Jesus was claiming to be able to do things the scribes thought only God can do.

Matthew 9:4

knew their thoughts

Jesus knew what they were thinking either supernaturally or because he could see them talking to each other.

Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?

Jesus used this question to rebuke the scribes. Here "hearts" refers to their minds or their thoughts. Alternate translation: "Do not think evil thoughts."

evil

This is moral evil or wickedness, not simply error in fact.

Matthew 9:5

For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "I just said 'Your sins are forgiven.' You may think that it is harder to say 'Get up and walk,' because the proof of whether or not I can heal the man will be shown by whether or not he gets up and walks." or "You may think that it is easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up and walk.'"

which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

The quotes can be translated as indirect quotes. Alternate translation: "which is easier, to tell someone that his sins are forgiven, or to tell him to get up and walk?" or "you may think that it is easier to tell someone that his sins are forgiven than to tell him to get up and walk."

Your sins are forgiven

Here "your" is singular. This can be stated in active form.

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Alternate translation: "I have forgiven your sins"
Matthew 9:6
that you may know
"I will prove to you." The "you" is plural.
your mat ... your house
Here "you" is singular.
go to your house
Jesus is not forbidding the man to go elsewhere. He is giving the man the opportunity to go home.
Matthew 9:7
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 9:8
they were afraid
Possible meanings are 1) they were afraid, or 2) they were in awe. "Awe" is a feeling of wonder a person has when they see or experience something great or powerful.
who had given
"because he had given"
such authority
This refers to the authority to declare sins forgiven.
Matthew 9:9
Connecting Statement:
This concludes the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man. Jesus then calls a tax collector to be one of his disciples.
As Jesus passed by from there
This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
passed by
"was leaving" or "was going"
Matthew ... him ... He
Church tradition says that this Matthew is the author of this Gospel, but the text gives no reason to change the pronouns from "him" and "He" to "me" and "I."
He said to him
"Jesus said to Matthew"
He got up and followed him
"Matthew got up and followed Jesus." This means Matthew became Jesus's disciple.
Matthew 9:10
the house
This is probably Matthew's house, but it could also be Jesus's house. Specify only if needed to avoid confusion.
behold
This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.
sinners
people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins
Matthew 9:11
When the Pharisees saw it
"When the Pharisees saw that Jesus was eating with the tax collectors and sinful people"
Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?
The Pharisees use this question to criticize what Jesus is doing. Alternate translation: "Your teacher should not eat with tax collectors and sinner."
Matthew 9:12
When Jesus heard this
Here "this" refers to the question the Pharisees asked about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.
People who are strong in body do not need a physician, only those who are sick do
Jesus answers with a proverb. He means that he eats with these kinds of people because he has come to help sinners.
People who are strong in body
"People who are healthy"
physician
doctor
only those who are sick do
The phrase "need a physician" is understood. Alternate translation: "only people who are sick need a physician"
Matthew 9:13
You should go and learn what this means
Jesus is about to quote the scriptures. Alternate translation: "You should learn the meaning of what God said in the scriptures"
You should go
Here "you" is plural and refers to the Pharisees.
I desire mercy and not sacrifice
Jesus is quoting what the prophet Hosea wrote in the scriptures. Here, "I" refers to God.
For I came
Here "I" refers to Jesus.
the righteous
Jesus is using irony. He does not think there are any people who are righteous and do not need to repent. Alternate translation: "those who think they are righteous"
Matthew 9:14
Connecting Statement:
The disciples of John the Baptist question the fact that Jesus's disciples do not fast.
do not fast
"continue to eat regularly"
Matthew 9:15
Can the sons of the wedding hall mourn while the bridegroom is still with them?
Jesus uses a question to answer John's disciples. They all knew that people do not mourn and fast at a wedding celebration. Jesus uses this proverb to show that his disciples do not mourn because he is still there with them. Alternate translation: "The sons of the wedding hall never mourn while the bridegroom is still with them."
sons of the wedding hall
This is an idiom that refers to the men who serve a bridegroom during a wedding. Alternate translation: "bridegroom's attendants"
the days will come when
This is a way of referring to some time in the future. Alternate translation: "the time will come when" or "someday"
the bridegroom will be taken away from them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will not be able to be with them any longer" or "someone will take the bridegroom away from them"

will be taken away
Jesus is probably referring to his own death, but this should not be made explicit here in the translation. To maintain the imagery of a wedding, it is best to just state that the bridegroom will not be there any longer.
Matthew 9:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to answer the question that the disciples of John had asked. He did this by giving two examples of old things and new things that people do not put together.
No man puts a piece of new cloth on an old garment
"No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment" or "People do not sew a piece of new cloth as a patch an old garment"
an old garment ... the garment
"old clothing ... the clothing"
the patch will tear away from the garment
If someone were to wash the garment, the patch of new cloth would shrink, but the old garment would not shrink. This would tear the patch off the garment and leave a bigger hole.
the patch
"the piece of new cloth." This is the piece of cloth used to cover a hole in the old garment.
a worse tear will be made
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this will make the tear worse"
Matthew 9:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to answer the question that disciples of John had asked.
Neither do people put new wine into old wineskins
Jesus uses another proverb to answer John's disciples. This means the same as the proverb in Matthew 9:16.
Neither do people put
"Neither does anyone pour" or "People never put"
new wine
This refers to wine that has not fermented yet. If grapes are unknown in your area, use the general term for fruit. Alternate translation: "grape juice"
old wineskins
This refers to wineskins that have stretched and dried out because they were already used for fermenting wine.
wineskins
"wine bags" or "skin bags." These were bags made out of animal skins.
the wine will be spilled, and the wineskins will be destroyed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and this will ruin the wineskins and spill the wine"
the skins will burst
When the new wine ferments and expands, the skins tear open because they can no longer stretch out.
fresh wineskins
"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to wineskins that no one has used.
both will be preserved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this will keep safe both the wineskins and the wine"
Matthew 9:18
Connecting Statement:
This begins an account of Jesus bringing to life the daughter of a Jewish official after she had died.
these things
This refers to the answer Jesus gave John's disciples about fasting.
behold
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
bowed down to him
This is a way someone would show respect in Jewish culture.
come and lay your hand on her, and she will live
This shows that the Jewish official believed Jesus had the power to bring his daughter back to life.
Matthew 9:19
his disciples
"Jesus's disciples"
Matthew 9:20
Connecting Statement:
This describes how Jesus healed another woman while he was on the way to the Jewish official's house.
Behold
The word "Behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
who suffered from a discharge of blood
"who had been bleeding" or "who frequently had a flow of blood." She was probably bleeding from her womb even when it was not the normal time for it. Some cultures may have a polite way of referring to this condition.
twelve years
"12 years"
his garment
"his robe" or "what he was wearing"
Matthew 9:21
For she had said to herself, "If only I touch his clothes, I will be made well."
She said this to herself before she touched Jesus's garment. This tells why she touched Jesus's garment.
If only I touch his clothes
According to Jewish law, because she was bleeding she was not supposed to touch anyone. She touches his clothes so that Jesus's power would heal her and yet
Matthew 9:22
But Jesus
"The woman was hoping she could touch him secretly, but Jesus"
Daughter
The woman was not Jesus's real daughter. Jesus was speaking to her politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "Young woman" or even omitted.
your faith has made you well
"because you believed in me, I will heal you"
the woman was healed from that hour
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her at that moment"
Matthew 9:23
Connecting Statement:
This returns to the account of Jesus bringing the daughter

of the Jewish official back to life.

the flute players and the crowd making a commotion

This was a common way to mourn for someone who has died.

flute players

"people who play flutes"

and the crowd making a commotion

The phrase "making a commotion" applies only to "the crowd" and does not include the flute players. Alternation translation: "and the crowd making a lot of noise" or "and the noisy crowd"

Matthew 9:24

Go away

Jesus was speaking to many people, so use the plural command form if your language has one.

the girl is not dead, but she is asleep

Jesus is using a play on words. It was common in Jesus's day to refer to a dead person as one who "sleeps." But here the dead girl will get up, as though she had only been sleeping.

Matthew 9:25

When the crowd had been put outside

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After Jesus had sent the crowd outside" or "After the family had sent the people outside"

got up

"got out of bed." This is the same meaning as in Matthew 8:15.

Matthew 9:26

General Information:

This is a summary statement that describes the result of Jesus raising this girl from the dead.

Connecting Statement:

This completes the account of Jesus bringing the daughter of the Jewish official back to life.

The news about this spread into all that region

"The people of that whole region heard about it" or "The people who saw that the girl was alive started telling everyone in the whole area about it"

Matthew 9:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus healing two blind men.

As Jesus passed by from there

As Jesus was leaving the region

passed by

"was leaving" or "was going"

followed him

This means they were walking behind Jesus, not necessarily that they had become his disciples.

Have mercy on us

It is implied that they wanted Jesus to heal them.

Son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling Jesus by this title.

Matthew 9:28

When Jesus had come into the house

This could be either Jesus's own house or the house in Matthew 9:10.

Yes, Lord

The full content of their answer is not stated, but it is understood. Alternate translation: "Yes, Lord, we believe you can heal us"

Matthew 9:29

touched their eyes and said

It is not clear whether he touched both men's eyes at the same time or used only his right hand to touch one then the other. As the left hand was customarily used for unclean purposes, it is most likely that he used only his right hand. It is also not clear whether he spoke as he was touching them or touched them first and then spoke to them.

Let it be done to you according to your faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will do as you have believed" or "Because you believe, I will heal you"

Matthew 9:30

their eyes were opened

This means they were able to see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed their eyes" or "the two blind men were able to see"

See that no one knows about this

Here "See" means "be sure." Alternate translation: "Be sure no one finds out about this" or "Do not tell anyone that I healed you"

Matthew 9:31

But the two men

"The two men did not do what Jesus told them to do. They"

spread the news

"told many people what had happened to them"

Matthew 9:32

Connecting Statement:

This is the account of Jesus healing a demon-possessed man who could not speak, and how people responded.

behold

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

a mute man ... was brought to Jesus

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone brought a mute man ... to Jesus"

mute

not able to talk

possessed by a demon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom a demon had possessed" or "whom a demon was controlling"

Matthew 9:33

When the demon had been driven out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After Jesus had forced the demon out" or "After Jesus had commanded the demon to leave"

the mute man spoke

"the mute man began to speak" or "the man who had been mute spoke" or "the man, who was no longer mute, spoke"

The crowds were astonished

"The people were amazed"

This has never been seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This has never happened before" or "No one has ever done

anything like this before"
Matthew 9:34
he drives out demons
"he forces demons to leave"
he drives
The pronoun "he" refers to Jesus.
Matthew 9:35
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story that began in [Matthew 8:1]
all the cities
The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize how very many cities Jesus went to. He did not necessarily go to every one of them. Alternate translation: "many of the cities"
cities ... villages
"large villages ... small villages" or "large towns ... small towns"
the gospel of the kingdom
Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. See how you translated this in [Matthew 4:23]
all kinds of disease and all kinds of sickness
"every disease and every sickness." The words "disease" and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. "Disease" is what causes a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.
Matthew 9:36
General Information:
This begins a new part of the story where Jesus teaches his disciples and sends them to preach and heal as he has done.
They were like sheep without a shepherd
This simile means they did not have a leader to take care of them. Alternate translation: "The people did not have a leader"
Matthew 9:37
General Information:
Jesus uses a proverb about harvesting to tell his disciples how they should respond to the needs of the crowds mentioned in the previous section.
The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few
Jesus uses a proverb to respond to what he is seeing. Jesus means there are a lot of people who are ready to believe God but only few people to teach them God's truth.
The harvest is plentiful
"There is plenty of ripe food for someone to collect"
laborers
"workers"
Matthew 9:38
pray to the Lord of the harvest
"pray to God, because he is in charge of the harvest"

Chapter 10

Matthew 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The sending of the twelve disciples
Many verses in this chapter describe how Jesus sent the twelve disciples out. He sent them to tell his message about the kingdom of heaven. They were to tell his message only in Israel and not to share it with the Gentiles.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples
The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:
In Matthew:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.
In Mark:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.
In Luke:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.
Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.
"The kingdom of heaven has come near"
No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when Jesus spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

Matthew 10:1 Notes

Matthew 10:1
Connecting Statement:
This begins an account of Jesus sending out his twelve disciples to do his work.
called his twelve disciples together
"summoned his 12 disciples"

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gave them authority
Be sure that the text clearly communicates that this authority was 1) to drive out unclean spirits and 2) to heal disease and sickness.
to drive them out
"to make the unclean spirits leave"
all kinds of disease and all kinds of sickness
"every disease and every sickness." The words "disease" and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. "Disease" is what causes a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.
Matthew 10:2
General Information:
Here the author provides the names of the twelve apostles as background information.
Now
This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew tells the names of the twelve apostles.
twelve apostles
This is the same group as the "twelve disciples" in Matthew 10:1.
first
This is first in order, not in rank.
Matthew 10:3
Matthew the tax collector
"Matthew, who was a tax collector"
Matthew 10:4
the Zealot
Possible meanings are 1) "the Zealot" is a title that shows that he was part of the group of people who wanted to free the Jewish people from Roman rule. Alternate translation: "the patriot" or "the nationalist" or 2) "the Zealot" is a description that shows that he was zealous for God to be honored. Alternate translation: "the zealous one" or "the passionate one"
who would betray him
"who would betray Jesus"
Matthew 10:5
General Information:
Although verse 5 begins by saying that he sent out the twelve, Jesus gave these instructions before he sent them out.
Connecting Statement:
Here Jesus begins to give instructions to his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.
These twelve Jesus sent out
"Jesus sent out these twelve men" or "It was these twelve men whom Jesus sent out"
sent out
Jesus sent them out for a particular purpose.
He instructed them
"He told them what they needed to do" or "He commanded them"
Matthew 10:6
lost sheep of the house of Israel
This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of Israel to sheep who have strayed from their shepherd.
house of Israel
This refers to the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "people of Israel" or "descendants of Israel"
Matthew 10:7
as you go
Here "you" is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.
The kingdom of heaven is near
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use the word "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2]
Matthew 10:8
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.
Heal ... raise ... cleanse ... cast out ... you have received ... give
These verbs and pronouns are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.
raise the dead
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cause the dead to live again"
Freely you have received, freely give
Jesus did not state what the disciples had received or were to give. Some languages may require this information in the sentence. Here "freely" means that there was no payment. Alternate translation: "Freely you have received these things, freely give them to others" or "You received these things without paying, so give them to others without making them pay"
Freely you have received, freely give
Here "received" is a metaphor that represents being made able to do things, and "give" is a metaphor that represents doing things for others. Alternate translation: "Freely you have received the ability to do these things, freely do them for others" or "Freely I have made you able to do these things, freely do them for others"
Matthew 10:9
your
This refers to the twelve apostles and so is plural.
gold, silver, or copper
These are metals out of which coins were made. This list is a metonym for money, so if the metals are unknown in your area, translate the list as "money."
belts
"money belts." A belt is a long strip of cloth or leather worn around the waist. It was often wide enough that it could be folded and used to carry money. Alternate translation: "purses" or "pouches"
Matthew 10:10
traveling bag
This could either be any bag used to carry things on a journey, or a bag used by someone to collect food or money.
an extra tunic
Use the same word you used for "tunic" in Matthew 5:40.
laborer
worker
his food
Here "food" refers to anything a person needs. Alternate translation: "what he needs"
Matthew 10:11

Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go out to preach.
Whatever city or village you enter
"Whenever you enter a city or village" or "When you go into any city or village"
city ... village
"large village ... small village" or "large town ... small town." See how you translated this in Matthew 9:35.
you
This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.
worthy
A "worthy" person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples.
stay there until you leave
The full meaning of the statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "stay in that person's house until you leave the town or village"
Matthew 10:12
As you enter into the house, greet it
The phrase "greet it" means greet the house. A common greeting in those days was "Peace be to this house!" Here "house" represents the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "As you enter the house, greet the people who live in it"
you
This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.
Matthew 10:13
your ... your
These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.
the house is worthy ... not worthy
Here "the house" represents those who live in the house. A "worthy" person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples. Jesus compares this person to one who is "not worthy," a person who does not welcome the disciples. Alternate translation: "the people who live in that house receive you well" or "the people who live in that house treat you well"
let your peace come upon it
The word "it" refers to the house, which represents the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "let them receive your peace" or "let them receive the peace that you greeted them with"
if it is not worthy
The word "it" means the house. Here "house" refers to the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "if they do not receive you well" or "if they do not treat you well"
let your peace return to you
Possible meanings are 1) if the household was not worthy, then God would hold back peace or blessings from that household or 2) if the household was not worthy, then the apostles were supposed to do something, such as asking God not to honor their greeting of peace. If your language has a similar meaning of taking back a greeting or its effects, that should be used here.
Matthew 10:14
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.
As for those who do not receive you or listen
"If no people in that house or city will receive you or listen"
you ... your
This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.
listen to your words
Here "words" refers to what the disciples say. Alternate translation: "listen to your message" or "listen to what you have to say"
city
You should translate this the same way you did in Matthew 10:11.
shake off the dust from your feet
"shake the dust off your feet as you leave." This is a sign that God has rejected the people of that house or city.
Matthew 10:15
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
it will be more bearable
"the suffering will be less"
the land of Sodom and Gomorrah
This refers to the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. Alternate translation: "the people who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"
that city
This refers to the people in the city that does not receive the apostles or listen to their message. Alternate translation: "the people of the city that does not receive you"
Matthew 10:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples. Here he begins to tell them about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.
See, I send
The word "See" here adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: "Look, I send" or "Listen, I send" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you. I send"
I send you out
Jesus is sending them out for a particular purpose.
as sheep in the midst of wolves
Sheep are defenseless animals that wolves often attack. Jesus is stating that people may harm the disciples. Alternate translation: "as sheep among people who are like dangerous wolves" or "as sheep among people who act the way dangerous animals act"
be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves
Jesus is telling the disciples they must be cautious and harmless among the people. If comparing the disciples to serpents or doves is confusing, it might be better not to state the similes. Alternate translation: "act with understanding and caution, as well as with innocence and virtue"
Matthew 10:17
Watch out for people! They will
You can translate with "because" to show how these two statements relate. Alternate translation: "Watch out for people because they will"
will deliver you up to
"will put you under the control of"

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councils
local religious leaders or elders who together keep peace in the community
whip you
"beat you with a whip"
Matthew 10:18
you will be brought
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will bring you" or "they will drag you"
for my sake
"because you belong to me" or "because you follow me"
to them and to the Gentiles
The pronoun "them" refers either to the "governors and kings" or to the Jewish accusers.
Matthew 10:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.
When they deliver you up
"When people take you to the councils." The "people" here are the same "people" as in Matthew 10:17.
you ... you
These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.
do not be anxious
"do not worry"
how or what you will speak
"how you are to speak or what you are to say." The two ideas may be combined: "what you are to say"
for what to say will be given to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say"
at that time
"right then" or "at that time"
Matthew 10:20
you ... your
These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.
the Spirit of your Father
If necessary, this can be translated as "the Spirit of God your heavenly Father" or a footnote can be added to make it clear that this refers to God the Holy Spirit and not to the spirit of an earthly father.
Father
This is an important title for God.
in you
"through you"
Matthew 10:21
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.
Brother will deliver up brother to death
"One brother will deliver up his brother to death" or "Brothers will deliver up their brothers to death." Jesus speaks of something that will happen many times.
deliver up brother to death
The abstract noun "death" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "hand brother over to authorties who will execute him"
a father his child
These words can be translated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "fathers will deliver up their children to death"
rise up against
"rebel against" or "turn against"
cause them to be put to death
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "have them put to death" or "have the authorities execute them"
Matthew 10:22
You will be hated by everyone
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone will hate you" or "All people will hate you"
You
This is plural and refers to the twelve disciples.
because of my name
Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you trust in me"
whoever endures
"whoever stays faithful"
to the end
It is not clear whether the "end" means when a person dies, when the persecution ends, or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.
that person will be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will deliver that person"
Matthew 10:23
in this city
Here "this" does not refer to a specific city. Alternate translation: "in one city"
flee to the next
"flee to the next city"
truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
before the Son of Man has
Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "before I, the Son of Man, have"
has come
"arrives"
Matthew 10:24
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.
A disciple is not greater than his teacher, nor a servant above his master
Jesus is using a proverb to teach his disciples a general truth. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should not expect people to treat them any better than the people treat Jesus.
A disciple is not greater than his teacher
"A disciple is always less important than his teacher" or "A teacher is always more important than his disciple"
nor a servant above his master
"and a servant is always less important than his master" or "and a master is always more important than his servant"
Matthew 10:25
It is enough for the disciple that he should be like his teacher

"The disciple should be satisfied to become like his teacher"
be like his teacher
If necessary, you can make explicit how the disciple becomes like the teacher. Alternate translation: "know as much as his teacher knows"
the servant like his master
If necessary, you can make explicit how the servant becomes like the master. Alternate translation: "the servant should be satisfied to become only as important as his master"
If they have called the master ... how much worse ... they call ... the members of his household
Again Jesus is emphasizing that since people have mistreated him, his disciples should expect people to treat them the same or worse.
how much worse will be the names they call the members of his household
"the names that they call the members of his household will certainly be much worse" or "they will certainly call the members of his household much worse names"
If they have called
"Since people have called"
the master of the house
Jesus is using this as a metaphor for himself.
Beelzebul
This name can either be 1) transcribed directly as "Beelzebul" or 2) translated with its original, intended meaning of "Satan."
his household
This is a metaphor for Jesus's disciples.
Matthew 10:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.
do not fear them
Here "them" refers to the people who mistreat followers of Jesus.
there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known
Both of these statements mean the same thing. Being concealed or hidden represents being kept secret, and being revealed represents being made known. Jesus is emphasizing that God will make all things known. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal the things that people hide"
Matthew 10:27
What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight, and what you hear softly in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops
Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should tell everyone what he tells the disciples in private. Alternate translation: "Tell people in the daylight what I tell you in the darkness, and proclaim upon the housetops what you hear softly in your ear"
What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight
Here "darkness" is a metonym for "night" which is a metonym for "private." Here "daylight" is a metonym for "public." Alternate translation: "What I tell you privately at night, say in public in the daylight"
what you hear softly in your ear
This is a way of referring to whispering. Alternate translation: "what I whisper to you"
proclaim upon the housetops
Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people far away could hear anyone speaking with a loud voice from one. Here "housetops" refers to any place where all people can hear. Alternate translation: "speak loudly in a public place for all to hear"
Matthew 10:28
General Information:
Here Jesus also begins to give reasons why his disciples should not be afraid of the persecution they might experience.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go to preach.
Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul
This is not distinguishing between people who cannot kill the soul and people who can kill the soul. No person can kill the soul. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of people. They can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul"
kill the body
This means to cause physical death. If these words are awkward, they can be translated as "kill you" or "kill other people."
body
the part of a person that can be touched, as opposed to the soul or spirit
kill the soul
This means to harm people after they have physically died.
soul
the part of a person that cannot be touched and that lives on after the physical body dies
fear him who is able
You can add "because" to clarify why people should fear God. Alternate translation: "fear God because he is able"
Matthew 10:29
Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?
Jesus states this proverb as a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "Think about the sparrows. They have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin."
sparrows
These are very small, seed-eating birds. Alternate translation: "small birds"
a small coin
This is often translated as the least valuable coin available in your country. It refers to a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a day's wage for a laborer. Alternate translation: "very little money"
not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge
This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "your Father knows when every one of them falls to the ground"
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 10:30

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even the hairs of your head are all numbered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows even how many hairs are on your head"
numbered
"counted"
Matthew 10:31
You are more valuable than many sparrows
"God values you more than many sparrows"
Matthew 10:32
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.
everyone who confesses me ... I will also confess before my Father
"whoever confesses me ... I will also confess before my Father" or "if anyone confesses me ... I will also confess him before my Father"
confesses me before men
"tells others that he is my disciple" or "acknowledges before other people that he is loyal to me"
I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven
You can make explicit the information that is understood. Alternate translation: "I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven that that person belongs to me"
my Father who is in heaven
"my heavenly Father"
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 10:33
he who denies me ... I will also deny before my Father
"whoever denies me ... I will also deny before my Father" or "if anyone denies me ... I will also deny him before my Father"
denies me before men
"denies to other people that he is loyal to me" or "refuses to acknowledge to others that he is my disciple"
I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven
You can make explicit the information that is understood. Alternate translation: "I will deny before my Father who is in heaven that this person belongs to me"
Matthew 10:34
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.
Do not think
"Do not suppose" or "You must not think"
upon the earth
This refers to the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: "to the people of the earth" or "to people"
a sword
This refers to division, fighting, and killing among people.
Matthew 10:35
to set ... against
"to cause ... to fight against"
a man against his father
"a son against his father"
Matthew 10:36
A man's enemies
"A person's enemies" or "A person's worst enemies"
those of his own household
"members of his own family"
Matthew 10:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.
He who loves ... is not worthy
Here "he" means any person in general. Alternate translation: "Those who love ... are not worthy" or "If you love ... you are not worthy"
loves
The word for "love" here refers to "brotherly love" or "love from a friend." Alternate translation: "cares for" or "is devoted to" or "is fond of"
worthy of me
"deserve to belong to me" or "worthy to be my disciple"
Matthew 10:38
pick up his cross and follow after me
"carry his cross and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "obey me even to the point of suffering and dying"
pick up
"take up" or "pick up and carry"
Matthew 10:39
He who finds his life will lose it. But he who loses ... will find it
Jesus uses a proverb to teach his disciples. This should be translated with as few words as possible. Alternate translation: "Those who find their lives will lose them. But those who lose their lives ... will find them" or "If you find your life you will lose it. But if you lose your life ... you will find it"
finds
This is a metaphor for "keeps" or "saves." Alternate translation: "tries to keep" or "tries to save"
will lose it
This does not mean the person will die. It is a metaphor that means the person will not experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will not have true life"
who loses his life
This does not mean to die. It is a metaphor that means a person considers obeying Jesus more important than his own life. Alternate translation: "who denies himself"
for my sake
"because he trusts me" or "on my account" or "because of me." This is the same idea as "for my sake" in Matthew 10:18.
will find it
This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will find true life"
Matthew 10:40
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.
He who welcomes
This means he receives someone as a guest.

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He who
The word "He" refers to anyone in general. Alternate translation: "Whoever" or "Anyone who" or "The one who"
you
This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles to whom Jesus is speaking.
He who welcomes you welcomes me
Jesus means that when someone welcomes you, it is like welcoming him. Alternate translation: "When someone welcomes you, it is like he is welcoming me" or "If someone welcomes you, it is as if he were welcoming me"
he who welcomes me also welcomes him who sent me
This means that when someone welcomes Jesus, it is like welcoming God. Alternate translation: "When someone welcomes me, it is like he is welcoming God the Father who sent me" or "If someone welcomes me, it is as if he were welcoming God the Father who sent me"
Matthew 10:41
in the name of a prophet
"because that prophet is a prophet" or "because he knows that that person is a prophet." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a prophet.
a prophet's reward
This refers to the reward that God gives the prophet, not to the reward that a prophet gives to another person.
in the name of a righteous man
"because that righteous man is a righteous man" or "because he knows that that person is righteous." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a righteous man.
a righteous man's reward
This refers to the reward God gives to a righteous person, not a reward that a righteous person gives to another person.
Matthew 10:42
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes instructing his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.
Whoever gives
"Anyone who gives"
one of these little ones
"one of these lowly ones" or "the least important of these." The phrase "one of these" here refers to one of Jesus's disciples.
in the name of a disciple
"because that disciple" or "because he knows that that person is a disciple." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a disciple.
truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
he will ... his reward
Here "he" and "his" refer to the one who is giving.
he will in no way lose
"God will not deny him." This has nothing to do with having a possession taken away. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly give him"

Chapter 11

Matthew 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 11:10.
Some scholars believe that Matthew 11:20 begins a new stage in the ministry of Christ because of Israel's rejection of him.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hidden revelation
After Matthew 11:20 Jesus begins to reveal information about himself and about the plans of God the Father, while hiding this information from those who reject him (Matthew 11:25).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of heaven is near"
No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when John spoke these words. English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

Matthew 11:1 Notes

Matthew 11:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of how Jesus responded to disciples of John the Baptist.
It came about that when
This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "Then when" or "After"
had finished instructing
"had finished teaching" or "had finished commanding."
his twelve disciples
This refers to the twelve chosen apostles of Jesus.
in their cities

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Here "their" refers to all the Jews in general.
Matthew 11:2
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
when John heard in the prison about
This is the first mention of John being in prison. Some languages may need to state that he had been put in prison or that he was in prison. Alternate translation: "Now John had been put in prison. When he heard about" or "When John, who was in prison, heard about"
he sent a message by his disciples
John the Baptist sent his own disciples with a message to Jesus.
Matthew 11:3
said to him
The pronoun "him" refers to Jesus.
Are you the one who is coming
"Are you the one whom we are expecting to come." This is another way to refer to the Messiah or Christ.
should we look for another
"should we be expecting someone else." The pronoun "we" refers to all Jews, not only John's disciples.
Matthew 11:4
report to John
"tell John"
Matthew 11:5
lepers are being cleansed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am healing lepers"
the dead are being raised back to life
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people who have died are being caused to live again" or "I am causing those who have died to become alive again" and
the gospel is being preached to the poor
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am preaching good news to the poor"
the poor
This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "poor people"
Matthew 11:6
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 11:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.
What did you go out in the desert to see—a reed ... wind?
Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: "Surely you did not go out to the desert to see a reed ... wind!"
a reed being shaken by the wind
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus mean the literal plants by the Jordan River or 2) Jesus is using a metaphor to mean a kind of person. Alternate translation: "a man who easily changes his mind and is like a reed blowing back and forth in the wind"
being shaken by the wind
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "swaying in the wind" or "blowing in the wind"
Matthew 11:8
But what did you go out to see—a man ... clothing?
Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: "And surely you did not go out to the desert to see a man ... clothing!"
dressed in soft clothing
"wearing expensive clothing." Rich people wore this kind of clothing.
Really
This word adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: "Indeed"
kings' houses
"kings' palaces"
Matthew 11:9
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.
But what did you go out to see—a prophet?
Jesus uses a question to make the people think about what kind of man John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: "But surely you went out to the desert to see a prophet!"
Yes, I say to you,
"I say to you yes,"
much more than a prophet
This can be translated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "the person you saw was much more than a prophet"
much more than
much more important than
Matthew 11:10
General Information:
Here, Jesus quotes the prophet Malachi to show that the life and ministry of John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy.
This is he of whom it was written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what the prophet Malachi wrote long ago about John the Baptist"
I am sending my messenger
The pronouns "I" and "my" refer to God. Malachi is quoting what God said.
before your face
Here "your" is singular, because God was speaking to the Messiah in the quotation. Also, "face" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "in front of you" or "to go ahead of you"
prepare your way before you
This is a metaphor that means the messenger will prepare the people to receive the Messiah's message.
Matthew 11:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
among those born of women, there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist
The word "arisen" is a metaphor for being active, referring

here to John's activity as a prophet. Alternate translation: "no one born of women has been a greater prophet than John the Baptist"

among those born of women

Even though Adam and Eve were not born of a woman, this is a way of referring to all humans. Alternate translation: "out of all people who have ever lived"

the least important person in the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, try to keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important person under the rule of our God in heaven"

is greater than he is

"is more important than John is"

Matthew 11:12

From the days of John the Baptist

"From the time John began preaching his message." The word "days" probably refers here to a period of months or even years.

the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force

There are various possible interpretations of this verse. The UDB assumes that it means that some people want to use God's kingdom for their own selfish purposes and that they are willing to use force against other people to accomplish this. Other versions assume a positive interpretation, that the call to enter the kingdom of God has become so urgent that people must act in an extreme manner in order to answer that call and to resist the temptation to sin further. A third interpretation is that violent people are harming God's people and trying to stop God from ruling.

Matthew 11:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

all the prophets and the law have been prophesying until John

Here "prophets and the law" refer to the things that the prophets and Moses wrote in scripture. Alternate translation: "these are the things that the prophets and Moses have prophesied through the scriptures until the time of John the Baptist"

Matthew 11:14

if you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the crowd.

he is Elijah who was to come

The word "he" refers to John the Baptist. This does not mean John the Baptist is literally Elijah. Jesus means John the Baptist fulfills the prophecy about "Elijah, who is to come" or the next Elijah. Alternate translation: "when the prophet Malachi said that Elijah would return, he was speaking about John the Baptist"

Matthew 11:15

He who has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"

He who has ... let him hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "You who have ... listen"

Matthew 11:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

To what should I compare this generation?

Jesus uses a question to introduce a comparison between the people of that day and what children might say in the marketplace. Alternate translation: "This is what this generation is like"

this generation

"the people living now" or "these people" or "you people of this generation"

marketplaces

large, open-air areas where people buy and sell items

Matthew 11:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues the parable that begins with the words "It is like" in verse 16.

saying ... and you did not weep

Jesus uses a parable to describe the people who were alive at that time. He compares them to a group of children who are trying to get the other children to play with them. However, no matter what they do, the other children will not join them. Jesus means that it does not matter if God sends someone like John the Baptist, who lives in the desert and fasts, or someone like Jesus, who celebrates with sinners and does not fast. The people, most specifically the Pharisees and religious leaders, still remain stubborn and refuse to accept God's truth.

We played a flute for you

"We" refers to the children sitting in the marketplace. Here "you" is plural and refers to the other group of children.

and you did not dance

"but you did not dance to the happy music"

We mourned

This means they sang sad songs like women did at funerals.

and you did not weep

"but you did not cry with us"

Matthew 11:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes talking to the crowds about John the Baptist.

not eating bread or drinking wine

Here "bread" refers to food. It does not mean that John never ate food. It means he fasted often, and when he ate, he did not eat good, expensive food. Alternate translation: "frequently fasting and not drinking alcohol" or "not eating fancy food and not drinking wine"

they say, 'He has a demon.'

This can be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "they say that he has a demon." or "they accuse him of having a demon."

they say

All occurrences of "they" refer to the people of that generation, and most specifically to the Pharisees and

religious leaders.

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"

came eating and drinking

This is the opposite of John's behavior. This means more than just consuming the normal amount of food and drink. It means Jesus celebrated and enjoyed good food and drink like other people did.

they say, 'Look, he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners!'

This can be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "they say that he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners." or "they accuse him of eating and drinking too much and of being ... sinners." If you translated "The Son of Man" as "I, the Son of man," you can state this as an indirect statement and use the first person. Alternate translation: "they say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners."

he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard

"he is a greedy eater and a drunk" or "he continually eats too much food and drinks too much alcohol"

But wisdom is justified by her deeds

This is a proverb that Jesus applies to this situation, because the people who rejected both him and John were not being wise. Jesus and John the Baptist are the wise ones, and the results of their deeds prove it.

wisdom is justified by her deeds

Here "wisdom" is described as a woman who is proven to be right by what she does. Jesus means that the results of a wise person's actions prove that he is truly wise. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the results of a wise person's deeds prove that he is wise"

Matthew 11:20

General Information:

Jesus begins to denounce the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

denounce the cities

Here "the cities" refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "rebuked the people of the cities" or "accuse the people of the cities of doing wrong"

cities

"towns"

in which most of his miracles were done

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "in which he did most of his miracles"

miracles

"mighty works" or "works of power"

Matthew 11:21

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!

Jesus speaks as if the people of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida were there listening to him, but they were not.

Woe to you

"How terrible it will be for you." Here "you" is singular and refers to the city. If it is more natural to refer to the people instead of a city, you could translate with a plural "you."

Chorazin ... Bethsaida ... Tyre ... Sidon

The names of these cities are used as metonyms for the people living in these cities.

If the miracles ... in sackcloth and ashes

Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not.

If the miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you

This can be translated with active forms. Alternate translation: "If I had done the miracles among the people of Tyre and Sidon that I have done among you"

which were done in you

Here the "you" is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual "you" to refer to the two cities, or a plural "you" to refer to the people of the cities.

they would have repented long ago

The pronoun "they" refers to the people of Tyre and Sidon.

would have repented

"would have shown they were sorry for their sins"

Matthew 11:22

it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you

Here "Tyre and Sidon" refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "God will show more mercy to the people of Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than to you" or "God will punish you more severely at the day of judgment than the people of Tyre and Sidon"

than for you

Here the "you" is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual "you" to refer to the two cities, or a plural "you" to refer to the people of the cities. The implied information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles"

Matthew 11:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

You, Capernaum

Jesus now speaks to the people in the city of Capernaum as if they were listening to him, but they were not. The pronoun "you" is singular and refers to Capernaum throughout these two verses.

You

All occurrences of "you" are singular. If it is more natural to refer to the people of the city, you could translate with a plural "you."

Capernaum ... Sodom

The names of these cities refer to the people living in Capernaum and in Sodom.

do you think you will be exalted to heaven?

"do you think you will be raised up to heaven?" Jesus uses a rhetorical question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride. It can be stated in active form: Alternate translation: "you cannot raise yourself up to heaven!" or "the praise of other people will not raise you up to heaven!" or "God will not bring you up to heaven like you think he will!"

you will be brought down to Hades

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

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"God will send you down to Hades"

For if in Sodom ... it would still have remained until today

Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not.

if in Sodom there had been done the miracles that were done in you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if I had done the miracles among the people of Sodom that I have done among you"

miracles

"mighty works" or "works of power"

it would still have remained

The pronoun "it" refers to the city of Sodom.

Matthew 11:24

I say to you

This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

it will be easier for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you

Here "land of Sodom" refer to the people who lived there. Alternate translation: "God will show more mercy to the people of Sodom in the day of judgment than to you" or "God will punish you more severely in the day of judgment than the people of Sodom"

than for you

The implicit information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles"

Matthew 11:25

General Information:

Here, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father while still in the presence of the crowd.

Father

This is an important title for God.

Lord of heaven and earth

"Lord who rules over heaven and earth." The phrase "heaven and earth" is a merism that refers to all people and things in the universe. Alternate translation: "Lord who rules over the whole universe"

you concealed these things ... and revealed them

It is not clear what is meant by "these things." If your language needs to specify what is meant, an alternative translation might be best. Alternate translation: "you concealed these truths ... and revealed them"

you concealed these things from

"you hid these things from" or "you have not made these things known to." This verb is the opposite of "revealed."

from the wise and understanding

These nominal adjectives can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "from people who are wise and understanding"

the wise and understanding

Jesus is using irony. He does not think these people are really wise. Alternate translation: "people who think they are wise and understanding"

revealed them

"made them known." The pronoun "them" refers to "these things" earlier in this verse.

to little children

Jesus compares ignorant people to little children. Jesus is emphasizing that many of those who believe him either are not well educated or do not think of themselves as wise.

Matthew 11:26

General Information:

Here, Jesus continues praying to his heavenly Father while still in the presence of the crowd.

for this was pleasing in your sight

The phrase "in your sight" is a metonym that stands for how a person considers something. Alternate translation: "for you considered it good to do this"

Matthew 11:27

General Information:

Here, Jesus begins to address the people again.

All things have been entrusted to me from my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has entrusted all things to me" or "My Father has given everything over to me"

All things

Possible meanings are 1) God the Father has revealed everything about himself and his kingdom to Jesus or 2) God has given all authority to Jesus.

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

no one knows the Son except the Father

This double negative emphasizes that the Father is the only one who knows the Son. Alternate translation: "the only one who knows the Son is the Father"

no one knows

The word "knows" here means more than just being acquainted with someone. It means knowing someone intimately because of having a special relationship with him.

the Son

Jesus was referring to himself in the third person.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

no one knows the Father except the Son

"only the Son knows the Father"

Matthew 11:28

all you

All occurrences of "you" are plural.

who labor and are heavy burdened

Jesus speaks of people being discouraged in their attempts to obey all the laws as if those laws were heavy burdens and the people were laboring to carry them. Alternate translation: "who are discouraged from trying so hard" or "Who are discouraged from trying so hard to obey the laws perfectly"

I will give you rest

"I will allow you to rest from your labor and burden"

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke on you

Jesus continues the metaphor. Jesus is inviting the people to become his disciples and follow him.

I am meek and lowly in heart

Here "meek" and "lowly in heart" mean basically the same thing. Jesus combines them to emphasize that he will be much kinder than the religious leaders. Alternate translation: "I am gentle and humble" or "I am very gentle"

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lowly in heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "lowly in heart" is an idiom that means "humble." Alternate translation: "humble"
you will find rest for your souls
Here "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "you will find rest for yourselves" or "you will be able to rest"
Matthew 11:30
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light
Both of these phrases mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that it is easier to obey him than it is the Jewish law. Alternate translation: "For what I place on you, you will be able to carry because it is light"
my burden is light
The word "light" here is the opposite of heavy, not the opposite of dark.

Chapter 12

Matthew 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:18-21, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Sabbath
This chapter has much to say about how God's people are to obey the Sabbath. Jesus said that the rules that the Pharisees made up did not help people obey the Sabbath the way God wanted them to. (See: sabbath)
"Blasphemy against the Spirit"
No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)

Links:

Matthew 12:1 Notes

Matthew 12:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus's ministry. Here, the Pharisees criticize his disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath.
At that time
This marks a new part of the story. Alternate translation: "A little later"
grainfields
This is a place to plant grain. If wheat is unknown and "grain" is too general, then you can use "fields of the plant they made bread from."
pluck heads of grain and eat them
Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.
to pluck heads of grain and eat them
"to pick some of the wheat and eat it" or "to pick some of the grain and eat it"
heads of grain
The heads of grain are the topmost part of the wheat plant. It holds the mature grain or seeds of the plant.
Matthew 12:2
do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath
Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.
the Pharisees
This does not mean all of the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "some Pharisees"
See, your disciples
"Look, your disciples." The Pharisees use this word to draw attention to what the disciples are doing.
Matthew 12:3
Connecting Statement:
Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.
to them
"to the Pharisees"
Have you never read ... with him?
Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of the scriptures they have read. Alternate translation: "I know you have read about ... with him"
when he was hungry, and the men who were with him
The phrase "were hungry" is understood from the phrase "was hungry." Alternate translation: "when he was hungry and the men who were with him were hungry" or "when he and those with him were hungry"
Matthew 12:4
the house of God
During the time of David there was no temple yet. Alternate translation: "the tabernacle" or "the place for worshiping God"
bread of the presence
This is sacred bread that priests placed before God in the tabernacle. Alternate translation: "bread that the priest placed before God" or "sacred bread"

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those who were with him
"the men who were with David"
but lawful only for the priests
"but, according to the law, only the priests could eat it"
Matthew 12:5
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.
Have you not read in the law that ... but are guiltless?
Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of what they have read in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "Surely you have read in the law of Moses that ... but are guiltless." or "You should know that the law teaches that ... but are guiltless."
profane the Sabbath
"do on the Sabbath what the law forbids them to do on that day"
are guiltless
"God will not punish them" or "God does not consider them guilty"
Matthew 12:6
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
one greater than the temple
"someone who is more important than the temple." Jesus was referring to himself as the one greater.
Matthew 12:7
General Information:
Here Jesus quotes the prophet Hosea to rebuke the Pharisees.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.
If you had known what this meant, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless
Here Jesus quotes scripture. Alternate translation: "The prophet Hosea wrote this long ago: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' If you had understood what this meant, you would not have condemned the guiltless"
I desire mercy and not sacrifice
In the law of Moses, God did command the Israelites to offer sacrifices. This means God considers mercy more important than the sacrifices.
I desire
The pronoun "I" refers to God.
the guiltless
This can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are not guilty"
Matthew 12:8
the Son of Man is
Jesus was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am"
is Lord of the Sabbath
"rules over the Sabbath" or "makes the laws about what people can do on the Sabbath"
Matthew 12:9
General Information:
Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees criticize Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath.
Then Jesus left from there
"Jesus left the grainfields" or "Then Jesus left"
their synagogue
Possible meanings are 1) the word "their" refers to the Jews of that town. Alternate translation: "the synogogue" or 2) the word "their" refers to the Pharisees that Jesus had just spoken to, and this was the synagogue that they and other Jews in that town attended. The word "their" does not mean that the Pharisees owned the synagogue. Alternate translation: "the synagogue that they attended"
Matthew 12:10
Behold
The word "Behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
a man who had a withered hand
"a man who had a paralyzed hand" or "a man with a crippled hand"
The Pharisees asked Jesus, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"
so that they might accuse him of sinning.
"The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of sinning, so they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'"
Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath
"According to the law of Moses, may a person heal another person on the Sabbath"
so that they might accuse him of sinning
They did not just want to accuse Jesus in front of the people. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give an answer that contradicted the law of Moses so they could take him before a judge and legally charge him with breaking the law.
Matthew 12:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.
What man would there be among you, who, if he had just one sheep ... would not take hold of it and raise it out?
Jesus uses a question to respond to the Pharisees. He is challenging them to think about what kind of work they do on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "Every one of you, if you only had one sheep ... would grab the sheep and raise it out."
raise
lift
Matthew 12:12
How much more valuable, then, is a man than a sheep!
The phrase "how much more" adds emphasis to the statement. Alternate translation: "Obviously, a man is much more valuable than a sheep!" or "Just think about how much more important a man is than a sheep"
it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath
"those who do good on the Sabbath are obeying the law"
Matthew 12:13
Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."
This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus commanded the man to stretch out his hand."
to the man
"to the man with the paralyzed hand" or "to the man with the crippled hand"
Stretch out your hand
"Hold out your hand" or "Extend your hand"

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He stretched
"The man stretched"
it was restored to health
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it was healthy again" or "it became well again"
Matthew 12:14
plotted against him
"planned to harm Jesus"
were seeking how they might destroy him
"were discussing how they might kill Jesus"
Matthew 12:15
General Information:
This account explains how the actions of Jesus fulfilled one of the prophecies of Isaiah.
Jesus, knowing this, withdrew
"Jesus was aware of what the Pharisees were planning, so he withdrew"
withdrew from
"departed from" or "left"
Matthew 12:16
not to make him known to others
"not to tell anyone else about him"
Matthew 12:17
that it might be fulfilled, what
The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" can be translated as the beginning of a new sentence. If so, the previous verse should end with a period. Alternate translation: "This was to fulfill what"
what had been said through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God had said long ago through the prophet Isaiah:"
Matthew 12:18
Connecting Statement:
Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry fulfilled scripture.
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
my ... I
All occurrences of these words refer to God. Isaiah is quoting what God said to him.
my beloved one, in whom my soul is well pleased
"he is my beloved one, and I am very pleased with him"
in whom my soul is well pleased
Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "with whom I am very pleased"
he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles
The means that God's servant will tell the Gentiles that there will be justice. It can be stated clearly that God is the one who will bring about justice, and the abstract noun "justice" can be expressed as "what is right." Alternate translation: "he will announce to the nations that God will do for them what is right"
Matthew 12:19
Connecting Statement:
Matthew continues to quote the prophet Isaiah.
neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets
Here people not hearing his voice represents him not speaking loudly. And, "in the street" is an idiom that means "publicly." Alternate translation: "he will not he shout in the cities and towns"
He ... his
All occurrences of these words refer to God's chosen servant.
Matthew 12:20
He
All occurrences of "he" refer to God's chosen servant.
He will not break any bruised reed; he will not quench any smoking flax
Both of these statements mean the same thing. They are metaphors emphasizing that God's servant will be gentle and kind. Both "bruised reed" and "smoking flax" represent weak and hurting people. If the metaphor is confusing, you could translate the literal meaning. Alternate translation: "He will be kind to weak people, and he will be gentle to those who are hurting"
bruised reed
"damaged plant"
he will not quench any smoking flax
"he will not put out any smoking flax" or "he will not stop any smoking flax from burning"
smoking flax
This refers to a lamp wick after the flame has gone out and when it is only smoking.
flax, until
This can be translated with a new sentence: "flax. This is what he will do until"
he leads justice to victory
Leading someone to victory represents causing him to be victorious. Causing justice to be victorious represents making things right that had been wrong. Alternate translation: "he makes everything right"
Matthew 12:21
in his name the Gentiles will have hope
The Gentiles will trust him to fulfill his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait" or "confidently expect." Alternate translation: "the Gentiles will trust in his name" or "the Gentiles will confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises"
in his name
The word "his" refers to God's servant who was spoken of in [Matthew 12:18]
Matthew 12:22
General Information:
Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees accuse Jesus of healing a man by the power of Satan.
Then someone blind and mute, possessed by a demon, was brought to Jesus
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone brought to Jesus a man who was blind and mute because a demon was controlling him"
someone blind and mute
"someone who could not see and could not talk"
Matthew 12:23
All the crowds were amazed
"All the people who had seen Jesus heal the man were greatly surprised"

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the Son of David
This is a title for the Christ or Messiah.
Son of
Here this means "descendant of."
Matthew 12:24
this miracle
This refers to the miracle of the healing of a blind, deaf, and demon-possessed man.
This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul ... demons
This double negative emphasizes that they think that the power of Beelzebul is the only thing that makes it possible for Jesus casts out demons. Alternate translation: "This man is only able to cast out demons because he is a servant of Beelzebul"
This man
The Pharisees avoid calling Jesus by name to show they reject him.
the prince of the demons
"the chief of the demons"
Matthew 12:25
General Information:
Here Jesus begins to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.
Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand
Jesus uses a proverb to respond to the Pharisees. Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that it would not make sense for Beelzebul to use his power to fight other demons.
Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate
Here "kingdom" refers to those who live in the kingdom. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "A kingdom will not last when its people fight among themselves"
every city or house divided against itself will not stand
Here "city" refers to the people who live there, and "house" refers to a family. Being "divided against itself" represents its people fighting each other. Alternate translation: "it ruins a city or a family when the people fight each other"
Matthew 12:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.
If Satan drives out Satan
The second use of Satan refers to the demons that serve Satan. Alternate translation: "If Satan works against his own demons"
How then will his kingdom stand?
Jesus uses this question to show the Pharisees that what they were saying was illogical. Alternate translation: "His kingdom would not be able to stand!" or "His kingdom would not last!"
Matthew 12:27
Beelzebul
This name refers to the same person as "Satan" (verse 26).
by whom do your sons drive them out?
Jesus uses another question to challenge the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "then you must say your followers also drive out demons by the power of Beelzebul. But you know this is not true."
your sons
Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. The phrase "your sons" refers to their followers. This was a common way of referring to those who follow teachers or leaders. Alternate translation: "your followers"
For this reason they will be your judges
"Because your followers cast out demons by the power of God, they prove that you are wrong about me."
Matthew 12:28
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.
But if I
Here "if" does not mean Jesus is questioning how he drives out demons. Here Jesus uses the word to introduce a true statement. Alternate translation: "But because I"
then the kingdom of God has come upon you
"then the kingdom of God has arrived among you." Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "this means God is establishing his rule among you"
come upon you
Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.
Matthew 12:29
How can anyone enter the house ... belongings from his house
Jesus uses a parable to continue his response to the Pharisees. Jesus means he can drive out demons because he is more powerful than Satan.
How can anyone enter ... without tying up the strong man first?
Jesus uses a question to teach the Pharisees and the crowd. Alternate translation: "No one can enter ... without tying up the strong man first." or "If a person wants to enter ... he must first tie up the strong man."
without tying up the strong man first
"without taking control of the strong man first"
Then he will steal
"The he can steal" or "Then he will be able to steal"
Matthew 12:30
who is not with me
"who does not support me" or "who does not work with me"
is against me
"opposes me" or "works against me"
the one who does not gather with me scatters
Jesus is using a metaphor that refers to a person either gathering the flock of sheep to a shepherd or making them scatter away from the shepherd. Jesus means that a person is either helping to make people become disciples of Jesus or he is making people reject Jesus.
Matthew 12:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
say to you
Here "you" is plural. Jesus is speaking directly to the Pharisees, but he is also teaching the crowd.
every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will forgive every sin that people commit and every evil thing they say" or "God will forgive every person who sins or says evil things"

blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not forgive the person who speaks evil things about the Holy Spirit"

Matthew 12:32

Whoever speaks any word against the Son of Man

Here "word" refers to what someone says. Alternate translation: "If a person says anything bad about the Son of Man"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

that will be forgiven him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive a person for that"

that will not be forgiven him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not forgive that person"

neither in this world, nor in that which is to come

Here "this world" and "that which is to come" refer to the present life and the next life. Alternate translation: "in this life or in the next life" or "now or ever"

Matthew 12:33

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

Make a tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad

Possible meanings are 1) "If you make a tree good, its fruit will be good, and if you make the tree bad, its fruit will be bad" or 2) "If a tree is good, it will have good fruit, and if a tree is bad, it will have bad fruit." This was a proverb. People were to apply its truth to how they can know whether a person is good or bad.

good ... bad

"healthy ... diseased"

a tree is recognized by its fruit

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people recognize a tree by its fruit" or "people know whether a tree is good or bad by looking at its fruit"

Matthew 12:34

You offspring of vipers

Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of." Vipers are poisonous snakes that are dangerous and represent evil. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 3:7]

You ... you

These are plural and refer to the Pharisees.

how can you say good things?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "you cannot say good things." or "you can only say evil things."

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Here "heart" is a metonym for the thoughts in a person's mind. Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that represents a person as a whole. Alternate translation: "what a person says with his mouth reveals what is in his mind"

Matthew 12:35

The good man from the good treasure of his heart produces what is good, and the evil man from the evil treasure of his heart produces what is evil

Jesus speaks about the "heart" as if it were a container that a person fills with good or evil things. This is a metaphor that means what a person says reveals what the person is truly like. If you want to keep this imagery, see the UDB. You can also translate the literal meaning. Alternate translation: "A man who is truly good will speak good things, and the man who is truly evil will speak evil things"

Matthew 12:36

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

people will give an account for

"God will ask people about" or "people will have to explain to God"

every idle word they will have said

Here "word" refers to something that someone says. This refers to statements that do no good. This is a metonym for statements made by people who are lazy or otherwise not doing anything good. Alternate translation: "every idle thing they will said"

idle

empty, useless, careless

Matthew 12:37

you will be justified ... you will be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will justify you ... God will condemn you"

Matthew 12:38

Connecting Statement:

The dialogue in these verses happens immediately after Jesus responded to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed a man by the power of Satan.

we wish

"we want"

to see a sign from you

You can make explicit why they want to see a sign. Alternate translation: "to see a sign from you that proves what you say is true"

Matthew 12:39

General Information:

Here Jesus begins to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign ... given to it

Jesus is speaking to the Jews of his generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation who demands signs from me ... given to you"

adulterous generation

Here "adulterous" is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. Alternate translation: "unfaithful generation" or "godless generation"

no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah

This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"

no sign will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not give it a sign"
the sign of Jonah
"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for Jonah"
Matthew 12:40
three days and three nights
This means complete 24-hour periods. Alternate translation: "three complete days"
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself.
in the heart of the earth
This means inside a physical grave.
Matthew 12:41
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.
The men of Nineveh
"The citizens of Nineveh"
at the judgment
"on judgment day" or "when God judges people"
this generation of people
This refers to the Jews living during the time Jesus was preaching.
and will condemn it
Possible meanings are 1) "condemn" here represents accusing. Alternate translation: "and will accuse this generation of people" or 2) God will condemn this generation of people because they did not repent as the people of Nineveh had. Alternate translation: "and God will condemn this generation"
and see
"and look." This emphasizes what Jesus says next.
someone greater
"someone more important"
someone
Jesus is speaking about himself.
than Jonah is here
You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "than Jonah is here, yet you still have not repented, which is why God will condemn you"
Matthew 12:42
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.
Queen of the South
This refers to the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was a land south of Israel.
will rise up at the judgment
"will stand up at the judgment"
at the judgment
"on judgment day" or "when God judges people." See how you translated this in Matthew 12:41.
this generation
This refers to the Jews living during the time Jesus was preaching.
and condemn them
See how you translated a similar statement in [Matthew 12:41]
She came from the ends of the earth
Here "ends of the earth" is an idiom that means "far away."
Alternate translation: "She came from very far away"
She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon
This statement explains why the Queen of the South will condemn the people of Jesus's generation. Alternate translation: "For she came"
and see
"and look." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
someone greater
"someone more important"
someone
Jesus is speaking about himself.
than Solomon is here
You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "than Solomon is here, yet you do not listen. That is why God will condemn you"
Matthew 12:43
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees. He begins to tell a parable.
waterless places
"dry places" or "places where no people live"
does not find it
Here "it" refers to rest.
Matthew 12:44
Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'
This can be translated as a statement rather than a quotation. Alternate translation: "So, the unclean spirit decides to return to the house from which it came."
to my house from which I came
This is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living. Alternate translation: "to the place I left"
it finds the house empty
Again, "house" is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living. Here, "empty" suggests that no one is living in the house. There is no other spirit living in the person.
it had been swept clean and put in order.
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had swept the house clean and has put everything in the house where it belongs"
Matthew 12:45
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes the parable that he began with the words "When an unclean spirit" in verse 43.
It will be just like that with this evil generation
This means that if the people of Jesus's generation do not believe him and become his disciples, they will be in a worse situation than they were before he came.
Matthew 12:46
General Information:
The arrival of Jesus's mother and brothers becomes an opportunity for him to describe his spiritual family.
behold
The word "behold" alerts us to a new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
his mother
This is Mary, Jesus's human mother.
his brothers
These are probably other children born to Mary, but it is is

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possible that the word "brothers" here refers to Jesus's cousins.

seeking to speak

"wanting to speak"

Matthew 12:47

Someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you."

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Someone told Jesus that his mother and brothers were outside and wanted to speak to him."

Matthew 12:48

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 12:1, where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus's ministry.

who told him

The details of the message the person told Jesus are understood and not repeated here. Alternate translation: "who told him that his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him"

Who is my mother and who are my brothers?

Jesus uses these questions to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers"

Matthew 12:49

See

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

here are my mother and my brothers

This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.

Matthew 12:50

whoever does

"anyone who does"

Father

This is an important title for God.

that person is my brother, and sister, and mother

This is a metaphor meaning that those who obey God belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.

Chapter 13

Matthew 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:14-15, which is from the Old Testament.

This chapter begins a new section. It contains some of Jesus's parables about the kingdom of heaven.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven (Matthew 13:11).

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Matthew wrote that Jesus "sat beside the sea"

Metaphor

Speakers often use words for things that can be touched to speak of things that cannot be touched. Jesus spoke of a bird eating a seed to describe how Satan kept people from understanding Jesus's message (Matthew 13:19).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, "they were scorched"

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth (Matthew 13:11-13).

Links:

Matthew 13:1 Notes

Matthew 13:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Jesus begins to teach the crowds, using parables, about the kingdom of heaven.

On that day

These events happened on the same day as those in the previous chapter.

out of the house

It is not mentioned at whose house Jesus was staying.

sat beside the sea

It is implied that he sat down to teach the people.

Matthew 13:2

so he got into a boat

It is implied that Jesus got into a boat because it would make it easier to teach the people.

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a boat
This was probably an open, wooden fishing boat with a sail.
Matthew 13:3
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.
Jesus said many things to them in parables
"Jesus told them many things in parables"
to them
"to the people in the crowd"
Behold
"Look" or "Listen." This word calls attention to what is to be said next. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
a farmer went out to sow seed
"a farmer went out to scatter seeds in a field"
Matthew 13:4
As he sowed
"As the farmer scattered the seed"
beside the road
This refers to a "path" next to the field. The ground there would have been hard from people walking on it.
devoured them
"ate all the seeds"
Matthew 13:5
rocky ground
This is ground full of rocks with just a thin layer of soil on top of the rocks.
Immediately they sprang up
"The seeds quickly sprouted and grew"
Matthew 13:6
they were scorched
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sun scorched the plants, and they became too hot"
they withered away
"the plants became dry and died"
Matthew 13:7
fell among the thorn plants
"fell where plants with thorns grew"
choked them
"choked the new sprouts." Use your word for the way weeds prevent other plants from growing well.
Matthew 13:8
produced a crop
"grew more seeds" or "gave fruit"
some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty
The words "seeds," "produced," and "crop" are understood from the previous phrase. These can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "some seeds produced one hundred times as much crop, some seeds produced sixty times as much crop, and some seeds produced thirty times as much crop"
one hundred ... sixty ... thirty
"100 ... 60 ... 30"
Matthew 13:9
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.
He who has ears, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]
He who ... let him
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]
Matthew 13:10
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 13:11
General Information:
Jesus explains to his disciples why he teaches with parables.
You have been given the privilege of understanding mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given
This can be translated with the active form and with implied information expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "God has given you the privilege of understanding mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but God has not given it to these people" or "God has made you able to understand mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but he has not enabled these people to understand"
You have been given the privilege
The word "You" is plural here and refers to the disciples.
mysteries of the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" occurs only in the book of Matthew. If possible, try to keep it in your translation. Alternate translation: "the secrets about our God in heaven and his rule"
Matthew 13:12
has will be given more
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "has understanding, God will give him more understanding"
whoever does not have
"whoever does not have understanding" or "whoever does not receive what I teach"
even what he has will be taken away from him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take away even what he has"
Matthew 13:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to explain to his disciples why he teaches in parables.
to them ... they
All occurrences of "them" and "they" refer to the people in the crowd.
Though they are seeing, they do not see; and though they are hearing, they do not hear, or understand.
Jesus uses this parallelism to tell and emphasize to the disciples that the crowd refuses to understand God's truth.
Though they are seeing
These words could refer to 1) them seeing what Jesus does. Alternate translation: "Though they see what I do" or 2) their ability to see with their eyes. Alternate translation:

"Though they are able to see"

they do not see

Here "see" represents understanding. Alternate translation: "they do not understand"

though they are hearing

These words could refer to 1) them hearing what Jesus teaches. Alternate translation: "Though they hear what I say" or 2) their ability to hear with their ears. Alternate translation: "Though they are able to hear"

they do not hear

Here "hear" represents listening well. Alternate translation: "they do not listen well" or "they do not pay attention"

Matthew 13:14

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that the people's failure to understand Jesus's teaching is a fulfillment of prophecy.

To them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, that which says

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They are fulfilling what God said long ago through the prophet Isaiah"

Listening, you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know

This begins a quote from the prophet Isaiah about the unbelieving people of Isaiah's day. Jesus uses this quote to describe the very crowd that was listening to him. These statements are again parallel and emphasize that the people refused to understand God's truth.

Listening, you will hear, but you will never understand

"You will hear things, but you will not understand them." You can make explicit what the people will hear. Alternate translation: "You will hear what God says through the prophets, but you will not understand its true meaning"

seeing, you will see, but you will never know

You can make explicit what the people will see. Alternate translation: "you will see what God does through the prophets, but you will not understand it"

Matthew 13:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes quoting the prophet Isaiah.

For the heart of this people ... I would heal them

God describes the people of Israel as if they had physical diseases that cause them to be unable to learn, to see, and to hear. God wants them to come to him so he will heal them. This is all a metaphor describing the people's spiritual condition. It means the people are stubborn and refuse to receive and understand God's truth. If they would, then they would repent and God would forgive them and welcome them back as his people. If the meaning is clear, keep the metaphor in your translation.

the heart of this people has become dull

Here "heart" refers to the mind. Alternate translation: "these people's minds are slow to learn" or "these people can no longer learn"

with their ears they hardly hear

They are not physically deaf. Here "hardly hear" means they refuse to listen and learn God's truth. Alternate translation: "they refuse to use their ears to listen"

they have shut their eyes

This means they refuse to understand, not that they have literally closed their eyes. Alternate translation: "they refuse to use their eyes to see"

understand with their heart

The word "heart" here is a metonym for people's innermost being. You may need to use the word in your language for the source of people's thinking and feelings. Alternate translation: "understand with their minds"

turn again

"turn back to me" or "repent"

I would heal them

"have me heal them." This means God would heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins and receiving them again as his people. Alternate translation: "have me receive them again"

Matthew 13:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples why he teaches with parables.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that they have pleased God because they have believed what Jesus has said and done.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see

Here "eyes" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "You are blessed because your eyes are able to see"

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are plural and refer to the disciples.

your ears, for they hear

Here "ears" refer to the whole person. You can also make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "blessed are your ears, for they hear" "you are blessed because your ears are able to hear"

Matthew 13:17

Truly I say to you

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

you

All occurrences of this word are plural and refer to the disciples.

the things that you see

You can make explicit what they have seen. Alternate translation: "the things you have seen me do"

the things that you hear

You can make explicit what they have heard. Alternate translation: "the things you have heard me say"

Matthew 13:18

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds, which he began in Matthew 13:3.

Matthew 13:19

the word of the kingdom

"the message about God's rule as king"

the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart

Jesus speaks of Satan causing the person to forget what he has heard as if Satan were a bird snatching the seed from

the ground. Alternate translation: "The evil one causes him to forget the message that he has heard just as a bird snatches away seed from the ground"

the evil one

This refers to Satan.

snatches away

Try to use a word that means to grab something away from someone who is the rightful owner.

what has been sown in his heart

This can be translated in active form: Alternate translation: "the message that God sowed in his heart" or "the message that he heard"

in his heart

Here "heart" refers to the mind of the hearer.

This is the seed that was sown beside the road

"This is the meaning of the seed that was sown beside the road" or "The road where seed was sown represents this person"

beside the road

See how you translated this in Matthew 13:4.

Matthew 13:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

What was sown on rocky ground

The phrase "what was sown" refers to seed that fell. Alternate translation: "The seed that fell on rocky ground"

What was sown on rocky ground is

"The rocky ground where seed was sown represents" or "The rocky ground where seed fell represents"

the person who hears the word

In the parable, the seed represents the word.

the word

This represents God's message. Alternate translation: "the message" or "God's teaching"

receives it with joy

Believing the word is spoken of as receiving it. Alternate translation: "joyfully believes it"

Matthew 13:21

yet he has no root in himself and he endures for a while

"yet he has shallow roots and only lasts for a little while." The root represents what makes a person continue to believe God's message. Alternate translation: "But like a plant that does not grow deep roots, he only endures for a little while"

he quickly falls away

Here "falls away" means stops believing. Alternate translation: "immediately he falls away" or "he quickly stops believing the message"

Matthew 13:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

What was sown

This refers to seed that was sown or that fell. Alternate translation: "The seed that was sown" or "The seed that fell"

What was sown among the thorn plants

"The ground with the thorn plants where seed was sown"

this is the person

"this represents the person"

the word

"the message" or "God's teaching"

the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word

Jesus speaks about the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches distracting a person from obeying God's word as if they were weeds that could wind around a plant and keep it from growing. Alternate translation: "as weeds prevent good plants from growing, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches keep this person from listening to God's word"

cares of the world

"the things in this world that people worry about"

the deceitfulness of riches

Jesus describes "riches" as if it were a person who could deceive someone. This means people think having more money will make them happy, but it will not. Alternate translation: "the love of money"

he becomes unfruitful

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Being unfruitful represents being unproductive. Alternate translation: "he becomes unproductive" or "he does not do what God wants"

Matthew 13:23

The seed that was sown on the good soil

You may have to consider "the seed" as a metonym for the soil on which the seed was sown. Alternate translation: "The good soil where seeds were sown"

He bears fruit and produces a crop

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Alternate translation: "Like a healthy plant that bears a crop of fruit, he is productive"

a crop, yielding in one case a hundred, in another sixty, and in another thirty times as much as was planted

See how you translated similar phrases in [Matthew 13:8]

a hundred ... sixty ... thirty

100 ... 60 ... 30

Matthew 13:24

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

Jesus presented another parable

This metaphor speaks of Jesus telling the people the parable as if he were putting a tangible object in front of them so they could examine it. Alternate translation: "Jesus told them another parable"

The kingdom of heaven is like a man

The translation should not equate the kingdom of heaven to a man, but rather the kingdom of heaven is like the situation described in the parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like"

good seed

"good food seeds" or "good grain seeds." The audience

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probably thought that Jesus was talking about wheat.
Matthew 13:25
his enemy came
"his enemy came to the field"
weeds
These weeds look like food plants when they are young, but their grain is poison. Alternate translation: "bad seed" or "weed seeds"
Matthew 13:26
When the blades sprouted
"When the wheat seeds sprouted" or "When the plants came up"
produced their crop
"produced grain" or "produced the wheat crop"
then the weeds appeared also
"then people could see there were weeds in the field also"
Matthew 13:27
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to tell a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.
the landowner
This is the same person who sowed good seed in his field.
did you not sow good seed in your field?
The servants used a question to emphasize their surprise. Alternate translation: "you sowed good seed in your field!"
did you not sow
The landowner probably had his servants plant the seeds. Alternate translation: "did we not sow"
Matthew 13:28
He said to them
"The landowner said to the servants"
So do you want us
The word "us" refers to the servants.
Matthew 13:29
Connecting Statement:
Jesus concludes the parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.
The landowner said
"The landowner said to his servants"
Matthew 13:30
I will say to the reapers, "First pull out the weeds and tie them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."
You can translate this as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "I will tell the reapers to first gather up the weeds and tie them in bundles to burn them, and then gather the wheat into my barn."
barn
a farm building that can be used for storing grain
Matthew 13:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a very small seed that grows into a very big plant.
The kingdom of heaven is like
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]
mustard seed
a very small seed that grows into a large plant
Matthew 13:32
This seed is indeed the smallest of all seeds
Mustard seeds were the smallest seeds known to the original hearers.
But when it has grown
"But when the plant has grown"
it is greater than
"it is larger than"
becomes a tree
A mustard plant can grow about 2 to 4 meters tall.
birds of the sky
"birds"
Matthew 13:33
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about the effect that yeast has on flour.
The kingdom of heaven is like yeast
The kingdom is not like the yeast, but the spread of the kingdom is like the spreading of the yeast.
The kingdom of heaven is like
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]
three measures of flour
Say "a large amount of flour" or use a term that your culture uses for measuring large amounts of flour.
until all the dough had risen
The implied information is that the yeast and the three measures of flour were made into dough for baking.
Matthew 13:34
All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; and he said nothing to them without a parable
Both sentences mean the same thing. They are combined to emphasize that Jesus taught the crowds only with parables.
All these things
This refers to what Jesus taught beginning at Matthew 13:1.
he said nothing to them without a parable
"he taught them nothing except by parables." The double negative can be expressed in a positive way. Alternate translation: "everything he taught them he said in parables"
Matthew 13:35
General Information:
Here the author quotes from the Psalms to show that Jesus's teaching in parables fulfilled prophecy.
what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled, when he said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God told one of the prophets to write long ago might come true"
when he said
"when the prophet said"
I will open my mouth
This is an idiom that means to speak. Alternate translation: "I will speak"
things that were hidden
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that God has kept hidden"
from the foundation of the world

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The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the beginning of the world" or "since God created the world"
Matthew 13:36
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to the house where Jesus and his disciples were staying. Jesus begins to explain to them the parable of the field that had both wheat and weeds, which he told beginning in Matthew 13:24.
went into the house
"went indoors" or "went into the house where he was staying"
Matthew 13:37
He who sows the good seed
"The one who sows the good seed" or "The sower of the good seed"
the Son of Man
Jesus is referring to himself.
Matthew 13:38
the sons of the kingdom
The idiom "sons of" refers to those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: "the people who belong to the kingdom"
of the kingdom
Here "kingdom" refers to God the king. Alternate translation: "of God"
the sons of the evil one
The idiom "sons of" refers those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: "the people who belong to the evil one"
Matthew 13:39
the enemy who sowed them
"the enemy who sowed the weeds"
Matthew 13:40
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples the parable of the field with both wheat and weeds.
Therefore, as the weeds are gathered up and consumed by fire
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore, as people gather up weeds and burn them in the fire"
Matthew 13:41
The Son of Man will send out his angels
Here Jesus is speaking of himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will send out my angels"
all stumbling blocks
everything that causes people to sin
those who commit lawlessness
"those who are lawless" or "evil people"
Matthew 13:42
furnace of fire
This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term "furnace" is not known, "oven" can be used. Alternate translation: "fiery furnace"
weeping and grinding of teeth
"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]
Matthew 13:43
shine like the sun
If this simile is not understandable in your language, you can use: "be as easy to see as the sun."
Father
This is an important title for God.
He who has ears, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]
He who has ... let him hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:15]
Matthew 13:44
General Information:
In this parable, Jesus uses a simile to teach his disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sold his possessions to purchase something of great value.
The kingdom of heaven is like
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]
like a treasure hidden in a field
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a treasure that someone had hidden in a field"
treasure
a very valuable and precious thing or collection of things
hid it
"covered it up"
sells everything he possesses, and buys that field
The implied information is that the person buys the field to take possession of the hidden treasure.
Matthew 13:45
General Information:
In this parable, Jesus uses a simile to teach his disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sold his possessions to purchase something of great value.
like a man who is a merchant looking for valuable pearls
The implied information is that the man was looking for valuable pearls that he could buy.
a merchant
a trader or wholesale dealer who often obtains merchandise from distant places
valuable pearls
A "pearl" is a smooth, hard, shiny, white or light-colored bead formed inside mollusks in the sea and highly prized as a gem or to make into valuable jewelry. Alternate translation: "fine pearls" or "beautiful pearls"
Matthew 13:46
General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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Matthew 13:47

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish.

the kingdom of heaven is like a net

The kingdom is not like the net, but the kingdom draws all kinds of people like a net catches all kinds of fish.

the kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

like a net that was cast into the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "like a net that some fishermen cast into the sea"

was cast into the sea

"was thrown into the sea"

Matthew 13:48

drew it up on the beach

"pulled the net up onto the beach" or "pulled the net ashore"

the good ones

Sometimes other creatures go into nets, but fishermen usually cast nets to catch fish, so most modern translations read, "the good fish."

the bad ones

Sometimes other creatures go into nets, but fishermen usually cast nets to catch fish, so most modern translations read, "the bad fish."

threw away

"did not keep"

Matthew 13:49

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains the parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish.

will come

"will come out" or "will go out" or "will come from heaven"

the wicked from among the righteous

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "the wicked people from the righteous people"

Matthew 13:50

They will throw them

"The angels will throw the wicked people"

furnace of fire

This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term "furnace" is not known, "oven" can be used. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:42]

weeping and grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Matthew 13:51

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who manages a household. This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus teaching the crowds about the kingdom of heaven through using parables.

Have you understood all these things?" The disciples said to him, "Yes."

If necessary, both direct quotations can be translated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Jesus asked them if they had understood all this, and they said that they did understand."

Matthew 13:52

has become a disciple to the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "has learned the truth about our God in heaven, who is king" or "has submitted himself to God's rule"

is like a man who is the owner of a house, who draws out old and new things from his treasure

Jesus speaks another parable. He compares scribes, who know very well the scriptures that Moses and the prophets wrote, and who also now accept Jesus's teachings, to a house owner who uses both old and new treasures.

treasure

A treasure is a very valuable and precious thing or a collection of things. Here it may refer to the place where these things are stored, the "treasury" or "storeroom."

Matthew 13:53

Then it came about that when

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

Matthew 13:54

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through Matthew 17:27, where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus's ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Here, the people of Jesus's home town reject him.

his own region

"his hometown." This refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

in their synagogue

The pronoun "their" is referring to the people of the region.

they were astonished

"they were amazed"

Where does this man get his wisdom and these miraculous powers from?

The people believed that Jesus was just an ordinary man. They use this question to express their amazement that he was so wise and was able to do miracles. Alternate translation: "How can an ordinary man like this be so wise and do such great miracles?" or "It is strange that he is able to speak with such wisdom and do these miracles!"

Matthew 13:55

Is not this man the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "He is just the son of a carpenter. We know his mother Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas."

the carpenter's son

A carpenter is someone who makes things with wood or stone. If "carpenter" is not known, "builder" can be used.

Matthew 13:56

Are not all his sisters with us?

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "And all his sisters are with us, too."

Where did he get all these things?

The crowd uses this question to show their understanding that Jesus must have gotten his abilities from somewhere. They were probably expressing their doubt that he got his abilities from God. Alternate translation: "He must have gotten his ability to do these things from somewhere!" or "We do not know where he got these abilities!"

all these things

This refers to Jesus's wisdom and ability to do miracles.

Matthew 13:57

They were offended by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Jesus's hometown took offense at him" or "The people rejected Jesus"

A prophet is not without honor

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "A prophet receives honor everywhere" or "People everywhere honor a prophet"

his own country

"his own region" or "his own hometown"

in his own family

"in his own home"

Matthew 13:58

He did not do many miracles there

"Jesus did not do many miracles in his own hometown"

Chapter 14

Matthew 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1 and 2 continue the account from chapter 13. Verses 3-12 stop the account and speak of things that happened earlier, possibly soon after Satan tempted Jesus

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, the writer does not tell who brought John's head to Herodias's daughter

Links:

Matthew 14:1 Notes

Matthew 14:1

General Information:

These verses explain Herod's reaction when he heard about Jesus. This event happens some time after the events that follow in the narrative.

About that time

"In those days" or "While Jesus was ministering in Galilee"

heard the news about Jesus

"heard reports about Jesus" or "heard about the fame of Jesus"

Matthew 14:2

He said

"Herod said"

has risen from the dead

The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from the dead speaks of coming alive again.

Therefore these powers are at work in him

Some Jews at that time believed if a person came back from the dead he would have powers to do mighty things.

Matthew 14:3

General Information:

Matthew recounts the story of John the Baptist's death in order to show why Herod reacted the way he did when he heard about Jesus.

Connecting Statement:

Here the author begins to tell about how Herod had executed John the Baptist. These events occur some time before the event in the previous verses.

Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison

It says that Herod did these things although he actually ordered others to do them for him. Alternate translation: "Herod ordered his soldiers to arrest and bind John the Baptist and put him in prison"

Philip's wife

Philip was Herod's brother. Herod had taken Philip's wife to be his own wife.

Matthew 14:4

For John ... as your wife

If needed, you can present the events of 14:3-4 in the order that they happened, as in the UDB.

For John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her as your wife."

This can be expressed as an indirect quote, if needed. Alternate translation: "For John had said to Herod that it was not lawful for Herod to have Herodias as his wife."

For John had said to him

"For John had kept saying to Herod"

It is not lawful

Philip was still alive when Herod married Herodias.

Matthew 14:5

would have killed him

"wanted to kill John"

he feared

"Herod feared"

they regarded him

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"they regarded John"
Matthew 14:6
in the midst
You can make explicit the implicit information. Alternate translation: "in the midst of the guests attending the birthday celebration"
Matthew 14:7
General Information:
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Matthew 14:8
After being instructed by her mother
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After her mother instructed her"
instructed
"coached" or "told"
she said
"the daughter of Herodias said to Herod"
platter
a very large plate
Matthew 14:9
The king was grieved by her request
The abstract noun "request" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "The king was grieved because she had asked him to kill John"
The king
"King Herod"
grieved
sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies
he ordered that it should be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his men to do what she said"
Matthew 14:10
Connecting Statement:
This concludes the account of how Herod executed John the Baptist.
Matthew 14:11
his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl"
platter
a very large plate
girl
Use the word for a young, unmarried girl.
Matthew 14:12
his disciples
"the disciples of John"
the corpse
"the dead body"
they went and told Jesus
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the disciples of John went and told Jesus what had happened to John the Baptist"
Matthew 14:13
Now
This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Matthew returns to telling about Jesus.
heard this
"heard what happened to John" or "heard the news about John"
he withdrew
"he left" or "he went away"
from there
"from that place"
When the crowds heard of it
"When the crowds heard where Jesus had gone" or "When the crowds heard that he had left"
the crowds
"the crowds of people" or "the huge group of people" or "the people"
on foot
This means that the people in the crowd were walking.
Matthew 14:14
Then Jesus came before them and saw the large crowd
"When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd"
Matthew 14:15
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people with only five small loaves of bread and two small fish.
the disciples came to him
"Jesus's disciples came to him"
the hour has already passed
Possible meanings of the words "the hour" are 1) they refer to the time for teaching. Alternate translation: "there is no more time for you to teach" Or 2) they refer to the day. Alternate translation: "the day is already over."
Matthew 14:16
They have no need
"The people in the crowd have no need"
You give them
The word "You" is plural, referring to the disciples.
Matthew 14:17
They said to him
"The disciples said to Jesus"
five loaves of bread
Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that have been shaped and baked.
Matthew 14:18
Bring them to me
"Bring the loaves and fish to me"
Matthew 14:19
Connecting Statement:
This concludes the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people.
sit down
"lie down." Use the verb for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.
He took
"He held in his hands." He did not steal them.
broke the loaves
"tore the loaves"
loaves
"loaves of bread" or "whole breads"
Looking up
Possible meanings are 1) "While looking up" or 2) "After looking up"
Matthew 14:20

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and were filled
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "until they were full" or "until they were no longer hungry"
they took up
"the disciples gathered up" or "some people gathered up"
twelve baskets full
"12 baskets full"
Matthew 14:21
Those who ate
"Those who ate the bread and the fish"
five thousand men
"5,000 men"
Matthew 14:22
Connecting Statement:
The following verses describe events that happened right after Jesus fed the five thousand people.
Immediately he
"As soon as Jesus had finished feeding all the people, he"
Matthew 14:23
When evening came
"Late in the evening" or "When it became dark"
Matthew 14:24
being tossed about by the waves
"and the disciples could not control the boat because of the large waves"
Matthew 14:25
In the fourth watch of the night
The fourth watch is between 3 a.m. and sunrise. Alternate translation: "Just before dawn"
walking on the sea
"walking on top of the water"
Matthew 14:26
they were troubled
"they were very afraid"
ghost
a spirit that has left the body of a person who has died
Matthew 14:27
General Information:
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Matthew 14:28
Peter answered him
"Peter answered Jesus"
Matthew 14:29
General Information:
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Matthew 14:30
when Peter saw the strong wind
Here "saw the strong wind" means he became aware of the wind. Alternate translation: "when Peter saw that the wind was tossing the waves back and forth" or "when he realized how strong the wind was"
Matthew 14:31
You of little faith, why
"You who have such little faith, why." Jesus addressed Peter this way because Peter became afraid. It can also be translated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You have so little faith! Why"
why did you doubt?
Jesus uses a question to tell Peter than he should not have doubted. You can make explicit what Peter should not have doubted. Alternate translation: "you should not have doubted that I could keep you from sinking."
Matthew 14:32
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 14:33
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.
Matthew 14:34
Connecting Statement:
Matthew describes in 14:34-36 what happened after Jesus walked on the water. He summarizes how the people were responding to Jesus's ministry.
When they had crossed over
"When Jesus and his disciples had crossed over the lake"
Gennesaret
This is a small town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.
Matthew 14:35
they sent messages
"the men of that area sent messages"
Matthew 14:36
They begged him
"The sick people begged him"
his garment
"his robe" or "what he was wearing"
were healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "became well"

Chapter 15

Matthew 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 15:8-9, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The "traditions of the elders"

The "traditions of the elders" were oral laws that the Jewish religious leaders developed because they wanted to make sure that everyone obeyed the law of Moses. However, they often worked harder to obey these rules than to obey the law of Moses itself. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for this, and they became angry as a result. (See: lawofmoses)

Jews and Gentiles

The Jews of Jesus's time thought that only Jews could please God by the way they lived. Jesus healed a Canaanite Gentile

woman's daughter to show his followers that he would accept both Jews and Gentiles as his people.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Sheep

The Bible often speaks of people as if they were sheep because sheep need someone to take care of them. This is because they do not see well and they often go to where other animals can kill them easily.

Links:

Matthew 15:1 Notes

Matthew 15:1

General Information:

The scene shifts to events that occur some time after events of the previous chapter. Here Jesus responds to the criticisms of the Pharisees.

Matthew 15:2

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders?

The Pharisees and scribes use this question to criticize Jesus and his disciples. Alternate translation: "Your disciples do not respect the rules that our ancestors have given us."

traditions of the elders

This is not the same as the law of Moses. This refers to later teachings and interpretations of the law given by religious leaders after Moses.

they do not wash their hands

This washing is not only to clean hands. This refers to a ceremonial washing according to the tradition of the elders. Alternate translation: "they do not wash their hands properly"

when they eat bread

The word "bread" here is a synecdoche for any kind of food, and the word "when" refers to what people generally do before eating meals. Alternate translation: "before they eat"

Matthew 15:3

Then why do you violate the commandment of God for the sake of your traditions?

Jesus answers with a question to criticize what the religious leaders do. Alternate translation: "And I see that you refuse to obey God's commands just so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you!"

Matthew 15:4

General Information:

Jesus quotes twice from Exodus to show how God expects people to treat their parents.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

He who speaks evil of his father or mother will surely die

"The people should execute anyone who speaks evil of his father or mother"

Matthew 15:5

But you say

Here "you" is plural and refers to the Pharisees and scribes.

Matthew 15:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the Pharisees.

that person does not need to honor his father

The words beginning with "But you say"

does not need to honor his father

It is implied that "his father" means "his parents." This means the religious leaders taught that a person does not need to show respect to his parents by taking care of them.

you have made void the word of God

Here "the word of God" refers specifically to God's commands. Alternate translation: "you have treated the word of God as if it were invalid" or "you have ignored God's commands"

for the sake of your traditions

"because you want to follow your traditions"

Matthew 15:7

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees and scribes.

Well did Isaiah prophesy about you

"Isaiah told the truth in this prophecy about you"

when he said

It is implied that Isaiah is speaking what God told him. Alternate translation: "when he told what God said"

Matthew 15:8

General Information:

Jesus continues to quote the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes.

This people honors me with their lips

Here "lips" refers to speaking. Alternate translation: "These people say all the right things to me"

me

All occurrences of this word refer to God.

but their heart is far from me

Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts or emotions. This phrase is a way of saying the people are not truly devoted to God. Alternate translation: "but they do not really love me"

Matthew 15:9

They worship me in vain

"Their worship means nothing to me" or "They only pretend to worship me"

the commandments of people

"the rules that people make up"

Matthew 15:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach the crowd and his disciples about what defiles a person and why the Pharisees and scribes were wrong to criticize him.

Matthew 15:11

enters into the mouth ... comes out of the mouth

Jesus is contrasting what a person eats to what a person says. Jesus means that God is concerned with what a person says rather than what a person eats.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Matthew 15:12
the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this statement made the Pharisees angry" or "this statement offended the Pharisees"
Matthew 15:13
Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up
This is a metaphor. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not actually belong to God, so God will remove them.
my heavenly Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
will be rooted up
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "my Father will uproot" or "he will take out of the ground" or "he will remove"
Matthew 15:14
Let them alone
The word "them" refers to the Pharisees.
blind guides ... both will fall into a pit
Jesus uses another metaphor to describe the Pharisees. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God.
Matthew 15:15
Connecting Statement:
Peter wants Jesus to explain the parable that Jesus told in Matthew 15:13-14.
to us
"to us disciples"
Matthew 15:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus explains the parable that he told in Matthew 15:13-14.
Are you also still without understanding?
Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Also, the word "you" is emphasized. Jesus cannot believe his own disciples do not understand. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you, my disciples, still do not understand what I teach!"
Matthew 15:17
Do you not understand ... into the latrine?
Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Alternate translation: "Surely you understand ... into the latrine."
passes into the stomach
"goes into the stomach"
latrine
This a polite term for the place where people bury body waste.
Matthew 15:18
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to explain the parable that he told in Matthew 15:13-14.
things that come out of the mouth
This refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: "words that a person says"
from the heart
Here "heart" refers to a person's mind or innermost being. Alternate translation: "from inside the person" or "from a person's mind"
Matthew 15:19
murder
the act of killing innocent people
Matthew 15:20
to eat with unwashed hands
This refers to eating without first ceremonially washing one's hands according to the traditions of the elders. Alternate translation: "eating without first washing one's hands"
Matthew 15:21
General Information:
This begins an account of Jesus healing the daughter of a Canaanite woman.
Jesus went away
It is implied that the disciples went with Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples went away"
Matthew 15:22
Behold, a Canaanite woman came
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a Canaanite woman who came"
a Canaanite woman came out from that region
"a woman who was from that region and who belonged to the group of people called Canaanites came." The country of Canaan no longer existed by this time. She was a part of a people group that lived near the cities of Tyre and Sidon.
Have mercy on me
This phrase implies that she is requesting that Jesus heal her daughter. Alternate translation: "Have mercy and heal my daughter"
Son of David
Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the woman may have been calling Jesus by this title.
My daughter is severely demon-possessed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A demon is controlling my daughter terribly" or "A demon is tormenting my daughter severely"
Matthew 15:23
answered her not a word
Here "word" refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: "said nothing to her"
Matthew 15:24
I was not sent to anyone except to the lost sheep ... Israel
This double negative emphasizes that the lost sheep are the only ones to whom Jesus was sent. Alternate translation: "I was sent only to the lost sheep ... Israel"
I was not sent to anyone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not send me to anyone"
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel
This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of Israel to sheep who have gone away from their shepherd. See how you translated this in [Matthew 10:6]
Matthew 15:25
she came
"the Canaanite woman came"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

bowed down before him
This shows that the woman humbled herself before Jesus.
Matthew 15:26
It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs
Jesus responds to the woman with a proverb. The basic meaning is that it is not right to take what is supposed to belong to Jews and give it to non-Jews.
the children's bread
Here "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "the children's food"
the little dogs
The Jews considered dogs to be unclean animals. Here they are used as an image for non-Jews.
Matthew 15:27
even the little dogs eat some of the crumbs that fall from their masters' tables
The woman responds by using the same imagery as Jesus used in the proverb he just spoke. She means non-Jews should be able to have a small amount of the good things Jews are throwing away.
little dogs
Use words here for dogs of any size that people keep as pets. See how you translated this in Matthew 15:26.
Matthew 15:28
let it be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will do"
Her daughter was healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her daughter" or "Her daughter became well"
from that hour
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "at exactly the same time" or "immediately"
Matthew 15:29
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 15:30
lame, blind, mute, and crippled people
"those who could not walk, those who could not see, those who could not talk, and those whose arms or legs did not function"
They presented them at Jesus' feet
Apparently some of these sick or crippled people were unable to stand up, so when their friends brought them to Jesus, they placed them on the ground in front of him. Alternate translation: "The crowds placed the sick people on the ground in front of Jesus"
Matthew 15:31
the crippled made well
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the crippled become well"
the crippled ... the lame ... the blind
These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "the crippled persons ... the lame persons ... the blind persons"
Matthew 15:32
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus feeding four thousand people with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.
without eating, or they may faint on the way
"without eating because they might faint on the way"
Matthew 15:33
Where can we get enough loaves of bread in such a deserted place to satisfy so large a crowd?
The disciples use a question to state that there is nowhere to get food for the crowd. Alternate translation: "There is nowhere nearby that we can get enough bread for such a large crowd."
Matthew 15:34
Seven, and a few small fish
The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "We have seven loaves of bread, and we also have a few small fish"
Matthew 15:35
sit down on the ground
Use your language's word for how people customarily eat when there is no table, whether sitting or lying down.
Matthew 15:36
He took the seven loaves and the fish
"Jesus held the seven loaves and the fish in his hands"
he broke the loaves
"he tore the loaves"
gave them
"gave the bread and the fish"
Matthew 15:37
they gathered
"the disciples gathered" or "some people gathered"
Matthew 15:38
Those who ate
"The people who ate"
four thousand men
"4,000 men"
Matthew 15:39
the region
"the area"
Magadan
This region is sometimes called "Magdala."

Chapter 16

Matthew 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yeast

Jesus spoke of the way people thought about God as if it were bread, and he spoke of what people taught about God as if it were the yeast that makes bread dough become larger and the baked bread taste good. He did not want his followers to listen to what the Pharisees and Sadducees taught. This was because if they did listen, they would not understand who God is and how he wants his people to live.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Jesus told his people to obey his commands. He did this by telling them to "follow" him. It is as if he were walking on a path and they were walking after him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background information

Matthew continues his account from chapter 15 in verses 1-20. The account stops in verse 21 so Matthew can tell the reader that Jesus told his disciples again and again that people would kill him after he arrived in Jerusalem. Then the account continues in verses 22-27 with what happened the first time Jesus told the disciples that he would die.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

Links:

Matthew 16:1 Notes

Matthew 16:1

General Information:

This begins an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees.

tested him

Here "tested" is used in a negative sense. Alternate translation: "challenged him" or "wanted to trap him"

Matthew 16:2

When it is evening

The situation can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "If the sky is red in the evening" or "If the sky is red when the sun is setting"

When it is evening

"When the sun is setting"

fair weather

This means clear, calm, and pleasant weather.

for the sky is red

As the sun is setting, Jews knew that if the color of the sky changes to red, it is a sign the next day will be clear and calm.

Matthew 16:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his response to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

When it is morning

The situation can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "If the sky is red in the morning" or "If the sky is red when the sun is rising"

foul weather

"cloudy, stormy weather"

red and overcast

"red and cloudy"

You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky

"You know how to look at the sky and understand what kind of weather you will have"

but you cannot interpret the signs of the times

"but you do not know how to look at what is happening right now and understand what it means"

Matthew 16:4

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign ... given to it

Jesus is speaking to his present generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation who demands signs from me ... given to you" See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39]

An evil and adulterous generation

Here "adulterous" is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39]

no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah

This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"

no sign will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not give it a sign"

the sign of Jonah

"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for Jonah." See how you translated this in Matthew 12:39.

Matthew 16:5

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus uses an opportunity to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

the other side

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "the other side of the lake" or "the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

Matthew 16:6

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Here "yeast" is a metaphor that refers to evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as "yeast" here and do not explain its meaning in your translation. This meaning will be made clear in 16:12.

Matthew 16:7

reasoned among themselves

"discussed this with each other" or "thought about this"

Matthew 16:8

You of little faith

"You who have such little faith." Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their concern about not bringing bread shows they have little faith in Jesus to provide for them. See how you translated this in Matthew 6:30.

why do you reason ... taken no bread?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples for not

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

understanding what he just said. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you think it was because you forgot to bring bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
Matthew 16:9
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.
Do you not understand? Do you not remember ... you gathered up?
Jesus use questions to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: "Surely you understand and remember ... you gathered up!" or "You should understand. You should remember ... you gathered up."
five thousand
"5,000"
Matthew 16:10
four thousand
"4,000"
Or the seven loaves ... you took up?
"Do you also not remember the seven loaves ... you took up?" Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples. Alternate translation: "Surely you also remember the seven loaves ... you took up!"
Matthew 16:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.
How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread?
Jesus uses this question to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: "You should have understood that I was not really speaking about bread."
the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees
Here "yeast" represents evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as "yeast" and do not explain the meaning in your translation. In 16:12 the disciples will understand the meaning.
Matthew 16:12
they ... them
These refer to the disciples.
Matthew 16:13
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus asks his disciples if they understand who he is.
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
the Son of Man
Jesus is referring to himself.
Matthew 16:14
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 16:15
General Information:
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Matthew 16:16
the Son of the living God
This is an important title for Jesus that shows his relationship to God.
the living God
Here "living" contrasts the God of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act.
Matthew 16:17
flesh and blood have not revealed
Here "flesh and blood" refers to a human being. Alternate translation: "a human did not reveal"
this to you
Here "this" refers to Peter's statement that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the Living God.
but my Father who is in heaven
The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but it was my Father in heaven who revealed this to you"
my Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
Matthew 16:18
I also say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
you are Peter
The name Peter means "rock."
upon this rock I will build my church
Here "build my church" is a metaphor for uniting the people who believe in Jesus into a community. Possible meanings are 1) "this rock" represents Peter, or 2) "this rock" represents the truth that Peter had just said in [Matthew 16:16]
The gates of Hades will not prevail against it
Here "Hades" is spoken of as if it were a city surrounded by walls with gates that keep dead people in and other people out. Here "Hades" represents death, and its "gates" represent its power. Possible meanings are 1) "the powers of death will not overcome my church" or 2) "my church will break down the power of death the way an army breaks into a city."
Matthew 16:19
I will give to you
Here "you" is singular and refers to Peter.
the keys of the kingdom of heaven
Keys are objects that are used to lock or unlock doors. Here they represent authority.
the kingdom of heaven
This refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation.
Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven
Here "bind" is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and "loose" is a metaphor meaning to allow something. Also, "in heaven" is a metonym that represents God himself. Alternate translation: "God in heaven will approve whenever you forbid or allow something on earth"
Matthew 16:20
General Information:
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Matthew 16:21
Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells his disciples for the first time that he will die

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

soon.

suffer many things at the hands of the elders ... scribes

Here "hands" represents power. Alternate translation: "suffer many things because of the elders ... scribes"

scribes, be killed, and be raised back to life on the third day

Here to raise back to life is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. The elders and chief priests would accuse Jesus so that others would kill him. Alternate translation: "scribes. People will then kill him, and on the third day God will make him become alive again"

third day

"Third" is the ordinal form of "three."

Matthew 16:22

Then Peter took him aside

Jesus tells them for the first time that he will die soon

Peter took him aside

"Peter spoke to Jesus when no one else could hear them"

May this be far from you

This is an idiom that means "may this never happen." Alternate translation: "No" or "Never" or "May God forbid this"

Matthew 16:23

Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me

Jesus means that Peter is acting like Satan because Peter is trying to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what God sent him to do. Alternate translation: "Get behind me, because you are acting like Satan! You are a stumbling block to me" or "Get behind me, Satan! I call you Satan because you are a stumbling block to me"

Get behind me

"Get away from me"

you do not think about the things of God, but about the things of people

"you do not think about what God thinks is important; instead, you only thing about the things that people think are important"

Matthew 16:24

to follow me

Following Jesus here represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: "to be my disciple" or "to be one of my disciples"

must deny himself

"must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"

take up his cross, and follow me

"carry his cross, and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "and obey me even to the point of suffering and dying" or "and he must obey me even to the point of suffering and dying"

and follow me

Following Jesus here represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "and obey me"

Matthew 16:25

For whoever wants

"For anyone who wants"

will lose it

This does not mean the person must necessarily die. It is a metaphor that means the person will consider obeying Jesus as being more important than his own life.

for my sake

"because he trusts me" or "on my account" or "because of me"

will find it

This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will find true life"

Matthew 16:26

For what does it profit a person ... his life?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "It does not profit a person ... his life."

if he gains the whole world

The words "the whole world" are an exaggeration for great riches. Alternate translation: "if he gains everything he desires"

but forfeits his life

"but he loses his life"

What can a person give in exchange for his life?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that a person can give to regain his life."

Matthew 16:27

the Son of Man ... his Father ... Then he

Here Jesus refers to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of man ... my Father ... Then I"

will come in the glory of his Father

"will come, having the same glory as his Father." This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "will come, having the same glory as my Father"

with his angels

Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "with his Father's angels" or "with my Father's angels" or 2) Alternate translation: "with the Son of Man's angels" or "with my angels." You do not have to specify in your translations to whom the angels belong. Alternate translation: "and the angels will be with him" or "and the angels will be with me"

his Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and the Son of Man, Jesus.

according to his deeds

"according to what that person has done"

Matthew 16:28

Truly I say to you

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

you

All occurrences of this word are plural and refer to the disciples.

will not taste death

Here "taste" means to experience. Alternate translation: "will not experience death" or" will not die"

until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom

Here "his kingdom" represents him being King. Alternate translation: "until they see the Son of Man coming as King" or "until they see the evidence that the Son of Man is King"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 17

Matthew 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Elijah

The Old Testament prophet Malachi lived many years before Jesus was born. Malachi had said that before the Messiah came a prophet named Elijah would return. Jesus explained that Malachi had been talking about John the Baptist. Jesus said this because John the Baptist had done what Malachi had said that Elijah would do. (See: prophet and christ)

"transfigured"

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Matthew says in this chapter that Jesus's body shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Links:

Matthew 17:1 Notes

Matthew 17:1

General Information:

This begins the account of Jesus's transfiguration.

Peter, James, and John his brother

"Peter, James, and James's brother John"

Matthew 17:2

He was transfigured before them

When they looked at him, his appearance was different from what it had been.

He was transfigured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "His appearance had changed" or "He appeared very different"

before them

"in front of them" or "so they could clearly him"

His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as brilliant as the light

These are similes that emphasize how bright Jesus's appearance became.

his garments

"what he was wearing"

Matthew 17:3

Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

to them

This refers to Peter, James, and John.

with him

"with Jesus"

Matthew 17:4

answered and said

"said." Peter is not responding to a question.

it is good for us to be here

It is not clear whether "us" refers only to Peter, James, and John, or if it refers to everyone there, including Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. If you can translate so that both options are possible, do so.

Matthew 17:5

behold

This alerts the reader to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

overshadowed them

"came over them"

there was a voice out of the cloud

Here "voice" refers to God speaking. Alternate translation: "God spoke to them from out of the cloud"

Matthew 17:6

the disciples heard it

"the disciples heard God speak"

Matthew 17:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 17:8

they ... saw no one except Jesus only

This double negative emphasizes that Jesus was the only thing that they saw. Alternate translation: "they ... saw only Jesus"

Matthew 17:9

Connecting Statement:

The following events happen immediately after the three disciples witness Jesus's transfiguration.

As they

"As Jesus and the disciples"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

Matthew 17:10

Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

The disciples are referring to the belief that Elijah will come back to life and return to the people of Israel before the Messiah comes.

Matthew 17:11

restore all things

"put things in order" or "get the people ready to receive the Messiah"

Matthew 17:12

But I tell you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

they ... their

All occurrences of these words may mean either 1) the Jewish leaders or 2) all the Jewish people.

the Son of Man will also suffer at their hands

Here "hands" refers to power. Alternate translation: "they will make the Son of Man suffer"

the Son of Man will

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"

Matthew 17:13

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
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Matthew 17:14
Connecting Statement:
This begins an account of Jesus healing a boy who had an evil spirit. These events happen immediately after Jesus and his disciples descend from the mountain.
Matthew 17:15
have mercy on my son
It is implied that the man wants Jesus to heal his son. Alternate translation: "have mercy on my son and heal him"
is epileptic
This means that he sometimes had seizures. He would become unconscious and move uncontrollably. Alternate translation: "has seizures"
Matthew 17:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 17:17
Unbelieving and perverse generation, how
"This generation does not believe in God and loves to do evil rather than good. How"
how long will I have to stay with you? How long must I bear with you?
These questions show Jesus is unhappy with the people. Alternate translation: "I am tired of being with you! I am tired of your unbelief and corruption!"
Matthew 17:18
the boy was healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the boy became well"
from that hour
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "immediately" or "at that moment"
Matthew 17:19
we
Here "we" refers to the disciples and does not include Jesus.
Why could we not cast it out?
"Why could we not make the demon come out of the boy?"
Matthew 17:20
For I truly say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
if you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard seed
Jesus compares the size of a mustard seed to the amount of faith needed to do a miracle. A mustard seed is very small, but it grows into a large plant. Jesus means it only takes a small amount of faith to do a great miracle.
nothing will be impossible for you
This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "you will be able to do anything"
Matthew 17:21
General Information:
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Matthew 17:22
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts momentarily, and Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a second time.
they stayed
"Jesus and his disciples stayed"
The Son of Man will be given over
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone will deliver the Son of Man"
given over into the hands of people
The word "hands" here is a metonym for the power that people use hands to exercise. Alternate translation: "taken and put under the power of people" or "taken and given to people who will control him"
The Son of Man
Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.
into the hands of people
Here "hands" refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "to the control of the people" or "to the people"
Matthew 17:23
him ... he
Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.
third day
"Third" is the ordinal form of "three."
he will be raised up
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise him up" or "God will cause him to become alive again"
deeply grieved
very sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies. See how you translated "grieved" in Matthew 14:9.
Matthew 17:24
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts again to a later time when Jesus teaches Peter about paying the temple tax.
When they
"When Jesus and his disciples"
the two-drachma tax
This was a tax that Jewish men paid to support the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the temple tax"
Matthew 17:25
the house
"the place where Jesus was staying"
What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes? From their sons or from others?
Jesus asks these questions to teach Simon, not to gain information for himself. Alternate translation: ""Listen, Simon. When kings collect taxes, they collect it from people who are not members of their own family. Do you agree that this is true?"
their sons
Possible meanings are that this word 1) is a synecdoche that refers to any members of the kings' family or 2) is a metaphor for the people of the kings' own country. Alternate translation: "their own family" or "the people of their own country"
Matthew 17:26
General Information:
This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 13:54, where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus's ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven.
Connecting Statement:

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Jesus continues to teach Peter about paying the temple tax.
"From others," Peter answered
If you translated Jesus's questions as statements in [Matthew 17:25]
From others
"From people who are not members of their own family."
See how you translated these words in Matthew 17:25.
the sons
Possible meanings are that this word 1) is a synecdoche that refers to any members of the kings' family or 2) is a metaphor for the people of the kings' own country. See how you translated these words in [Matthew 17:25]
Matthew 17:27
But so that we do not cause the tax collectors to stumble, go
Causing people to stumble is a metaphor for offending them. Possible meanings are 1) Jesus was concerned that the tax collectors would think he had done something very wrong. Alternate translation: "so that we do not cause the tax collectors to think that we do something that is very bad" or 2) Jesus was concerned that the tax collectors might think that he was a sinner and so could not be the Messiah. Alternate translation: "so that we do not cause the tax collectors to reject me"
throw in a hook
Fishermen tied hooks to the end of a line, then threw it in the water to catch fish.
its mouth
"the fish's mouth"
a shekel
a silver coin worth four days' wages
Take it
"Take the shekel"
for me and you
Here "you" is singular and refers to Peter. Each man had to pay a half shekel tax. So one shekel would be enough for Jesus and Peter to pay their taxes.

Chapter 18

Matthew 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

What should Jesus's followers do when other followers sin against them?
Jesus taught that his followers must treat each other well and not be angry with each other. They should forgive anyone who is sorry for his sin, even if he has committed the same sin before. If he is not sorry for his sin, Jesus's followers should speak with him alone or in a small group. If he is still not sorry after that, then Jesus's followers can treat him as guilty. (See: repent and sin)

Links:

Matthew 18:1 Notes

Matthew 18:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through Matthew 18:35, where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven. Here, Jesus uses a little child to teach the disciples.
At that time
Very soon after the events described in the previous verse.
Who is greatest
"Who is the most important" or "Who among us will be the most important"
in the kingdom of heaven
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth"
Matthew 18:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 18:3
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
unless you turn ... children, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you will enter the kingdom of heaven only if you turn ... children"
become like little children
Jesus uses a simile to teach the disciples that they should not be concerned with who is most important. They should be concerned with becoming humble like a child.
enter the kingdom of heaven
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "enter God's kingdom" or "belong to our God in heaven when he establishes his rule on earth"
Matthew 18:4
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues teaching the disciples that they need to be humble like a child if they want to be important in God's kingdom.
is the greatest
"is the most important" or "will be the most important"
in the kingdom of heaven
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth"
Matthew 18:5
in my name

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Here "my name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because he is my disciple"

Whoever ... in my name receives me

Jesus means that it is the same as welcoming him. Alternate translation: "When someone ... in my name, it is like he is welcoming me" or "When someone ... in my name, it is as if he were welcoming me"

Matthew 18:6

that a large millstone should be hung about his neck, and that he should be sunk into the depths of the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if someone put a large millstone around his neck and threw him into the deep sea"

millstone

This is a large, heavy, circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Alternate translation: "a heavy stone"

Matthew 18:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and warns against the terrible consequences of causing children to sin.

to the world

Here "world" refers to people. Alternate translation: "to the people of the world"

stumbling blocks ... those stumbling blocks come ... the person through whom those stumbling blocks come

Here "stumbling" is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: "things that cause people to sin ... things come that cause people to sin ... any person who causes others to sin"

Matthew 18:8

If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you

Jesus exaggerates here to emphasize that people must do anything necessary to remove from their lives what causes them to sin.

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural "you."

into life

"into eternal life"

than to be thrown into the eternal fire having two hands or two feet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "than to have both hands and feet when God throws you into the eternal fire"

Matthew 18:9

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

The command to destroy the eye, perhaps the most important part of the body, is probably an exaggeration for his hearers to do anything necessary to remove from their lives anything that causes them to sin.

causes you to stumble

Here "stumble" is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: "causes you to sin"

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural "you."

into life

"into eternal life"

than to be thrown into the fiery hell having both eyes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "than to have both eyes when God throws you into the fiery hell"

the fiery hell

"hell, which is full of fire" or "the fire of hell"

Matthew 18:10

See that

"Be careful that" or "Be sure that"

you do not despise any of these little ones

"you do not think of these little ones as being unimportant." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you show respect to these little ones"

For I say to you

This add emphasis to what Jesus says next.

that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven

Jewish teachers taught that only the most important angels could be in God's presence. Jesus means that the most important angels speak to God about these little ones.

always look on the face of my Father

This is an idiom that means they are in God's presence. Alternate translation: "are always close to my Father" or "are always in the presence of my Father"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 18:11

General Information:

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Matthew 18:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and tells a parable to explain God's care for people.

What do you think?

Jesus uses this question to get people's attention. Alternate translation: "Think about how people act." or "Think about this."

you

This word is plural.

a hundred ... ninety-nine

"100 ... 99"

does he not leave ... astray?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "he will always leave ... astray."

Matthew 18:13

If he finds it ... that did not go astray

This is the end of the parable that begins with the words "If anyone" in verse 12.

truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. The word "you" is plural.

Matthew 18:14

it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"your Father in heaven does not want any of these little ones to die" or "your Father in heaven does not want even one of these little ones to die"
your
This word is plural.
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 18:15
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach his disciples about forgiveness and reconciliation.
your brother
This refers to a fellow believer in God, not a physical brother. Alternate translation: "your fellow believer"
you will have gained your brother
"you will have made your relationship with your brother good again"
Matthew 18:16
so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be confirmed
Here "mouth" and "word" refer to what a person says. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that two or three witnesses may say that what you say about your brother is true"
Matthew 18:17
if he refuses to listen to them
"if your fellow believer refuses to listen to the witnesses who came with you"
to the church
"to the whole community of believers"
let him be to you as a pagan and a tax collector
"treat him as you would treat a pagan or tax collector." This implies that they should remove him from the community of believers.
Matthew 18:18
I tell you truly
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
you
All occurrences of this word are plural.
whatever things you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven
Here "bind" is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and "loose" is a metaphor meaning to allow something. Also, "in heaven" is a metonym that represents God himself. See how you translated similar phrases in [Matthew 16:19]
Matthew 18:19
if two of you
It is implied that Jesus means "if at least two of you" or "if two or more of you."
they ... them
These refer to the "two of you." Alternate translation: "you ... you"
my Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
Matthew 18:20
two or three
It is implied that Jesus means "two or more" or "at least two."
are gathered
"meet"
in my name
Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because they are my disciples"
Matthew 18:21
seven times
"7 times"
Matthew 18:22
seventy times seven
Possible meanings are 1) "70 times 7" or 2) "77 times." If using a number would be confusing, you can translate it as "more times than you can count" or "you must always forgive him."
Matthew 18:23
Connecting Statement:
Jesus uses a parable to teach about forgiveness and reconciliation.
the kingdom of heaven is similar
This introduces a parable. See how you translated a similar parable introduction in [Matthew 13:24]
to settle accounts with his servants
"his servants to pay him what they owed him" or "to have his servants tell him what they had done with the goods he had entrusted to them"
Matthew 18:24
the settling
This abstract noun can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "to settle accounts"
one servant was brought
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone brought one of the king's servants"
ten thousand talents
"10,000 talents" or "more money than the servant could ever repay"
Matthew 18:25
his master commanded him to be sold ... and payment to be made
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the king commanded his servants to sell the man ... and to pay the debt with the money from the sale"
Matthew 18:26
fell down, bowed down
This shows that the servant approached the king in the most humble way possible.
before him
"before the king"
Matthew 18:27
he was moved with compassion
"he felt compassion for the servant"
released him
"let him go"
Matthew 18:28
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples.
one hundred denarii
"100 denarii" or "one hundred days' wages"
He took hold of him

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"The first servant took hold of his fellow servant"
Matthew 18:29
fell down
This shows that the fellow servant approached the first servant in the most humble way possible. See how you translated this in [Matthew 18:26]
and pleaded with him
"and begged him"
Matthew 18:30
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples.
he went and threw him into prison
"the first servant went and threw his fellow servant into prison"
Matthew 18:31
his fellow servants
"other servants"
told their master
"told the king"
deeply grieved
very sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies. See how you translated this phrase in Matthew 17:23.
Matthew 18:32
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciple.
Then that servant's master called him
"Then the king called the first servant"
you pleaded with me
"you begged me"
Matthew 18:33
Should you not have ... you?
The king uses a question to scold the first servant. Alternate translation: "You should have ... you!"
Matthew 18:34
General Information:
This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 18:1, where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus concludes his parable about forgiveness and reconciliation.
His master
"The king"
handed him over
"gave him over." Most likely the king himself did not take the first servant to the torturers. Alternate translation: "he ordered his servants to give him over"
to the torturers
"to those who would torture him"
that was owed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the first servant owed the king"
Matthew 18:35
my heavenly Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
you ... your
All occurrences of these words are plural. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, but this parable teaches a general truth that applies to all believers.
from your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "from your heart" is an idiom that means "sincerely." Alternate translation: "sincerely" or "completely"

Chapter 19

Matthew 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Jesus taught about divorce because the Pharisees wanted people to think Jesus's teachings about divorce were wrong (Matthew 19:3-12). Jesus talked about what God had first said about marriage when he created it.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven (Matthew 19:12).

Links:

Matthew 19:1 Notes

Matthew 19:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 22:46]
It came about that when
This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "When" or "After"
had finished these words
Here "words" refers to what Jesus taught starting in [Matthew 18:1]
departed from
"walked away from" or "left"
Matthew 19:2
General Information:
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Matthew 19:3
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about marriage and divorce.
came to him
"came to Jesus"
testing him, saying to him
Here "tested" is used in a negative sense. Alternate

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translation: "and challenged him by asking him" or "and wanted to trap him by asking him"
Matthew 19:4
Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?
Jesus uses this question to remind the Pharisees of what the scripture says about men, women, and marriage. Alternate translation: "Surely you have read that in the beginning when God created people he made them male and female."
Matthew 19:5
General Information:
Jesus quotes from Genesis to show that a husband and wife should not divorce.
He who made them also said, 'For this reason ... flesh.'
This is part of what Jesus expected the Pharisees to have understood from the scripture. The direct quotation can be expressed as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And surely you know that God also said that for this reason ... flesh."
For this reason
This is a part of the quotation from Genesis story about Adam and Eve. In that context the reason a man will leave his father and mother is because God created a woman to be the man's companion.
join to his wife
"stay close to his wife" or "live with his wife"
the two will become one flesh
This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: "they will become like one person"
Matthew 19:6
So they are no longer two, but one flesh
This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: "So a husband and wife are no longer like two persons, but they are like one person"
Matthew 19:7
They said to him
"The Pharisees said to Jesus"
command us
"command us Jews"
certificate of divorce
This is a document that legally ends the marriage.
Matthew 19:8
For your hardness of heart
The phrase "hardness of heart" is a metaphor that means "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "Because of your stubbornness" or "Because you are stubborn"
your hardness ... allowed you ... your wives
Here "you" and "your" are plural. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, but Moses gave this command many years earlier to their ancestors. Moses's command applied to all Jewish men in general.
from the beginning
Here "beginning" refers to when God first created man and woman.
Matthew 19:9
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
marries another
You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "marries another woman"
Matthew 19:10
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 19:11
to whom it is given
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to whom God gives it" or "whom God enables to follow it"
Matthew 19:12
there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "there are men whom other men have made eunuchs"
eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs
Possible meanings are 1) "men who have made themselves eunuchs by removing their private parts" or 2) "men who choose to remain unmarried and sexually pure."
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "so they can better serve our God in heaven"
Matthew 19:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus receives and blesses little children.
some little children were brought to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some people brought little children to Jesus"
Matthew 19:14
Permit
allow
do not forbid them to come to me
"do not stop them from coming to me"
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such ones
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "for when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth, he will be king over such as these" or "for God will allow such as these into his kingdom"
belongs to such ones
"belongs to those who are like children." This is a simile that means those who are humble like children will enter God's kingdom.
Matthew 19:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 19:16
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to a different time when Jesus explains to a rich man what it will cost to follow him.
Behold
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
good thing
This means a thing that pleases God.
Matthew 19:17
Why do you ask me about what is good?

Jesus uses this rhetorical question to encourage the man to think about his reason for asking Jesus about what is good. Alternate translation: "You ask me about what is good" or "Think about why you ask me about what is good."

Only one is good

"God alone is completely good"

to enter into life

"to receive eternal life"

Matthew 19:18

General Information:

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Matthew 19:19

love your neighbor as yourself

The Jewish people believed that their neighbors were only other Jews. Jesus is extending that definition to include all people. Alternate translation: "love every other person as much as you love yourself"

Matthew 19:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:21

If you wish

"If you want"

to the poor

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "to those who are poor"

you will have treasure in heaven

The phrase "treasure in heaven" is a metaphor that refers to a reward from God. Alternate translation: "God will reward you in heaven"

Matthew 19:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains to his disciples the rewards of giving up material possessions and relationships to follow him.

Truly I say to you

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

to enter the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "to accept our God in heaven as their king" or "to enter God's kingdom"

Matthew 19:24

it is easier ... kingdom of God

Jesus uses an exaggeration to illustrate how very difficult it is for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.

the eye of a needle

the hole near one end of a needle, through which thread is passed

Matthew 19:25

they were very astonished

"the disciples were amazed." It is implied that they were astonished because they believed having riches was proof that God approved of someone.

Who then can be saved?

The disciples use a question to emphasize their surprise. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then there is no one whom God will save!" or "Then there is no one who will receive eternal life!"

Matthew 19:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:27

we have left everything

"we have left all our wealth" or "we have given up all our possessions"

What then will we have?

"What good thing will God give us?"

Matthew 19:28

Truly I say to you

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

in the new age

"in the new time." This refers to when God restores all things. Alternate translation: "at the time when God makes all things new"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

sits on his glorious throne

Sitting on his throne represents ruling as a king. His throne being glorious represents his rule being glorious. Alternate translation: "sits as king on his glorious throne" or "rules gloriously as king"

sit upon twelve thrones

Here sitting on thrones refers to ruling as kings. The disciples will not be equal to Jesus who is also on a throne. They will receive authority from him. Alternate translation: "sit as kings on 12 thrones"

the twelve tribes of Israel

Here "tribes" refers to people from those tribes. Alternate translation: "the people of the 12 tribes of Israel"

Matthew 19:29

for my name's sake

Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because he believes in me"

receive one hundred times as much

"receive from God 100 times as many good things as they gave up"

will inherit eternal life

This is an idiom that means "God will bless them with eternal life" or "God will cause them to live forever."

Matthew 19:30

But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first

Here "first" and "last" refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with their status in the kingdom of heaven. Alternate translation: "But many who seem to be important now will be the least important, and many who seem to be unimportant now will be very important"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 20

Matthew 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the landowner and his vineyard

Jesus tells this parable (Matthew 20:1-16) to teach his disciples that what God says is right is different from what people say is right.

Links:

Matthew 20:1 Notes

Matthew 20:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about a landowner who hires workers, to illustrate how God will reward those who belong to the kingdom of heaven.

For the kingdom of heaven is like

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated the introduction to the parable in [Matthew 13:24]

Matthew 20:2

After he had agreed

"After the landowner had agreed"

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages"

he sent them into his vineyard

"he sent them to work in his vineyard"

Matthew 20:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

He went out again

"The landowner went out again"

the third hour

The third hour is around nine in the morning.

standing idle in the marketplace

"standing in the marketplace not doing anything" or "standing in the marketplace with no work to do"

marketplace

a large, open-air area where people buy and sell food and other items

Matthew 20:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

Again he went out

"Again the landowner went out"

the sixth hour and again the ninth hour

The sixth hour is around noon. The ninth hour is around three in the afternoon.

did the same

This means the landowner went to the marketplace and hired workers.

Matthew 20:6

the eleventh hour

This is about five in the afternoon.

standing idle

"not doing anything" or "not having any work"

Matthew 20:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

beginning from the last to the first

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "beginning with the workers who started working last, then the workers who started working earlier, and finally the workers who started working first" or "first paying the workers I hired last, then paying the workers I hired earlier in the day, and finally paying the workers I hired first"

Matthew 20:9

who had been hired

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the landowner hired"

Matthew 20:10

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages"

Matthew 20:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

When they received

"When the workers who had worked the longest received"

the landowner

"the vineyard owner"

Matthew 20:12

you have made them equal to us

"you have paid them the same amount of money as you paid us"

we who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat

The phrase "borne the burden of the day" is an idiom that means "worked the entire day." Alternate translation: "we who have worked the entire day, even during the hottest part"

Matthew 20:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

one of them

"one of the workers who had worked the longest"

Friend

Use a word that one man would use to address another man whom he is politely rebuking.

Did you not agree with me for one denarius?

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

were complaining. Alternate translation: "We already agreed that I would give you one denarius."

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages"

Matthew 20:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a landowner who hires workers.

Is it not lawful for me to do as I want with what belongs to me?

The landowner uses a question to correct the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "It is lawful for me do what I want with my own possessions."

Is it not lawful for me

"Do I not have the right" or "Is it not proper." The landowner is reminding the laborers that everyone allows people to do what they wish with their own property. He is not asking if there is a law against what he is doing.

Or are you envious because I am good?

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "You should not be envious because I am good."

I am good

In the context here, the reader should understand the landowner being "good" as "generous," the opposite of the laborers being "evil," which is "envious."

Matthew 20:16

So the last will be first, and the first last

Here "first" and "last" refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with their status in the kingdom of heaven. See how you translated a similar statement in Matthew 19:30. Alternate translation: "So those who seem to be unimportant now will be the most important, and those who seem to be the most important now will be the least important"

So the last will be first

Here the parable has ended and Jesus is speaking. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus said, 'So the last will be first'"

Matthew 20:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time as he and his disciples travel to Jerusalem.

going up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was on top of a hill, so people had to travel up to get there.

Matthew 20:18

See, we are going

Jesus uses the word "See" to tell the disciples the must pay attention to what he is about to tell them.

we are going

Here "we" refers to Jesus and the disciples.

the Son of Man will be given over

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will give the Son of Man over"

Son of Man ... him

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate these in the first person.

They will condemn

The chief priests and scribes will condemn Jesus.

Matthew 20:19

and will deliver him to the Gentiles for them to mock

The chief priests and scribes will deliver Jesus to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles will mock him.

to flog

"to whip him" or "to beat him with whips"

third day

"Third" is the ordinal form of "three."

him ... him ... he

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate these in the first person.

he will be raised up

The words "be raised up" are an idiom for "be made alive again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise him up" or "God will make him alive again"

Matthew 20:20

Connecting Statement:

In response to the question that the mother of two of the disciples asks, Jesus teaches his disciples about authority and serving others in the kingdom of heaven.

the sons of Zebedee

This refers to James and John.

Matthew 20:21

at your right hand ... at your left hand

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor.

in your kingdom

Here "kingdom" refers to Jesus ruling as king. Alternate translation: "when you are king"

Matthew 20:22

You do not know

Here "you" is plural and refers to the mother and the sons.

Are you able

Here "you" is plural, but Jesus is only talking to the two sons.

drink the cup that I am about to drink

To "drink the cup" or "drink from the cup" is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation: "suffer what I am about to suffer"

They said

"The sons of Zebedee said" or "James and John said"

Matthew 20:23

My cup you will indeed drink

To "drink a cup" or "drink from a cup" is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation: "You will indeed suffer as I will suffer"

right hand ... left hand

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor. See how you translated this in [Matthew 20:21]

but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for my Father has prepared those places, and he will give them to whom he chooses"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

relationship between God and Jesus.
Matthew 20:24
heard this
"heard what James and John had asked Jesus"
they were very angry with the two brothers
If necessary, you can make explicit why the ten disciples were angry. Alternate translation: "they were very angry with the two brothers because each of them also wanted to sit in a place of honor next to Jesus"
Matthew 20:25
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes teaching his disciples about authority and serving others.
called them
"called the twelve disciples"
the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them
"the Gentile kings forcefully rule over their people"
their important men
"the important men among the Gentiles"
exercise authority over them
"have control over the people"
Matthew 20:26
whoever wishes
"whoever wants" or "whoever desires"
Matthew 20:27
to be first
"to be important"
Matthew 20:28
the Son of Man ... his life
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate this in the first person.
did not come to be served
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did not come so that other people would serve him" or "did not come so that other people would serve me"
but to serve
You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but to serve other people"
to give his life as a ransom for many
Jesus's life being a "ransom" is a metaphor for his being punished in order to set people free from being punished for their own sins. Alternate translation: "to give his life as a substitute for many" or "to give his life as a substitute to set many free"
to give his life
To give one's live is an idiom meaning to die voluntarily, usually in order to help others. Alternate translation: "to die"
for many
You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "for many people"
Matthew 20:29
Connecting Statement:
This begins an account of Jesus healing two blind men.
As they went
This refers to the disciples and Jesus.
followed him
"followed Jesus"
Matthew 20:30
There were two blind men sitting
This is sometimes translated as "Behold, there were two blind men sitting." Matthew is alerting us to a new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
When they heard
"When the two blind men heard"
was passing by
"was walking by them"
Son of David
Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of King David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling Jesus by this title.
Matthew 20:31
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 20:32
called to them
"called to the blind men"
do you wish
"do you want"
Matthew 20:33
that our eyes may be opened
The men speak of becoming able to see as if there eyes were to be opened. Because of Jesus's previous question, we understand that they were expressing their desire. Alternate translation: "we want you to open our eyes" or "we want to be able to see"
Matthew 20:34
being moved with compassion
"having compassion" or "feeling compassion for them"

Chapter 21

Matthew 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 21:5,16 and 42, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there

were both a donkey had a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 21:1-7 and Mark 11:1-7 and Luke 19:29-36 and John 12:14-15)

Hosanna

This is what the people shouted to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. This word means "save us," but people used it to praise God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you"

No one knows for sure what this phrase means. No one knows if Jesus meant that God would someday give the kingdom back or not.

Links:

Matthew 21:1 Notes

Matthew 21:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. Here he gives his disciples instructions about what they are to do.

Bethphage

This is a village near Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:2

a donkey tied up

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "a donkey that someone has tied up"

tied up there

You can make explicit how the donkey is tied. Alternate translation: "tied up there to a post" or "tied up there to a tree"

colt

young male donkey

Matthew 21:3

General Information:

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Matthew 21:4

General Information:

Here the author quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that Jesus fulfilled prophecy by riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew explains that Jesus's actions fulfilled scripture.

all this happened to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this happened so that Jesus would fulfill what God spoke through the prophet long ago"

through the prophet

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

Matthew 21:5

the daughter of Zion

The "daughter" of a city means the people of the city. Alternate translation: "the people of Zion" or "the people who live in Zion"

Zion

This is another name for Jerusalem.

on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey

The phrase "on a colt, the foal of a donkey" is explaining that the donkey is a young animal. Alternate translation: "on a young, male donkey"

Matthew 21:6

General Information:

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Matthew 21:7

cloaks

These were outer clothing or long coats.

Matthew 21:8

crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches off the trees and spread them in the road

These are ways to show honor to Jesus as he was entering Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:9

Hosanna

This word means "save us," but it can also mean "praise God!"

the son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "descendant of king David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the crowd was probably calling Jesus by this title.

in the name of the Lord

Here "in the name" means "in the power" or "as a representative." Alternate translation: "in the power of the Lord" or "as the representative of the Lord"

Hosanna in the highest

Here "highest" refers to God who rules from the highest heaven. Alternate translation: "Praise God, who is in the highest heaven" or "Praise be to God"

Matthew 21:10

all the city was stirred

Here "city" refers to the people living there. Alternate translation: "many people from all over the city were stirred"

stirred

"excited"

Matthew 21:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:12

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus entering into the temple.

Jesus entered the temple

Jesus did not enter the actual temple. He entered the courtyard around the temple.

who bought and sold

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Merchants were selling animals and other items that travelers bought to offer the proper sacrifices at the temple.
Matthew 21:13
General Information:
Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the vendors and money changers.
He said to them
"Jesus said to those who were changing money and buying and selling things"
It is written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The prophets wrote long ago" or "God said long ago"
My house will be called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My house will be"
My house
Here "My" refers to God and "house" refers to the temple.
a house of prayer
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "a place where people pray"
a den of robbers
Jesus uses a metaphor to scold the people for buying and selling items in the temple. Alternate translation: "like a place where robbers hide"
Matthew 21:14
the blind and the lame
These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "those who were blind and those who were lame"
lame
those who have an injured foot or leg that makes walking difficult
Matthew 21:15
the marvelous things
"the wonderful things" or "the miracles." This refers to Jesus healing the blind and lame people in Matthew 21:14.
Hosanna
This word means "save us" but can also mean "praise God!" See how you translated this in Matthew 21:9.
the Son of David
Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "descendant of king David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the children were probably calling Jesus by this title. See how you translated this in Matthew 21:9.
they became very angry
It is implied that they were angry because they did not believe Jesus was the Christ and they did not want other people praising him. Alternate translation: "they became very angry because people were praising him"
Matthew 21:16
General Information:
Jesus quotes from the Psalms to justify how the people had responded to him.
Do you hear what they are saying?
The chief priests and scribes ask this question to rebuke Jesus because they are angry with him. Alternate translation: "You should not allow them to say these things about you!"
But have you never read ... praise'?
Jesus asks this question to remind the chief priests and scribes of what they have studied in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "Yes, I hear them, but you should remember what you read in the scriptures ... praise.'"
Out of the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise
The phrase "out of the mouths" refers to speaking, and "prepared praise" is a metonym for preparing the children and infants to praise. Alternate translation: "You prepared little children and nursing infants to give praise to God"
Matthew 21:17
Jesus left them
"Jesus left the chief priests and scribes"
Matthew 21:18
Connecting Statement:
In verses 18 through 22, Jesus uses a fig tree to teach his disciples about faith and prayer.
Now
This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew explains that Jesus is hungry and that is why he stops at the fig tree.
Matthew 21:19
he ... found nothing on it except leaves
This double negative emphasizes that leaves were the only things that he found. Alternate translation: "he ... found only leaves on it"
withered
died and dried up
Matthew 21:20
How did the fig tree immediately wither away?
The disciples use a question to emphasize how surprised they are. Alternate translation: "We are astonished that the fig tree has dried up so quickly!"
wither away
"dry up and die"
Matthew 21:21
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
if you have faith and do not doubt
Jesus expresses the same idea both positively and negatively to emphasize that this faith must be genuine. Alternate translation: "if you truly believe"
you will even say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,'
You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will even be able to tell this mountain to get up and throw itself into the sea,"
it will be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will happen"
Matthew 21:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 21:23
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of the religious leaders questioning

Jesus's authority.

had come into the temple

It is implied that Jesus did not enter the actual temple. He entered the courtyard around the temple.

these things

This refers to Jesus teaching and healing in the temple. It probably also refers to Jesus driving out the buyers and sellers the previous day.

Matthew 21:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the religious leaders.

from where did it come?

"where did he get the authority to do that?"

If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'

This has quotes within a quote. You could translate the direct quotations as an indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "If we say that we believe John received his authority from heaven, then Jesus will ask us why we did not believe John."

From heaven

Here "heaven" refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God in heaven"

Why then did you not believe him?

The religious leaders know that Jesus could scold them with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "Then you should have believed John the Baptist"

Matthew 21:26

But if we say, 'From men,'

This is a quote within a quote. You could translate the direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But if we say that we believe John received his authority from men,"

we fear the crowd

"we fear what the crowd would think or even do to us"

they all view John as a prophet

"they believe John is a prophet"

Matthew 21:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about two sons to rebuke the religious leaders and to illustrate their unbelief.

But what do you think?

Jesus uses a question to challenge the religious leaders to think deeply about the parable he will tell them. Alternate translation: "Tell me what you think about what I am about to tell you."

Matthew 21:29

he changed his mind

This refers to the son reconsidering his thoughts and deciding to act differently from how he had said he would act.

Matthew 21:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:31

They said

"The chief priests and elders said"

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to the chief priests and elders"

Truly I say to you

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

the tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you do

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "when God establishes his rule on earth, he will agree to bless the tax collectors and prostitutes by ruling over them before he agrees to do that for you"

before you do

Possible meanings are 1) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes sooner than he will accept the Jewish religious leaders, or 2) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes instead of the Jewish religious leaders.

Matthew 21:32

John came to you

Here "you" is plural and refers to all the people of Israel, not just the religious leaders. Alternate translation: "John came to the people of Israel"

in the way of righteousness

This is an idiom that means John showed the people the right way to live. Alternate translation: "and told you the way God wants you to live"

you did not believe him

Here "you" is plural and refers to the religious leaders.

Matthew 21:33

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about rebellious servants.

a landowner

"a person who owned a piece of property"

a hedge

"a wall" or "a fence"

dug a winepress in it

"dug a hole in the vineyard in which to press the grapes"

rented it out to vine growers

The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the vine growers to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep the rest.

vine growers

These were people who knew how to take care of vines and grapes.

Matthew 21:34

to collect his fruit

The landowner expected the vine growers pay him for allowing them to use the vineyard by giving him some of the fruit they had grown.

Matthew 21:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

his servants

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"the landowner's servants"
Matthew 21:36
General Information:
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Matthew 21:37
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 21:38
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable.
Matthew 21:39
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 21:40
Now
The word "now" does not mean "at this moment," but it is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.
Matthew 21:41
They said to him
Matthew does not make clear who answered Jesus. If you need to specify an audience you can translate as "The people said to Jesus."
He will violently destroy those wicked people
"He will bring those wicked people to a miserable end" or "He will make those evil people die in misery"
Matthew 21:42
General Information:
Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that God will honor the one whom the religious leaders reject.
Connecting Statement:
Here Jesus begins to explain the parable of the rebellious servants.
Jesus said to them
It is unclear to whom Jesus asks the following question. If you need to make "them" specific, use the same audience as you did in Matthew 21:41.
Did you never read ... eyes'?
Jesus uses a question to make his audience think deeply about what this scripture means. Alternate translation: "Think about what you have read ... eyes.'"
The stone which the builders rejected has been made the cornerstone
Jesus is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, will reject Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, like the cornerstone in a building.
has been made the cornerstone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has become the cornerstone"
This was from the Lord
"The Lord has caused this great change"
it is marvelous in our eyes
Here "in our eyes" refers to seeing. Alternate translation: "it is wonderful to see"
Matthew 21:43
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
to you
Here "you" is plural. Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who had rejected him.
the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation that produces its fruits
Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take his kingdom away from you and will give it to a nation that produces the kingdom's fruits" or "God will reject you, and he will be king over people from other nations that produce the kingdom's fruits"
that produces its fruits
"Fruits" here is a metaphor for "results" or outcome." Alternate translation: "that produces good results"
Matthew 21:44
Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces
Here, "this stone" is the same stone as in [Matthew 21:42]
But anyone on whom it falls will be crushed
This means basically the same thing as the previous sentence. It is a metaphor that means the Christ will have the final judgment and will destroy everyone who rebels against him.
Matthew 21:45
Connecting Statement:
The religious leaders react to the parable that Jesus told.
his parables
"Jesus's parables"
Matthew 21:46
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 22

Matthew 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 44, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wedding Feast

In the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14), Jesus taught that when God offers to save a person, that person needs to accept the offer. Jesus spoke of life with God as a feast that a king prepares for his son, who has just gotten married. In addition, Jesus emphasized that not everyone whom God invites will properly prepare themselves to come to the feast. God will throw these people out from the feast.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When the king in the parable said,

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"My oxen and fattened calves have been killed" (Matthew 22:4), he assumed that the hearers would understand that those who had killed the animals had also cooked them.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. To the Jews, the ancestors were the masters of the descendants, but in one psalm David calls one of his descendants "Lord." Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that this is a paradox, saying, "If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?" (Matthew 22:45).

Links:

Matthew 22:1 Notes

Matthew 22:1

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and to illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about a marriage feast.

to them

"to the people"

Matthew 22:2

The kingdom of heaven is like

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated this in Matthew 13:24.

Matthew 22:3

those who had been invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people the king had invited"

Matthew 22:4

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

servants, saying, 'Tell them who are invited, "See ... feast."'

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "servants, ordering them to tell those whom he invited, 'See ... feast.'"

See

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

My oxen and fattened cattle have been killed

It is implied that the animals are cooked and ready to eat. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My servants have killed and cooked my oxen and my fattened cattle"

My oxen and fattened cattle

"My best oxen and calves for eating"

Matthew 22:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

But they paid no attention

"But the guests the king invited ignored the invitation"

Matthew 22:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 22:7

they destroyed those murderers

"they killed those murderers." If your language has a strong word for "killed," you might want to use it here.

Matthew 22:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

those who were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom I invited"

Matthew 22:9

the highway crossings

"where the main roads of the city cross." The king is sending the servants to the place where they are most likely to find people.

Matthew 22:10

both bad and good

"both the good people and the bad people"

So the wedding hall was filled with guests

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the guests filled the wedding hall"

hall

a large room

Matthew 22:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

Matthew 22:12

how did you come in here without wedding clothes?

The king uses a question to scold the guest. Alternate translation: "you are not wearing proper clothes for a wedding. You should not be here."

the man was speechless

"the man was silent"

Matthew 22:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a marriage feast.

Bind this man hand and foot

"Tie him up so that he cannot move his hands or feet"

the outer darkness

Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

weeping and the grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Matthew 22:14

For many people are called, but few are chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God invites many people, but he only chooses a few"

For

This marks a transition. Jesus has ended the parable and now explains the point of the parable.

Matthew 22:15

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions. Here the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Pharisees ask him about paying taxes to Caesar.
how they might entrap Jesus in his own talk
"how they could cause Jesus to say something wrong so they could arrest him"
Matthew 22:16
their disciples ... Herodians
The disciples of the Pharisees supported paying taxes only to Jewish authorities. The Herodians supported paying taxes to the Roman authorities. It is implied that the Pharisees believed that no matter what Jesus said, he would offend one of these groups.
Herodians
These were officials and followers of the Jewish king Herod. He was friends with Roman authorities.
you do not show partiality between people
"you do not show special honor to anyone" or "you do not consider anyone more important than anyone else"
Matthew 22:17
to pay taxes to Caesar
People did not pay taxes directly to Caesar but to one of his tax collectors. Alternate translation: "to pay the taxes that Caesar requires"
Matthew 22:18
Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?
Jesus uses a question to scold those who were trying to trap him. Alternate translation: "Do not test me, you hypocrites!" or "I know that you hypocrites are only trying to test me!"
Matthew 22:19
denarius
This was a Roman coin worth one day's wages.
Matthew 22:20
to them
Here "them" refers to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees.
Whose image and name are these?
Jesus uses a question to get the people to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "Tell me whose image and name you see on this coin."
Matthew 22:21
Caesar's
You can make clear the understood information in their response. Alternate translation: "The coin has Caesar's image and name on it"
things that are Caesar's
"things that belong to Caesar"
things that are God's
"things that belong to God"
Matthew 22:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 22:23
Connecting Statement:
The Sadducees try to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about marriage and the resurrection of the dead.
Matthew 22:24
Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies ... brother.'
The religious leaders were asking Jesus about what Moses had written in the scriptures. If your language does not allow quotes within quotes, this could be stated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies ...brother."
his brother ... his wife ... his brother
Here "his" refers to the dead man.
Matthew 22:25
Connecting Statement:
The Sadducees continue asking Jesus a question.
The first
"The oldest"
Matthew 22:26
the second ... the third ... the seventh
"the next oldest ... the next oldest ... the youngest" or "his oldest younger brother ... that brother's oldest younger brother ... the youngest"
Matthew 22:27
After them all
"After every brother had died"
Matthew 22:28
Now
Here the Sadducees shift from the story about the seven brothers to their actual question.
in the resurrection
"when dead people come back to life"
Matthew 22:29
You are mistaken
It is implied that Jesus means that they are mistaken about what they think about the resurrection. Alternate translation: "You are mistaken about the resurrection"
the power of God
"what God is able to do"
Matthew 22:30
in the resurrection
"when dead people rise back to life"
they neither marry
"people will not marry"
nor are given in marriage
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "nor will people give their children in marriage"
Matthew 22:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins asking a question to show that people who have died will live again. He is scolding the Sadducees by asking this question. He is not looking for an answer.
have you not read
This is the beginning of a question that end with the words "the God of Jacob" in verse 32. Jesus asks this question to remind the religious leaders of what they know from scripture. If this rhetorical question is translated as a statement, the question mark in verse 32 would be changed to a period. Alternate translation: "you have read"
what was spoken to you by God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God spoke to you"
Matthew 22:32
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes asking the question he began in verse 31.
the God of Jacob'?
This question begins in verse 31 and ends in verse 32. Jesus uses this question to remind the Sadducees of what is in the

scripture and to rebuke them for not understanding it. If you translated the rhetorical question as a statement in verse 31, then the question mark here would be changed to a period. Alternate translation: "the God of Jacob.'"

'I am the God of ... Jacob'

You can translate the direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "that he is the God of ... Jacob"

of the dead, but of the living

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "of dead people, but he is the God of living people"

Matthew 22:33

General Information:

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Matthew 22:34

General Information:

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Matthew 22:35

Connecting Statement:

A Pharisee who was an expert in the law tries to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about the greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:36

General Information:

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Matthew 22:37

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Deuteronomy as the greatest commandment.

with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind

These three phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly." Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being.

Matthew 22:38

the great and first commandment

Here "great" and "first" mean the same thing. They emphasize that this is the most important commandment.

Matthew 22:39

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Leviticus as the second greatest commandment.

your neighbor

Here "neighbor" means more than just those who live nearby. Jesus means a person must love all people.

Matthew 22:40

On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets

Here the phrase "the whole law and the prophets" refers to all of scripture. Alternate translation: "Everything that Moses and the prophets wrote in the scriptures is based on these two commandments"

Matthew 22:41

Connecting Statement:

Jesus asks the Pharisees a difficult question in order to stop their attempts to trap him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story in which Jesus asks the religious leaders a question.

Matthew 22:42

son ... son of David

In both of these "son" means "descendant."

Matthew 22:43

General Information:

Jesus quotes from the Psalms to show that the Christ is more than just "the son of David."

How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord

Jesus uses a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. Alternate translation: "Then, tell me why David in the Spirit calls him Lord"

David in the Spirit

"David, whom the Holy Spirit is inspiring." This means the Holy Spirit is influencing what David says.

call him

Here "him" refers to the Christ, who is also the descendant of David.

Matthew 22:44

The Lord said

Here "Lord" refers to God the Father.

to my Lord

Here "Lord" refers to the Christ. Also, "my" refers to David. This means the Christ is superior to David.

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I make your enemies your footstool

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "until I conquer your enemies" or "until I make your enemies bow down before you"

Matthew 22:45

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 19:1, that tells of Jesus ministering in Judea.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions.

If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?

Jesus uses a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "David calls him 'Lord,' so the Christ has to be more than just a descendant of David."

If David then calls the Christ

David referred to Jesus as "Lord" because Jesus was not only a descendant of David, but he was also superior to him.

Matthew 22:46

to answer him a word

Here "word" refers to what people say. Alternate translation: "to answer him anything" or "to answer him"

any more questions

It is implied that no one asked him the kind of questions that were intended to make him say something wrong so the religious leaders could arrest him.

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Chapter 23

Matthew 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Hypocrites

Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites many times (Matthew 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29) and carefully tells what he means by doing that. The Pharisees made rules that no one could actually obey, and then they persuaded the ordinary people that they were guilty because they could not obey the rules. Also, the Pharisees obeyed their own rules instead of obeying God's original commands in the law of Moses.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name calling

In most cultures, it is wrong to insult people. The Pharisees took many of the words in this chapter as insults. Jesus called them "hypocrites," "blind guides," "fools," and "serpents" (Matthew 23:16-17). Jesus uses these words to say that God would surely punish them because they were doing wrong.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "He who is greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11-12).

Links:

Matthew 23:1 Notes

Matthew 23:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story, in which Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment. Here he begins to warn the people about the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 23:2

sit in Moses' seat

Here "seat" represents the authority to rule and make judgments. Alternate translation: "have authority as Moses had" or "have authority to say what the law of Moses means"

Matthew 23:3

whatever ... do these things and observe them

"all the things ... do them and observe them" or "everything ... do it and observe it"

Matthew 23:4

they bind heavy burdens that are difficult to carry, and then they put them on people's shoulders. But they themselves will not move a finger to carry them

Here "bind heavy burdens ... put them on people's shoulders" is a metaphor for the religious leaders making many difficult rules and making the people obey them. And "will not move a finger" is an idiom that means the religious leaders will not help the people. Alternate translation: "they make you obey many rules that are difficult to follow. But they do nothing at all to help you follow the rules"

Matthew 23:5

They do all their deeds to be seen by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They do all their deeds so that people can see what they do"

For they make their phylacteries wide, and they enlarge the edges of their garments

Both of these are things the Pharisees do to appear as if they honor God more than other people.

phylacteries

small leather boxes containing paper with scripture written on it

they enlarge the edges of their garments

The Pharisees made the tassels on the bottom of their robes especially long to show their devotion to God.

Matthew 23:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowds and disciples about the Pharisees.

places of honor ... chief seats

Both of these are the places where the most important people sit.

Matthew 23:7

marketplaces

large, open-air areas where people buy and sell items

to be called 'Rabbi' by people.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for people to call them 'Rabbi.'"

Matthew 23:8

But you must not be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But you must not let anyone call you"

you

All occurrences of "you" are plural and refer to all of Jesus's followers.

all of you are brothers

Here "brothers" means "fellow believers."

Matthew 23:9

call no man on earth your father

Jesus is using hyperbole to tell his hearers that they must not allow even the most important people to be more important to them than God is. Alternate translation: "do not call any man on earth your father" or "do not say that any man on earth is your father"

you have only one Father

"Father" here is an important title for God.

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Matthew 23:10
Neither must you be called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Also, do not let anyone call you"
you have only one teacher, the Christ
When Jesus said "the Christ," he was speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Christ, am your only teacher"
Matthew 23:11
he who is greatest among you
"the person who is most important among you"
among you
Here "you" is plural and refers to Jesus's followers.
Matthew 23:12
exalts himself
"makes himself important"
will be humbled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will humble"
will be exalted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make important" or "God will honor"
Matthew 23:13
General Information:
Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. If you do not keep the metaphor of the house, be sure to change all instances of "shut" and "enter." Also, since the words "kingdom of heaven," which refer to God, who lives in heaven, occur only in Matthew, try to use your language's word for "heaven" in your translation.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.
But woe to you
"How terrible it will be for you!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.
You shut the kingdom of heaven against people ... you do not enter it ... neither do you allow those about to enter to do so
Jesus is speaking of the kingdom of heaven, which is God ruling over his people, as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use your language's word for "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "You make it impossible for people to enter the kingdom of heaven ... you do not enter it ... neither do you allow those about to enter to do so" or "You prevent people from accepting God, who lives in heaven, as king ... you do not accept him as king ... and you make it impossible for those about to accept him as king to do so"
Matthew 23:14
General Information:
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Matthew 23:15
you go over sea and land
This is an idiom that means they go to distant places. Alternate translation: "you travel great distances"
to make one convert
"to make one person accept your religion"
son of hell
Here "son of" is an idiom that means "one belonging to." Alternate translation: "person who belongs in hell" or "person who should go to hell"
Matthew 23:16
blind guides
The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. See how you translated "blind guides" in [Matthew 15:14]
by the temple, it is nothing
"by the temple does not have to keep his oath"
is bound to his oath
"is tied to his oath." The phrase "bound to his oath" is a metaphor for being required to do what one has said he would do in an oath. Alternate translation: "must do what he promised to do"
Matthew 23:17
blind fools
The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.
Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold holy?
Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees because they treated the gold as if it were more important than the temple. Alternate translation: "The temple that has dedicated the gold to God is more important than the gold!"
the temple that makes the gold holy
"the temple that makes the gold belong to God alone"
Matthew 23:18
And
The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "And you also say"
it is nothing
"he does not have to do what he has sworn to do" or "he does not have to keep his oath"
the gift
This is an animal or grain that a person would bring to God by putting it on God's altar.
is bound to his oath
"is tied to his oath." Being required to do what one has said he would do in an oath is spoken of as if he is tied to the oath. Alternate translation: "must do what he promised to do"
Matthew 23:19
blind people
The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.
Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy?
Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees for treating the gift as if it were more important than the altar. Alternate translation: "The altar that makes the gift holy is greater than the gift!"
the altar that makes the gift holy
"the altar that makes the gift special to God"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Matthew 23:20
by everything on it
"by all the gifts that people have placed on it"
Matthew 23:21
the one who lives in it
God the Father
Matthew 23:22
him who sits on it
God the Father
Matthew 23:23
Woe to you ... hypocrites!
"How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.
mint and dill and cumin
These are various leaves and seeds people used to make food taste good.
you have left undone
"you have not obeyed"
the weightier matters
"the more important matters"
But these you ought to have done
"You ought to have obeyed these more important laws"
and not to have left the other undone
This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "and to make sure the other is done" or "and to make sure to do the other"
Matthew 23:24
You blind guides
Jesus uses this metaphor to describe the Pharisees. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God. See how you translated this metaphor in [Matthew 15:14]
you who strain out a gnat but swallow a camel
Being careful to follow the less important laws and ignoring the more important laws is as foolish as being careful not to swallow the smallest unclean animal but eating the meat of the largest unclean animal. Alternate translation: "you are as foolish as a person who strains out a gnat that falls into his drink but swallows a camel"
strain out a gnat
This means to pour a liquid through a cloth to remove a gnat from a drink.
gnat
a small flying insect
Matthew 23:25
Woe to you ... hypocrites!
"How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.
For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence
This is a metaphor that means the scribes and Pharisees appear pure on the outside to others, but on the inside they are wicked.
they are full of robbery and self-indulgence
"they take what belongs to others, and they do almost everything to benefit themselves"
Matthew 23:26
You blind Pharisee
The Pharisees were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.
Clean first the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside may become clean also
This is a metaphor that means that if they would become pure in their inner being, then the result is that they would be pure on the outside as well.
Matthew 23:27
you are like whitewashed tombs ... unclean
This is a simile that means the scribes and Pharisees may appear to be pure on the outside, but they are wicked on the inside.
whitewashed tombs
"tombs that someone has painted white." The Jews would paint tombs white so that people would easily see them and avoid touching them. Touching a tomb would make a person ceremonially unclean.
Matthew 23:28
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 23:29
of the righteous
This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "of the righteous people"
Matthew 23:30
in the days of our fathers
"during the time of our forefathers"
we would not have been partners with them
"we would not have joined with them"
shedding the blood of
Here "blood" refers to life. To shed blood means to kill. Alternate translation: "killing" or "murdering"
Matthew 23:31
sons of those who murdered the prophets
Possible meanings are 1) the word "sons" is a metonym for "descendants." Alternate translation: "descendants of those who murdered the prophets" or 2) the word "sons" is a metaphor for people who are like others. Alternate translation: "just like those who murdered the prophets."
Matthew 23:32
You also fill up the measure of your fathers
Jesus uses this as a metaphor meaning the Pharisees will complete the wicked behavior that their forefathers started when they killed the prophets. Alternate translation: "You also finish the sins your ancestors began"
Matthew 23:33
You serpents, you offspring of vipers
Serpents are snakes, and vipers are poisonous snakes. They are dangerous and often symbols of evil. Alternate translation: "You who are as evil and dangerous as poisonous snakes"
offspring of vipers
Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of." See how you translated a similar phrase in Matthew 3:7.
how will you escape the judgment of hell?
Jesus uses this question as a rebuke. Alternate translation: "there is no way for you to escape the judgment of hell!"
Matthew 23:34

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Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.
I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes
Sometimes the present tense is used to show that someone will do something very soon. Alternate translation: "I will send prophets, wise men, and scribes to you"
chase from city to city
You may need to make explicit that the purpose of chasing is to persecute. Alternate translation: "chase from city to city and persecute them" or "persecute them in city after city"
Matthew 23:35
upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on the earth ... blood ... blood
The phrase "upon you will come" is an idiom that means to receive punishment. To shed blood is a metonym meaning to kill people, so "righteous blood that has been shed on the earth" represents righteous people who have been killed. Alternate translation: "God will punish you for the murders of all the righteous people ... murder .. murder"
Abel ... Zechariah
Abel was the first righteous victim of murder, and Zechariah, who was murdered by Jews in the temple, was probably thought to be the last. These two men represent all the righteous people who have been murdered.
Zechariah
This Zechariah is unknown. He was not the father of John the Baptist.
whom you murdered
Jesus does not mean the people to whom he is speaking actually murdered Zechariah. He means their ancestors did.
Matthew 23:36
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
Matthew 23:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus mourns over the people of Jerusalem because they reject every messenger that God sends to them.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem
Jesus speaks to the people of Jerusalem as though they were the city itself.
those who are sent to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God sends to you"
your children
Jesus is speaking to Jerusalem as if it is a woman and the people are her children. Alternate translation: "your people" or "your inhabitants"
just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings
This is a simile that emphasizes Jesus's love for the people and how he wanted to take care of them.
hen
a female chicken. You can translate with any bird that protects her children under her wing.
Matthew 23:38
your house is left to you desolate
"God will leave your house, and it will be empty"
your house
Possible meanings are 1) "the city of Jerusalem" or 2) "the temple."
Matthew 23:39
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
Here "in the name" means "in the power" or "as a representative." See how you translated this in [Matthew 21:9]

Chapter 24

Matthew 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Jesus begins to prophesy about the future from that time until he returns as king of everything. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

"The end of the age"

In this chapter, Jesus gives an answer to his disciples when they ask how they will know when he will come again.

The example of Noah

In the time of Noah, God sent a great flood to punish people for their sins. He warned them many times about this coming flood, but it actually began suddenly. In this chapter, Jesus draws a comparison between that flood and the last days. (See: sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Let"

The ULB uses this word to begin several commands of Jesus, such as "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (24:16), "let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house" (24:17), and "let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak" (24:18). There are many different ways to form a command. Translators must select the most natural ways in their own languages. Note that this word does not mean "permit."

Links:

Matthew 24:1 Notes

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Matthew 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to describe events that will happen before he comes again during the end times.

from the temple

It is implied that Jesus was not in the temple itself. He was in the courtyard around the temple.

Matthew 24:2

Do you not see all these things?

Jesus uses a question to make the disciples think deeply about what he will tell them. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you something about all these buildings."

Truly I say to you

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

not one stone will be left on another that will not be torn down

It is implied that enemy soldiers will tear down the stones. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the enemy soldiers come, they will tear down every stone in these buildings"

Matthew 24:3

What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age

Here "your coming" refers to when Jesus will come in power, establishing God's reign on earth and bringing this age to an end. Alternate translation: "What will be the sign that you are about to come and that the world is about to end"

Matthew 24:4

Be careful that no one leads you astray

Here "leads you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "Be careful that no one deceives you"

Matthew 24:5

many will come in my name

The name here is the name of Messiah or Christ, not of Jesus and seems to be a metonym for the authority of the Christ. Alternate translation: "many will claim to have my authority as Christ"

will lead many astray

Here "leads you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "will deceive many people"

Matthew 24:6

See that you are not troubled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let these things trouble you"

Matthew 24:7

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom

Both of these mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that people everywhere will fight each other.

Matthew 24:8

the beginning of birth pains

This refers to the pains a woman feels before giving birth to a child. This metaphor means these wars, famines, and earthquakes are just the beginning of the events that will lead to the end of the age.

Matthew 24:9

they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you

"people will give you over to the authorities, who will make you suffer and will kill you."

You will be hated by all the nations

Here "nations" is a metonym, referring to the people of nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People from every nation will hate you"

for my name's sake

Here "name" refers to the complete person. Alternate translation: "because you believe in me"

Matthew 24:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 24:11

will rise up

"Rise" here is an idiom for "become established." Alternate translation: "will come"

and lead many astray

Here "lead ... astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "and deceive many people"

Matthew 24:12

lawlessness will increase

The abstract noun "lawlessness" can be translated with the phrase "disobeying the law." Alternate translation: "disobeying the law will increase" or "people will disobey God's law more and more"

the love of many will grow cold

Possible meanings are 1) "many people will no longer love other people" or 2) "many people will no longer love God."

Matthew 24:13

the one who endures to the end will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save the person who endures to the end"

the one who endures

"the person who stays faithful"

to the end

It is not clear whether the word "end" refers to when a person dies or when the persecution ends or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.

the end

"the end of the world" or "the end of the age"

Matthew 24:14

This good news of the kingdom will be preached

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will tell the good news that God will rule"

all the nations

Here, "nations" stands for people. Alternate translation: "all people in all places"

Matthew 24:15

the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the shameful one who defiles the things of God, about whom Daniel the prophet wrote"

let the reader understand

This is not Jesus speaking. Matthew added this to alert the reader that Jesus was using words that they would need to think about and interpret.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Matthew 24:16
General Information:
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Matthew 24:17
let him who is on the housetop
Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people could stand on them.
Matthew 24:18
General Information:
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Matthew 24:19
in those days
"at that time"
Matthew 24:20
that your flight will not occur
"that you will not have to flee" or "that you will not have to run away"
the winter
"the cold season"
Matthew 24:21
General Information:
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Matthew 24:22
Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved
This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "If God had not shortened the time of suffering, everyone would have died" or "Because God shortened those days, some people lived"
no flesh
"nobody" or "no one." Here, "flesh" is poetic way of referring to people.
those days will be shortened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will shorten the time of suffering"
Matthew 24:23
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.
do not believe it
"do not believe the false thing they have said to you"
Matthew 24:24
so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect
Here "lead astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. This can be translated as two sentences. Alternate translation: "so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect" or "so as to deceive people. If possible, they would even deceive the elect"
Matthew 24:25
General Information:
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Matthew 24:26
if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do
This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "if someone tells you that the Christ is in the wilderness, do"
Or, 'See, he is in the inner rooms,'
This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Or, if someone tells you that the Christ is in the inner room,"
in the inner rooms
"in a secret room" or "in secret places"
Matthew 24:27
as the lightning shines ... so will be the coming
This means that the Son of Man will come very quickly and will be easy to see.
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
Matthew 24:28
Wherever a dead animal is, there the vultures will gather
This is probably a proverb that the people of Jesus's time understood. Possible meanings are 1) when the Son of Man comes, everyone will see him and know that he has come, or 2) wherever spiritually dead people are, false prophets will be there to tell them lies.
vultures
birds that eat the bodies of dead or dying creatures
Matthew 24:29
immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun
"as soon as the tribulation of those days has finished, the sun"
the tribulation of those days
"that time of suffering"
the sun will be darkened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make the sun dark"
the powers of the heavens will be shaken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will shake things in the sky and above the sky"
Matthew 24:30
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
all the tribes
Here "tribes" refers to people. Alternate translation: "all the people of the tribes" or "all the people"
Matthew 24:31
He will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet
"He will have a trumpet sounded and send his angels" or "He will have an angel blow a trumpet, and he will send his angels"
He ... his
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
they will gather
"his angels will gather"
his elect
These are the people whom the Son of Man has chosen.
from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other
Both of these mean the same thing. They are idioms that mean "from everywhere." Alternate translation: "from all over the world"
Matthew 24:32
General Information:
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Matthew 24:33
he is near, at the very gates
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person and using the imagery of a king or important official getting close to the gates of a walled city. This metaphor means the time for Jesus to come is soon. Alternate translation: "I am near and will soon appear"

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Matthew 24:34
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
this generation will not pass away
Here "pass away" is a polite way of saying "die." Alternate translation: "the people of this generation will not all die"
this generation
Possible interpretations are 1) "all people alive today," referring to the people alive when Jesus was speaking, or 2) "all people alive when these things I have just told you about happen." Try to translate so that both interpretations are possible.
until all of these things will have happened
"until God causes all these things to happen"
Matthew 24:35
Heaven and the earth will pass away
The words "heaven" and "earth" are a synecdoche that includes everything that God has created, especially those things that seem permanent. Jesus is saying that his word, unlike these things, is permanent. Alternate translation: "Even heaven and the earth will pass away"
my words will never pass away
Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: "what I say will always be true"
Matthew 24:36
that day and hour
Here "day" and "hour" refer to the exact time that the Son of Man will return.
nor the Son
"not even the Son"
Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
Father
This is an important title for God.
Matthew 24:37
As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man
"At the time when the Son of Man comes, it will be like the time of Noah."
so will be the coming of the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "so will it be when I, the Son of Man, come"
Matthew 24:38
General Information:
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Matthew 24:39
away—so will be the coming of the Son of Man
This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "away. This is how it will be when the Son of Man comes"
Matthew 24:40
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to tell his disciples to be ready for his return.
Then
This is when the Son of Man comes.
one will be taken, and one will be left
Possible meanings are 1) the Son of Man will take one away to heaven and will leave the other on earth for punishment or 2) the angels will take one away for punishment and leave the other for blessing.
Matthew 24:41
General Information:
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Matthew 24:42
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true"
be on your guard
"pay attention"
Matthew 24:43
that if the master of the house ... broken into
Jesus uses a parable of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.
the thief
Jesus is saying he will come when people are not expecting him, not that he will come to steal.
he would have been on guard
"he would have guarded his house"
would not have allowed his house to be broken into
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "would not have allowed anyone to get into his house to steal things"
Matthew 24:44
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
Matthew 24:45
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.
So who is the faithful and wise servant whom his master ... time?
Jesus uses this question to make his disciples think. Alternate translation: "So who is the faithful and wise servant? He is the one whom his master ... time." or "Be like the faithful and wise servant, whom his master ... time."
give them their food
"give the people in the master's home their food"
Matthew 24:46
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 24:47
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
Matthew 24:48
Connecting Statement:
Jesus concludes his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.
says in his heart
Here "heart" refers to the mind. Alternate translation: "thinks in his mind"
My master has been delayed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My master is slow to return" or "My master will not return for a long time"
Matthew 24:49
General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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Matthew 24:50
on a day that the servant does not expect and at an hour that he does not know
Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that the master will come when the servant is not expecting him.
Matthew 24:51
cut him in pieces
This is an idiom that means to make the person suffer terribly.
assign him a place with the hypocrites
"put him with the hypocrites" or "send him to the place where hypocrites are sent"
there will be weeping and grinding of teeth
"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Chapter 25

Matthew 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the teaching of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the ten virgins

Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) to tell his followers to be ready for him to return. His hearers could understand the parable because they knew Jewish wedding customs.

When the Jews arranged marriages, they would plan for the wedding to take place weeks or months later. At the proper time, the young man would go to his bride's house, where she would be waiting for him. The wedding ceremony would take place, and then the man and his bride would travel to his home, where there would be a feast.

Links:

Matthew 25:1 Notes

Matthew 25:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells a parable about wise and foolish virgins to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.
the kingdom of heaven will be like
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]
lamps
These could have been 1) lamps or 2) torches made by putting cloth around the end of a stick and wetting the cloth with oil.
Matthew 25:2
Five of them
"Five of the virgins"
Matthew 25:3
did not take any oil with them
"had with them only the oil in their lamps"
Matthew 25:4
General Information:
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Matthew 25:5
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
while the bridegroom was delayed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "while the bridegroom was taking a long time to arrive"
they all got sleepy
"all ten virgins got sleepy"
Matthew 25:6
there was a cry
"someone shouted"
Matthew 25:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable.
trimmed their lamps
"adjusted their lamps so they would burn brightly"
Matthew 25:8
The foolish said to the wise
These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "The foolish virgins said to the wise virgins"
our lamps are going out
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the fire in our lamps is about to burn out"
Matthew 25:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 25:10
they went away
"the five foolish virgins went away"
to buy
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to buy more oil"
those who were ready
These are the virgins who had extra oil.
the door was shut
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the servants shut the door"
Matthew 25:11
open for us
This implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "open the door for us so we can come inside"
Matthew 25:12

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Connecting Statement:
Jesus concludes the parable about the ten virgins.
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what the master says next.
I do not know you
"I do not know who you are." This is the end of the parable.
Matthew 25:13
you do not know the day or the hour
Here "day" and "hour" refer to an exact time. The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "you do not know the exact time when the Son of Man will return"
Matthew 25:14
Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells a parable about faithful and unfaithful servants to illustrate that his disciples should remain faithful during his absence and be prepared for his return.
it is like
The word "it" here refers to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:24).
was about to go
"was ready to go" or "was to go soon"
entrusted his possessions to them
"put them in charge of his possessions"
his possessions
"what he owned"
Matthew 25:15
five talents
"five talents of gold." Avoid translating this into modern money. A "talent" of gold was worth twenty years' wages. The parable is contrasting the relative amounts of five, two, and one, as well as the large amount of wealth involved. Alternate translation: "five bags of gold" or "five bags of gold, each worth 20 years' wages"
to another he gave two ... gave one talent
The word "talents" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "to another he gave two talents of gold ... gave one talent of gold" or "to another he gave two bags of gold ... gave one bag of gold"
according to his own ability
The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "according to each servant's skill in managing wealth"
Matthew 25:16
worked with them
"invested the talents" or "used them in business" or "traded with them"
gained another five talents
"out of his investments he earned another five talents"
Matthew 25:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.
gained another two
"earned another two talents"
Matthew 25:18
General Information:
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Matthew 25:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
Matthew 25:20
I have gained five talents more
"I have earned five more talents"
talents
A "talent" was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15]
Matthew 25:21
Well done
"You have done well" or "You have done right." Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done.
Enter into the joy of your master
The phrase "Enter into the joy" is an idiom. Also, the master is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "Come and be happy with me"
Matthew 25:22
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.
I have gained two more talents
"I have earned two more talents"
Matthew 25:23
Well done
"You have done well" or "You have done right." Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done. See how you translated this in Matthew 25:21.
Enter into the joy of your master
The phrase "Enter into the joy" is an idiom. Also, the master is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "Come and be happy with me" See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:21]
Matthew 25:24
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.
a hard man
Possible meanings are 1) a man who demands much from other people or 2) a man who does not treat others well.
You reap where you did not sow, and you harvest where you did not scatter
The words "reap where you did not sow" and "harvest where you did not scatter" mean the same thing. They refer to a farmer who gathers crops that other people have planted. The servant uses this metaphor to accuse the master of taking what rightfully belongs to others.
scatter
"scatter seed." This refers to sowing seed by gently throwing handfuls of it onto the soil.
Matthew 25:25

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

See, you have here what belongs to you
"Look, here is what is yours"
Matthew 25:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.
You wicked and lazy servant, you knew
"You are a wicked servant who does not want to work. You knew"
I reap where I have not sowed and harvest where I have not scattered
The words "reap where I have not sowed" and "harvest where I have not scattered" mean the same thing. They refer to a farmer who gathers crops that people who work for him have planted. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:24]
Matthew 25:27
received back my own
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "received back my own money"
interest
payment from the banker for the temporary use of the master's money
Matthew 25:28
Connecting Statement:
Jesus concludes the parable about the servants and the talents.
take away the talent
The master is speaking to other servants.
talent
A "talent" was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15]
Matthew 25:29
who possesses
It is implied that the person who possesses something also uses it wisely. Alternate translation: "who uses well what he has"
he will have an abundance
"he will have much more"
from anyone who does not possess anything
It is implied that the person does possess something but he does not use it wisely. Alternate translation: "from anyone does not use well what he has"
will be taken away
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take away" or "I will take away"
Matthew 25:30
the outer darkness
Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]
weeping and grinding of teeth
"Grinding of teeth" is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]
Matthew 25:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to tell his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
Matthew 25:32
Before him will be gathered all the nations
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He will gather all the nations before him"
Before him
"In front of him"
all the nations
Here "nations" refers to people. Alternate translation: "all people from every country"
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats
Jesus uses a simile to describe how he will separate the people.
Matthew 25:33
He will place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left
This is a metaphor that means the Son of Man will separate all people. He will put the righteous people at his right side, and he will put the sinners at his left side.
Matthew 25:34
the King ... his right hand
Here, "the King" is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus was referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the King, ... my right hand"
Come, you who have been blessed by my Father
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Come, you whom my Father has blessed"
my Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "inherit the kingdom that God has made ready for you"
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "receive the blessings of God's rule that he has planned to give you"
from the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since he first created the world"
Matthew 25:35
General Information:
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Matthew 25:36
General Information:
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Matthew 25:37
the righteous
This can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the righteous people"
Or thirsty
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Or when did we see you thirsty"
Matthew 25:38
Or naked
This is the end of a series of questions that begins in verse 37. The understood information can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "Or when did we see you naked"
Matthew 25:39
General Information:
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Matthew 25:40
the King
This is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
say to them
"say to those at his right hand"
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This emphasizes what the King says next.
one of the least
"one of the least important"
these brothers of mine
Here "brothers" refers to anyone, male or female, who obeys the King. Alternate translation: "my brothers and sisters here" or "these who are like my brothers and sisters"
you did it for me
"I consider that you did it for me"
Matthew 25:41
Then he will
"Then the King will." Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
you cursed
"you people whom God has cursed"
the eternal fire that has been prepared
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the eternal fire that God has prepared"
his angels
the devil's helpers
Matthew 25:42
General Information:
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Matthew 25:43
naked, but you did not clothe me
The words "I was" preceding "naked" are understood. Alternate translation: "I was naked, but you did not give me clothes"
sick and in prison
The words "I was" preceding "sick" are understood. Alternate translation: "I was sick and in prison"
Matthew 25:44
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.
they will also answer
"those on his left will also answer"
Matthew 25:45
for one of the least of these
"for any of the least important ones of my people"
you did not do for me
"I consider that you did not do it for me" or "I was really the one whom you did not help"
Matthew 25:46
General Information:
This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 23:1, where Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment.
These will go away into eternal punishment
"The King will send these to a place where they will receive punishment that never ends"
but the righteous into eternal life
The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but the King will send the righteous to the place where they will live forever with God"
the righteous
This nominative adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the righteous people"

Chapter 26

Matthew 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 26:31, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sheep

Sheep are a common image used in Scripture to refer to the people of Israel. In Matthew 26:31, however, Jesus used the words "the sheep" to refer to his disciples and to say that they would run away when he was arrested.

Passover

The Passover festival was when the Jews would celebrate the day God killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but "passed over" the Israelites and let them live.

The eating of the body and blood

Matthew 26:26-28 describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At this time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist", or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Judas's kiss for Jesus

Matthew 26:49 describes how Judas kissed Jesus so the soldiers would know whom to arrest. The Jews would kiss each other when they greeted each other.

"I am able to destroy the temple of God"

Two men accused Jesus of saying that he could destroy the temple in Jerusalem and then rebuild it "in three

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days" (Matthew 26:61). They were accusing him of insulting God by claiming that God had given him the authority to destroy the temple and the power to rebuild it. What Jesus actually said was that if the Jewish authorities were to destroy this temple, he would certainly raise it up in three days (John 2:19).

Links:

Matthew 26:1 Notes

Matthew 26:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that tells of Jesus's crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Here he tells his disciples how he will suffer and die.

It came about that when

"After" or "Then, after." This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next.

all these words

This refers to all that Jesus taught starting in Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 26:2

the Son of Man will be given over to be crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some men will give the Son of Man to other people who will crucify him"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Matthew 26:3

Connecting Statement:

These verses give background information about the Jewish leaders' plot to arrest and kill Jesus.

were gathered together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "came together" or "met together"

Matthew 26:4

Jesus stealthily

"Jesus secretly"

Matthew 26:5

Not during the festival

What the leaders did not want to do during the festival can be made clearer. Alternate translation: "We should not kill Jesus during the festival"

the festival

This is the yearly Passover festival.

Matthew 26:6

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of a woman pouring expensive oil on Jesus before his death.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Simon the leper

It is implied that this is a man whom Jesus had healed from leprosy.

Matthew 26:7

he was reclining

"Jesus was lying on his side." You can use your language's word for the position people usually are in when they eat.

a woman came to him

"a woman came to Jesus"

alabaster jar

This is a costly container made of soft stone.

ointment

oil that has a pleasing smell

she poured it upon his head

The woman did this to honor Jesus.

Matthew 26:8

What is the reason for this waste?

The disciples ask this question out of their anger over the woman's actions. Alternate translation: "This woman has done a bad thing by wasting this ointment!"

Matthew 26:9

This could have been sold for a large amount and given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "She could have sold this for a large amount of money and given the money"

to the poor

Here "the poor" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "to poor people"

Matthew 26:10

Why are you causing trouble for this woman?

Jesus asks this question as a rebuke of his disciples. Alternate translation: "You should not be causing trouble for this woman!"

Why are you

All occurrences of "you" are plural and refer to the disciples.

Matthew 26:11

the poor

This can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "poor people"

Matthew 26:12

ointment

This is oil that has a pleasing smell. See how you translated this in Matthew 26:7.

Matthew 26:13

Truly I say to you

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

wherever this good news is preached

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "wherever people preach this good news"

what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her" or "people will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her"

Matthew 26:14

Connecting Statement:

Judas Iscariot agrees to help the Jewish leaders arrest and kill Jesus.

Matthew 26:15

to turn him over to you

"to bring Jesus to you"

thirty pieces of silver

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Since these words are the same as those in an Old Testament prophecy, keep this form instead of changing it to modern money.

thirty pieces

"30 pieces"

Matthew 26:16

to turn him over to them

"to enable them to seize him"

Matthew 26:17

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus celebrating the Passover with his disciples.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Matthew 26:18

He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."'"

This has quotations within quotations. You can state some of the direct quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "He told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and tell him that the Teacher says to him, 'My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" or "He told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and say to him that the Teacher's time is at hand and he will keep the Passover with his disciples at that man's house."

My time

Possible meanings are 1) "The time that I told you about" or 2) "The time God has set for me."

is at hand

Possible meanings are 1) "is near" or 2) "has come."

keep the Passover

"eat the Passover meal" or "celebrate the Passover by eating the special meal"

Matthew 26:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:20

he sat down to eat

Use the word for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.

Matthew 26:21

Truly I say to you

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

Matthew 26:22

Surely not I, Lord?

"I am surely not the one, am I, Lord?" Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question since the apostles were sure they would not betray Jesus. Alternate translation: "Lord, I would never betray you!" or 2) this was a sincere question since Jesus's statement probably troubled and confused them.

Matthew 26:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:24

The Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

will go

Here "go" is a polite way to refer to dying. Alternate translation: "will go to his death" or "will die"

just as it is written about him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the prophets wrote about him in the scriptures"

that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man who betrays the Son of Man"

Matthew 26:25

Is it I, Rabbi?

"Rabbi, am I the one who will betray you?" Judas may be using a rhetorical question to deny that he is the one who will betray Jesus. Alternate translation: "Rabbi, surely I am not the one who will betray you."

You have said it yourself

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean "yes" without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: "You are saying it" or "You are admitting it"

Matthew 26:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as he celebrates the Passover with his disciples.

took ... blessed ... broke

See how you translated these words in Matthew 14:19.

Matthew 26:27

He took

Translate "took" as you did in Matthew 14:19.

a cup

Here "cup" refers to the cup and the wine in it.

gave it to them

"gave it to the disciples"

Drink it

"Drink the wine from this cup"

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood

"For this wine is my blood"

blood of the covenant

"blood that shows that the covenant is in effect" or "blood that makes the covenant possible"

is poured out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will soon flow out of my body" or "will flow out of my wounds when I die"

Matthew 26:29

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

fruit of the vine

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "wine"

in my Father's kingdom

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "when my Father establishes his rule on earth"

my Father's

Father is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 26:30

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples as they walk to the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Mount of Olives.
hymn
a song of praise to God
Matthew 26:31
General Information:
Jesus quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that in order to fulfill prophecy, all of his disciples will leave him.
fall away
"leave me"
for it is written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the prophet Zechariah wrote long ago in the scriptures"
I will strike
Here "I" refers to God. It is implied that God will cause or allow people to harm and kill Jesus.
the shepherd ... sheep of the flock
These are metaphors that refer to Jesus and the disciples.
the sheep of the flock will be scattered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will scatter all the sheep of the flock" or "the sheep of the flock will run off in all directions"
Matthew 26:32
after I am raised up
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after God raises me up" or "after God brings me back to life"
Matthew 26:33
fall away
See how you translated this in Matthew 26:31.
Matthew 26:34
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
before the rooster crows
Roosters often crow about the time the sun comes up, so the hearers might have understood these words as a metonym for the sun coming up. However, the actual crowing of a rooster is an important part of the story later on, so keep the word "rooster" in the translation.
rooster
a male chicken, a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up
crows
This is the common English word for what a rooster does to make his loud call.
you will deny me three times
"you will say three times that you are not my follower"
Matthew 26:35
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 26:36
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus praying in Gethsemane.
Matthew 26:37
began to become sorrowful
"he became very sad"
Matthew 26:38
My soul is deeply sorrowful
Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "I am very sad"
even to death
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "and I feel as if I could even die"
Matthew 26:39
fell on his face
He purposely lay face down on the ground to pray.
My Father
This is an important title for God that shows the relationship between God and Jesus.
let this cup pass from me
Jesus speaks of the work that he must do, including dying on the cross, as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to drink from a cup. The word "cup" is an important word in the New Testament, so try to use an equivalent for that in your translation.
this cup
Here "cup" is a metonym that stands for the cup and the contents within it. The contents in the cup are a metaphor for the suffering that Jesus will have to endure. Jesus is asking the Father if it is possible for him not to have to experience the death and suffering that Jesus knows will soon happen.
Yet, not as I will, but as you will
This can be expressed as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "But do not do what I want; instead, do what you want"
Matthew 26:40
he said to Peter, "What, could you not watch
Jesus is speaking to Peter, but the "you" is plural, referring to Peter, James, and John.
What, could you not watch with me for one hour?
Jesus uses a question to scold Peter, James, and John. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you could not stay awake with me for one hour!"
Matthew 26:41
you do not enter into temptation
Here the abstract noun "temptation" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "no one tempts you to sin"
The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak
Here "spirit" is a metonym that stands for a person's desires to do good. "Flesh" stands for the needs and desires of a person's body. Jesus means that the disciples may have the desire to do what God wants, but as humans they are weak and often fail.
Matthew 26:42
He went away
"Jesus went away"
a second time
The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39]
My Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
if this cannot pass away unless I drink it
"if the only way this can pass away is if I drink it." Jesus speaks of the work that he must do as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to drink.
if this

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Here "this" refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in Matthew 26:39).

unless I drink it

"unless I drink from it" or "unless I drink from this cup of suffering." Here "it" refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in Matthew 26:39).

your will be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "may what you want happen" or "do what you want to do"

Matthew 26:43

their eyes were heavy

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "they were very sleepy"

Matthew 26:44

third time

The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39]

Matthew 26:45

Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?

Jesus uses a question to scold the disciples for going to sleep. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you are still sleeping and resting!"

the hour is at hand

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the time has come"

the Son of Man is being betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone is betraying the Son of Man"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

betrayed into the hands of sinners

Here "hands" refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "betrayed into the power of sinners" or "betrayed so that sinners will have power over him"

Look

"Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

Matthew 26:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:47

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of when Judas betrayed Jesus and the religious leaders arrested him.

While he was still speaking

"While Jesus was still speaking"

clubs

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

Matthew 26:48

Now ... Seize him

Here "Now" is used to mark a pause in the main story. Here Matthew tells background information about Judas and the signal he planned to use to betray Jesus.

saying, "The one I kiss is the man. Seize him."

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that the one he kissed was the one they should seize."

kiss

This was a respectful way to greet one's teacher.

Matthew 26:49

he came up to Jesus

"Judas came up to Jesus"

kissed him

"met him with a kiss." Good friends would kiss each other on the cheek, but a disciple would probably kiss his master on the hand to show respect. No one knows for sure how Judas kissed Jesus.

Matthew 26:50

Then they came

Here "they" refers to the people with clubs and swords that came with Judas and the religious leaders.

laid hands on Jesus, and seized him

"grabbed Jesus, and arrested him"

Matthew 26:51

Behold

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

Matthew 26:52

who take up the sword

The word "sword" is a metonym for the act of killing someone with a sword. The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "who pick up a sword to kill others" or "who want to kill other people"

sword will perish by the sword

"sword will die by means of the sword" or "sword—it is with the sword that someone will kill them"

Matthew 26:53

Do you think that I could not call ... angels?

Jesus uses a question to remind the person with the sword that Jesus could stop those who are arresting him. Alternate translation: "Surely you know that I could call ... angels."

Do you think

Here "you" is singular and refers to the person with the sword.

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

more than twelve legions of angels

The word "legion" is a military term that refers to a group of about 6,000 soldiers. Jesus means God would send enough angels to easily stop those who are arresting Jesus. The exact number of angels is not important. Alternate translation: "more than 12 really large groups of angels"

Matthew 26:54

But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, that this must happen?

Jesus uses a question to explain why he is letting these people arrest him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But if I did that, I would not be able to fulfill what God said in the scriptures must happen"

Matthew 26:55

Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me like a robber?

Jesus is using this question to point out the wrong actions of those arresting him. Alternate translation: "You know that I am not a robber, so it is wrong for you to come out to me bringing swords and clubs"

clubs

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

in the temple

It is implied that Jesus was not in the actual temple. He was in the courtyard around the temple.

Matthew 26:56

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the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I would fulfill all that the prophets wrote in the scriptures"
abandoned him
"left him." If your language has a word that means they left him when they should have stayed with him, use it here.
Matthew 26:57
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus's trial before the council of Jewish religious leaders.
Matthew 26:58
Peter followed him
"Peter followed Jesus"
courtyard of the high priest
an open area near the high priest's house
He went inside
"Peter went inside"
the officers
These were probably the servants of the "scribes and elders" (Matthew 26:57).
Matthew 26:59
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
so that they
Here "they" refers to the chief priests and the members of the council.
might put him to death
"might have a reason to execute him"
Matthew 26:60
two came forward
"two men came forward" or "two witnesses came forward"
Matthew 26:61
This man said, 'I am able to destroy ... days.'
If your language does not allow quotes within quotes you can rewrite it as a single quote. Alternate translation: "This man said that he is able to destroy ... days."
This man said
"This man Jesus said"
in three days
"within three days," before the sun goes down three times, not "after three days," after the sun has gone down the third time
Matthew 26:62
What is it that they are testifying against you?
The chief priest is not asking Jesus for information about what the witnesses said. He is asking Jesus to prove what the witnesses said is wrong. Alternate translation: "What is your response to what the witnesses are testifying against you?"
Matthew 26:63
Son of God
This is an important title that describes the relationship between the Christ and God.
the living God
Here "living" contrasts the God of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act. See how you translated this in Matthew 16:16.
Matthew 26:64
You have said it yourself
This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean "yes" without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: "You are saying it" or "You are admitting it"
But I tell you, from now on you
Here "you" is plural. Jesus is speaking to the high priest and to the other persons there.
from now on you will see the Son of Man
Possible meanings are 1) the phrase "from now on" is an idiom that means they will see the Son of Man in his power at some time in the future or 2) the phrase "from now on" means that from the time of Jesus's trial and onward, Jesus is showing himself to be the Messiah who is powerful and victorious.
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself in third person.
sitting at the right hand of Power
Here "Power" is metonym that represents God. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "sitting in the place of honor beside the all-powerful God"
coming on the clouds of heaven
"riding to earth on the clouds of heaven"
Matthew 26:65
the high priest tore his clothes
Tearing clothing was a sign of anger and sadness.
He has spoken blasphemy
The reason the high priest called Jesus's statement blasphemy is probably that he understood Jesus's words in [Matthew 26:64]
Why do we still need witnesses?
The high priest uses this question to emphasize that he and the members of the council do not need to hear from any more witnesses. Alternate translation: "We do not need to hear from any more witnesses!"
now you have heard
Here "you" is plural and refers to the members of the council.
Matthew 26:66
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 26:67
Then they
Possible meanings are 1) "Then some of the men" or 2) "Then the soldiers."
spit in his face
This was done as an insult.
slapped him
hit him in the face with the palms of their hands
Matthew 26:68
Prophesy to us
Here "Prophesy to us" means to tell by means of God's power. It does not mean to tell what will happen in the future.
you Christ
Those hitting Jesus do not really think he is the Christ. They call him this to mock him.
Matthew 26:69
General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

These events happen at the same time as Jesus's trial before the religious leaders.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of how Peter denies three times that he knows Jesus, as Jesus said he would do.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Matthew 26:70

I do not know what you are talking about

Peter was able to understand what the servant girl was saying. He used these words to deny that he had been with Jesus.

Matthew 26:71

When he went out

"When Peter went out"

gateway

opening in the wall around a courtyard

said to those there

"said to the people who were sitting there"

Matthew 26:72

He again denied it with an oath

"He denied it again by swearing"

Matthew 26:73

one of them

"one of those who were with Jesus"

one of them, for the way you speak gives you away

This can be translated with a new sentence. "one of them. We can tell you are from Galilee because you speak like a Galilean"

Matthew 26:74

to curse

"to call down a curse on himself"

rooster crowed

A rooster is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. A rooster that has called out is said to have "crowed." See how you translated this in Matthew 26:34.

Matthew 26:75

Peter remembered the words that Jesus had said, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times."

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Peter remembered that Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Jesus three times."

Chapter 27

Matthew 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Delivered him to Pilate the governor"

The Jewish leaders needed to get permission from Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, before they could kill Jesus. This was because Roman law did not allow them to kill Jesus themselves. Pilate was going to set one prisoner free, and he wanted to set Jesus free, but they wanted him to free a very bad prisoner named Barabbas instead.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Matthew 27:60) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

The soldiers said, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Links:

Matthew 27:1 Notes

Matthew 27:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's trial before Pilate.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

plotted against Jesus to put him to death

The Jewish leaders were planning how they could convince the Roman leaders to kill Jesus.

Matthew 27:2

General Information:

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Matthew 27:3

General Information:

This event happened after Jesus's trial in front of the council of Jewish religious leaders, but we do not know if it happened before or during Jesus's trial before Pilate.

Connecting Statement:

The author has stopped telling the story of Jesus's trial so he can tell the story of how Judas killed himself.

Then when Judas

If your language has a way of showing that a new story is starting, you may want to use that here.

that Jesus had been condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus"

the thirty pieces of silver

This was the money that the chief priests had given Judas to betray Jesus. See how you translated it in Matthew 26:15.

Matthew 27:4

innocent blood

This is an idiom that refers to the death of an innocent person. Alternate translation: "a person who does not

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deserve to die"

What is that to us?

The Jewish leaders use this question to emphasize that they do not care about what Judas said. Alternate translation: "That is not our problem!" or "That is your problem!"

Matthew 27:5

threw down the pieces of silver in the temple

Possible meanings are 1) he threw the pieces of silver while in the temple courtyard, or 2) he was standing in the temple courtyard, and he threw the pieces of silver into the temple.

Matthew 27:6

It is not lawful to put this

"Our laws do not allow us to put this"

put this

"put this silver"

the treasury

This is the place they kept the money they used to provide for things needed for the temple and the priests.

price of blood

This is an idiom that means money paid to a person who helped kill someone. Alternate translation: "money paid for a man to die"

Matthew 27:7

potter's field

This was a field that was bought to bury strangers who died in Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:8

that field has been called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people call that field"

to this day

This means to the time that Matthew is writing this book.

Matthew 27:9

General Information:

The author quotes Old Testament scripture to show that Judas's suicide was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Then that which had been spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled what the prophet Jeremiah spoke"

the price set on him by the sons of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the price the sons of Israel set on him"

the sons of Israel

This refers to those among the people of Israel who paid to kill Jesus and speaks of them as though they were doing what all the people of Israel wanted them to do. Alternate translation: "some of the descendants of Israel" or "the leaders of Israel"

Matthew 27:10

directed me

Here "me" refers to Jeremiah.

Matthew 27:11

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Jesus's trial before Pilate, which began in Matthew 27:2.

Now

The word "Now" is used here to mark a return to the main events of the story.

the governor

"Pilate"

You say so

Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said" or 2) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so"

Matthew 27:12

But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when the chief priests and elders accused him"

Matthew 27:13

Do you not hear how many things they accuse you of?

Pilate asks this question because he is surprised that Jesus remains silent. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you do not answer these people who accuse you of doing so many bad things!"

how many things they accuse you of

"how many things they testify against you about"

Matthew 27:14

did not answer even one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed

"did not say even one word; this greatly amazed the governor." This is an emphatic way of saying that Jesus was completely silent.

Matthew 27:15

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story so Matthew can give information to help the reader understand what happens beginning in [Matthew 27:17]

the festival

This is the Passover celebration.

prisoner chosen by the crowd

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "prisoner whom the crowd would choose"

Matthew 27:16

they had a notorious prisoner

"there was a notorious prisoner"

notorious

well known for doing something bad

Matthew 27:17

they were gathered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the crowd gathered"

Jesus who is called Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom some people call the Christ"

Matthew 27:18

they had handed Jesus over to him

"the Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him." They had done this so that Pilate would judge Jesus.

Matthew 27:19

While he was sitting

"While Pilate was sitting"

sitting on the judgment seat

"sitting on the judge's seat." This is where a judge would sit while making a decision.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

sent word
"sent a message"
I have suffered much today
"I have been very upset today"
Matthew 27:20
Now ... destroy Jesus
Here "Now" is used to mark a pause in the story. Matthew tells background information about why the crowd chose Barabbas.
they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus
The phrase "ask for Barabbas" is an ellipsis for "ask Pilate to release Barabbas." The phrase "destroy Jesus" here is a euphemism for "kill Jesus," and because the people in the crowd would not kill Jesus themselves, it is a metonym or ellipsis for the crowd telling Pilate to have his soldiers kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "they should ask Pilate to release Jesus and tell him to have his soldiers kill Jesus"
Matthew 27:21
asked them
"asked the crowd"
Matthew 27:22
who is called Christ
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom some people call the Christ"
Matthew 27:23
has he done
"has Jesus done"
they cried out
"the crowd cried out"
Matthew 27:24
he was gaining nothing
"he was doing no good" or "he was unable to convince the people"
washed his hands in front of the crowd
Pilate does this as a sign that he is not responsible for Jesus's death.
the blood
Here "blood" refers to a person's death. Alternate translation: "the death"
You see to it
This is an idiom that means "This is your responsibility."
Matthew 27:25
May his blood be on us and our children
Here "blood" is a metonym that stands for a person's death. The phrase "be on us and our children" is an idiom that means they accept the responsibility of what is happening. Alternate translation: "Yes! We and our descendants will be responsible for executing him"
Matthew 27:26
Then he set Barabbas free for them
Possible meanings are 1) Pilate set Barabbas free because the crowd had asked him to or 2) Pilate released Barabbas and put him under the control of the crowd.
he scourged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified
It is implied that Pilate ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus. Handing Jesus over to be crucified is a metaphor for ordering his soldiers to crucify Jesus. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus and to crucify him" (See: and)
scourged Jesus
"beat Jesus with a whip" or "whipped Jesus"
Matthew 27:27
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus's crucifixion and death.
company of soldiers
"group of soldiers"
Matthew 27:28
stripped him
"pulled off his clothes"
scarlet
bright red
Matthew 27:29
a crown of thorns
"a crown from thorny branches" or "a crown from branches with thorns on them"
a staff in his right hand
They gave Jesus a stick to hold to represent a scepter that a king holds. They did this to mock Jesus.
Hail, King of the Jews
They were saying this to mock Jesus. They were calling Jesus "King of the Jews," but they did not really believe he was a king. And yet what they were saying was true.
Hail
"We honor you" or "May you live a long time"
Matthew 27:30
They spat on him
The past tense of the verb "spit" can be either "spit" or "spat."
Matthew 27:31
General Information:
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Matthew 27:32
As they came out
This means Jesus and the soldiers came out of the city. Alternate translation: "As they came out of Jerusalem"
they found a man
"the soldiers saw a man"
whom they forced to go with them so that he might carry his cross
"whom the soldiers forced to go with them so that he could carry Jesus's cross"
Matthew 27:33
place called Golgotha
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "place that people called Golgotha"
Matthew 27:34
him wine to drink mixed with gall
Wine alone might have reduced the pain of crucifixion. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "him wine, which they had mixed with gall"
gall
Gall is the bitter yellow liquid that bodies use in digestion. The people were mocking Jesus by mixing it with the wine and so making the wine undrinkable.
Matthew 27:35
his garments
These were the clothes Jesus had been wearing.
Matthew 27:36
General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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Matthew 27:37
the charge against him
"a written explanation of why he was being crucified"
Matthew 27:38
Two robbers were crucified with him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The soldiers crucified two robbers with Jesus"
Matthew 27:39
shaking their heads
They did this to make fun of Jesus.
Matthew 27:40
If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross
They did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so they wanted him to prove it if it was true. Alternate translation: "If you are the Son of God, prove it by coming down from the cross"
the Son of God
This is an important title for the Christ that describes his relationship to God.
Matthew 27:41
General Information:
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Matthew 27:42
He saved others, but he cannot save himself
Possible meanings are 1) the Jewish leaders do not believe that Jesus saved others or that he can save himself, or 2) they believe he did save others but are laughing at him because now he cannot save himself.
He is the King of Israel
The leaders are mocking Jesus. They call him "King of Israel," but they do not really believe he is king. Alternate translation: "He says that he is the King of Israel"
Matthew 27:43
Connecting Statement:
The Jewish leaders continue mocking Jesus.
For he even said, 'I am the Son of God.'
This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For Jesus even said that he is the Son of God."
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.
Matthew 27:44
the robbers who were crucified with him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the robbers that the soldiers crucified with Jesus"
Matthew 27:45
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
from the sixth hour ... until the ninth hour
"from about noon ... for three hours" or "from about twelve o'clock midday ... until about three o'clock in the afternoon"
darkness came over the whole land
The word "darkness" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "it became dark over the whole land"
Matthew 27:46
Jesus cried
"Jesus called out" or "Jesus shouted"
Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani
These words are what Jesus cried out in his own language. Translators usually leave these words as they are.
Matthew 27:47
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:48
one of them
Possible meanings are 1) one of the soldiers or 2) one of those who stood by and watched.
sponge
This is a sea animal that is harvested and used to take up and hold liquids. These liquids can later be pushed out.
gave it to him
"gave it to Jesus"
Matthew 27:49
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:50
gave up his spirit
Here "spirit" refers to that which gives life to a person. This phrase is a way of saying that Jesus died. Alternate translation: "he died, giving his spirit over to God" or "he breathed his last breath"
Matthew 27:51
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of the events that happened when Jesus died.
Behold
The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.
the curtain of the temple was split in two
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the curtain of the temple tore in two" or "God caused the curtain of the temple to tear in two"
Matthew 27:52
The tombs were opened, and the bodies of the holy people who had fallen asleep were raised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God opened the tombs and made many godly people who had died become alive again"
the bodies of the holy people who had fallen asleep were raised
Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God put life back into to the dead bodies of many godly people who had fallen asleep"
fallen asleep
This is a polite way of referring to dying. Alternate translation: "died"
Matthew 27:53
They came out ... appeared to many
The order of the events that Matthew describes (beginning with the words "The tombs were opened" in verse 52) is unclear. After the earthquake when Jesus died and the tombs were opened 1) the holy people came back to life, and then, after Jesus came back to life, the holy people entered Jerusalem, where many people saw them, or 2) Jesus came back to life, and then the holy ones came back to life and entered the city, where many people saw them.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Matthew 27:54
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
those who were watching Jesus
"those who were guarding Jesus." This refers to the other soldiers who were guarding Jesus with the centurion. Alternate translation: "the other soldiers with him who were guarding Jesus"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.
Matthew 27:55
General Information:
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Matthew 27:56
the mother of the sons of Zebedee
"the mother of James and John" or "the wife of Zebedee"
Matthew 27:57
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus's burial.
Arimathea
This is the name of a city in Israel.
Matthew 27:58
Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then Pilate ordered the soldiers to give the body of Jesus to Joseph"
Matthew 27:59
linen
a fine, costly cloth
Matthew 27:60
that he had cut into the rock
It is implied that Joseph had workers who cut the tomb into the rock.
Then he rolled a large stone
Most likely Joseph had other people there to help him roll the stone.
Matthew 27:61
opposite the tomb
"across from the tomb"
Matthew 27:62
the Preparation
This is the day that people got everything ready for the Sabbath.
were gathered together with Pilate
"met with Pilate"
Matthew 27:63
when that deceiver was alive
"when Jesus, the deceiver, was alive"
he said, 'After three days will I rise again.'
This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he said that after three days he will rise again." or "he said that after three day he would rise again."
Matthew 27:64
command that the tomb be made secure
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "command your soldiers to guard the tomb"
the third day
"day number three." This refers to the day after two nights have passed.
his disciples may come and steal him
"his disciples may come and steal his body"
his disciples may ... say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and
This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "his disciples may ... tell the people that he has risen from the dead, and"
from the dead
From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
and the last deception will be worse than the first
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "and if they deceive people by saying that, it will be worse than the way he deceived people before when he said that he was the Christ"
Matthew 27:65
a guard
This consisted of four to sixteen Roman soldiers.
Matthew 27:66
sealing the stone
Possible meanings are 1) they put a cord around the stone and attached it with seals to the rock wall on either side of the entrance to the tomb or 2) they put seals between the stone and the wall.
placing the guard
"telling the soldiers to stand where they could keep people from tampering with the tomb"

Chapter 28

Matthew 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Matthew 28:1) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

"Make disciples"

The last two verses (Matthew 28:19-20) are commonly known as "The Great Commission" because they contain a very important command given to all Christians. Christians are to "make disciples" by going to people, sharing the gospel with them and training them to live as Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

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An angel of the Lord

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels looked human. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 28:1-2 and Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 and John 20:12)

Links:

Matthew 28:1 Notes

Matthew 28:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week

"After the Sabbath, as the sun began to come up Sunday morning"

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

the other Mary

"the other woman named Mary." This is Mary the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 27:56).

Matthew 28:2

Behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended ... and rolled away the stone

Possible meanings are 1) the earthquake happened because the angel came down and rolled away the stone or 2) all these events happened at the same time .

earthquake

a sudden and violent shaking of the ground

Matthew 28:3

His appearance

"The angel's appearance"

was like lightning

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright in appearance the angel was. Alternate translation: "was bright like lightning"

his clothing as white as snow

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright and white the angel's clothes were. The verb "was" from the previous phrase can be repeated. Alternate translation: "his clothing was very white, like snow"

Matthew 28:4

became like dead men

This is a simile that means the soldiers fell down and did not move. Alternate translation: "fell to the ground and lay there like dead men"

Matthew 28:5

the women

"Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary"

who has been crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the people and the soldiers crucified" or "whom they crucified"

Matthew 28:6

was lying

This means that Jesus's body was lying on the flat surface inside the tomb, not that Jesus was saying things that were not true.

Matthew 28:7

tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead. See, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and that Jesus has gone ahead of you to Galilee, where you will see him."

He has risen

"He has come back to life"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

going ahead of you ... you will see him

Here "you" is plural. It refers to the women and the disciples.

I have told you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the women.

Matthew 28:8

The women

"Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary"

Matthew 28:9

Behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

Greetings

This is an ordinary greeting, much like "Hello" in English.

took hold of his feet

"got down on their knees and held onto his feet"

Matthew 28:10

my brothers

This refers to Jesus's disciples.

Matthew 28:11

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders when they heard of Jesus's resurrection.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

the women

Here this refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

behold

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

Matthew 28:12

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discussed the matter with them
"decided on a plan among themselves." The priests and elders decided to give the money to the soldiers.
Matthew 28:13
Say to others, 'The disciples of Jesus came ... while we were sleeping.'
If your language does not allow quotations within quotations you may translate this as a single quote.
Alternate translation: "Tell others that Jesus' disciples came ... while you were sleeping."
Matthew 28:14
If this report reaches the governor
"If the governor hears that you were asleep when Jesus's disciples took his body"
the governor
"Pilate" (Matthew 27:2)
we will persuade him and take any worries away from you
"do not worry. We will talk to him so that he does not punish you."
Matthew 28:15
did as they had been instructed
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "did what the priests had told them to do"
This report spread widely among the Jews and continues even today
"Many Jews heard this report and continue to tell others about it even today"
even today
This refers to the time Matthew wrote the book.
Matthew 28:16
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of Jesus meeting with his disciples after his resurrection.
Matthew 28:17
they worshiped him, but some doubted
Possible meanings are 1) they all worshiped Jesus even though some of them doubted, or 2) some of them worshiped Jesus, but others did not worship him because they doubted.
but some doubted
It can be stated explicitly what the disciples doubted. Alternate translation: "some doubted that he was really Jesus and that he had become alive again"
Matthew 28:18
All authority has been given to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has given me all authority"
in heaven and on earth
Here "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean everyone and everything in heaven and earth. The words "in heaven and on earth" can be translated as "over everyone and everything in heaven and on earth."
Matthew 28:19
of all the nations
Here "nations" refers to the people, and the saying is probably a hyperbole. Alternate translation: "of the people in every nation"
into the name
Here "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by the authority"
Father ... Son
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
Matthew 28:20
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
even to the end of the age
"until the end of this age" or "until the end of the world"

Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Mark

Introduction (1:1–13) The ministry of Jesus in Galilee Early ministry (1:14–3:6) Jesus becomes more popular among the people (3:7–5:43) Moving away from Galilee and then returning (6:1–8:26)
Progress toward Jerusalem, repeated times when Jesus predicts his own death, the disciples misunderstand, and Jesus teaches them how difficult it will be to follow him (8:27–10:52) Last days of ministry and preparation for final conflict in Jerusalem (11:1–13:37) The death of Christ and the empty tomb (14:1–16:8)

What is the Book of Mark about?

The Gospel of Mark is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Mark wrote much about how Jesus suffered and died on the cross. He did this to encourage his readers who were being persecuted. Mark also explained Jewish customs and some Aramaic words. This may indicate that Mark expected most of his first readers to be Gentiles.

How should the title of this book be translated?

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

Who wrote the Book of Mark?

The book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the author was Mark. Mark was also known as John Mark. He was a close friend of Peter. Mark may not have witnessed what Jesus said and did. But many scholars think that Mark wrote in his gospel what Peter told him about Jesus.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What were Jesus's teaching methods?

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

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why does Mark frequently use terms indicating short periods of time?

The Gospel of Mark uses the word "immediately" forty-two times. Mark does this to make the events more exciting and vivid. It moves the reader quickly from one event to the next.

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

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions. Translators are advised not to include these verses. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include one or more of these verses, the translators can include them. If they are included, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to Mark's Gospel.

"If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." (7:16) "where their worm never dies and the fire is not put out" (9:44) "where their worm never dies and the fire is not put out" (9:46) "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'He was counted with the lawless ones'" (15:28)

The following passage in not found in the earliest manuscripts. Most Bibles include this passage, but modern Bibles put it in brackets ([]) or indicate in some way that this passage may not have been original to Mark's Gospel. Translators are advised to do something similar to what is done in the modern versions of the Bible.

"Early on the first day of the week, after he arose, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who were with him, while they were mourning and weeping. They heard that he was alive and that he had been seen by her, but they did not believe. After these things he appeared in a different form to two of them, as they were walking out into the country. They went and told the rest of the disciples, but they did not believe them. Jesus later appeared to the eleven as they were reclining at the table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw him after he rose from the dead. He said to them, 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the entire creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, and he who does not believe will be condemned. These signs will go with those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons. They will speak in new languages. They will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.' After the Lord had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. The disciples left and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that went with them." (16:9-20)

Chapter 1

Mark 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:2-3, which is a quotation from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"You can make me clean"

Leprosy was a disease of the skin that made a person unclean and unable to properly worship God. Jesus is capable of making people physically "clean" or healthy as well as spiritually "clean" or right with God. (See: clean)

Prophecy

Mark begins this book about Jesus Christ with the words that the prophet Isaiah wrote long before that time. Then he tells how John the Baptist and Jesus Christ fulfilled that prophecy.

Repentance

Repent means stop sinning. John the Baptist taught people to repent so that God would forgive their sins. Jesus taught people to repent and to believe the good news about the kingdom of God.

The work of Jesus

Jesus went around preaching the good news of God, casting demons out of people, and healing people who were sick.

Links:

Mark 1:1 Notes Mark intro

Mark 1:1

General Information:

The author of this book is Mark, also called John Mark. He was the son of one of the women named Mary mentioned in the four Gospels. He was also the nephew of Barnabas. This whole book is about Jesus Christ.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 1:2

General Information:

Mark begins this book with the words that the prophet Isaiah wrote long ago about a messenger who would come and tell the people to get ready for the Lord's coming. Verses 4-15 show how this prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

before your face

This is an idiom that means "ahead of you."

your face ... your way

Here the word "your" refers to the Lord and is singular.

the one

This refers to the messenger.

will prepare your way

Doing this represents preparing the people for the Lord's arrival. Alternate translation: "will prepare the people for your arrival"

Mark 1:3

Connecting Statement:

This verse tells how the messenger in verse 2 would prepare the Lord's way.

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness

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

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

These two phrases mean the same thing.

Make ready the way of the Lord

"Get the road ready for the Lord." Doing this represents being prepared to hear the Lord's message when he comes. Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord to come" or "Be ready for the Lord when he comes"

Mark 1:4

General Information

The events in Mark 1:4-15 are a fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied. John was the "messenger" of verse 2 and "the one calling out in the wilderness" of verse 3.

John came

Translators can make it explicit that John's coming was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Alternate translation: "So John came" or "In fulfillment of that prophecy, John came"

Mark 1:5

The whole country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem

The words "The whole country" are a metonym for the people who live in the country and a generalization that refers to a great number of people, not to every single person. Alternate translation: "Many people from Judea and Jerusalem"

They were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins

They did these things at the same time. The people were baptized because they repented of their sins. Alternate translation: "When they repented of their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan River"

Mark 1:6

he ate locusts and wild honey

Locusts and wild honey were foods that John could find in the wilderness. Wild honey is honey that wild bees make.

Mark 1:7

He was preaching

"John was preaching"

the strap of his sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie

John was comparing himself to a servant to show how great the one to come would be. Alternate translation: "I am not even worthy to do the lowly task of removing his shoes"

the strap of his sandals

People often wore sandals that were made of leather and were tied to their feet with leather straps.

stoop down

"bend down"

Mark 1:8

but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

John was contrasting how he was purifying people with water with how the one to come would purify people with the Holy Spirit. To baptize with the Holy Spirit is a metaphor meaning that that person would send the Holy Spirit to purify people. The Holy Spirit would then live in them and empower them to stop sinning and to obey God. If possible, use the same word for "baptize" here as you used for John's baptism.

Mark 1:9

It happened in those days

This marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

he was baptized by John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John baptized him"

Mark 1:10

the Spirit coming down on him like a dove

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Possible meanings are 1) this is a simile, and the Spirit descended upon Jesus as a bird descends from the sky toward the ground or 2) the Spirit literally looked like a dove as he descended upon Jesus.

Mark 1:11

A voice came out of the heavens

This represents God speaking. Sometimes people avoid referring directly to God because they respect him. Alternate translation: "God spoke from the heavens"

beloved Son

This is an important title for Jesus. The Father calls Jesus his "beloved Son" because of his eternal love for him.

Mark 1:12

Connecting Statement:

After Jesus's baptism, he is in the wilderness for 40 days and then goes to Galilee to teach and call his disciples.

compelled him to go out

"forced Jesus to go out"

Mark 1:13

He was in the wilderness

"He stayed in the wilderness"

forty days

"40 days"

He was with

"He was among"

Mark 1:14

after John was arrested

"after John was placed in prison." Mark is referring to when King Herod had John arrested. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after King Herod had John arrested" or "after soldiers arrested John"

proclaiming the gospel

"telling many people about the good news"

Mark 1:15

The time is fulfilled

"It is now time"

the kingdom of God is near

Possible meanings are 1) God was beginning to rule. Alternate translation: "God is beginning to rule over all" or 2) God would soon rule over all. Alternate translation: "God is about to rule over all"

Mark 1:16

he saw Simon and Andrew

"Jesus saw Simon and Andrew"

casting a net in the sea

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to catch fish"

Mark 1:17

Come, follow me

"Follow me" or "Come with me"

I will make you fishers of men

This metaphor means Simon and Andrew will teach people God's true message, so others will also follow Jesus. Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you gather fish"

men

human beings, persons, people, not specifically males

Mark 1:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:19

in the boat

This was probably James and John's boat.

mending the nets

"repairing the nets"

Mark 1:20

called them

It may be helpful to state clearly why Jesus called to James and John. Alternate translation: "called them to come with him"

hired servants

"servants who worked for them"

they followed him

James and John went with Jesus.

Mark 1:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus teaches in the synagogue of the town of Capernaum on the Sabbath. By sending a demon out of a man he amazes the people in all the nearby area around Galilee.

came into Capernaum

"arrived at Capernaum"

Mark 1:22

for he was teaching them as someone who has authority and not as the scribes

The idea of "teach" can be stated clearly when talking about "someone who has authority" and "the scribes." Alternate translation: "for he was teaching them as someone who has authority teaches and not as the scribes teach"

Mark 1:23

General Information:

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Mark 1:24

What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?

The demon asked this rhetorical question meaning that there was no reason for Jesus to interfere with him or any other demon. Alternate translation: "Jesus of Nazareth, leave us alone! There is no reason for you to interfere with us."

we ... us

These pronouns are exclusive. They refer to the demon inside the man and all other demons, but do not include the listener.

Have you come to destroy us?

The demon asked this rhetorical question to urge Jesus not to harm him or any other demon. Alternate translation: "Do not destroy us!"

Mark 1:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:26

threw him down

Here the word "him" refers to the demon-possessed man.

and went out from him while crying out with a loud voice

"and cried out with a loud voice as it went out from him"

Mark 1:27

so they asked each other, "What is this? ... they obey him!"

The people used a question to show how amazed they were.

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It can be expressed as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "so they said to each other, 'This is amazing! ... they obey him!'"

A new teaching with authority!

The people used this exclamation to express their amazement at Jesus' teaching. It can also be expressed as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "He gives a new teaching, and he speaks with authority!" or "He teaches something new, and he has authority!"

He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him!

This was evidence of Jesus' authority.

Mark 1:28

General Information:

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Mark 1:29

General Information:

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Mark 1:30

Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever

The word "Now" marks a pause in the story. In this sentence, Mark introduces Simon's mother-in-law to the story and gives background information about her.

Mark 1:31

raised her up

"caused her to stand" or "made her able to get out of bed"

the fever left her

You may want to make explicit who healed her. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her of the fever"

she started serving them

You may want to make explicit that she served food. Alternate translation: "she provided them with food and drinks"

Mark 1:32

they brought to him

"the people brought to Jesus"

all who were sick or possessed by demons

The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize the great number of people who came. Alternate translation: "many who were sick or possessed by demons"

Mark 1:33

The whole city gathered together at the door

The word "city" is a metonym for the people who lived in the city. Here the word "whole" is probably a generalization to emphasize that most people from the city gathered. Alternate translation: "Many people from that city gathered outside the door"

Mark 1:34

He healed

"Jesus healed"

Mark 1:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus takes time to pray in the midst of his time of healing people. He then goes to towns throughout Galilee to preach, heal, and cast out demons.

He got up

"Jesus got up"

a solitary place

"a place where he could be alone"

Mark 1:36

Simon and those who were with him

Here "him" refers to Simon. Also, those with him include Andrew, James, John, and possibly other people.

Mark 1:37

Everyone is looking for you

The word "Everyone" is an exaggeration to emphasize that many people were looking for Jesus. Alternate translation: "Many people are looking for you"

Mark 1:38

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "I" refer to Jesus.

Let us go elsewhere

"We need to go to some other place." Here Jesus uses the word "us" to refer to himself, along with Simon, Andrew, James, and John.

Mark 1:39

He went throughout all of Galilee

The words "throughout all" are an exaggeration used to emphasize that Jesus went to many locations during his ministry. Alternate translation: "He went to many places in Galilee"

Mark 1:40

A leper came to him. He was begging him; he knelt down and said to him

"A leper came to Jesus. He knelt down and was begging Jesus and said"

If you are willing, you can make me clean

In the first phrase, the words "to make me clean" are understood because of the second phrase. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to make me clean, then you can make me clean"

are willing

"want" or "desire"

you can make me clean

In biblical times, a person who had any of certain skin diseases was considered unclean until his skin had healed enough that he was no longer contagious. Alternate translation: "you can heal me"

Mark 1:41

Moved with compassion, Jesus

Here the word "moved" is an idiom meaning to feel emotion about another's need. Alternate translation: "Having compassion for him, Jesus" or "Jesus felt compassion for the man, so he"

I am willing

It may be helpful to state what Jesus is willing to do. Alternate translation: "I am willing to make you clean"

Mark 1:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:43

General Information:

The word "him" used here refers to the leper whom Jesus healed.

Mark 1:44

Be sure to say nothing to anyone

"Be sure to not say anything to anyone"

show yourself to the priest

Jesus told the man to show himself to the priest so that the

priest could look at his skin to see if his leprosy was really gone. The law of Moses required people to present themselves to the priest if they had been unclean but were no longer unclean.

show yourself

The word "yourself" here represents the skin of the leper. Alternate translation: "show your skin"

a testimony to them

It is best to use the pronoun "them," if possible, in your language. Possible meanings are 1) "a testimony to the priests" or 2) "a testimony to the people."

Mark 1:45

But he went out

The word "he" refers to the man Jesus healed.

began to declare it freely

Here "declare it freely" is a metaphor for telling people in many places about what had happened. Alternate translation: "began to tell people in many places about what Jesus had done"

so much so that

The man spread the news so much that

that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly

This was the result of the man spreading the news so much. Here "openly" is a metaphor for "publicly." Jesus could not enter the towns because many people would crowd around him. Alternate translation: "that Jesus could no longer enter a town publicly" or "that Jesus could no longer enter the towns in a way that many people would see him"

remote places

"lonely places" or "places where no one lived"

from everywhere

The word "everywhere" is a hyperbole used to emphasize how very many places the people came from. Alternate translation: "from all over the region"

Chapter 2

Mark 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinners"

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as "sinners." (See: sin)

Fasting and Feasting

People would fast, or not eat food for a long time, when they were sad or were showing God that they were sorry for their sins. When they were happy, like during weddings, they would have feasts, or meals where they would eat much food. (See: fast)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The Jewish leaders used rhetorical questions to show that they were angry because of what Jesus said and did and that they did not believe that he was God's Son

Links:

Mark 2:1 Notes

Mark 2:1

Connecting Statement:

After preaching and healing people throughout Galilee, Jesus returns to Capernaum, where he heals and forgives the sin of a paralyzed man.

it was heard that he was at home

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people there heard that he was staying at his home"

Mark 2:2

So many gathered there

The word "there" refers to the house that Jesus stayed at in Capernaum. Alternate translation: "So many people gathered there" or "So many people came to the house"

there was no more space

This refers to there being no space inside the house. Alternate translation: "there was no more room for them inside"

he spoke the word to them

"Jesus spoke his message to them"

Mark 2:3

four people were carrying him

"four of them were carrying him." It is likely that there were more than four people within the group that brought the man to Jesus.

were bringing a paralyzed man

"were bringing a man who was unable to walk or use his arms"

Mark 2:4

could not get near him

"could not get close to where Jesus was"

they removed the roof that was above Jesus, and after they made an opening, they lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on

Houses where Jesus lived had flat roofs made of clay and covered with tiles. Alternate translation: "they removed the tiles from the part of the roof above where Jesus was. And when they had dug through the clay roof, they lowered the mat the paralzyed man was lying on" or "they made a hole in the roof above Jesus, and then they lowered the paralyzed man on the mat"

Mark 2:5

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Seeing their faith
"Seeing the men's faith." Possible meanings are 1) that only the men who carried the paralyzed man had faith or 2) that the paralyzed man and the men who brought him to Jesus all had faith.
Son
The word "Son" here shows Jesus cared for the man as a father cares for a son. Alternate translation: "My son"
your sins are forgiven
Jesus did not clearly say who was forgiving the man's sins. Alternate translation: "your sins are gone" or "you do not have to pay for your sins" or "your sins do not count against you"
Mark 2:6
reasoned in their hearts
Here "their hearts" is a metonym for the people's thoughts. Alternate translation: "were thinking to themselves"
Mark 2:7
How can this man speak this way?
The scribes used this question to show their anger that Jesus said "Your sins are forgiven." Alternate translation: "This man should not speak this way!"
Who can forgive sins but God alone?
The scribes used this question to say that since only God can forgive sins, then Jesus should not say "Your sins are forgiven." Alternate translation: "Only God can forgive sins!"
Mark 2:8
in his spirit
"in his inner being" or "in himself"
they were thinking within themselves
Each of the scribes was thinking to himself; they were not talking to each other.
Why are you thinking this in your hearts?
Jesus uses this question to tell the scribes that what they are thinking is wrong. Alternate translation: "What you are thinking is wrong." or "Do not think that I am blaspheming."
this in your hearts
The word "hearts" is a metonym for their inner thoughts and desires. Alternate translation: "this inside yourselves" or "these things"
Mark 2:9
Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, ... take up your mat and walk'?
Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "I just said to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven.' You may think that it is harder to say 'Get up, take up your mat and walk,' because the proof of whether or not I can heal him will be shown by whether or not he gets up and walks." or "You may think that it is easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up, take up your mat and walk.'"
Mark 2:10
But in order that you may know
"But so that you may know." The word "you" refers to the scribes and the crowd.
that the Son of Man has authority
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man." Alternate translation: "that I am the Son of Man and I have authority"
Mark 2:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 2:12
in front of everyone
"while all the people there were watching"
Mark 2:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus is teaching the crowd beside the Sea of Galilee, and he calls Levi to follow him.
the lake
This is the Sea of Galilee, which is also known as the Lake of Gennesaret.
the crowd came to him
"the people went where he was"
Mark 2:14
Levi son of Alphaeus
Alpheus was Levi's father.
the tax collector's tent
We do not know what kind of a structure this was or what it was made of. It may have been a tent or booth. It probably included a table and some kind of protection from sun and rain.
Mark 2:15
Connecting Statement:
It is now later in the day, and Jesus is at Levi's house for a meal.
Levi's house
"the home of Levi"
sinners
In this verse, the word "sinners" refers to people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins
for there were many and they followed him
Possible meanings are 1) "for there were many tax collectors and sinful people who followed Jesus" or 2) "for Jesus had many disciples and they followed him."
Mark 2:16
Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?
The scribes and Pharisees asked this question to show they disapproved of Jesus's hospitality. This can be worded as a statement. Alternate translation: "He should not eat with tax collectors and sinners!"
Mark 2:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus responds to what the scribes had said to his disciples about his eating with tax collectors and sinful people.
he said to them
"he said to the scribes"
People who are strong in body do not need a physician; only people who are sick need one
Jesus used this proverb about sick people and doctors to teach them that only people who know that they are sinful realize that they need Jesus.
strong in body
"healthy"
I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners

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Jesus expects his hearers to understand he came for those who want help. Alternate translation: "I came for people who understand they are sinful, not for people who believe they are righteous"

but sinners

The words "I came to call" are understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "but I came to call sinners"

Mark 2:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells parables to show why his disciples should not fast while he is with them.

the Pharisees were fasting ... the disciples of the Pharisees

These two phrases refer to the same group of people, but the second is more specific. Both refer to the followers of the Pharisee sect, but they do not focus on the leaders of the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "the disciples of the Pharisees were fasting ... the disciples of the Pharisees"

Some people

"Some men." It is best to translate this phrase without specifying exactly who these men are. If in your language you have to be more specific, the possible meanings are 1) these men were not among John's disciples or the disciples of the Pharisees or 2) these men were among John's disciples.

came and said to him

"came and said to Jesus"

Mark 2:19

Can the wedding attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them?

Jesus uses this question to remind the people of something they already know and to encourage them to apply it to him and his disciples. Alternate translation: "Wedding attendants do not fast while the bridegroom is with them. Rather they celebrate and feast."

Mark 2:20

the bridegroom will be taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will go away"

away from them ... they will fast

The words "them" and "they" refer to the wedding attendants.

Mark 2:21

No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment

Sewing a piece of new cloth on an old garment will make the hole on an old garment worse if the piece of new cloth has not yet shrunk. Both the new cloth and old garment will be ruined.

Mark 2:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell another parable. This one is about putting new wine into old wineskins rather than into new wineskins.

new wine

"grape juice." This refers to wine that has not fermented yet. If grapes are unknown in your area, use the general term for fruit juice.

old wineskins

This refers to wineskins that have been used many times.

wineskins

These were bags made out of animal skins. They could also be called "wine bags" or "skin bags."

the wine will burst the skins

New wine expands as it ferments. If it is put in new wineskins, the wineskins will stretch. But old wineskins are brittle and cannot stretch. If new wine is poured into old wineskins, the wineskins will tear open.

are lost

"will be ruined"

fresh wineskins

"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to wineskins that have never been used.

Mark 2:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus gives the Pharisees an example from scripture to show why the disciples were not wrong to pick grain on the Sabbath.

began picking heads of grain

The disciples were picking heads of grain to eat the kernels, or seeds, in them while they were walking. They were not harvesting the grain to take it home. Plucking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether it was lawful to do this on the Sabbath.

heads of grain

The "heads" are the topmost part of the wheat plant, which is a kind of tall grass. The heads hold the mature grain or seeds of the plant.

as they made their way

"as they walked along"

Mark 2:24

Connecting Statement:

The Pharisees ask a question about what the disciples were doing (verse 23).

doing something that is not lawful on the Sabbath day

Plucking grain in others' fields and eating it (verse 23) was not considered stealing. The question was whether it was lawful to do this on the Sabbath.

Look, why are they doing something that is not lawful on the Sabbath day?

The Pharisees ask Jesus a question to condemn him. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look! They are breaking the Jewish law concerning the Sabbath."

Look

"Look at this" or "Listen." This is a word used to get the attention of someone to show them something. If there is a word in your language that is used to draw a person's attention to something, you could use that here.

Mark 2:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to scold the Pharisees by asking them a question.

He said to them

"Jesus said to the Pharisees"

Have you never read what David did

This question ends in 2:26. Jesus is reminding the scribes and Pharisees of something David did on the Sabbath. If

this rhetorical question is translated as a statement or a command, then the question mark in 2:26 should become a period. Alternate translation: "You have read what David did" or "Remember what you read about what David did"

read what David did

Jesus refers to reading about David in the Old Testament. This can be translated showing the implicit information. Alternate translation: "read in the scriptures what David did"

Mark 2:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking the question he began in verse 25.

how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him?

This question began in 2:25. If you translated the rhetorical question as a statement or command in verse 25, then the question mark here should become a period. Alternate translation: "how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him."

how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him

This can be expressed as a statement separate from verse 25. If so, verse 25 should end with a period instead of a dash. Alternate translation: "He went into the house of God ... to those who were with him"

how he went

The word "he" refers to David.

the bread of the presence

This refers to the twelve loaves of bread that were placed on a golden table in the tabernacle or temple building as a sacrifice to God.

Mark 2:27

The Sabbath was made for mankind

Jesus makes clear why God established the Sabbath. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made the Sabbath for mankind"

mankind

"man" or "people" or "the needs of people." This word refers to both men and women.

not mankind for the Sabbath

The words "was made" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "mankind was not made for the Sabbath" or "God did not make mankind for the Sabbath"

Mark 2:28

General Information:

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Chapter 3

Mark 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sabbath

It was against the law of Moses to do work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees believed healing a sick person on the Sabbath was "work," so they said that Jesus did wrong when he healed a person on the Sabbath. (See: lawofmoses)

"Blasphemy against the Spirit"

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Links:

Mark 3:1 Notes

Mark 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath in the synagogue and shows how he feels about what the Pharisees had done with the Sabbath rules. The Pharisees and Herodians begin planning to put Jesus to death.

a man with a withered hand

"a man with a crippled hand"

Mark 3:2

Some people watched him closely to see if he would heal him

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"Some people watched Jesus closely to see if he would heal the man with the withered hand"

Some people

"Some of the Pharisees." Later, in Mark 3:6, these people are identified as Pharisees.

so that they could accuse him

If Jesus were to heal the man that day, the Pharisees would accuse him of breaking the law by working on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "so that they could accuse him of wrongdoing" or "so that they could accuse him of breaking the law"

Mark 3:3

in the middle of everyone

"in the middle of this crowd"

Mark 3:4

Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath ... or to kill?

Jesus said this to challenge them. He wanted them to acknowledge that it is lawful to heal people on the Sabbath.

to do good on the Sabbath day or to do harm ... to save a life or to kill

These two phrases are similar in meaning, except that the second is more extreme.

to save a life or to kill

It may be helpful to repeat "is it lawful," as that is the question Jesus is asking again in another way. Alternate translation: "is it lawful to save a life or to kill"

to save a life

"to save someone's life" or "to save someone from dying"

But they were silent

"But they refused to answer him"

Mark 3:5

He looked around

"Jesus looked around"

was grieved

"was deeply saddened"

by their hardness of heart

This metaphor describes how the Pharisees were unwilling to have compassion on the man with the withered hand. Alternate translation: "because they were unwilling to have compassion on the man"

Stretch out your hand

"Reach out with your hand"

his hand was restored

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus restored his hand" or "Jesus made his hand the way it was before"

Mark 3:6

began to plot

"began to make a plan"

the Herodians

This is the name of an informal political party that supported Herod Antipas.

how they might put him to death

"how they might kill Jesus"

Mark 3:7

Connecting Statement:

A great crowd of people follows Jesus, and he heals many people.

the sea

This refers to the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 3:8

Idumea

This is the region, previously known as Edom, which covered the southern half of the province of Judea.

the things he was doing

This refers to the miracles Jesus was performing. Alternate translation: "the great miracles that Jesus was performing"

came to him

"came to where Jesus was"

Mark 3:9

General Information:

Verse 9 tells what Jesus asked his disciples to do because of the large crowd of people around him. Verse 10 tells why such a large crowd was around Jesus. The information in these verses can be reordered to present the events in the order they happened, as in the UDB.

He told his disciples to have a small boat ... not press against him

As the large crowd was pushing forward toward Jesus, he was in danger of being crushed by them. They would not crush him intentionally. It was just that there were so many people.

Mark 3:10

For he healed many, so that everyone ... to touch him

This tells why so many people were crowding around Jesus that he thought they might crush him. Alternate translation: "For, because Jesus had healed many people, everyone ... to touch him"

For he healed many

The word "many" refers to the large number of people Jesus had already healed. Alternate translation: "For he healed many people"

everyone who had afflictions eagerly approached him in order to touch him

They did this because they believed that touching Jesus would make them well. This can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "all the sick people pushed forward eagerly trying to touch him so that they might be healed"

Mark 3:11

saw him

"saw Jesus"

they fell down ... cried out, and they said

Here "they" refers to the unclean spirits. It is they who are causing the people they possess to do things. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they caused the people they were possessing to fall down before him and to cry out to him"

they fell down before him

The unclean spirits did not fall down before Jesus because they loved him or wanted to worship him. They fell down before him because they were afraid of him.

You are the Son of God

Jesus has power over unclean spirits because he is the "Son of God."

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 3:12

He strictly ordered them

"Jesus strictly ordered the unclean spirits"

not to make him known

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"not to reveal who he was"
Mark 3:13
General Information:
Jesus chooses the men he wants to be his apostles.
Mark 3:14
so that they might be with him and he might send them to proclaim the message
"so that they would be with him and he could send them to proclaim the message"
Mark 3:15
General Information:
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Mark 3:16
Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter
The author begins to list the names of the twelve apostles. Simon is the first man listed.
Mark 3:17
to whom he gave
The phrase "to whom" refers to both James son of Zebedee and his brother John.
the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder
Jesus called them this because they were like thunder. Alternate translation: "the name Boanerges, which means men who are like thunder" or "the name Boanerges, which means Thunder Men"
Mark 3:18
Thaddaeus
This is the name of a man.
Mark 3:19
who would betray him
"who would betray Jesus" The word "who" refers to Judas Iscariot.
Mark 3:20
Then he went home
"Then Jesus went to the house where he was staying."
they could not even eat bread
The word "bread" represents food. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples could not eat at all" or "they could not eat anything"
Mark 3:21
they went out to seize him
Members of his family went to the house so that they could take hold of him and force him to go home with them.
for they said
Possible meanings for the word "they" are 1) his relatives or 2) some people in the crowd.
out of his mind
This idiom describes how they thought he was acting. Alternate translation: "crazy" or "insane"
Mark 3:22
By the ruler of the demons he drives out demons
"By the power of Beelzebul, who is the ruler of the demons, Jesus drives out demons"
Mark 3:23
Connecting Statement:
Jesus explains with a parable why it is foolish for people to think that Jesus is controlled by Satan.
Jesus called them to himself
"Jesus called the people to come to him"
How can Satan cast out Satan?
Jesus asked this rhetorical question in response to the scribes saying that he cast out demons by Beelzebul. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Satan cannot cast out himself!" or "Satan does not go against his own evil spirits!"
Mark 3:24
If a kingdom is divided against itself
The word "kingdom" is a metonym for the people who live in the kingdom. Alternate translation: "If the people who live in a kingdom are divided against each other"
cannot stand
Here "stand" is a metaphor that means endure, or continue to exist. Alternate translation: "cannot endure" or "will end"
Mark 3:25
house
This is a metonym for the people who live in a house. Alternate translation: "family" or "household"
Mark 3:26
If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided
The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that refers back to Satan, and it is also a metonym for his evil spirits. Alternate translation: "If Satan and his evil spirits were fighting one another" or "If Satan and his evil spirits have risen up against each other and are divided"
is not able to stand
Here "stand" is a metaphor that means endure, or stay strong. Alternate translation: "cannot endure" or "cannot stay strong"
Mark 3:27
plunder
to steal a person's valuables and possessions
Mark 3:28
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important.
the sons of men
"those who have been born of man." This expression is used to emphasize peoples' humanity. Alternate translation: "people"
utter
speak
Mark 3:29
will never have forgiveness
The idea in the noun forgiveness can be expressed with a phrase. Alternate translation: "will never be forgiven"
is guilty of an eternal sin
"Eternal sin" is a metonym for "a sin that will be eternally punished." Alternate translation: "is guilty of a sin that will be punished eternally"
Mark 3:30
they were saying
"the people were saying"
has an unclean spirit
This is an idiom that means to be possessed by an unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "is possessed by an unclean spirit"
Mark 3:31
Then his mother and his brothers came

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"Then Jesus's mother and brothers came"
They sent for him, summoning him
"They sent someone inside to tell him that they were outside and to have him come out to them"
Mark 3:32
are looking for you
"are asking for you"
Mark 3:33
Who are my mother and my brothers?
Jesus uses this question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers."
Mark 3:34
here are my mother and my brothers
This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.
Mark 3:35
whoever does ... that person is
"those who do ... they are"
that person is my brother, and sister, and mother
This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family. Alternate translation: "that person is like a brother, sister, or mother to me"

Chapter 4

Mark 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Mark 4:3-10 forms one parable. The parable is explained in 4:14-23.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:12, which is a quotation from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Parables
The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth.

Links:

Mark 4:1 Notes

Mark 4:1
Connecting Statement:
As Jesus teaches from a boat at the seaside, he tells them the parable of the soils.
the sea
This is the Sea of Galilee.
Mark 4:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 4:3
Listen!
"Pay attention!
A farmer went out to sow his seed
This means that he tossed seeds onto the ground so they could grow.
Mark 4:4
some seed ... devoured it
"some seeds ... devoured them"
Mark 4:5
Other seed ... it did not have ... it sprang ... it did not have
"Other seeds ... they did not have ... they sprang ... they did not have"
it sprang up
"the seed that landed on the rocky ground began to grow quickly"
soil
This refers to the loose dirt on the ground in which you can plant seeds.
Mark 4:6
the plants were scorched
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it scorched the young plants"
because they had no root, they dried up
"because the young plants had no roots, they dried up"
Mark 4:7
Other seed ... choked it ... it did not produce
"Other seeds ... choked them ... they did not produce"
Mark 4:8
yielding thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times
The amount of grain produced by each plant is being compared to the single seed from which it grew. Ellipsis is used here to shorten the phrases but they can be written out. Alternate translation: "Some plants bore thirty times as much as the seed that the man had planted, some produced sixty times as much grain, and some produced a hundred times as much grain"
thirty ... sixty ... a hundred
"30 ... 60 ... 100." These may be written as numerals.
Mark 4:9
Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" is a metonym for being willing to understand and obey. Alternate translation: "Whoever is willing to listen, listen" or "Whoever is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"
Whoever has ... let him hear
Since Jesus wanted his audience to pay attention, this can also be expressed with the word "you." Alternate translation: "If you have ears to hear, then hear" or "If you

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are willing to understand, then understand and obey"
Mark 4:10
When Jesus was alone
This does not mean that Jesus was completely alone; rather, it means that the crowds were gone and Jesus was only with the twelve and some of his other close followers.
Mark 4:11
To you is given
This can be stated in active form. "God has given you" or "I have given you"
to those outside
"to those outside our group" or "to those who are not among us." This refers to all the other people who were not among the twelve or Jesus's other close followers.
everything is in parables
It can be stated that Jesus gives the parables to the people. Alternate translation: "I have spoken everything in parables"
Mark 4:12
when they look ... when they hear
It is assumed that Jesus is speaking about the people looking at what he shows them and hearing what he tells them. Alternate translation: "when they look at what I am doing ... when they hear what I am saying"
they look, but do not see
Possible meanings are 1) the word "look" here refers to making an effort to see and "see" refers to actually being able to see what they have looked for and is a metaphor for "understand." Alternate translation: "they look, but they do not understand" Or 2) here the word translated "look" refers to seeing what one is looking at and the word translated "see" refers to understanding what they are seeing.
they would turn
"they would turn to God." Here "turn" is a metaphor for "repent." Alternate translation: "they would repent"
Mark 4:13
He said to them
"Then Jesus said to his disciples"
Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?
Jesus used these questions to show how sad he was that his disciples could not understand his parable. Alternate translation: "If you cannot understand this parable, think about how hard it will be for you to understand all the other parables."
Mark 4:14
General Information:
Jesus begins to explain the parable he told in [Mark 4:3-8]
The sower
"The farmer who sows his seed"
sows the word
Sowing God's word represents teaching it. Alternate translation: "teaches people God's word" or "represents one who teaches God's word"
the word
The phrase "the word" represents God's message. Alternate translation: "God's message"
Mark 4:15
These are the ones beside the road
Here Jesus speaks about people. Alternate translation: "These people are the seeds that fall beside the road" or "These people are like seeds that fall beside a road"
When they hear
"When they hear the word"
Mark 4:16
these are the seed sown on the rocky ground
"These people are the seeds that fall on the rocky ground" or "These people are like seeds that fall on the rocky ground"
Mark 4:17
they do not have root in themselves
Having no root represents not fully understanding or believing God's word. Alternate translation: "they are like young plants that have no roots"
endure
In this parable, "endure" means "continue to believe." Alternate translation: "continue in their belief"
tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word
The phrase "on account of the word" means "because they believe God's message. Alternate translation: "tribulation or persecution comes because they believe God's message"
they immediately fall away
In this parable, "fall away" means "stop believing God's message"
Mark 4:18
Still others are the ones sown among the thorns
"Still other people are the seeds that fall among the thorns" or "And other people are like seeds that fall among the thorns"
Mark 4:19
the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word
The words "cares," "deceitfulness," and "desires" are spoken of as if they were weeds that wrap around plants and keep them from growing. Alternate translation: "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke God's message in their lives like thorns that choke young plants"
the cares of the world
"the worries in this life" or "the concerns about this present life"
the deceitfulness of wealth
"the lie that wealth will make them happy" or "the lie that having many possessions will make them happy"
it is unproductive
"the word does not produce a crop in them." The word being unproductive means that it does not have an effect on the person's life.
Mark 4:20
Those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit
"The seeds that fall on the good soil represent people who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit"
and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much
Fruit represents the results or effect of God's word in a person's life. The numbers tell how much fruit there might be, or how great the results might be. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"and produce good results, like plants that bear thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much fruit as what was sown"
Mark 4:21
Jesus said to them
"Jesus said to the crowd"
Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket or under the bed?
This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You certainly do not bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under a bed!"
Mark 4:22
For nothing is hidden that will not be known ... come out into the open
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For everything that is hidden will be made known, and everything that is secret will come out into to open"
nothing is hidden ... nothing is secret
"there is nothing that is hidden ... there is nothing that is secret" Both of the phrases have the same meaning. Jesus is emphasizing that everything that is secret will be made known.
Mark 4:23
If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Mark 4:9]
If anyone ... let him hear
Since Jesus wanted his audience to pay attention, this can also be expressed with the word "you." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Mark 4:9]
Mark 4:24
He said to them
"Jesus said to the crowd"
for the measure you use
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is talking about a literal measure and giving generously to others or 2) this is a metaphor in which Jesus speaks of "understanding" as if it were "measuring."
will be measured to you, and more will be added to you.
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will measure that amount for you, and he will add it to you"
Mark 4:25
to him will be given more ... even what he has will be taken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to him God will give more ... from him God will take away" or "God will give more to him ... God will take away from him"
Mark 4:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells the people parables to teach them about the kingdom of God. Later he explains the parables to his disciples.
like a man who sows his seed
When someone sows seed, he plants the seed by scattering it on the ground. Alternate translation: "like a farmer who plants his seed" or "like a farmer who scatters his seed"
Mark 4:27
He sleeps at night and gets up by day
This is something that the man habitually does. Alternate translation: "He sleeps each night and gets up each day" or "He sleeps each night and gets up the next day"
gets up by day
"is up during the day" or "is active during the day"
though he does not know how
"though the man does not know how the seed sprouts and grows"
Mark 4:28
the blade
the stalk or sprout
the ear
the head on the stalk or the part of the plant that holds the fruit
Mark 4:29
he immediately sends in the sickle
Here "the sickle" is a metonym that stands for the farmer or the people whom the farmer sends out to harvest the grain. Alternate translation: "he immediately goes into the field with a sickle to harvest the grain" or "he immediately sends people with sickles into the field to harvest the grain"
sickle
a curved blade or a sharp hook used to cut grain
because the harvest has come
Here the words "has come" are part of an idiom that means it is time for something. Alternative translation: "because it is time for harvesting the grain" or "because the grain is ready to be gathered"
Mark 4:30
To what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to explain it?
Jesus asked this question to cause his hearers to think about what the kingdom of God is like. Alternate translation: "With this parable I can explain what the kingdom of God is like."
Mark 4:31
when it is sown
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone sows it" or "when someone plants it"
Mark 4:32
it forms large branches
The mustard tree is described as causing its branches to grow large. Alternate translation: "it has large branches"
Mark 4:33
he spoke the word to them
"Word" here is a synecdoche for "the message of God." The word "them" refers to the crowds. Alternate translation: "he taught them the message of God"
as much as they were able to understand
"and if they were able to understand some, he kept telling them more"
Mark 4:34
when he was alone
This means that he was away from the crowds, but his disciples were still with him.
he explained everything
Here "everything" refers to all his parables. Alternate translation: "he explained all his parables"
Mark 4:35

Connecting Statement:
As Jesus and his disciples take a boat to escape the crowds of people, a great storm arises. His disciples are afraid when they see that even the wind and the sea obey Jesus.
he said to them
"Jesus said to his disciples"
the other side
"the other side of the Sea of Galilee" or "the other side of the sea"
Mark 4:36
General Information:
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Mark 4:37
a violent windstorm arose
Here "arose" is an idiom for "began." Alternate translation: "a violent windstorm began"
the boat was almost full of water
It may be helpful to state that the boat was filling up with water. Alternate translation: "the boat was in danger of being filled with water"
Mark 4:38
the stern
The stern is the back part of the boat.
They woke him up
The word "they" refers to the disciples.
do you not care that we are about to die?
The disciples asked this question to show that they were in great danger and that they were upset that Jesus was not helping them. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you need to pay attention to what is happening; we are all about to die!"
we are about to die
The word "we" includes the disciples and Jesus.
Mark 4:39
Peace! Be still!
These two phrases are similar and used to emphasize what Jesus wanted the wind and the sea to do.
a great calm
"a great stillness over the sea" or "a great calm over the sea"
Mark 4:40
Then he said to them
"And Jesus said to his disciples"
Why are you afraid? Do you still not have faith?
Jesus asks these questions to make his disciples consider why they are afraid when he is with them. These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You should not be afraid. You need to have more faith."
Mark 4:41
Who then is this, because even the wind and the sea obey him?
The disciples ask this question in amazement at what Jesus did. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This man is not like ordinary men; even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Chapter 5

Mark 5 General Notes

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Talitha, koum"
The words "Talitha, koum"

Links:

Mark 5:1 Notes

Mark 5:1
Connecting Statement:
After Jesus calms the great storm, he heals a man who has many demons, but the local people in Gerasa are not glad about his healing, and they beg Jesus to leave.
They came
The word "They" refers to Jesus and his disciples.
the sea
This refers to the Sea of Galilee.
Gerasenes
This name refers to the people who live in Gerasa.
Mark 5:2
with an unclean spirit
This is an idiom meaning that the man is "controlled" or "possessed" by the unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "controlled by an unclean spirit" or "that an unclean spirit possessed"
Mark 5:3
General Information:
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Mark 5:4
He had been bound many times
This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "People had bound him many times"
his shackles were shattered
This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "he shattered his shackles"
shackles
pieces of metal that people wrap around the arms and legs of prisoners and attach with chains to objects that do not move so the prisoners cannot move
No one had the strength to subdue him
The man was so strong that no one could subdue him. Alternate translation: "He was so strong that no one was strong enough to subdue him"
subdue him
"control him"
Mark 5:5
cut himself with sharp stones
Often when a person is possessed by a demon, the demon will cause the person to do self-destructive things, such as cutting himself.

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Mark 5:6
When he saw Jesus from a distance
When the man first saw Jesus, Jesus would have been getting out of the boat.
bowed down
This means that he knelt down before Jesus out of reverence and respect, not out of worship.
Mark 5:7
General Information:
The information in verses 7 and 8 may be reordered to present the events in the order that they happened, as in the UDB.
He cried out
"The unclean spirit cried out"
What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?
The unclean spirit asks this question out of fear. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! There is no reason for you to interfere with me."
Jesus ... do not torment me
Jesus has the power to torment unclean spirits.
Son of the Most High God
This is an important title for Jesus.
I beg you by God himself
Here the unclean spirit is swearing by God as he makes a request of Jesus. Consider how this type of request is made in your language. Alternate translation: "I beg you before God" or "I swear by God himself and beg you"
Mark 5:8
General Information:
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Mark 5:9
He asked him
"And Jesus asked the unclean spirit"
He answered him, "My name is Legion, for we are many."
One spirit was speaking for many here. He spoke of them as if they were a legion, a Roman army unit of about 6,000 soldiers. Alternate translation: "And the spirit said to him, 'Call us an army, for many of us are inside the man.'"
Mark 5:10
He begged him
"The unclean spirit begged Jesus"
not to send them
"not to send him and the other unclean spirits"
Mark 5:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 5:12
they begged him
"the unclean spirits begged Jesus"
Mark 5:13
he allowed them
It may be helpful to state clearly what Jesus allowed them to do. Alternate translation: "Jesus allowed the unclean spirits to do what they asked permission to do"
into the sea, and about two thousand pigs drowned in the sea
You can make the words after the comma a separate sentence: "into the sea. There were about two thousand pigs, and they drowned in the sea"
about two thousand pigs
"about 2,000 pigs"
Mark 5:14
reported what had happened in the city and in the countryside
"told people in the city and in the countryside what had happened"
Mark 5:15
Legion
This was the name of the many demons that had been in the man. See how you translated this in Mark 5:9.
in his right mind
This is an idiom meaning that he is thinking clearly. Alternate translation: "of a normal mind" or "thinking clearly"
they were afraid
The word "they" refers to the group of people who went out to see what had happened.
Mark 5:16
Those who had seen what happened
"The people who had witnessed what had happened"
Mark 5:17
General Information:
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Mark 5:18
the demon-possessed man
Though the man is no longer demon-possessed, he is still described in this way. Alternate translation: "the man who had been demon-possessed"
Mark 5:19
But Jesus did not permit him
What Jesus did not allow the man to do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But he did not allow the man to come with them"
Mark 5:20
Decapolis
This is the name of a region that means Ten Cities. It is located to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee.
everyone was amazed
It may be helpful to state why the people were amazed. Alternate translation: "all the people who heard what the man said were amazed"
Mark 5:21
Connecting Statement:
After healing the demon-possessed man in region of the Gerasenes, Jesus and his disciples return across the lake to Capernaum where one of the leaders of the synagogue asks Jesus to heal his daughter.
the other side
This refers to the other side of the sea
beside the sea
"on the seashore" or "on the shore"
the sea
This is the Sea of Galilee.
Mark 5:22
Jairus
This is the name of a man.
Mark 5:23
lay your hands
"Laying on hands" refers to a prophet or teacher placing his

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

hand on someone and imparting either healing or a blessing. In this case, Jarius is asking Jesus to heal his daughter.

that she may be made well and live

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and heal her and make her live"

Mark 5:24

So he went with him

"So Jesus went with Jairus." Jesus's disciples also went with him. Alternate translation: "So Jesus and the disciples went with Jairus"

pressed close around him

This means they crowded around Jesus and pressed themselves together to be closer to Jesus.

Mark 5:25

Connecting Statement:

While Jesus is on his way to heal the man's little 12-year-old girl, a woman who has been sick for 12 years interrupts by touching Jesus for her healing.

Now a woman was there

The word "Now" is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story with a new person. Consider how new people are introduced into a story in your language.

who had a flow of blood for twelve years

The woman did not have an open wound; rather, her monthly flow of blood would not stop. Your language may have a polite way to refer to this condition.

for twelve years

"for 12 years"

Mark 5:26

she grew worse

"her sickness got worse" or "her bleeding increased"

Mark 5:27

the reports about Jesus

She had heard reports about Jesus of how he healed people. Alternate translation: "that Jesus healed people"

cloak

outer garment or coat

Mark 5:28

I will be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will heal me" or "his power will heal me"

Mark 5:29

she was healed from her affliction

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sickness left her" or "she was no longer sick"

Mark 5:30

that power had gone out from him

When the woman touched Jesus, Jesus felt his power healing her. Jesus himself did not lose any of his power to heal people when he healed her. Alternate translation: "that his healing power had healed someone"

Mark 5:31

this crowd pressed around you

This means they crowded around Jesus and pressed themselves together to be closer to Jesus. See how you translated this in Mark 5:24.

Mark 5:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:33

fell down before him

"knelt down before him." She knelt down before Jesus as an act of honor and submission.

told him the whole truth

The phrase "the whole truth" refers to how she had touched him and had became well. Alternate translation: "told him the whole truth about how she had touched him"

Mark 5:34

Daughter

Jesus called the woman "Daughter." This was a kind way for a teacher to speak to a woman. Jesus showed that he cared about her.

your faith

"your faith in me"

Mark 5:35

While he was speaking

"While Jesus was speaking"

the synagogue leader

This refers to Jairus (Mark 5:22).

Why trouble the teacher any longer?

This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is useless to bother the teacher any longer" or "There is no need to bother the teacher any longer."

the teacher

This refers to Jesus.

Mark 5:36

the message that was spoken

This can be stated as in active form. Alternate translation: "the message that they told Jairus"

Just believe

If necessary, you can state what Jesus is commanding Jairus to believe. Alternate translation: "Just believe I can make you daughter live"

Mark 5:37

General Information:

In verses 37 and 38, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

He did not permit anyone to accompany him except Peter ... James

This double negative emphasizes that Peter and the others were the only ones whom he permitted to accompany him. Alternate translation: "He only permitted Peter ... James to accompany him"

He did not permit

Jesus did not permit

to accompany him

"to come with him." It may be helpful to state where they were going. Alternate translation: "to accompany him to Jairus' house"

Mark 5:38

General Information:

In verses 37 and 38, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

he saw

Jesus saw

Mark 5:39

he said to them

"Jesus said to the people who were weeping"

Why are you upset and why do you weep?

Jesus asked this question to help them see their lack of faith. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is not a time to be upset and crying."

The child is not dead but sleeps

Jesus uses the common word for sleep, and so should the translation.

Mark 5:40

They began to mock him

Jesus used the common word for sleep (verse 39). The reader should understand that the people who hear Jesus speak are laughing at him because they truly do know the difference between a dead person and a sleeping person and they think he does not.

put them all outside

"sent all the other people outside the house"

those who were with him

This refers to Peter, James, and John.

went in where the child was

It may be helpful to state where the child is. Alternate translation: "went into the room where the child was lying"

Mark 5:41

Talitha, koum

This is an Aramaic sentence that Jesus spoke to the little girl in her language. Write these words as they sound, using your alphabet.

Mark 5:42

she was twelve years of age

"she was 12 years old"

Mark 5:43

He strictly ordered them that no one should know about this. Then

This can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "He ordered them strictly, 'No one should know about this!' Then" or "He ordered them strictly, 'Do not tell anyone about what I have done!' Then"

He strictly ordered them

"He strongly commanded them"

Then he told them to give her something to eat.

This can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "And he told them, 'Give her something to eat.'"

Chapter 6

Mark 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Anointed with oil"

In the ancient Near East, people would try to heal sick people by putting olive oil on them.

Links:

[Mark 6:1 Notes]

Mark 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus returns to his hometown, where he is not accepted.

his hometown

This refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up and where his family lived. This does not mean that he owned land there.

Mark 6:2

What is this wisdom that has been given to him?

This question can be asked in active form. Alternate translation: "What is this wisdom that he has gained?"

that he does with his hands

This phrase emphasizes that Jesus himself does the miracles. Alternate translation: "that he himself works"

Mark 6:3

Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are his sisters not here with us?

These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "He is just an ordinary carpenter! We know him and his family. We know Mary his mother. We know his younger brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon. And his younger sisters also live here with us."

Mark 6:4

to them

"to the crowd"

A prophet is not without honor, except

This sentence uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. Alternate translation: "A prophet is always honored, except" or "People always honor prophets, except those"

Mark 6:5

to lay his hands on a few sick people

Prophets and teachers would put their hands on people in order to heal them or bless them. In this case, Jesus was healing people.

Mark 6:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus sends his disciples out in sets of two to preach and to heal.

he called the twelve

Here the word "called" means that he summoned the twelve to come to him.

two by two

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"2 by 2" or "in pairs"
Mark 6:8
General Information:
Jesus's instructions in verses 8 and 9 can be reordered to separate what he told the disciples to do from what he told them not to do, as in the UDB.
to take nothing for their journey, except a staff
This double negative emphasizes that a staff is the only thing that they were to take. Alternate translation: "to take only a staff for their journey"
no bread
Here "bread" is a synecdoche for food in general. Alternate translation: "no food"
Mark 6:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 6:10
He said to them
"Jesus said to the twelve"
remain until you go away from there
Here "remain" represents daily going back to that house to eat and sleep there. Alternate translation: "eat and sleep in that house until you leave that area"
Mark 6:11
as a testimony to them
"as a testimony against them." The testimony can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "as a testimony that they did not welcome you" or "to show them that they did wrong when they did not welcome you"
Mark 6:12
They went out
The word "They" refers to the twelve and does not include Jesus. Also, it may be helpful to state that they went out to various towns. Alternate translation: "They went out to various towns"
repent
"stop sinning"
Mark 6:13
They cast out many demons
It may be helpful to state that they cast the demons out of people. Alternate translation: "They cast many demons out of people"
Mark 6:14
Connecting Statement:
Before this time, Herod commanded that John the Baptist be killed. When Herod hears about Jesus's miracles, he worries, thinking that someone has raised John the Baptist from the dead.
King Herod heard this
The word "this" refers to everything that Jesus and his disciples had been doing in various towns, including casting out demons and healing people.
Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised
Some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "Some people were saying, 'He is John the Baptist, who has been raised"
John the Baptist has been raised from the dead
"Raised from the dead" is an idiom that means "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has raised John the Baptist from the dead" or "John the Baptist has become alive again"
Mark 6:15
Some others said, "He is Elijah."
It may be helpful to state why some people thought he was Elijah. Alternate translation: "Some others said, 'He is Elijah, whom God promised to send back again.'"
Mark 6:16
whom I beheaded
Herod said "I beheaded" because he had commanded his soldier to behead John. Alternate translation: "whom I commanded my soldier to behead"
has been raised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has risen" or "has become alive again"
Mark 6:17
General Information:
Here the author begins to give background information about Herod and why he beheaded John the Baptist.
Herod sent to have John arrested and he had him bound in prison
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Herod sent his soldiers to arrest John and to bind him in prison"
on account of Herodias
"because of Herodias"
his brother Philip's wife
"the wife of his brother Philip." Herod's brother Philip is not the same Philip who was an evangelist in the book of Acts or the Philip who was one of Jesus's twelve disciples.
because he had married her
"because Herod had married her"
Mark 6:18
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 6:19
Herodias held on to anger against him
"Herodias continued to be angry at John"
and wanted to kill him
Herodias wanted someone to kill John. Alternate translation: "and she wanted someone to kill him"
but she could not
What she could not do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "but she could not kill him" or "but she could not have him killed"
Mark 6:20
for Herod feared John; he knew
These two clauses can be linked differently to show more clearly why Herod feared John. Alternate translation: "for Herod feared John because he knew"
he knew that he was a righteous
"Herod knew that John was a righteous"
Listening to him
"Listening to John"
Mark 6:21
Connecting Statement:
The author continues to give background information about Herod and the beheading of John the Baptist.
an opportunity came

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"a convenient day" or "there was an opportune time." This was a time when Herodias could finally do something so that John the Baptist would be killed.

he made a dinner for his officials ... of Galilee

This means that he invited those people to a special dinner to celebrate his birthday with him. Alternate translation: "he had a banquet for his officials ... of Galilee" or "he invited his officials ... of Galilee to eat and celebrate with him"

a dinner

a formal meal or banquet

Mark 6:22

Herodias herself

The word "herself" is a reflexive pronoun used to emphasize that it was significant that it was Herodias's own daughter who danced at the dinner.

came in

"came into the room"

Mark 6:23

Whatever you ask ... my kingdom

"I will give you whatever you ask me to give to you, even half of what I own and rule, if you ask for that"

Mark 6:24

went out

"went out of the room"

Mark 6:25

on a wooden platter

"on a board" or "on a large wooden dish"

Mark 6:26

because of the oath he had made

The oath was what Herod swore to the girl in verse 23. Alternate translation: "because of what he had sworn to the girl" or "because he had sworn to give the girl whatever she asked for"

and because of his dinner guests

This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "and because his dinner guests had heard his oath"

Mark 6:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:28

on a platter

"on a tray"

Mark 6:29

When his disciples

"When John's disciples"

Mark 6:30

Connecting Statement:

After the disciples return from preaching and healing, they go somewhere to be alone, but there are many people who come to hear Jesus teach. When it becomes late, he feeds the people and then sends everyone away while he prays alone.

Mark 6:31

a deserted place

a place where there are no people

many were coming and going

This means that people were continually coming to the apostles and then going away from them.

they did not even

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

Mark 6:32

So they went away

Here the word "they" includes both the apostles and Jesus.

Mark 6:33

they saw them leaving and many recognized them, and they ran there together on foot from all the towns, and they arrived there before them

The people saw Jesus and the apostles leaving, and many of the people recognized Jesus and the apostles, and the people ran there together on foot from all the towns, and the people arrived there before Jesus and the apostles did.

on foot

The people are going on foot by land, which contrasts with how the disciples went by boat.

Mark 6:34

When they came ... on them because they were like ... to teach them

When Jesus and the disciples came ... on the people in the crowd because the people in the crowd were like ... to teach the people in the crowd

they were like sheep without a shepherd

Jesus compares the people to sheep who are confused when they do not have their shepherd to lead them.

Mark 6:35

When the hour was late

This means it was late in the day. Alternate translation: "When it was getting late" or "Late in the afternoon"

a deserted place

This refers to a place where there are no people. See how you translated this in Mark 6:31.

Mark 6:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:37

But he answered and said to them

"But Jesus answered and said to his disciples"

Can we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?

The disciples ask this question to say that there is no way they could afford to buy enough food for this crowd. Alternate translation: "We could not buy enough bread to feed this crowd, even if we had two hundred denarii!"

two hundred denarii

"200 denarii." The singular form of the word "denarii" is "denarius." A denarius was a Roman silver coin worth one day's wages.

Mark 6:38

loaves

lumps of bread dough that have been shaped and baked

Mark 6:39

green grass

Describe the grass with the color word used in your language for healthy grass, which may or may not be the color green.

Mark 6:40

in groups of hundreds and fifties

This refers to the number of people in each of the groups. Alternate translation: "with about fifty people in some groups and about a hundred people in other groups"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Mark 6:41

looking up to heaven

This means that he looked up toward the sky, which is associated with the place where God lives.

he blessed

"he spoke a blessing" or "he gave thanks"

He also divided the two fish among them all

"he divided the two fish so that everyone could have some"

Mark 6:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:43

They took up

Possible meaning are 1) "The disciples took up" or 2) "The people took up."

broken pieces of bread, twelve baskets full

"twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread"

twelve baskets

"12 baskets"

Mark 6:44

There were five thousand men who ate the loaves

Telling the number of men in the crowd hints at how large the crowd was. The women and children also ate. Alternate translation: "So many people ate the loaves of bread; the number of just the men was five thousand"

five thousand men

"5,000 men"

Mark 6:45

to the other side

This refers to the Sea of Galilee. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

Bethsaida

This is a town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 6:46

After taking leave of them

"After saying goodbye to them" or "After they had left." Use the common words your language uses for a time when friends leave each other and expect to see each other after a few hours or days.

Mark 6:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:48

Connecting Statement:

A storm arises while the disciples are trying to cross the lake. Seeing Jesus walking on the water terrifies them. They do not understand how Jesus can calm the storm.

fourth watch

This is the time between 3 a.m. and sunrise.

Mark 6:49

a ghost

the spirit of a dead person or some other kind of spirit

Mark 6:50

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:51

They were completely amazed

If you need to be more specific, it can stated what they were amazed by. Alternate translation: "They were completely amazed at what he had done"

Mark 6:52

what the loaves meant

Here the phrase "the loaves" refers to when Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread. Alternate translation: "what it meant when Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread" or "what it meant when Jesus caused the few loaves to become many"

their hearts were hardened

Having a hard heart represents being too stubborn to understand. Alternate translation: "they were too stubborn to understand"

Mark 6:53

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus and his disciples arrive at Gennesaret in their boat, people see him and bring people for him to heal. This happens wherever they go.

Gennesaret

This is the name of the region to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 6:54

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:55

they ran throughout the whole region

It may be helpful to state why they ran through the region. Alternate translation: "they ran throughout the whole district in order to tell others that Jesus was there"

they ran ... they heard

The word "they" refers to the people who recognized Jesus, not to the disciples.

the sick

This phrase refers to people. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

Mark 6:56

Wherever he entered

"Wherever Jesus entered"

they would put

Here "they" refers to the people. It does not refer to Jesus's disciples.

the sick

This phrase refers to people. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

They begged him

Possible meanings are 1) "The sick begged him" or 2) "The people begged him."

let them touch

The word "them" refers to the sick.

the edge of his garment

"the hem of his robe" or "the edge of his clothes"

as many as

"all those who"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 7

Mark 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:6-7, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hand washing

The Pharisees washed many things that were not dirty because they were trying to make God think that they were good. They washed their hands before they ate, even when their hands were not dirty, though the law of Moses did not say that they had to do it. Jesus told them that they were wrong and that people make God happy by thinking and doing the right things. (See: lawofmoses and clean)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Ephphatha"

This is an Aramaic word. Mark wrote it the way it sounds using Greek letters and then explained what it means.

Links:

Mark 7:1 Notes

Mark 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and scribes.

gathered around him

"gathered around Jesus"

Mark 7:2

They saw

"The Pharisees and the scribes saw"

that is, unwashed

The word "unwashed" explains why the disciples' hands were defiled. It can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "that is, with hands that they had not washed" or "that is, they had not washed their hands"

Mark 7:3

General Information:

In verses 3 and 4, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands carefully

The words "do not" and "unless" are a double negative. This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews eat only after they wash their hands carefully"

unless they wash their hands carefully

This kind of hand washing was an important ceremonial or religious act, not just an act of making ones hands clean physically. The Jews washed their hands carefully to obey all religious traditions and rules about cleanness. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "unless they make their hands ceremonially clean"

elders

Jewish elders were leaders in their communities and were also judges for the people.

Mark 7:4

they hold to many other things they have received

The words "things they have received" refers to traditions that they learned from their elders. Alternate translation: "they follow many other traditions" or "they do many other things that they were taught to do"

copper vessels

"copper kettles" or "metal containers"

the couches upon which they eat

"benches" or "beds." At that time, the Jews would recline when eating.

Mark 7:5

Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unclean hands?

Here "walk according to" is a metaphor for "obey." The Pharisees and scribes asked this question to challenge Jesus's authority. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Your disciples should not disobey the traditions of our elders by eating their bread with unclean hands."

unclean

The hands were ritually unclean because the disciples had not performed the ceremonial washing. The Pharisees were not accusing them of eating with physical dirt on their hands.

bread

This is a synecdoche, representing food in general. Alternate translation: "food"

Mark 7:6

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, who had written scripture many years earlier.

with their lips

Here "lips" is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "by what they say"

but their heart is far from me

Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts or emotions. This is a way of saying the people are not truly devoted to God. Alternate translation: "but they do not really love me"

Mark 7:7

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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Mark 7:8
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.
You abandon the commandment of God
"You refuse to obey the commandment of God"
hold on to
This phrase is a metaphor for strictly obeying. Alternate translation: "strictly obey"
Mark 7:9
How well you reject the commandment ... keep your tradition
Jesus uses this ironic statement to rebuke his listeners for forsaking God's commandment. Alternate translation: "You think you have done well in how you have rejected the commandment of God so you may keep your own traditions, but what you have done is not good at all"
How well you reject
"How skillfully you reject"
Mark 7:10
He who speaks evil of his father or mother will surely be put to death
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The authorities must execute a person who speaks evil about his father or mother"
who speaks evil of
"who curses"
Mark 7:11
General Information:
In verses 11 and 12, Jesus shows how the Pharisees teach people that they do not have to obey God's commandment to honor their parents. In verse 11 Jesus tells what the Pharisees allow people to say about their possessions, and in verse 12 he tells how that affects what people do for their parents.
is Corban
"Corban" is a Hebrew word that refers to things that people promise to give to God. Translators normally transliterate it using the target language alphabet. Some translators translate its meaning, and then leave out Mark's explanation of the meaning that follows. Alternate translation: "is a gift to God" or "belongs to God"
Whatever help you would have received from me is Corban
A person might say this so that he would not have to give anything to help his parents. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will not help you, because whatever help you would have received from me is Corban"
a Gift
This phrase explains the meaning of the Hebrew word "Corban." Mark explained the meaning so that his non-Jewish readers could understand what Jesus said. This seems to have been the proper name of a sacrifice. You may need to make explicit who the gift was given to. Alternate translation: "a Gift to God"
Mark 7:12
then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother
Possible meanings are that by telling people that they could say that their possessions are Corban, 1) the Pharisees did not allow people to help their parents, or 2) the Pharisees allowed people to refuse to help their parents. Alternate translation: "then you permit him to do nothing for his father or his mother"
then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother
Here "do anything" refers to helping his parents by giving to them. This can be translated as "then you no longer permit him to give anything to his father or his mother" or "then you permit him to give nothing to his father or his mother"
Mark 7:13
the word of God
Jesus is speaking specifically of the command to love father and mother. Alternate translation: "God's command"
void
canceled or done away with
many similar things you do
"you are doing many other things similar to this"
Mark 7:14
Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells a parable to the crowd to help them understand what he has been saying to the scribes and Pharisees.
He called
"Jesus called"
Listen to me, all of you, and understand
The words "Listen" and "understand" are related. Jesus uses them together to emphasize that his hearers should pay close attention to what he is saying.
understand
It may be helpful to state what Jesus is telling them to understand. Alternate translation: "try to understand what I am about to tell you"
Mark 7:15
nothing from outside of a person
Jesus is speaking about what a person eats. This is in contrast to "what comes out of the person." Alternate translation: "nothing from outside a person that he can eat"
It is what comes out of the person
This refers to the things a person does or says. This is in contrast to what is "outside a person that ... enters into him." Alternate translation: "It is what comes out of a person that he says or does"
Mark 7:16
General Information:
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Mark 7:17
Connecting Statement:
The disciples still do not understand what Jesus has just said to the scribes, Pharisees, and crowds. Jesus explains his meaning more thoroughly to them.
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story. Jesus is now away from the crowd, in a house with his disciples.
Mark 7:18
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach his disciples by asking a question.
Are you also still without understanding?
Jesus uses this question to express his disappointment that

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they do not understand. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "After all I have said and done, I would expect you to understand."
Mark 7:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes asking the question he is using to teach his disciples.
because ... latrine?
This is the end of the question that begins with the words "Do you not see" in verse 18. Jesus uses this question to teach his disciples something they should already know. It can be expressed as a statement. "You should already understand that whatever enters into a person from outside cannot defile him, because it cannot go into his heart, but it goes into his stomach and then passes out into the latrine."
it cannot go into his heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or mind. Here Jesus means that food does not affect a person's character. Alternate translation: "it cannot go into his inner being" or "it cannot go into his mind"
because it
Here "it" refers to what goes into a person; that is, what a person eats.
all foods clean
It may be helpful to explain clearly what this phrase means. Alternate translation: "all foods clean, meaning that people can eat any food without God considering the eater defiled"
Mark 7:20
He said
"Jesus said"
It is that which comes out of the person that defiles him
"What defiles a person is what comes out of him"
Mark 7:21
out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or mind. Alternate translation: "out of the inner being, come evil thoughts" or "out of the mind, come evil thoughts"
Mark 7:22
sensuality
not controlling one's lustful desires
slander
or blasphemy
Mark 7:23
come from within
Here the word "within" describes a person's heart. Alternate translation: "come from within a person's heart" or "come from within a person's thoughts"
Mark 7:24
Connecting Statement:
When Jesus goes away to Tyre, he heals the daughter of a Gentile woman who has extraordinary faith.
Mark 7:25
had an unclean spirit
This is an idiom meaning that she was possessed by the unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "was possessed by an unclean spirit"
fell down
"knelt." This is an act of honor and submission.
Mark 7:26
Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by descent
The word "Now" is used here to mark a pause in the story, as the author gives us background information about the woman.
Syrophoenician
This is the name of the woman's nationality. She was born in the Phoenician region in Syria.
Mark 7:27
Let the children first be fed. For it is not proper ... throw it to the dogs
Here Jesus speaks about the Jews as if they are children and the Gentiles as if they are dogs. Alternate translation: "Let the children of Israel first be fed. For it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the Gentiles, who are like dogs"
Let the children first be fed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We must first feed the children of Israel"
proper
morally right
bread
This refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "food"
dogs
This refers to small dogs kept as pets.
Mark 7:28
General Information:
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Mark 7:29
you are free to go
Jesus was implying that she no longer needed to stay to ask him to help her daughter. He would do it. Alternate translation: "you may go now" or "you may go home in peace"
The demon has gone out of your daughter
Jesus has caused the unclean spirit to leave the woman's daughter. This can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "I have caused the evil spirit to leave your daughter"
Mark 7:30
General Information:
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Mark 7:31
Connecting Statement:
After healing people in Tyre, Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee. There he heals a deaf man, which amazes the people.
went out again from the region of Tyre
"left the region of Tyre"
up into the region
Possible meanings are 1) "in the region" as Jesus is at the sea in the region of the Decapolis or 2) "through the region" as Jesus went through the region of the Decapolis to get to the sea.
Decapolis
This is the name of a region that means Ten Cities. It is located to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee. See how you translated this in [Mark 5:20]
Mark 7:32
They brought

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"And people brought"

who was deaf

"who was not able to hear"

they begged him to lay his hand on him

Prophets and teachers would put their hands on people in order to heal them or bless them. In this case, people are begging Jesus to heal a man. Alternate translation: "they begged Jesus to put his hand on the man to heal him"

Mark 7:33

Then taking him ... privately, he

"Then Jesus took the man ... privately, and he"

he put his fingers into his ears

Jesus is putting his own fingers in the man's ears.

then he spit and touched his tongue

It may be helpful to state that Jesus spit on his fingers. Alternate translation: "then he spit on his fingers and touched the man's tongue with them"

Mark 7:34

looked up to heaven

This means that he looked up toward the sky, which is associated with the place where God lives.

sighed

This means that Jesus groaned or that he let out a long deep breath that could be heard.

said to him

"said to the man"

Ephphatha

This is an Aramaic word. It should be copied into your language using your alphabet.

Mark 7:35

his ears were opened

This means he was able to hear. Alternate translation: "his ears were opened and he was able to hear" or "he was able to hear"

the bond of his tongue was released

This metaphor speaks of the man's tongue as if it were bound by a rope or chain that kept the man from speaking and that Jesus broke or loosened so the man could speak. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus released the bond of his tongue" or "Jesus set his tongue free" or "Jesus enabled the man to speak"

Mark 7:36

But the more he ordered them, the more abundantly they proclaimed it

The refers to him ordering them not to tell anyone about what he had done. Alternate translation: "But though he continually ordered them not to tell anyone, they continually proclaimed it"

the more abundantly

"the more widely" or "the more"

Mark 7:37

were extremely astonished

"were utterly amazed" or "were exceedingly astonished" or "were astonished beyond all measure"

the deaf hear and the mute speak

These refer to people. Alternate translation: "the deaf people hear and the mute people speak" or "people who cannot hear, hear, and people who cannot speak, speak"

Chapter 8

Mark 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Bread

When Jesus worked a miracle and provided bread for a large crowd of people, they probably thought about when God miraculously provided food for the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness.

Yeast is the ingredient that causes bread to become larger before it is baked. In this chapter, Jesus uses yeast as a metaphor for things that change the way people think, speak, and act.

"Adulterous generation"

When Jesus called the people an "adulterous generation," he was telling them that they were not faithful to God. (See: faithful and peopleofgod)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Jesus used many rhetorical questions as a way of both teaching the disciples

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mark 8:35-37).

Links:

Mark 8:1 Notes

Mark 8:1

Connecting Statement:

A great, hungry crowd is with Jesus. He feeds them using only seven loaves and a few fish before Jesus and his disciples get in a boat to go to another place.

In those days

This phrase is used to introduce a new event in the story.

Mark 8:2

they continue to be with me already for three days and have nothing to eat

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"this is this third day these people have been with me, and they have nothing to eat"

Mark 8:3

they may faint

Possible meanings are 1) literal, "they may lose consciousness temporarily" or 2) hyperbolic exaggeration, "they may become weak."

Mark 8:4

Where can we get enough loaves of bread in such a deserted place to satisfy these people?

The disciples are expressing surprise that Jesus would expect them to be able to find enough food. Alternate translation: "This place is so deserted that there is no place here for us to get enough loaves of bread to satisfy these people!"

loaves of bread

Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that have been shaped and baked.

Mark 8:5

He asked them

"Jesus asked his disciples"

Mark 8:6

He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground.

This can be written as a direct quote. "Jesus commanded the crowd, 'Sit down on the ground.'"

sit down

Use your language's word for how people customarily eat when there is no table, whether sitting or lying down.

Mark 8:7

They also had

Here the word "they" is used to refer to Jesus and his disciples.

he gave thanks for them

"Jesus gave thanks for the fish"

Mark 8:8

They ate

"The people ate"

they picked up

"the disciples picked up"

the remaining broken pieces, seven large baskets

This refers to the broken pieces of fish and bread that were left over after the people ate. Alternate translation: "the remaining broken pieces of bread and fish, which filled seven large baskets"

Mark 8:9

Then he sent them away

It may be helpful to clarify when he sent them away. Alternate translation: "After they ate, Jesus sent them away"

Mark 8:10

they went into the region of Dalmanutha

It may be helpful to clarify how they got to Dalmanutha. Alternate translation: "they sailed around the Sea of Galilee to the region of Dalmanutha"

Dalmanutha

This is the name of a place on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 8:11

Connecting Statement:

In Dalmanutha, Jesus refuses to give the Pharisees a sign before he and his disciples get in a boat and leave.

They sought from him

"They asked him for"

a sign from heaven

They wanted a sign that would prove that Jesus's power and authority were from God. Possible meanings are 1) The word "heaven" is a metonym for God. Alternate translation: "a sign from God" or 2) the word "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sign from the sky"

to test him

The Pharisees tried to test Jesus to make him prove that he was from God. Some information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "to prove that God had sent him"

Mark 8:12

He sighed deeply in his spirit

This means that he groaned or that he let out a long deep breath that could be heard. It probably shows Jesus's deep sadness that the Pharisees refused to believe him. See how you translated this in Mark 7:34.

in his spirit

"in himself"

Why does this generation seek for a sign?

Jesus is scolding them. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This generation should not seek a sign."

this generation

When Jesus speaks of "this generation," he is referring to the people who lived at that time. The Pharisees are included in this group. Alternate translation: "you and the people of this generation"

no sign will be given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not give a sign"

Mark 8:13

he left them, got into a boat again

Jesus's disciples went with him. Some information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "he left them, got into a boat again with his disciples"

to the other side

This describes the Sea of Galilee, which can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to the other side of the sea"

Mark 8:14

Connecting Statement:

While Jesus and his disciples are in a boat, they have a discussion about the lack of understanding among the Pharisees and Herod, though they had seen many signs.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here the author tells background information about the disciples forgetting to bring bread.

no more than one loaf

The negative phrase "no more" is used to emphasize how small an amount of bread they had. Alternate translation: "only one loaf"

Mark 8:15

Keep watch and be on guard

These two terms have a common meaning and are repeated here for emphasis. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "Keep watch"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod
Here Jesus is speaking to his disciples in a metaphor they do not understand. Jesus is comparing the Pharisees' and Herod's teachings to yeast, but you should not explain this when you translate it because the disciples themselves did not understand it.
Mark 8:16
no bread
The word "no" is an exaggeration. The disciples did have one loaf of bread
Mark 8:17
Why are you arguing about having no bread?
Here Jesus is mildly rebuking his disciples because they should have understood what he had been talking about. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not be thinking that I am talking about actual bread."
Do you still not see or understand?
These questions have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that they do not understand. This can be written as one question or as a statement. Alternate translation: "Do you not yet understand?" or "You should perceive and understand by now the things I say and do."
Do you have hardened hearts?
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind and "hardened" is a metaphor for not being able or willing to understand something. Jesus uses a question to scold the disciples. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are so slow to understand what I mean!" or "You are unwilling to understand what I mean!"
Mark 8:18
You have eyes; do you not see? You have ears; do you not hear? Do you not remember?
Jesus continues to mildly rebuke his disciples. These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You have eyes, but you do not understand what you see. You have ears, but you do not understand what you hear. You should remember."
Mark 8:19
the five thousand
This refers to the 5,000 people Jesus fed. Alternate translation: "the 5,000 people"
how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you take up
It may be helpful to state when they collected the baskets of pieces. Alternate translation: "how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you collect after everyone finished eating"
Mark 8:20
the four thousand
This refers to the 4,000 people Jesus fed. Alternate translation: "the 4,000 people"
how many basketfuls of broken pieces of bread did you take up
It may be helpful to state when they collected these. Alternate translation: "how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you collect after everyone finished eating"
Mark 8:21
Do you not yet understand?
Jesus is mildly rebuking his disciples for not understanding. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should understand by now the things I say and do."
Mark 8:22
Connecting Statement:
When Jesus and his disciples get out of their boat at Bethsaida, Jesus heals a blind man.
Bethsaida
This is a town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. See how you translated the name of this town in [Mark 6:45]
to touch him
It may be helpful to state why they wanted Jesus to touch the man. Alternate translation: "to touch him in order to heal him"
Mark 8:23
When he had spit on his eyes ... he asked him
"When Jesus had spit on the man's eyes ... Jesus asked the man"
Mark 8:24
He looked up
"The man looked up"
I see men who look like walking trees
The man sees men walking around, yet they are not clear to him, so he compares them to trees. Alternate translation: "Yes, I see people! They are walking around, but I cannot see them clearly. They look like trees"
Mark 8:25
Then he again
"Then Jesus again"
and the man opened his eyes, his sight was restored
The phrase "his sight was restored" can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "restoring the man's sight, and then the man opened his eyes"
Mark 8:26
General Information:
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Mark 8:27
Connecting Statement:
Jesus and his disciples talk on their way to the villages of Caesarea Philippi about who Jesus is and what will happen to him.
Mark 8:28
They answered him and said
"They answered him, saying,"
John the Baptist
The disciples answer that this was who some people said Jesus was. This can be shown more clearly. Alternate translation: "Some people say that you are John the Baptist"
Others say ... others
The word "others" refers to other people. This refers to their responses to Jesus's question. Alternate translation: "Other people say you are ... other people say you are"
Mark 8:29
He asked them
"Jesus asked his disciples"
Mark 8:30
Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.
Jesus did not want them to tell anyone that he was the Christ. This can be made more explicit. This can also be

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written as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "Jesus warned them not to tell anyone that he is the Christ." or "Jesus warned them, 'Do not tell anyone that I am the Christ.'"

Mark 8:31

Son of Man

This is an important title for Jesus.

would be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and would be killed, and after three days rise up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the elders and the chief priests and the scribes would reject him, and that men would kill him, and that after three days he would rise up"

Mark 8:32

He spoke that message openly

Possible meanings are 1) "He said this so that people could hear him" or 2) "He said this in a way that was easy to understand."

began to rebuke him

Peter rebuked Jesus for saying the things he said would happen to the Son of Man. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "began to rebuke him for saying these things"

Mark 8:33

Connecting Statement:

After rebuking Peter for his not wanting Jesus to die and rise, Jesus tells both his disciples and the crowd how to follow him.

Get behind me, Satan

Jesus means that Peter is acting like Satan because Peter is trying to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what God sent him to do. Alternate translation: "Get behind me, because you are acting like Satan"

Get behind me

"Get away from me"

Mark 8:34

follow me

Following Jesus here represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: "be my disciple" or "be one of my disciples"

must deny himself

"must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"

take up his cross, and follow me

"carry his cross and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "must obey me even to the point of suffering and dying"

follow me

Following Jesus here represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "obey me"

Mark 8:35

For whoever wants

"For anyone who wants"

life

This refers to both physical life and spiritual life.

for my sake and for the gospel

"because of me and because of the gospel." Jesus is talking about people who lose their lives because they follow Jesus and the gospel. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "because he follows me and tells others the gospel"

Mark 8:36

What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and then forfeit his life?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Even if a person gains the whole world, it will not benefit him if he forfeits his life."

to gain the whole world and then forfeit his life

This can also be expressed as a condition starting with the word "if." Alternate translation: "if he gains the whole world and then forfeits his life"

to gain the whole world

The words "the whole world" are an exaggeration for great riches. Alternate translation: "to gain everything he ever wanted"

forfeit

To forfeit something is to lose it or to have another person take it away.

Mark 8:37

What can a person give in exchange for his life?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is nothing a person can give in exchange for his life." or "No one can give anything in exchange for his life."

What can a person give

If in your language "giving" requires someone to receive what is given, "God" can be stated as the receiver. Alternate translation: "What can a person give to God"

Mark 8:38

ashamed of me and my words

"ashamed of me and my message"

in this adulterous and sinful generation

Jesus speaks of this generation as "adulterous," meaning that they are unfaithful in their relationship with God. Alternate translation: "in this generation of people who have committed adultery against God and are very sinful" or "in this generation of people who are unfaithful to God and are very sinful"

the Son of Man will be ashamed

Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed"

when he comes

"when he comes back"

in the glory of his Father

When Jesus returns he will have the same glory as his Father.

with the holy angels

"accompanied by the holy angels"

Chapter 9

Mark 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

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"transfigured"
Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Mark says in this chapter that Jesus's clothing shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Hyperbole
Jesus said things that he did not expect his followers to understand literally. When he said, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off" (Mark 9:43), he was exaggerating so they would know that they should stay away from anything that caused them to sin, even if it was something they loved or thought they needed.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Elijah and Moses
Elijah and Moses suddenly appeared to Jesus, James, John, and Peter, and then they disappeared. All four of them saw Elijah and Moses, and because Elijah and Moses spoke with Jesus, the reader should understand that Elijah and Moses appeared physically.
"Son of Man"
Jesus referred to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter
Paradox
A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus used a paradox when he said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

Links:

Mark 9:1 Notes

Mark 9:1
He said to them
"Jesus said to his disciples"
the kingdom of God come with power
The kingdom of God coming represents God showing himself as king. Alternate translation: "God show himself with great power as king"
Mark 9:2
alone by themselves
The author uses the reflexive pronoun "themselves" here to emphasize that they were alone and that only Jesus, Peter, James, and John went up the mountain.
he was transfigured
"Transfigure" means for a person's outward appearance to change. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his appearance had changed" or "he appeared very different"
before them
"in front of them"
Mark 9:3
radiantly brilliant
"shining" or "glowing." Jesus's garments were so white they were emitting or giving off light.
extremely
"very"
whiter than any bleacher on earth could bleach them
Bleaching describes the process of making natural white wool even whiter by using chemicals like bleach or ammonia. Alternate translation: "whiter than any person on earth could whiten them"
Mark 9:4
Elijah with Moses appeared
It may be helpful to state who these men are. Alternate translation: "two prophets who had lived long ago, Elijah and Moses, appeared"
they were talking
The word "they" refers to Elijah and Moses.
Mark 9:5
Peter answered and said to Jesus
"Peter said to Jesus." Here the word "answered" is used to introduce Peter into the conversation. Peter was not answering a question.
it is good for us to be here
It is not clear whether "us" refers only to Peter, James, and John, or if it refers to everyone there, including Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. If you can translate so that both options are possible, do so.
shelters
simple, temporary places in which to sit or sleep
Mark 9:6
For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified
This parenthetical sentence tells background information about Peter, James, and John.
they were terrified
"they were very frightened" or "they were very afraid"
Mark 9:7
came and overshadowed
"appeared and covered"
Then a voice came out of the cloud
Here "a voice came out" is a metonym for someone speaking. It can also be stated clearly who spoke. Alternate translation: "Then someone spoke from the cloud" or "Then God spoke from the cloud"
This is my beloved Son. Listen to him
God the Father expresses his love for his "beloved Son," the Son of God.
beloved Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
Mark 9:8
when they looked

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Here "they" refers to Peter, James, and John.
Mark 9:9
he commanded them to tell no one ... until the Son of Man had risen
This implies that he was permitting them to tell people about what they had seen after he rose from being dead.
risen from the dead
"risen from among the dead." This speaks of becoming alive again. The phrase "the dead" refers to "dead people" and is a metonym for death. Alternate translation: "risen from death"
Mark 9:10
rising from the dead
"to rise from among the dead." This speaks of becoming alive again. The phrase "the dead" refers to "dead people" and is a metonym for death. Alternate translation: "rising from death"
So they kept the matter to themselves
Here "kept the matter to themselves" is an idiom that means they did not tell anyone about what they had seen. Alternate translation: "So they did not tell anyone about what they had seen"
Mark 9:11
Connecting Statement:
Though Peter, James, and John wondered what Jesus might mean by "rising from the dead," they asked him instead about Elijah's coming.
They asked him
The word "they" refers to Peter, James, and John.
Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?
Prophecy foretold that Elijah would come again from heaven. Then the Messiah, who is the Son of Man, would come to rule and reign. The disciples are confused about how the Son of Man could die and rise again. Alternate translation: "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah comes?"
Mark 9:12
Elijah does come first to restore all things
By saying this, Jesus affirms that Elijah would come first.
Why then is it written ... be despised?
Jesus uses this question to remind his disciples that the scriptures also teach that the Son of Man must suffer and be despised. This may be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "But I also want you to consider what is written about the Son of Man. The scriptures say that he must suffer many things and be hated."
be despised
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people would hate him"
Mark 9:13
they did whatever they wanted to him
It may be helpful to state what people did to Elijah. Alternate translation: "our leaders treated him very badly, just as they wanted to do"
Mark 9:14
Connecting Statement:
When Peter, James, John, and Jesus came down from the mountain, they found the scribes arguing with the other disciples.
When they came to the disciples
Jesus, Peter, James, and John returned to the other disciples who had not gone with them up the mountain.
they saw a great crowd around them
"Jesus and those three disciples saw a great crowd around the other disciples"
scribes were arguing with them
The scribes were arguing with the disciples who had not gone with Jesus.
Mark 9:15
was amazed
It may be helpful to state why they were amazed. Alternate translation: "was amazed that Jesus had come"
Mark 9:16
General Information:
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Mark 9:17
He has a spirit
This means the boy is possessed by an unclean spirit. "He has an unclean spirit" or "He is possessed by an unclean spirit"
Mark 9:18
down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes
A convulsion, or seizure, can cause a person to have trouble breathing or swallowing. This causes white foam to come out of the mouth. If your language has a way to describe that, you could use it. Alternate translation: "down, and bubbles come out of his mouth, and he grinds his teeth and becomes"
becomes rigid
"becomes stiff" or "his body becomes rigid"
they could not
This refers to the disciples not being about to drive the spirit out of the boy. Alternate translation: "they could not drive it out of him"
Mark 9:19
He answered them
Though it was the boy's father who made a request of Jesus, Jesus responds to the whole crowd. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Jesus responded to the crowd"
Unbelieving generation
"You unbelieving generation." Jesus calls the crowd this as he begins to respond to them.
how long will I have to stay with you? How long will I bear with you?
Jesus uses these questions to express his frustration. Both questions have the same meaning. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "Your unbelief tires me! I wonder how long I must bear with you."
bear with you
"endure you" or "put up with you"
Bring him to me
"Bring the boy to me"
Mark 9:20
spirit
This refers to the unclean spirit. See how you translated this in Mark 9:17.
convulsion
This is the violent shaking of a person's body that can occur when that person has no control over his body.
Mark 9:21

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

For how much time
"How long"
Since childhood
"Since he was a small child." It may be helpful to state this as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "He has been like this since he was a small child"
Mark 9:22
have pity
"have compassion"
Mark 9:23
'If you are able'?
Jesus repeated what the man had said to him. Alternate translation: "Do you say to me 'If you are able'?" or "Why do you say 'If you are able'?"
'If you are able'?
Jesus used this question to rebuke the man's doubt. It can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not say to me, 'If you are able.'" or "You ask me if I am able. Of course I am able."
All things are possible for the one who believes
"God can do anything for people who believe in him"
for the one
"for the person" or "for anyone"
believes
This refers to belief in God. Alternate translation: "believes in God"
Mark 9:24
Help my unbelief
The man is asking Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief and increase his faith. Alternate translation: "Help me when I do not believe" or "Help me have more faith"
Mark 9:25
the crowd running to them
This means that more people were running toward where Jesus was and that the crowd there was growing larger.
You mute and deaf spirit
The words "mute" and "deaf" can be explained. Alternate translation: "You unclean spirit, you who are causing the boy to be unable to speak and unable to hear"
Mark 9:26
It cried out
"The unclean spirit cried out"
convulsed the boy greatly
"shook the boy violently"
came out
It is implied that the spirit came out of the boy. Alternate translation: "came out of the boy"
The boy looked like one who was dead
The boy's appearance is compared to that of a dead person. Alternate translation: "The boy appeared dead" or "The boy looked like a dead person"
so that many
"so that many people"
Mark 9:27
took him by the hand
This means that Jesus grasped the boy's hand with his own hand. Alternate translation: "grasped the boy by the hand"
lifted him up
"helped him get up"
Mark 9:28
privately
This means they were alone.
cast it out
"cast the unclean spirit out." This refers to casting the spirit out of the boy. Alternate translation: "cast the unclean spirit out of the boy"
Mark 9:29
This kind cannot be cast out except by prayer
The words "cannot" and "except" are both negative words. In some languages it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "This kind can be cast out only by prayer"
This kind
This describes unclean spirits. Alternate translation: "This kind of unclean spirit"
Mark 9:30
Connecting Statement:
After he heals the demon-possessed boy, Jesus and his disciples leave the house where they are staying. He takes time to teach his disciples alone.
They went out from there
"Jesus and his disciples left that region"
passed through
"traveled through" or "passed by"
Mark 9:31
for he was teaching his disciples
Jesus was teaching his disciples privately, away from the crowd. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "for he was teaching his disciples privately"
The Son of Man will be given over
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone will give the Son of Man over"
The Son of Man
Here Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. This is an important title for Jesus. "I, the Son of Man,"
into the hands of men
Here "hands" is a metonym for control. Alternate translation: "into the control of men" or "so that men will be able to control him"
When he has been put to death, after three days he
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After they have put him to death and three days have passed, he"
Mark 9:32
they were afraid to ask him
They were afraid to ask Jesus what his statement meant. Alternate translation: "they were afraid to ask him what it meant"
Mark 9:33
Connecting Statement:
When they come to Capernaum, Jesus teaches his disciples about being humble servants.
they came to
"they arrived at." The word "they" refers to Jesus and his disciples.
were you discussing
"were you discussing with one another"
Mark 9:34

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

they were silent
They were silent because they were ashamed to tell Jesus what they had been discussing. Alternate translation: "they were silent because they were ashamed"
who was the greatest
Here "the greatest" refers to "the greatest" among the disciples. Alternate translation: "who was the greatest among them"
Mark 9:35
If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all
Here the words "first" and "last" are opposites of one another. Jesus speaks of being the "most important" as being "first" and of being the "least important" as being "last." Alternate translation: "If anyone wants God to consider him to be the most important person of all, he must consider himself to be the least important of all"
of all ... of all
"of all people ... of all people"
Mark 9:36
in their midst
"among them." The word "their" refers to the crowd.
He took him in his arms
This means that he hugged the child or picked him up and placed him on his lap.
Mark 9:37
such a child
"a child like this"
in my name
This means to do something because of love for Jesus. Alternate translation: "because he loves me" or "for my sake"
the one who sent me
This refers to God, who has sent him to earth. Alternate translation: "God, who has sent me"
Mark 9:38
John said to him
"John said to Jesus"
driving out demons
"sending away demons." This refers to casting demons out of people. Alternate translation: "driving demons out of people"
in your name
Here "name" is associated with Jesus's authority and power. Alternate translation: "by the authority of your name" or "by the power of your name"
he does not follow us
This means that he is not among their group of disciples. Alternate translation: "he is not one of us" or "he does not walk with us"
Mark 9:39
General Information:
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Mark 9:40
is not against us
"is not opposing us"
is for us
It can be explained clearly what this means. Alternate translation: "is trying to achieve the same goals that we are"
Mark 9:41
gives you a cup of water to drink in my name because you belong to Christ
Jesus speaks about giving someone a cup of water as an example of how one person may help another. This is a metaphor for helping someone in any way.
not lose
This negative sentence emphasizes the positive meaning. In some languages, it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "definitely receive"
Mark 9:42
millstone
a large, round stone used for grinding grain into flour
Mark 9:43
If your hand causes you to stumble
Here "hand" is a metonym for desiring to do something sinful that you would do with your hand. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful with one of your hands"
to enter into life maimed
"to be maimed and then to enter into life" or "to be maimed before entering into life"
to enter into life
Dying and then beginning to live eternally is spoken of as entering into life. Alternate translation: "to enter into eternal life" or "to die and begin to live forever"
maimed
missing a body part as a result of having it removed or being injured. Here it refers to missing a hand. Alternate translation: "without a hand" or "missing a hand"
into the unquenchable fire
"where the fire cannot be put out"
Mark 9:44
General Information:
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Mark 9:45
If your foot causes you to stumble
Here the word "foot" is a metonym for desiring to do something sinful that you would do with your feet, such as going to a place you should not go to. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful with one of your feet"
to enter into life lame
"to be lame and then to enter into life" or "to be lame before entering into life"
to enter into life
Dying and then beginning to live eternally is spoken of as entering into life. Alternate translation: "to enter into eternal life" or "to die and begin to live forever"
lame
"unable to walk easily." Here it refers not being able to walk well because of missing a foot. Alternate translation: "without a foot" or "missing a foot"
be thrown into hell
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to throw you into hell"
Mark 9:46
General Information:
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Mark 9:47
If your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out

Here the word "eye" is a metonym for either 1) desiring to sin by looking at something. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful by looking at something, tear your eye out" or 2) Desiring to sin because of what you have looked at. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful because of what you look at, tear your eye out"

to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes

This refers to the state of a person's physical body when he dies. A person does not take his physical body with him into eternity. Alternate translation: "to enter into the kingdom of God after having lived on earth with only one eye than to have lived on earth with two eyes"

to be thrown into hell

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "for God to throw you into hell"

Mark 9:48

where their worm does not die

The meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "where worms that eat people there do not die"

Mark 9:49

everyone will be salted with fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will salt everyone with fire" or "Just as salt purifies a sacrifice, God will purify everyone by allowing them to suffer"

will be salted with fire

Here "fire" is a metaphor for suffering, and putting salt on people is a metaphor for purifying them. So "will be salted with fire" is a metaphor for being purified through suffering. Alternate translation: "will be made pure in the fire of suffering" or "will suffer in order to be purified as a sacrifice is purified with salt"

Mark 9:50

its saltiness

"its salty taste"

how can you make it salty again?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you cannot make it salty again."

salty again

"taste salty again"

Have salt among yourselves

Jesus speaks of doing good things for one another as if good things were salt that people possess. Alternate translation: "Do good to each other, like salt adds flavor to food"

Chapter 10

Mark 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 10:7-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jesus's teaching about divorce

The Pharisees wanted to find a way to make Jesus say that it is good to break the law of Moses, so they asked him about divorce. Jesus tells how God originally designed marriage to show that the Pharisees taught wrongly about divorce.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Metaphors are pictures of visible objects that speakers use to explain invisible truths. When Jesus spoke of "the cup which I will drink," he was speaking of the pain he would suffer on the cross as if it were a bitter, poisonous liquid in a cup.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus used a paradox when he said, "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43).

Links:

Mark 10:1 Notes

Mark 10:1

Connecting Statement:

After Jesus and his disciples leave Capernaum, Jesus reminds the Pharisees, as well as his disciples, what God really expects in marriage and divorce.

Jesus left that place

Jesus's disciples were traveling with him. They were leaving Capernaum. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples left Capernaum"

and to the area beyond the Jordan River

"and to the land on the other side of the Jordan River" or "and to the area east of the Jordan River"

He was teaching them again

The word "them" refers to the crowds.

he was accustomed to do

"was his custom" or "he usually did"

Mark 10:2

General Information:

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Mark 10:3

What did Moses command you

Moses gave the law to their ancestors, which they now were also supposed to follow. Alternate translation: "What did Moses command your ancestors about this"

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Mark 10:4
a certificate of divorce
This was a paper saying that the woman was no longer his wife.
Mark 10:5
"It was because ... this law," Jesus said to them.
In some languages speakers do not interrupt a quote to say who is speaking. Rather they say who is speaking at the beginning or end of the complete quote. Alternate translation: "Jesus said to them, 'It was because ... this law.'"
because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law
Long before this time, Moses wrote this law for the Jews and their descendants because they had hard hearts. The Jews of Jesus's time also had hard hearts, so Jesus included them by using the words "your" and "you." Alternate translation: "because your ancestors had hard hearts like yours that he wrote this law"
your hard hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being or mind. The phrase "hard hearts" is a metaphor for "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "your stubbornness"
Mark 10:6
God made them
"God made people"
Mark 10:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to quote what God said in the book of Genesis.
For this reason
"Therefore" or "Because of this"
be united to his wife
"join with his wife"
Mark 10:8
and the two ... one flesh
Jesus finishes quoting what God said in the book of Genesis.
they are no longer two, but one flesh
This is a metaphor to illustrate their close union as husband and wife. Alternate translation: "the two people are like one person" or "they are no longer two, but together they are one body"
Mark 10:9
Therefore what God has joined together, let no man tear apart
The phrase "what God has joined together" refers to any married couple. Alternate translation: "Therefore since God has joined together husband and wife, let no one tear them apart"
Mark 10:10
When they were
"When Jesus and his disciples were"
were in the house
Jesus's disciples were speaking to him privately. Alternate translation: were alone in the house"
asked him again about this
The word "this" refers to the conversation that Jesus had just had with the Pharisees about divorce.
Mark 10:11
Whoever
"Anyone who"
commits adultery against her
Here "her" refers to the first woman he was married to.
Mark 10:12
she commits adultery
In this situation she commits adultery again her previous husband. Alternate translation: "she commits adultery against him" or "she commits adultery against the first man"
Mark 10:13
Connecting Statement:
When the disciples rebuke the people for bringing their little children to Jesus, he blesses the children and reminds the disciples that people must be as humble as a child to enter the kingdom of God.
Then they brought
"Now people were bringing." This is the next event in the story.
he might touch them
This means that Jesus would touch them with his hands and bless them. Alternate translation: "he might touch them with his hands and bless them" or "he might lay his hands on them and bless them"
rebuked them
"rebuked the people"
Mark 10:14
Jesus noticed it
The word "it" refers to the disciples rebuking the people who were bringing the children to Jesus.
was angry
Jesus was angry with the disciples.
Permit the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them
These two clauses have similar meanings, repeated for emphasis. In some languages it is more natural to emphasize this in another way. Alternate translation: "Be sure to allow the little children to come to me"
do not forbid
"allow"
for the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like them
The kingdom belonging to people represents the kingdom including them. Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God includes people who are like them" or "because only people like them are members of the kingdom of God"
Mark 10:15
whoever will not receive ... child will definitely not enter it
"if anyone will not recieve ... child, he will definitely not enter it"
as a little child
Jesus is comparing how people must receive the kingdom of God to how little children would receive it. Alternate translation: "in the same manner as a little child would"
will not receive the kingdom of God
"will not accept God as their king"
definitely not enter it
The word "it" refers to the kingdom of God.
Mark 10:16
he took the children into his arms
"he hugged the children"
Mark 10:17
to inherit eternal life
Here the man speaks of "receiving" as if it were

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"inheriting." This metaphor is used to emphasize the importance of receiving. Also, "inherit" here does not mean that someone has to die first. Alternate translation: to receive eternal life"
Mark 10:18
Why do you call me good?
Jesus asks this question to remind the man that no man is good the way God is good. Alternate translation: "You do not understand what you are saying when you call me good."
No one is good except God alone
This double negative emphasizes that God is the only one who is good. Alternate translation: "The only one who is good is God"
Mark 10:19
do not testify falsely
"do not testify falsely against anyone" or "do not lie about someone in court"
Mark 10:20
General Information:
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Mark 10:21
One thing you lack
"There is one thing you are missing." Here "lack" is a metaphor for needing to do something. Alternate translation: "One thing you need to do" or "There is one thing you have not yet done" or
give it to the poor
Here the word "it" refers to the things he sells and is a metonym for the money he receives when he sells them. Alternate translation: "give the money to the poor"
the poor
This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "poor people"
treasure
wealth, valuable things
Mark 10:22
had many possessions
"owned many things"
Mark 10:23
How difficult it is
"It is very difficult"
Mark 10:24
Jesus said to them again
"Jesus said to his disciples again"
Children, how
"My children, how." Jesus is teaching them as a father would teach his children. Alternate translation: "My friends, how"
how hard it is
"it is very hard"
Mark 10:25
It is easier for a camel ... kingdom of God
It is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Jesus uses an exaggeration to emphasize how very difficult it is for rich people to get into the kingdom of God.
It is easier for a camel
This speaks of an impossible situation. If you cannot state this in this way in your language, you can use the word "would." Alternate translation: "It would be easier for a camel"
the eye of a needle
Here "the eye" refers to the small hole in one end of a sewing needle. The thread goes through this hole and ties to the needle. Alternate translation: "the hole of a needle"
Mark 10:26
They were
"The disciples were"
Then who can be saved?
This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "If that is so, then no one will be saved!"
Mark 10:27
With people it is impossible, but not with God
The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "It is impossible for people to save themselves, but God can save them"
Mark 10:28
Look, we have left everything and have followed you
Here the word "Look" is used to draw attention to the words that come next. Similar emphasis can be expressed in other ways. Alternate translation: "We have left everything and have followed you"
have left everything
"have left everything behind"
Mark 10:29
Truly I say to you, there is no one
This sentence ends in verse 30. It can be stated in positive form. If so, in verse 30, "who will not receive" would become "will receive." Alternate translation: "Truly I say to you, everyone"
or lands
"or plots of ground" or "or the land that he owns"
for my sake
"for my cause" or "for me"
for the gospel
"to proclaim the gospel"
Mark 10:30
who will not receive
This sentence began in verse 29. If you the sentence was stated in positive form in verse 29, verse 30 would be changed to positive form also. Alternate translation: "will receive"
this age
"the world as you know it" or "this present age"
brothers and sisters and mothers and children
Like the list in verse 29, this describes the family in general. The word "fathers" is missing in verse 30, but it does not significantly change the meaning.
with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life
This can be reworded so that the ideas in the abstract noun "persecution" are expressed with the verb "persecute." Because the sentence is so long and complicated, "will receive" can be repeated. Alternate translation: "and even though people persecute them, in the world to come, they will receive eternal life"
in the world to come
"in the future world" or "in the future
Mark 10:31

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

are first will be last, and the last first
Here the words "first" and "last" are opposites of one another. Jesus speaks of being the "important" as being "first" and of being the "unimportant" as being "last." Alternate translation: "are important will be unimportant, and those who are unimportant will be important"
the last first
The phrase "the last" refers to people who are "last." Also, the understood verb in this clause may be supplied. Alternate translation: "those who are last will be first"
Mark 10:32
They were on the road ... and Jesus was going ahead of them
"Jesus and his disciples were walking on the road ... and Jesus was in front of his disciples"
those who were following behind
"those who were following behind them." Some people were walking behind Jesus and his disciples.
Mark 10:33
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
the Son of Man will
Jesus is speaking about himself. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"
the Son of Man will be given over to
The words "given over" mean "betrayed" or "put into the power of." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will hand the Son of Man to" or "they will hand the Son of Man over to"
They will condemn
The word "They" refers to the chief priests and the scribes.
give him over to the Gentiles
"betray him to the Gentiles" or "put him under the control of the Gentiles"
Mark 10:34
They will mock
"People will mock"
put him to death
"kill him"
he will rise
This refers to rising from the dead. Alternate translation: "he will rise from being dead"
Mark 10:35
we ... us
These words refer only to James and John.
Mark 10:36
General Information:
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Mark 10:37
in your glory
"when you are glorified." The phrase "in your glory" refers to when Jesus is glorified and rules over his kingdom. Alternate translation: "when you rule in your kingdom"
Mark 10:38
You do not know
"You do not understand"
drink the cup which I will drink
Here "cup" refers to what Jesus must suffer. Suffering is often referred to as drinking from a cup. Alternate translation: "drink the cup of suffering that I will drink" or "drink from the cup of suffering that I will drink from"
be baptized with the baptism with which I will be baptized
Here "baptism" and being baptized represent suffering. Just as water covers a person during baptism, suffering will overwhelm Jesus. Alternate translation: "endure the baptism of suffering which I will suffer"
Mark 10:39
We are able
They respond this way, meaning that they are able to drink the same cup and endure the same baptism.
you will drink
"you will drink as well"
Mark 10:40
But who is to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to give
"But I am not the one who allows people to sit at my right hand or my left hand"
but it is for those for whom it has been prepared
"but those places are for those for whom they have been prepared." The word "it" refers to the places to his right hand and to his left hand.
it has been prepared
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has prepared it" or "God has prepared them"
Mark 10:41
heard about this
The word "this" refers to James and John asking to sit at Jesus's right and left hands.
Mark 10:42
Jesus called them
"Jesus called his disciples"
those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) people in general consider these people the rulers of the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "those whom people consider to be the rulers of the Gentiles" or 2) the Gentiles consider these people their rulers. Alternate translation: "those whom the Gentiles think of as their rulers"
dominate
have control or power over
exercise authority
"flaunt their authority." This means that they show or use their authority in an overbearing way.
Mark 10:43
But it is not this way among you
This refers back to the previous verse about the Gentile rulers. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But do not be like them"
become great
"be highly respected"
Mark 10:44
to be first
This is a metaphor for being the most important. Alternate translation: "to be the most important"
Mark 10:45
For the Son of Man did not come to be served
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the Son of Man did not come to have people serve him"
to be served, but to serve

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"to be served by people, but to serve people"
for many
"for many people"
Mark 10:46
Connecting Statement:
As Jesus and his disciples continue walking toward Jerusalem, Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus, who then walks with them.
the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar
"a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus." Bartimaeus is the name of a man. Timaeus is his father's name.
Mark 10:47
When he heard that it was Jesus
Bartimaeus heard people saying that it was Jesus. Alternate translation: "When he heard people saying that it was Jesus"
Son of David
Jesus is called the Son of David because he is a descendant of King David. Alternate translation: "You who are the Messiah descended from King David"
Mark 10:48
Many rebuked
"Many people rebuked"
all the more
"even more"
Mark 10:49
commanded him to be called.
This can be translated in active form or as as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "commanded others to call him." or "commanded them, 'Call him to come over here.'"
They called
The word "They" refers to the crowd.
Be brave
"Have courage" or "Do not be afraid"
He is calling for you
"Jesus is calling for you"
Mark 10:50
sprang up
"jumped up"
Mark 10:51
answered him
"answered the blind man"
to receive my sight
"to be able to see"
Mark 10:52
Your faith has healed you
This phrase is written this way to place emphasis on the man's faith. Jesus heals the man because he believes that Jesus can heal him. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I am healing you because you have believed in me"
he followed him
"he followed Jesus"

Chapter 11

Mark 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 11:9-10, 17, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on a donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey had a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 21:1-7 and Mark 11:1-7 and Luke 19:29-36 and John 12:14-15)

Links:

Mark 11:1 Notes

Mark 11:1
Now as they came to Jerusalem, they were close to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives
"When Jesus and his disciples came near to Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives"
They have come to Bethphage and Bethany in the vicinity of Jerusalem.
Bethphage
This is the name of a village.
Mark 11:2
opposite us
"ahead of us"
a colt
This refers to a young donkey that is large enough to carry a man.
that has never been ridden
This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "that no one has ever ridden"
Mark 11:3
Why are you doing this
It can be written clearly what the word "this" refers to. Alternate translation: "Why are you untying and taking the

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colt"

has need of it

"needs it"

will immediately send it back here

Jesus will send it back promptly when he is finished using it. Alternate translation: "will immediately send it back when he no longer needs it"

Mark 11:4

They went

"The two disciples went"

colt

This refers to a young donkey that is large enough to carry a man. See how you translated this in Mark 11:2.

Mark 11:5

What are you doing, untying that colt?

The people wanted to know why the two men were untying the colt. They may have been concerned that the two men were doing something they should not have been doing. Alternate translation: "Why are you untying that colt?"

Mark 11:6

They spoke

"They responded"

as Jesus told them

"as Jesus had told them to respond." This refers to how Jesus had told them to respond to people's questions about taking the colt.

let them go their way

This means that they allowed them to continue doing what they were doing. Alternate translation: "let them take the donkey with them"

Mark 11:7

They brought the colt to Jesus

The word "They" refers to the two disciples.

threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it

"laid their cloaks on its back and Jesus sat on it." It is easier to ride a colt or a horse when there is a blanket or something similar on its back. In this case, the disciples put their cloaks on it.

cloaks

"coats" or "robes"

Mark 11:8

Many people spread their garments on the road

It was a tradition to lay garments on the road in front of important people to honor them. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Many people spread their garments on the road to honor him"

others spread branches they had cut from the fields

It was a tradition to lay palm branches on the road in front of important people to honor them. Alternate translation: "others spread on the road branches that they had cut from the fields to honor him"

Mark 11:9

who followed

"who followed him"

Hosanna

This word means "save us," but people also shouted it joyfully when they wanted to praise God. You can translate it according to how it was used, or you can write "Hosanna" using your language's way of spelling that word. Alternate translation: "Praise God"

Blessed is the one

This is referring to Jesus. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Blessed are you, the one"

in the name of the Lord

This is a metonym for the Lord's authority. Alternate translation: "with the authority of the Lord"

Blessed is

"May God bless"

Mark 11:10

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David

"Blessed is our father David's coming kingdom." This refers to Jesus coming and ruling as king. The word "blessed" can be translated as an active verb. Alternate translation: "Blessed be the coming of your kingdom" or "May God bless you as you rule your coming kingdom"

of our father David

Here David's descendant who will rule is referred to as David himself. Alternate translation: "of the greatest descendant of our father David" or "that David's greatest descendant will rule"

Hosanna in the highest

Possible meanings are 1) "Praise God who is in heaven" or 2) "Let those who are in heaven shout 'Hosanna'."

the highest

Here heaven is spoken of as "the highest." Alternate translation: "the highest heaven" or "heaven"

Mark 11:11

the time being late

"because it was late in the day"

he went out to Bethany with the twelve

"he and his twelve disciples left Jerusalem and went to Bethany"

Mark 11:12

he was hungry

"Jesus was hungry"

Mark 11:13

Connecting Statement:

This happens while Jesus and his disciples are walking to Jerusalem.

if he could find any fruit on it

"if there was any fruit on it"

he found nothing but leaves

This means that he did not find any figs. Alternate translation: "he found only leaves and no figs on the tree"

the season

"the time of year"

Mark 11:14

He said to it, "No one will ever eat fruit from you again

Jesus speaks to the fig tree and curses it. He speaks to it so that his disciples hear him.

his disciples heard it

The word "it" refers to what Jesus said.

Mark 11:15

They came

"Jesus and his disciples came"

began to cast out the sellers and the buyers in the temple

Jesus is driving these people out of the temple. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "began to drive the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

sellers and buyers out of the temple"
the sellers and the buyers
"the people who were buying and selling"
Mark 11:16
to carry anything through the temple that could be sold
"to carry anything that could be sold through the temple"
Mark 11:17
General Information:
God had said earlier in his word, through the prophet Isaiah, that his temple would be a house of prayer for all the nations.
Is it not written, 'My house will be called ... the nations'?
Jesus is rebuking the Jewish leaders for their misuse of the temple. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is written in the scriptures that God said, 'I want my house to be called a house where people from all nations may pray.'"
But you have made it a den of robbers
Jesus compares the people to robbers and the temple to a robbers' den. Alternate translation: "But you are like robbers who have made my house into a robbers' den"
a den of robbers
"a cave where robbers hide"
Mark 11:18
they looked for a way
"they sought a way" or "they tried to find a way"
to destroy him
"to kill him"
Mark 11:19
When evening came
"In the evening"
they left the city
"Jesus and his disciples left the city"
Mark 11:20
Connecting Statement:
Jesus uses the example of the fig tree to remind the disciples to have faith in God.
walked by
"were walking along the road"
they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots
Translate this statement to clarify that the tree died. Alternate translation: "they saw that the fig tree had withered away down to its roots and died"
withered away
"dried up"
Mark 11:21
Peter remembered
It may be helpful to state what Peter remembered. Alternate translation: "Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the fig tree"
Mark 11:22
Jesus answered them
"Jesus replied to his disciples"
Mark 11:23
Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
if he does not doubt in his heart but believes
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "if he truly believes in his heart" or "if he does not doubt but believes"
God will do
"God will make happen"
Mark 11:24
Therefore I say to you
"So I tell you"
it will be yours
It is understood that this will happen because God will provide what you ask for. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "God will give it to you"
Mark 11:25
When you stand and pray
It is common in Hebrew culture to stand when praying to God. Alternate translation: "When you pray"
whatever you have against anyone
"whatever grudge you have against anyone." Here the word "whatever" refers to any grudge you hold against someone for sinning against you or any anger you have against someone.
Mark 11:26
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 11:27
Connecting Statement:
The next day when Jesus returns to temple, he gives the chief priests, scribes, and elders an answer to their question about his casting the money changers out of the temple area, by asking them a question that they were not willing to answer.
They came to
"Jesus and his disciples came to"
Jesus was walking in the temple
This means that Jesus was walking around inside of the temple; he was not walking into the temple.
Mark 11:28
They said to him
The word "They" refers to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.
By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you the authority to do them?
Possible meanings: 1) Both of these questions have the same meaning and are asked together to strongly question Jesus's authority and so can be combined. Alternate translation: "Who gave you authority to do these things?" 2) They are two separate questions, the first asking about the nature of the authority and the second about who gave it to him.
you do these things
The words "these things" refer to Jesus turning over the sellers' tables in the temple and speaking against what the chief priests and scribes taught. Alternate translation: "things like those you did here yesterday"
Mark 11:29
Tell me
"Answer me"
Mark 11:30
The baptism of John
"The baptism that John performed"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

was it from heaven or from men
"was it authorized by heaven or by men"
from heaven
Here "heaven" refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God"
from men
"from people"
Mark 11:31
If we say, 'From heaven,'
This refers to the source of the baptism of John. Alternate translation: "If we say, 'It was from heaven,'"
From heaven
Here "heaven" refers to God. See how you translated this in [Mark 11:30]
not believe him
The word "him" refers to John the Baptist.
Mark 11:32
But if we say, 'From men,'
The religious leaders imply that they will suffer from the people if they give this answer. This refers to the source of the baptism of John. Alternate translation: "But if we say, 'The baptism of John was from men,'" or "But if we say, 'From men,' that would not be good." or "But we do not want to say that it was from men."
From men
"It came from a person"
They were afraid of the people
The author, Mark, explains why the religious leaders did not want to say that John's baptism was from men. This can be stated clearly. "They said this to each other because they were afraid of the people" or "They did not want to say that John's baptism was from men because they were afraid of the people"
Mark 11:33
We do not know
This refers to the baptism of John. This understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "We do not know where the baptism of John came from"

Chapter 12

Mark 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:10-11, 36, which is from the Old Testament.

Links:

Mark 12:1 Notes

Mark 12:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus speaks this parable against the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.
Then Jesus began to teach them
The word "them" here refers to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders to whom Jesus had been talking in the previous chapter.
put a hedge around it
He put a barrier around the vineyard. It could have been a row of shrubs, a fence, or a stone wall.
dug a pit for a winepress
This means that he carved a pit on the rock, which would be the bottom part of the winepress used for collecting the squeezed grape juice. Alternate translation: "carved a pit into rock for the winepress" or "he made a vat to collect the juice from the winepress"
leased the vineyard to vine growers
The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the vine growers to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep the rest.
Mark 12:2
At the right time
This refers to the time of harvest. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "When the time came to harvest the grapes"
Mark 12:3
But they took him
"But the vine growers took the servant"
empty-handed
This means that they did not give him any of the fruit. Alternate translation: "without any grapes"
Mark 12:4
he sent to them
"the owner of the vineyard sent to the vine growers"
they wounded him in the head
This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "they beat that one on the head, and they hurt him terribly"
Mark 12:5
yet another ... many others
These phrases refer to other servants. Alternate translation: "yet another servant ... many other servants"
They treated many others in the same way
This refers to servants that the owner sent. The phrase "in the same way" refers to them being mistreated. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "They also mistreated many other servants whom he sent"
Mark 12:6
a beloved son
It is implied that this is the owner's son. Alternate translation: "his beloved son"
Mark 12:7
the heir
This is the owner's heir, who would inherit the vineyard after his father died. Alternate translation: "the owner's heir"
the inheritance

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

The tenants are referring to the vineyard as "the inheritance." Alternate translation: "this vineyard"
Mark 12:8
They seized him
"The vine growers seized the son"
Mark 12:9
Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do?
Jesus asks a question and then gives the answer to teach the people. The question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "So I will tell you what the owner of the vineyard will do."
Therefore
Jesus has finished telling the parable and is now asking the people what they think will happen next.
destroy
kill
will give the vineyard to others
The word "others" refers to other vine growers who will care for the vineyard. Alternate translation: "he will give the vineyard to vine growers to care for it"
Mark 12:10
General Information:
This scripture was written long before in God's word.
Have you not read this scripture?
Jesus reminds the people of a scripture passage. He uses a rhetorical question here to rebuke them. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you have read this scripture." or "You should remember this scripture."
has been made the cornerstone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord made into the cornerstone"
Mark 12:11
This was from the Lord
"The Lord has done this"
it is marvelous in our eyes
Here "in our eyes" stands for seeing, which is a metaphor for the people's opinion. Alternate translation: "we have seen it and think that it is marvelous" or "we think that it is wonderful"
Mark 12:12
sought a way
"wanted to find a way"
they were afraid of the crowd
They were afraid of what the crowd would do to them if they arrested Jesus. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but they feared what the crowd would do if they arrested him"
against them
"to accuse them"
Mark 12:13
Connecting Statement:
In an effort to trap Jesus, some of the Pharisees and Herodians, and then the Sadducees, come to Jesus with questions.
Then they sent
"Then the Jewish leaders sent"
the Herodians
This was the name of an informal political party that supported Herod Antipas.
to trap him
Here the author describes tricking Jesus as trying to "trap him." Alternate translation: "to trick him"
Mark 12:14
When they came, they said
Here "they" refers to those sent from among the Pharisees and the Herodians.
what people think is not a concern to you
The abstract noun "concern" may be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "you are not concerned about what people think of you" or "you do not try to win people's favor"
you do not show partiality to anyone
"you do not judge people by how they look" or "you judge people by what is in their hearts"
Mark 12:15
Jesus knew their hypocrisy
They were acting hypocritically. This can be explained more clearly. Alternate translation: "Jesus knew that they did not really want to know what God wanted them to do"
Why do you test me?
Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders because they were trying to trick him. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I know you are trying to make me say something wrong so you can accuse me."
denarius
This coin was worth a day's wages.
Mark 12:16
They brought one
"The Pharisees and the Herodians brought a denarius"
likeness and inscription
"picture and name"
They said, "Caesar's
Here "Caesar's" refers to his likeness and inscription. Alternate translation: "They said, 'They are Caesar's likeness and inscription"
Mark 12:17
Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's
Jesus is teaching that his people must respect the government by paying taxes. This figure of speech can be clarified by changing Caesar to Roman government. Alternate translation: "Give to the Roman government the things that belong to the Roman government"
and to God
The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: "and give to God"
They marveled at him
They were amazed at what Jesus had said. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "They marveled at him and at what he had said"
Mark 12:18
who say there is no resurrection
This phrase explains who the Sadducees were. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "who say there is no resurrection from the dead"
Mark 12:19
Moses wrote for us, 'If a man's brother dies ... brother.'
The Sadducees are quoting what Moses had written in the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

law. Moses's quote can be expressed as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies ... brother."

wrote for us

"wrote for us Jews." The Sadducees were a group of Jews. Here they use the word "us" to refer to themselves and all Jews.

the man should take the brother's wife

"the man should marry his brother's wife"

raise up children for his brother

"have a son for his brother." The man's first son would be considered to be the dead brother's son, and the son's descendants would be considered to be the dead brother's descendants. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "have a son who will be considered to be the dead brother's son"

Mark 12:20

There were seven brothers

The Sadducees tell Jesus a story because they want to ask him a question about it to test him. The story is not about things that really happened. Alternate translation: "Suppose there were seven brothers"

the first

the first brother

the first took a wife

"the first brother married a woman." Here marrying a woman is spoken of as "taking" her.

Mark 12:21

the second ... the third

These numbers refer to each of the brothers and can be expressed as such. Alternate translation: "the second brother ... the third brother"

the second took her

"the second married her." Here marrying a woman is spoken of as "taking" her.

the third in the same way

"the third brother married her as his other bothers had done, and he also died leaving no children"

Mark 12:22

The seven

This refers to all the brothers. Alternate translation: "The seven brothers"

The seven left no children

Each of the brothers married the woman and then died before he had any children with her. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Eventually all seven brothers married that woman one by one, but none of them had any children with her, and one by one they died"

Mark 12:23

In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?

The Sadducees are testing Jesus by asking this question. If your readers can only understand this as a request for information, this can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Now tell us whose wife she will be in the resurrection, when they all rise again."

Mark 12:24

Is this not the reason you are mistaken, because ... power of God?

Jesus rebukes the Sadducees because they are mistaken about God's law. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are mistaken because ... power of God."

you do not know the scriptures

This means that they do not understand what is written in the Old Testament scriptures.

the power of God

"how powerful God is"

Mark 12:25

For when they rise

Here the word "they" refers to the brothers and the woman from the example.

rise

Waking and getting up from sleep is a metaphor for becoming alive after having been dead.

from the dead

The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"

they neither marry nor are given in marriage

"they do not marry, and they are not given in marriage"

nor are given in marriage

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and no one gives them in marriage"

heaven

This refers to the place where God lives.

Mark 12:26

that are raised

This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "who rise" or "who rise to live again"

the book of Moses

"the book that Moses wrote"

the account about the bush

This refers to the part of the book of Moses that tells about when God spoke to Moses out of a bush that was burning but that did not burn up. Alternate translation: "the passage about the burning bush" or "the words about the fiery bush"

the bush

This refers to a shrub, a woody plant that is smaller than a tree.

how God spoke to him

"about when God spoke to Moses"

I am the God of Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob

This means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worship God. These men have died physically, but they are still alive spiritually and still worship God.

Mark 12:27

not the God of the dead, but of the living

Here "the dead" refers to people who are dead, and "the living" refers to people who are alive. Also, the words "the God" can be stated clearly in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "not the God of dead people, but the God of living people"

the living

This includes people who are alive physically and spiritually.

You are quite mistaken

It may be helpful to state what they are mistaken about.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Alternate translation: "When you say that dead people do not rise again, you are quite mistaken"

quite mistaken

"completely mistaken" or "very wrong"

Mark 12:28

He asked him

"The scribe asked Jesus"

Mark 12:29

The most important is

"The most important" refers to the most important commandment. Alternate translation: "The most important commandment is"

Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord"

Mark 12:30

with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength

Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being. These four phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

Mark 12:31

love your neighbor as yourself

Jesus uses this simile to compare how people are to love each other with the same love as they love themselves. Alternate translation: "love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

than these

Here the word "these" refers to the two commandments that Jesus had just told the people.

Mark 12:32

Good, Teacher

"Good answer, Teacher" or "Well said, Teacher"

God is one

This means that there is only one God. Alternate translation: "there is only one God"

that there is no other

The word "God" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "that there is no other God"

Mark 12:33

with all the heart ... all the understanding ... all the strength

Here "heart" is a metonym for person's thoughts, feelings, or inner being. These three phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

to love one's neighbor as oneself

This simile compares how people are to love each other with the same love that they love themselves. Alternate translation: "to love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

is even more than

This idiom means that something is more important than something else. In this case, these two commandments are more pleasing to God that burnt offering and sacrifices. This may be written clearly. Alternate translation: "is even more important than" or "is even more pleasing to God than"

Mark 12:34

You are not far from the kingdom of God

This can be stated in positive form. Here Jesus speaks of the man being ready to submit to God as king as being physically close to the kingdom of God, as if it where a physical place. Alternate translation: "You are close to submitting to God as king"

no one dared

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everyone was afraid"

Mark 12:35

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he said

Some time has passed and Jesus is now in the temple. This is not part of the previous conversation. Alternate translation: "Later, while Jesus was teaching in the temple area, he said to the people"

How is it that the scribes say the Christ is the son of David?

Jesus uses this question to get the people to think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Consider why the scribes say the Christ is the son of David."

the son of David

"a descendant of David"

Mark 12:36

David himself

This word "himself" refers to David and is used to place emphasis on him and what he said. Alternate translation: "It was David who"

in the Holy Spirit

This means that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit directed David in what he said. Alternate translation: "inspired by the Holy Spirit"

said, 'The Lord said to my Lord

Here David calls God "The Lord" and calls the Christ "my Lord." This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "said about the Christ, 'The Lord God said to my Lord"

Sit at my right hand

Jesus is quoting a psalm. Here God is speaking to the Christ. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I put your enemies under your feet

In this quote, God speaks of defeating enemies as putting them under the feet of the victor. Alternate translation: "until I completely defeat your enemies"

Mark 12:37

calls him 'Lord,'

Here the word "him" refers to the Christ.

so how can the Christ be David's son?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "so consider how the Christ can be a descendant of David"

Mark 12:38

be greeted in the marketplaces

This can be expressed with an active form. These greetings showed that the people respected the scribes. Alternate translation: "to have people greet them respectfully in the marketplaces"

Mark 12:39

the most important seats ... the places of honor

You may want to make explicit that the scribes liked to sit in these places. Alternate translation: "to sit in the most important seats ... to have people seat them in the places of

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

honor"

Mark 12:40

They also devour widows' houses

Here Jesus describes the scribes' cheating of widows and stealing of their houses as "devouring" their houses. Alternate translation: "They also cheat widows in order to steal their houses from them"

widows' houses

The words "widows" and "houses" are synecdoches for helpless people and all of a person's important possessions, respectively. Alternate translation: "everything from helpless people"

These men will receive greater condemnation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly punish them with greater condemnation" or "God will certainly punish them severely"

will receive greater condemnation

The word "greater" implies a comparison. Here the comparison is to other men who are punished. Alternate translation: "will receive greater condemnation than other people"

Mark 12:41

Connecting Statement:

Still in the temple area, Jesus comments on the value of the widow's offering.

an offering box

This box, which everyone could use, held temple offerings.

Mark 12:42

two mites

"two small copper coins." These were the least valuable coins available.

worth about a penny

"worth very little." A penny is worth very little. Translate "penny" with the name of the smallest coin in your language if you have one that is worth very little.

Mark 12:43

General Information:

In verse 43 Jesus says that the widow put more money in the offering than the rich people put in, and in verse 44 he tells his reason for saying that. The information can be reordered so that Jesus tells his reason first and then says that the widow put in more, as in the UDB.

He called

"Jesus called"

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

all of them who contributed to

"all the other people who put money into"

Mark 12:44

abundance

much wealth, many valuable things

her poverty

"lack" or "the little she had"

to live on

"to survive on"

Chapter 13

Mark 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:24-25, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The return of Christ

Jesus said much about what would happen before he returned (Mark 13:6-37). He told his followers that bad things would happen to the world and bad things would happen to them before he returned, but they needed to be ready for him to return at any time.

Links:

Mark 13:1 Notes

Mark 13:1

General Information:

As they leave the temple area, Jesus tells his disciples what will happen to the wonderful temple that Herod the Great has built.

the wonderful stones and wonderful buildings

The "stones" refer to the stones that the buildings were built with. Alternate translation: "the wonderful buildings and the wonderful stones that they are made of"

Mark 13:2

Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone

This question is used to draw attention to the buildings. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look at these great buildings! Not one stone" or "You see these great buildings now, but not one stone"

Not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down

It is implied that enemy soldiers will tear down the stones. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Not one stone will remain on top of another, for enemy soldiers will come and destroy these buildings"

Mark 13:3

Connecting Statement:

In answer to the disciples' questions about the temple's destruction and what is going to happen, Jesus tells them what was going to take place in the future.

As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter

It can be expressed clearly that Jesus and his disciples had walked to the Mount of Olives. Alternate translation: "After

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

arriving at the Mount of Olives, which is opposite the temple, Jesus sat down. Then Peter"

privately

when they were alone

Mark 13:4

these things happen ... are about to happen

This refers to what Jesus had just said will happen to the stones of the temple. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "these things happen to the buildings of the temple ... are about to happen to the temple buildings"

when all these things

"that all these things"

Mark 13:5

to them

"to his disciples"

leads you astray

Here "leads you astray" is a metaphor for "persuades you to believe what is not true." Alternate translation: "deceives you"

Mark 13:6

lead many astray

Here "lead many astray" is a metaphor "persuades many to believe what is not true." Alternate translation: "deceive many people"

in my name

This is metonym. Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "claiming my authority" or 2) Alternate translation: "claiming that God sent them."

I am he

"I am the Christ"

Mark 13:7

hear of wars and rumors of wars

"hear of wars and reports about wars." Possible meanings are 1) "hear the sounds of wars close by and news of wars far away" or 2) "hear of wars that have started and reports about wars that are about to start"

but the end is not yet

"but it is not yet the end" or "but the end will not happen until later" or "but the end will be later"

the end

This probably refers to the end of the world.

Mark 13:8

will rise against

This idiom means to fight against one another. Alternate translation: "will fight against"

kingdom against kingdom

The words "will rise" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "kingdom will rise against kingdom" or "the people of one kingdom will fight against the people of another kingdom"

These are the beginnings of birth pains

Jesus speaks of these disasters as the beginnings of birth pains because more severe things will happen after them. Alternate translation: "These events will be like the first pains a woman suffers when she is about to bear a child"

Mark 13:9

Be on your guard

"Be ready for what people will do to you"

will give you over to councils

"take you and put you under the control of councils"

you will be beaten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will beat you"

You will stand before

This means to be put on trial and judged. Alternate translation: "You will be put on trial before" or "You will be brought to trial and judged by"

for my sake

"because of me" or "on account of me"

as a testimony to them

This means they will testify about Jesus. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "and testify to them about me" or "and you will tell them about me"

Mark 13:10

But the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations

Jesus is still speaking about things that must happen before the end comes. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "But the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations before the end will come"

Mark 13:11

hand you over

Here this means to put people under the control of the authorities. Alternate translation: "give you over to the authorities"

but the Holy Spirit

The words "who will speak" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "but the Holy Spirit, who will speak through you"

Mark 13:12

Brother will deliver up brother to death

"One brother will put another brother under the control of people who will kill him" or "Brothers will put their brothers under the control of people who will kill them." This will happen many times to many different people. Jesus is not speaking of just one person and his brother.

Brother ... brother

This refers to both brothers and sisters. Alternate translation: "People ... their siblings"

a father his child

The words "will deliver up to death" are understood from the previous phrase. This means that some fathers will betray their children, and this betrayal will cause their children to be killed. Alternate translation: "fathers will deliver up their children to death" or "fathers will betray their children, handing them over to be killed"

Children will rise up against their parents

This means that children will oppose their parents and betray them. Alternate translation: "Children will oppose their parents"

cause them to be put to death

This means that the authorities will sentence the parents to be put to death. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "cause the authorities to sentence the parents to die" or "the authorities will kill the parents"

Mark 13:13

You will be hated by everyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone will hate you"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

because of my name
Jesus uses the metonym "my name" to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you believe in me"
whoever endures to the end, that person will be saved
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whoever endures to the end, God will save that person" or "God will save whoever endures to the end"
whoever endures to the end
Here "endures" represents continuing to be faithful to God even while suffering. Alternate translation: "whoever suffers and stays faithful to God to the end"
to the end
Possible meanings are 1) "to the end of his life" or 2) "to the end of that time of trouble"
Mark 13:14
the abomination of desolation
This phrase is from the book of Daniel. Jesus's audience would have been familiar with this passage and the prophecy about the abomination entering the temple and defiling it. Alternate translation: "the shameful thing that defiles the things of God"
standing where it should not be standing
Jesus's audience would have known that this refers to the temple. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple, where it should not be standing"
let the reader understand
Mark added this to get the readers' attention, so that they would think about what Jesus meant when he spoke about the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be standing. Alternate translation: "may everyone who reads this understand what it means"
Mark 13:15
on the housetop
Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people could stand on them.
Mark 13:16
not return
This refers to returning to his house. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "not return to his house"
to take his cloak
"to get his cloak"
Mark 13:17
those who are nursing infants
women who give babies breast milk
Mark 13:18
Pray that it
"Pray that these times" or "Pray that these things"
the winter
"the cold season" or "the cold, rainy season." This refers to the time of year when it is cold and unpleasant and difficult to travel.
Mark 13:19
such as has not been from the beginning
"greater than there has ever been since the beginning of the world." This describes how great and terrible the tribulation will be. There has never been a tribulation as terrible as this one will be.
the beginning of creation, which God created
the beginning of creation, when God created the world
no, nor ever will be again
"and greater than there will ever be again" or "and after that tribulation, there will never again be a tribulation like it"
Mark 13:20
Unless the Lord had shortened the days
The writer uses past tense to describe a future event. Alternate translation: "If the Lord had not decided that he would shorten those days"
had shortened the days
"had shortened the time." It may be helpful to specify which "days" are referred to. Alternate translation: "had reduced the days of suffering" or "had shortened the time of suffering"
no flesh would be saved
The word "flesh" refers to people, and "saved" refers to physical salvation. Alternate translation: "no one would be saved" or "everyone would die"
for the sake of the elect
"in order to help the elect"
the elect, those whom he chose
The phrase "those whom he chose" means the same thing as "the elect." Together, they emphasize that God chose these people.
Mark 13:21
General Information:
In verse 21 Jesus gives a command, and in 22 he tells the reason for the command. This can be reordered with the reason first, and the command second, as in the UDB.
Mark 13:22
false Christs
"people who claim they are Christ"
so as to deceive
"in order to deceive" or "hoping to deceive" or "trying to deceive"
so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect
The phrase "even the elect" implies that the false Christs and false prophets will expect to deceive some people, but they will not know if they will be able to deceive the elect. Alternate translation: "in order to deceive people, and even deceive the elect, if that is possible"
the elect
"the people whom God has chosen"
Mark 13:23
Be on guard
"Be watchful" or "Be alert"
I have told you all these things ahead of time
Jesus told them these things to warn them. Alternate translation: "I have told you all these things ahead of time to warn you"
Mark 13:24
the sun will be darkened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sun will become dark"
the moon will not give its light
Here the moon is spoken of as if it were alive and able to give something to someone else. Alternate translation: "the moon will not shine" or "the moon will be dark"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Mark 13:25
the stars will fall from the sky
This does not mean that they will fall to earth but that they will fall from where the are now. Alternate translation: "the stars will fall from their places in the sky"
the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the powers in the heavens will shake" or "God will shake the powers that are in the heavens"
the powers that are in the heavens
"the powerful things in the heavens." These words could refer to 1) the sun, moon, and stars or 2) powerful spiritual beings
in the heavens
"in the sky"
Mark 13:26
Then they will see
"Then people will see"
with great power and glory
"powerfully and gloriously"
Mark 13:27
he will gather
The word "he" refers to God and is a metonym for his angels, as they are the ones who will gather the elect. Alternate translation: "they will gather" or "his angels will gather"
the four winds
The whole earth is spoken of as "the four winds," which refer to the four directions: north, south, east, and west. Alternate translation: "the north, south, east, and west" or "all parts of the earth"
from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky
These two extremes are given to emphasize that the elect will be gathered from the entire earth. Alternate translation: "from every place on earth"
Mark 13:28
Connecting Statement:
Jesus gives two short parables here to remind people to be aware when the things that he has been explaining happen.
the branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves
The phrase "the branch" refers to the branches of the fig tree. Alternate translation: "its branches become tender and put out their leaves"
tender
"green and soft"
puts out its leaves
Here the fig tree is spoken of as if it were alive and able to willingly cause its leaves to grow. Alternate translation: "its leaves begin to sprout"
summer
the warm part of the year or the growing season
Mark 13:29
these things
This refers to the days of tribulation. Alternate translation: "these things I have just described"
recognize that he is near
Many modern translations read, "you recognize" or "you know." It is not clear whether Jesus is stating a fact or issuing a command.
he is near
"the Son of Man is near"
close to the gates
This idiom means that he is very near and has almost arrived, referring to a traveler being close to arriving at the city gates. Alternate translation: "and is almost here"
Mark 13:30
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.
will not pass away
"Pass away" is a polite way of saying "die." Alternate translation: "will not die" or "will not end"
until all of these things
The phrase "these things" refers to the days of tribulation.
Mark 13:31
Heaven and earth
The two extremes are given to refer to all of the sky, including the sun, moon, stars, and planets, and all of the earth. Alternate translation: "The sky, the earth, and everything in them"
will pass away
"will cease to exist." Here this phrase refers to the world ending.
my words will never pass away
Jesus speaks of words not losing their power as if they were something that will never physically die. Alternate translation: "my words will never lose their power"
Mark 13:32
that day or that hour
This refers to the time that the Son of Man will return. Alternate translation: "that day or that hour that the Son of Man will return" or "the day or the hour that I will return"
no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father
These words specify some of those who do not know when the Son of Man will return, different from the Father, who does know. Alternate translation: "no one knows—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son know—but the Father" or "neither the angels in heaven nor the Son know; no one knows but the Father"
the angels in heaven
Here "heaven" refers to the place where God lives.
but the Father
It is best to translate "Father" with the same word that your language naturally uses to refer to a human father. Also, this is an ellipsis, stating that the Father knows when the Son will return. Alternate translation: "but only the Father knows"
Mark 13:33
what time it is
It can be stated clearly what "time" refers to here. Alternate translation: "when all these events will happen"
Mark 13:34
each one with his work
"telling each one what work he should do"
Mark 13:35
it could be in the evening
"he could return in the evening"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

rooster crows
The rooster is a bird that "crows" very early in the morning by making a loud call.
Mark 13:36
find you sleeping
Here Jesus speaks of not being ready as "sleeping."
Alternate translation: "find you not ready for his return"
Mark 13:37
General Information:
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Chapter 14

Mark 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 14:27, 62, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The eating of the body and blood

Mark 14:22-25 describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At this time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist," or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Abba, Father

"Abba" is an Aramaic word that the Jews used to speak to their fathers. Mark writes it as it sounds and then translates it.

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Mark 14:1 Notes

Mark 14:1
Connecting Statement:
Just two days before the Passover, the chief priests and scribes are secretly plotting to kill Jesus.
stealthily
without people noticing
Mark 14:2
For they were saying
The word "they" refers to the chief priests and the scribes.
Not during the festival
This refers to them not arresting Jesus during the festival.
Alternate translation: "We must not do it during the festival"
Mark 14:3
Connecting Statement:
Though some were angry that the oil was used to anoint Jesus, Jesus says that the woman has anointed his body for burial before he will die.
Simon the leper
This man previously had leprosy but was no longer ill. This is a different man than Simon Peter and Simon the Zealot.
he was reclining at the table
In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they reclined on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.
alabaster jar
This is a jar made from alabaster. Alabaster is a very expensive yellow-white stone. Alternate translation: "beautiful white stone jar"
of very expensive perfume, which was pure nard
"that contained expensive, fragrant perfume called nard."
Nard is a very expensive, sweet-smelling oil used to make perfume.
on his head
"on Jesus's head"
Mark 14:4
What is the reason for the waste of this perfume?
They asked this question to show that they disapproved of the woman pouring the perfume on Jesus. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is terrible that she wasted that perfume!"
Mark 14:5
This perfume could have been sold
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We could have sold this perfume" or "She could have sold this perfume"
three hundred denarii
"300 denarii." Denarius is the singular form of denarii. A denarius is a roman silver coin and it is worth one day's wage.
given to the poor
The phrase "the poor" refers to poor people. This refers to giving the money from the sale of the perfume to the poor.
Alternate translation: "the money given to poor people"
Mark 14:6
Why are you troubling her?
Jesus rebukes the guests for questioning this woman's action. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not trouble her!"
Mark 14:7
the poor
This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "poor people"
Mark 14:8

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
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Mark 14:9
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.
wherever the gospel is preached
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "wherever my followers preach the gospel"
what this woman has done will be spoken of
"what this woman has done will also be spoken of"
Mark 14:10
Connecting Statement:
After the woman anoints Jesus with perfume, Judas promises to deliver Jesus to the chief priests.
so that he might give him over to them
Judas did not deliver Jesus over to them yet, rather he went to make arrangements with them. Alternate translation: "in order to arrange with them that he would give Jesus over to them"
give him over
"bring him to them so they could capture him" or "put him in their power" or "betray him"
Mark 14:11
When the chief priests heard it
It may be helpful to state clearly what the chief priests heard. Alternate translation: "When the chief priests heard what he was willing to do for them"
to give him money
"to give him silver coins"
give him over to them
"put them in their power" or "betray him to them"
Mark 14:12
Connecting Statement:
Jesus sends two of the disciples to prepare the Passover meal.
when they sacrificed the Passover lamb
At the beginning of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, it was customary to sacrifice a lamb. Alternate translation: "when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb"
eat the Passover
Here the "Passover" refers to the Passover meal. Alternate translation: "eat the Passover meal"
Mark 14:13
bearing a pitcher of water
"carrying a large jar full of water"
Mark 14:14
The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room ... with my disciples?"
This can be written as an indirect quote. Translate this so that it is a polite request. Alternate translation: "Our Teacher would like to know where the guest room is where he may eat the Passover with his disciples."
guest room
a room for visitors
Mark 14:15
Make the preparations for us there
They were to prepare the meal for Jesus and his disciples to eat. Alternate translation: "Prepare the meal for us there"
Mark 14:16
The disciples left
"The two disciples left"
as he had said
"as Jesus had said"
Mark 14:17
Connecting Statement:
That evening as Jesus and the disciples eat the Passover meal, Jesus tells them that one of them will betray him.
he came with the twelve
It may be helpful to state where they came to. Alternate translation: "he came with the twelve to the house"
Mark 14:18
lying down at the table
In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they lay down on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.
Mark 14:19
one by one
This means that "one at a time" each disciple asked him.
Surely not I?
Possible meanings are 1) this was a question for which the disciples expected the answer to be no or 2) this was a rhetorical question that did not require a response. Alternate translation: "Surely I am not the one who will betray you!"
Mark 14:20
It is one of the twelve, the one now
"He is one of the twelve of you, the one now"
dipping bread with me in the bowl
In Jesus's culture, people would often eat bread, dipping it in a shared bowl of sauce or of oil mixed with herbs.
Mark 14:21
For the Son of Man will go as it is written about him
Here Jesus refers to the scriptures prophesying about his death. If you have a polite way to talk about death in your language, use it here. Alternate translation: "For the Son of Man will die in the way that the scriptures say"
it is written
"the scripture says" or "as they wrote in the scripture"
through whom the Son of Man is betrayed
This can be stated more directly. Alternate translation: "who betrays the Son of Man"
Mark 14:22
bread
This was a flat loaf of unleavened bread, which was eaten as part of the Passover meal.
broke it
This means that he broke the bread into pieces for the people to eat. Alternate translation: "broke it into pieces"
Take this. This is my body
"Take this bread. It is my body." Though most understand this to mean that the bread is a symbol of Jesus's body and that it is not actual flesh, it is best to translate this statement literally.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Mark 14:23
He took a cup
Here "cup" is a metonym for wine. Alternate translation: "He took the cup of wine"
Mark 14:24
This is my blood of the covenant, the blood that is poured out for many
The covenant is for the forgiveness of sins. This can be written more explicitly. Alternate translation: "This is my blood that confirms the covenant, the blood that is poured out so that many may receive the forgiveness of sins"
This is my blood
"This wine is my blood." Though most understand this to mean that the wine is a symbol of Jesus's blood and that it is not actual blood, it is best to translate this statement literally.
Mark 14:25
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.
fruit of the vine
"wine." This is a descriptive way to refer to wine.
new
Possible meanings are 1) "again" or 2) "in a new way"
Mark 14:26
hymn
A hymn is a type of song. It was traditional for them to sing an Old Testament psalm.
Mark 14:27
Jesus said to them
"Jesus said to his disciples"
will fall away
This is an idiom that means leave. Alternate translation: "will leave me"
I will strike
"kill." Here "I" refers to God.
the sheep will be scattered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will scatter the sheep"
Mark 14:28
I am raised up
This idiom means that God will cause Jesus to become alive again after he has died. This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "God raises me from the dead" or "God makes me alive again"
I will go ahead of you
"I will go before you"
Mark 14:29
all fall away
"everyone else falls away" or "everyone else leaves you"
Mark 14:30
Truly I say to you
This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.
rooster crows
The rooster is a male bird that calls out loudly very early in the morning. When he makes that sound he "crows."
twice
two times
you will deny me
"you will say that you do not know me"
Mark 14:31
said emphatically
"said insistently" or "said strongly"
If I must die
"Even if I must die"
They all made the same promise
This means that all of the disciples said the same thing that Peter said.
Mark 14:32
Connecting Statement:
When they go to Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, Jesus encourages three of his disciples to stay awake while he prays. Twice he awakens them, and the third time he tells them to wake up because it is time for the betrayal.
They came to the place
The word "they" refers to Jesus and his disciples.
Mark 14:33
distressed
overwhelmed with sorrow
deeply troubled
The word "deeply" refers to Jesus being greatly troubled in his soul. Alternate translation: "extremely troubled"
Mark 14:34
My soul is
Jesus speaks of himself as his "soul." Alternate translation: "I am"
even to the point of death
Jesus is exaggerating because he feels so much distress and sorrow that he feels like he is about to die, though he knows he will not die until after the sun rises.
watch
The disciples were to stay alert while Jesus prayed. This does not mean that they were supposed to watch Jesus pray.
Mark 14:35
if it were possible
This means that if God would allow it to happen. Alternate translation: "if God would allow it"
the hour might pass
Here "this hour" refers to Jesus's time of suffering, both now in the garden and later. Alternate translation: "that he would not have to go through this time of suffering"
Mark 14:36
Abba
a term used by Jewish children to address their father. Since it is followed by "Father," it is best to transliterate this word.
Father
This is an important title for God.
Remove this cup from me
Jesus speaks of the suffering that he must endure as if it were a cup.
But not my will, but yours
Jesus is asking God to do what he wants to be done and not what Jesus wants. Alternate translation: "But do not do what I want, do what you want"
Mark 14:37

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

found them sleeping
The word "them" refers to Peter, James, and John.
Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch for one hour?
Jesus rebukes Simon Peter for sleeping. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Simon, you are asleep when I told you to stay awake. You could not even stay awake for one hour."
Mark 14:38
that you do not enter into temptation
Jesus speaks of being tempted as if it were entering into a physical place. Alternate translation: "that you are not tempted"
The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak
Jesus warns Simon Peter that he is not strong enough to do what he wants to do in his own strength. Alternate translation: "You are willing in your spirit, but you are too weak to do what you want to do" or "You want to do what I say, but you are weak"
The spirit ... the flesh
These refer to two different aspects of Peter. "The spirit" is his inmost desires. "The flesh" is his human ability and strength.
Mark 14:39
used the same words
"prayed again what he prayed before"
Mark 14:40
found them sleeping
The word "them" refers to Peter, James, and John.
for their eyes were heavy
Here the author speaks of a sleepy person having a hard time keeping his eyes open as having "heavy eyes." Alternate translation: "for they were so sleepy they were having a hard time keeping their eyes open"
Mark 14:41
He came the third time
Jesus had gone and prayed again. Then he returned to them a third time. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Then he went and prayed again. He returned the third time"
Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
Jesus rebukes his disciples for not staying awake and praying. You can translate this rhetorical question as a statement if needed. Alternate translation: "You are still sleeping and resting!"
The hour has come
The time of Jesus's suffering and betrayal is about to begin.
Look!
"Listen!"
The Son of Man is being betrayed
Jesus warns his disciples that his betrayer is approaching them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am being betrayed"
Mark 14:42
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 14:43
one of the twelve
"one of the twelve disciples"
Mark 14:44
General Information:
Here Mark gives background information about how Judas had arranged with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus.
his betrayer
This refers to Judas.
The one I kiss is the man
Here "the man" refers to the man that Judas was going to identify. Alternate translation: "The man I kiss is the one you want"
Mark 14:45
he kissed him
"Judas kissed him"
Mark 14:46
laid hands on him and seized him
These two phrases have the same meaning to emphasize that they seized Jesus. Alternate translation: "grabbed Jesus and seized him" or "seized him"
Mark 14:47
who stood by
"who was standing nearby"
Mark 14:48
Jesus said to them
"Jesus said to the crowd"
Do you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to arrest me?
Jesus is rebuking the crowd. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is ridiculous that you come here to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a robber!"
Mark 14:49
But this was done that
"But this has happened so that"
Mark 14:50
All those with Jesus
This refers to the disciples.
Mark 14:51
linen
cloth made from the fibers of a flax plant
that was wrapped around him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that he had wrapped around himself"
When the men seized him
"When the men seized that man"
Mark 14:52
he left the linen garment
Because the man was trying to run away, the others would have grabbed at his clothing, trying to stop him.
Mark 14:53
Connecting Statement:
After the crowd of the chief priests, scribes, and elders lead Jesus to the high priest, Peter watches nearby while some stand to give false testimony against Jesus.
There were gathered with him all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes
This can be reordered so that it is easier to understand. "All of the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes had gathered there together"
Mark 14:54
Now

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This word is used here to mark a change in the story as the author tells us about Peter.

as far as the courtyard of the high priest

As Peter followed Jesus, he stopped at the high priest's courtyard. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "and he went as far as the courtyard of the high priest"

He sat among the officers

Peter sat with the officers who were working at the courtyard. Alternate translation: "He sat in the courtyard among the officers"

the officers

These were probably the servants of the "the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes" (Mark 14:54).

Mark 14:55

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the story as the author returns to telling us about Jesus being put on trial.

they might put him to death

They were not the ones who would execute Jesus; rather, they would order someone else to do it. Alternate translation: "they might have Jesus executed" or "they might have someone execute Jesus"

But they did not find any

They did not find testimony against Jesus with which they could convict him and have him put to death. Alternate translation: "But they did not find any testimony with which to convict him"

Mark 14:56

brought false testimony against him

Here speaking false testimony is described as if it were a physical object that someone can carry. Alternate translation: "accused him by speaking false testimony against him"

their testimony did not agree

"they contradicted each other"

Mark 14:57

brought false testimony against him

Here speaking false testimony is described as if it were a physical object that someone can carry. Alternate translation: "accused him by speaking false testimony against him"

Mark 14:58

We heard him say

"We heard Jesus say." The word "we" refers to the people who brought false testimony against Jesus and does not include the people to whom they are speaking.

made with hands ... made without hands

Here "hands" refers to men. Alternate translation: "made by men ... without man's help" or "built by men ... without man's help"

in three days

"within three days." This means that the temple would be built within a three-day period.

will build another

The word "temple" is understood from the previous phrase. It may be repeated. Alternate translation: "will build another temple"

Mark 14:59

their testimony did not agree

"these witnesses contradicted each other"

Mark 14:60

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus answers that he is the Christ, the high priest and all of the leaders there condemn him as one who deserves to die.

stood up among them

Jesus stands up in the middle of the angry crowd to speak to them. Translate this to show who was present when Jesus stood up to speak. Alternate translation: "stood up among the chief priests, scribes, and elders"

Have you no answer? What is it these men testify against you?

The chief priest is not asking Jesus for information about what the witnesses said. He is asking Jesus to prove what the witnesses said is wrong. Alternate translation: "Are you not going to reply? What do you say in response to the testimony these men are speaking against you?"

Mark 14:61

the Son of the Blessed One

Here God is called "the Blessed One." It is best to translate "Son" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a "son" of a human father. Alternate translation: "the Son of God"

Mark 14:62

I am

This likely has a double meaning: 1) to respond to the high priest's question and 2) to call himself "I Am," which is what God called himself in the Old Testament.

he sits at the right hand of power

Here "power" is a metonym that represents God. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sits in the place of honor beside the all-powerful God"

comes with the clouds of heaven

Here the clouds are described as accompanying Jesus when he returns. Alternate translation: "when he comes down through the clouds in the sky"

Mark 14:63

tore his garments

The high priest tore his clothes purposefully to show his outrage and horror at what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: "tore his garments in outrage"

Do we still need witnesses?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We certainly do not need any more people who will testify against this man!"

Mark 14:64

You have heard the blasphemy

This refers to what Jesus said, which the high priest called blasphemy. Alternate translation: "You have heard the blasphemy he has spoken"

They all

all the people in the room

Mark 14:65

Some began to

some of the people in the room

to cover his face

They covered his face with a cloth or blindfold, so he could

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not see. Alternate translation: "to cover his face with a blindfold"

Prophesy

They mocked him, asking him to prophesy who was hitting him. Alternate translation: "Prophesy who hit you"

officers

men who guarded the governor's house

Mark 14:66

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus had predicted, Peter denies Jesus three times before the rooster crows.

below in the courtyard

"outside in the courtyard"

one of the servant girls of the high priest

The servant girls worked for the high priest. Alternate translation: "one of the servant girls who worked for the high priest"

Mark 14:67

General Information:

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Mark 14:68

denied

This means to claim that something is not true. In this case, Peter was saying that what the servant girl said about him was not true.

neither know nor understand what you are talking about

Both "know" and "understand" have the same meaning here. The meaning is repeated to add emphasis to what Peter is saying. Alternate translation: "I really do not understand what you are talking about"

Mark 14:69

the servant girl

This is the same servant girl who identified Peter previously.

one of them

The people were identifying Peter as one of Jesus's disciples. This can be made clearer. Alternate translation: "one of Jesus's disciples" or "one of those who have been with that man they arrested"

Mark 14:70

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 14:71

to put himself under curses

If in your language you have to name the person who curses someone, state God. Alternate translation: "to say for God to curse him"

Mark 14:72

rooster immediately crowed

The rooster is a male bird that calls out loudly very early in the morning. If he has made that sound he has "crowed."

a second time

"Second" here is an ordinal number.

he broke down

This idiom means that he was overwhelmed with grief and lost control of his emotions. Alternate translation: "he was overwhelmed with grief" or "he lost control of his emotions"

Chapter 15

Mark 15 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The curtain of the temple was split in two"

The curtain in the temple was an important symbol that showed that people needed to have someone speak to God for them. They could not speak to God directly because all people are sinful and God hates sin. God split the curtain to show that Jesus's people can now speak to God directly because Jesus has paid for their sins.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Mark 15:46) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

Both by pretending to worship Jesus (Mark 15:19) and by pretending to speak to a king (Mark 15:18), the soldiers and the Jews showed that they hated Jesus and did not believe that he was the Son of God. (See: and mock)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

This is a phrase in Aramaic. Mark transliterates its sounds by writing them using Greek letters. He then explains its meaning.

Links:

Mark 15:1 Notes

Mark 15:1

Connecting Statement:

When the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and the council give Jesus over to Pilate, they accuse Jesus of doing many bad things. When Pilate asks if what they had said is true, Jesus does not answer him.

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they bound Jesus and led him away
They commanded for Jesus to be bound, but it would have been the guards who actually bound him and led him away. Alternate translation: "they commanded for Jesus to be bound and then he was led away" or "they commanded the guards to bind Jesus and then they led him away"
They handed him over to Pilate
They had Jesus led to Pilate and transferred control of Jesus over to him.
Mark 15:2
You say so
Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so" or 2) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said"
Mark 15:3
were accusing him of many things
"were saying that Jesus had done many bad things"
Mark 15:4
Pilate again asked him
"Pilate asked Jesus again"
Do you give no answer
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Do you have an answer"
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
Mark 15:5
that amazed him
It surprised Pilate that Jesus did not reply and defend himself.
Mark 15:6
Connecting Statement:
Pilate, hoping the crowd will choose Jesus, offers to release a prisoner, but the crowd asks for Barabbas instead.
Now
This word is used here to mark a pause in the story as the author tells background information about Pilate's tradition of releasing a prisoner at feasts and about Barabbas.
Mark 15:7
General Information:
The writer continues giving background information that will enable the reader to understand the part of the story that follows.
the rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion
The writer writes as though he believes that the readers know which rebels and which rebellion he is talking about, not as though he is introducing new participants to the story.
Mark 15:8
to do for them as he had done in the past
This refers to Pilate releasing a prisoner at feasts. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "to release a prisoner to them as he had done in the past"
Mark 15:9
General Information:
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Mark 15:10
For he knew that it was because of envy ... Jesus over to him
This is background information about why Jesus was handed over to Pilate.
it was because of envy that the chief priests
They envied Jesus, probably because so many people were following him and becoming his disciples. Alternate translation: "the chief priests were envious of Jesus. This is why they" or "the chief priests were envious of Jesus's popularity among the people. This is why they"
Mark 15:11
stirred up the crowd
The author speaks of the chief priests rousing or urging the crowd as if the crowd were a bowl of something that they were stirring. Alternate translation: "roused the crowd" or "urged the crowd"
released instead
They requested Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus. Alternate translation: "released instead of Jesus"
Mark 15:12
Connecting Statement:
The crowd asks for Jesus's death, so Pilate turns him over to the soldiers, who mock him, crown him with thorns, strike him, and lead him out to crucify him.
What then should I do with the King of the Jews
Pilate asks what he should do with Jesus if he releases Barabbas to them. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "If I release Barabbas, what then should I do with the King of the Jews"
Mark 15:13
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 15:14
Pilate said to them
"Pilate said to the crowd"
Mark 15:15
to satisfy the crowd
"make the crowd happy by doing what they wanted him to do"
He scourged Jesus
Pilate did not actually scourge Jesus but rather his soldiers did.
scourged
"flogged." To "scourge" is to beat with an especially painful whip.
then handed him over to be crucified
Pilate told his soliders to take Jesus away to crucify him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "told his soldiers to take him away and crucify him"
Mark 15:16
the courtyard (which is the government headquarters)
This was where the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem lived, and where the governor stayed when he was in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the courtyard of the soldiers' barracks" or "the courtyard of the governor's residence"
the whole company of soldiers
"the whole unit of soldiers" "the whole cohort of soldiers"
Mark 15:17

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They put a purple robe on Jesus
Purple was a color worn by royalty. The soldiers did not believe that Jesus was king. They clothed him this way to mock him because others said that he was the King of the Jews.
a crown of thorns
"a crown made of thorny branches"
Mark 15:18
began to salute him
The reader should understsnd that they were mocking Jesus by pretending to salute him.
Hail, King of the Jews
The greeting "Hail" with a raised hand was only used to greet the Roman emperor. The soldiers did not believe that Jesus was the king of the Jews. Rather they said this to mock him.
Mark 15:19
a reed
"a stick" or "a staff"
went to their knees
"kneeled" or "knelt" or "got on their knees"
Mark 15:20
General Information:
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Mark 15:21
Simon ... Alexander ... Rufus
These are names of men.
Cyrene
This is the name of a place.
from the country
"from outside the city"
he was the father of Alexander and Rufus
This is background information about the man whom the soldiers forced to carry Jesus's cross.
they forced him to carry his cross
According to Roman law, a solider could force a man he came upon along the road to carry a load. In this case, they forced Simon to carry Jesus's cross.
Mark 15:22
Connecting Statement:
The soldiers bring Jesus to Golgotha, where they crucify him with two others. Many people mock him.
Place of a Skull
"Skull Place" or "Place of the Skull." This the name of a place. It does not mean that there are lots of skulls there.
Skull
A skull is the head bones, or a head without any flesh on it.
Mark 15:23
wine mixed with myrrh
It may be helpful to explain that myrrh is a pain-relieving medicine. Alternate translation: "wine mixed with a medicine called myrrh" or "wine mixed with a pain-relieving medicine called myrrh"
Mark 15:24
General Information:
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Mark 15:25
the third hour
"Third" here is a ordinal number. This refers to nine o'clock in the morning. Alternate translation: "nine o'clock in the morning"
Mark 15:26
On a sign
The soldiers attached this sign to the cross above Jesus. Alternate translation: "They attached to the cross above Jesus's head a sign on which"
the charge against him
"the crime they were accusing him of doing"
Mark 15:27
one on the right of him and one on his left
This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "one on a cross on the right side of him and one on a cross on the left side of him"
Mark 15:28
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 15:29
shaking their heads
This action showed that the people disapproved of Jesus.
Aha!
This is a exclamation of mockery. Use the appropriate exclamation in your language.
You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days
The people refer to Jesus by what he earlier prophesied that he would do. Alternate translation: "You who said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days"
Mark 15:30
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 15:31
In the same way
This refers to the way that the people who were walking by Jesus were mocking him.
were mocking him with each other
"were saying mocking things about Jesus among themselves"
Mark 15:32
Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down
The leaders did not believe that Jesus is the Christ, the King of Israel. Alternate translation: "He calls himself the Christ and the King of Israel. So let him come down" or "If he is really the Christ and the King of Israel, he should come down"
believe
The means to believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "believe in him"
insulted
mocked, slandered
Mark 15:33
the sixth hour
This refers to noon or 12 p.m.
darkness came over the whole land
Here the author describes it becoming dark outside as if the darkness were a wave that moved over the land. Alternate translation: "the whole land became dark"
Mark 15:34
At the ninth hour
This refers to three o'clock in the afternoon. Alternate

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translation: "At three o'clock in the afternoon" or "In the middle of the afternoon"

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani

These are Aramaic words that should be copied as is into your language with similar sounds.

is interpreted

"means"

Mark 15:35

Some of those standing by heard his words and said

It can be stated clearly that they misunderstood what Jesus said. Alternate translation: "When some of those standing there heard his words, they misunderstood and said"

Mark 15:36

sour wine

"vinegar"

reed staff

"stick." This was a staff made from a reed.

gave it to him

"gave it to Jesus." The man held up the staff so that Jesus could drink wine from the sponge. Alternate translation: "held it up to Jesus"

Mark 15:37

General Information:

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Mark 15:38

The curtain of the temple was split in two

Mark is showing that God himself split the temple curtain. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God split the curtain of the temple in two"

Mark 15:39

the centurion

This is the centurion who supervised the soldiers who crucified Jesus.

who stood and faced Jesus

Here "faced" is an idiom that means to look towards someone. Alternate translation: "who stood in front of Jesus"

that he had died in this way

"how Jesus had died" or "the way Jesus had died"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 15:40

looked on from a distance

"watched from far away"

(the mother of James ... and of Joses)

"who was the mother of James ... and of Joses." This can be written without the parentheses.

James the younger

"the younger James." This man was referred to as "the younger" probably to distinguish him from another man named James.

Joses

This Joses was not that same person as the younger brother of Jesus. See how you translated the same name in [Mark 6:3]

Salome

Salome is the name of a woman.

Mark 15:41

When he was in Galilee, they followed him ... with him to Jerusalem

"When Jesus was in Galilee, these women followed him ... with him to Jerusalem." This is background information about the women who watched the crucifixion from a distance.

came up with him to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for people to speak of going up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

Mark 15:42

Connecting Statement:

Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the body of Jesus, which he wraps in linen and puts in a tomb.

evening had come

Here evening is spoken of as if it were something that is able to "come" from one place to another. Alternate translation: "it had become evening" or "it was evening"

Mark 15:43

Joseph of Arimathea came there. He was a respected

The phrase "came there" refers to Joseph coming to Pilate, which is also described after the background information is given, but his coming is referenced before for emphasis and to help introduce him to the story. There may be a different way to do this in your language. Alternate translation: "Joseph of Arimathea was a respected"

Joseph of Arimathea

"Joseph from Arimathea." Joseph is the name of a man, and Arimathea is the name of the place his is from.

He was a respected member of the council ... for the kingdom of God

This is background information about Joseph.

went in to Pilate

"went to Pilate" or "went in to where Pilate was"

asked for the body of Jesus

It can be stated clearly that he wanted to get the body so that he could bury it. Alternate translation: "asked for permission to get the body of Jesus in order to bury it"

Mark 15:44

Pilate was amazed that Jesus was already dead; he called the centurion

When Pilate heard that Jesus was dead, he was surprised, so he asked the centurion if it was true. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Pilate was amazed when he heard that Jesus was already dead, so he called the centurion"

Mark 15:45

he gave the body to Joseph

"he permitted Joseph to take Jesus's body"

Mark 15:46

linen

Linen is cloth made from the fibers of a flax plant. See how you translated this in Mark 14:51.

He took him down ... Then he rolled a stone

You may need to make explicit that Joseph probably had help from other people when he took Jesus's body down from the cross, prepared it for the tomb, and closed the tomb. Alternate translation: "He and others took him down ... Then they rolled a stone"

a tomb that had been cut out of a rock

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a tomb that someone had previously cut out of solid rock"

a stone against

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"a huge flat stone in front of"
Mark 15:47
Joses
This Joses was not that same person as the younger brother of Jesus. See how you translated the same name in [Mark 6:3]
the place where Jesus was buried
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place where Joseph and the others buried Jesus's body"

Chapter 16

Mark 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb
The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Mark 15:46) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

A young man dressed in a white robe
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 28:1-2 and Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 and John 20:12)

Links:

Mark 16:1 Notes

Mark 16:1
Connecting Statement:
On the first day of the week, women come early because they expect to use spices to anoint Jesus's body. They are surprised to see a young man who tells them Jesus is alive, but they are afraid and do not tell anyone.
When the Sabbath day was over
That is, after the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, had ended and the first day of the week had begun.
Mark 16:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:3
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:4
the stone had been rolled away
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had rolled away the stone"
Mark 16:5
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:6
He is risen!
The angel is emphatically stating that Jesus has risen from the dead. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "He arose!" or "God raised him from the dead!" or "He raised himself from the dead!"
Mark 16:7
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:8
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:9
Connecting Statement:
Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene, who tells the disciples, then he appears to two others as they walk in the country, and later he appears to the eleven disciples.
on the first day of the week
"on Sunday"
Mark 16:10
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Mark 16:11
They heard
"They heard Mary Magdalene say"
he had been seen by her
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Mary Magdalene had seen him" or "she had seen him"
Mark 16:12
he appeared in a different form to two of them
The "two of them" saw Jesus, but he looked different from how he had looked previously.
two of them
"two of his disciples"
Mark 16:13
they did not believe them
The rest of the disciples did not believe what the two who had been walking in the country said.
Mark 16:14
Connecting Statement:
When Jesus meets with the eleven, he rebukes them for their unbelief and tells them to go out into all the world to preach the gospel.
the eleven
These are the eleven apostles who remain after Judas has left them.

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they were reclining at the table

This is a metonym for eating, which was the usual way people in that day ate meals. Alternate translation: "they were eating a meal"

reclining

In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they lay down on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.

hardness of heart

Jesus is rebuking his disciples because they would not believe in him. Translate this idiom so it is understood that the disciples were not believing Jesus. Alternate translation: "refusal to believe"

Mark 16:15

Go into all the world

Here "the world" is a metonym for the people in the world. Alternate translation: "Go everywhere there are people"

the entire creation

This is an exaggeration and a metonym for people everywhere. Alternate translation: "absolutely everybody"

Mark 16:16

He who believes and is baptized will be saved

The word "He" refers to anyone. This sentence can be made active. Alternate translation: "God will save all people who believe and allow you to baptize them"

he who does not believe will be condemned

The word "he" refers to anyone. This clause can be made active. Alternate translation: "God will condemn all people who do not believe"

Mark 16:17

These signs will go with those who believe

Mark speaks of miracles as though they were people going along with the believers. Alternate translation: "People watching those who believe will see these things happen and know that I am with the believers"

In my name they

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is giving a general list: "In my name they will do things like these: They" or 2) Jesus is giving an exact list: "These are the things they will do in my name: They."

In my name

Here "name" is associated with Jesus's authority and power. See how "in your name" is translated in [Mark 9:38]

Mark 16:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:19

he was taken up into heaven and sat

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God took him up into heaven, and he sat"

sat down at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "sat in the place of honor beside God"

Mark 16:20

worked with them

worked together with them, helped them as they worked

confirmed the word

This idiom means they proved that their message was true. Alternate translation: "showed that his message, which they were speaking, was true"

by the signs that went with them

"by enabling them wherever they went to do miracles that showed that they truly were his disciples"

Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Luke

Introduction and purpose for writing (1:1-4) Birth of Jesus and his preparation for his ministry (1:5-4:13) Jesus's ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50) Jesus's journey to Jerusalem Discipleship (9:51-11:13) Conflict and Jesus's grief (11:14-14:35) Parables about things that are lost and found. Parables about honesty and dishonesty (15:1-16:31) Kingdom of God (17:1-19:27) Jesus's entry into Jerusalem (19:28-44) Jesus in Jerusalem (19:45-21:4) Jesus's teaching about his second coming (21:5-36) Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection (22:1-24:53)

What is the Gospel of Luke about?

The Gospel of Luke is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Luke wrote his gospel for a person named Theophilus. Luke wrote an accurate description of the life of Jesus so that Theophilus would be certain of what is true. However, Luke expected the gospel to encourage all believers, not just Theophilus.

How should the title of this book be translated?

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

Who wrote the Book of Luke?

This book does not give the name of the author. The same person who wrote this book also wrote the Book of Acts. In parts of the Book of Acts, the author uses the word "we." This indicates that the author traveled with Paul. Most scholars think that Luke was this person traveling with Paul. Therefore, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought Luke was the author of both the Book of Luke and the Book of Acts.

Luke was a medical doctor. His way of writing shows that he was an educated man. He was probably a Gentile. Luke himself probably did not witness what Jesus said and did. But he said that he talked to many people who did.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What are the roles of women in the Gospel of Luke?

Luke described women in a very positive way in his gospel. For example, he often showed women being more faithful to God than most men. (See: faithful)

Why does Luke write so much about the final week of Jesus's life?

Luke wrote much about Jesus's final week. He wanted his readers to think deeply about Jesus's final week and his death on the cross. He wanted people to understand that Jesus willingly died on the cross so that God could forgive them for sinning against him. (See: sin)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following verses are not in the earliest manuscripts. The ULB and UDB include these verses, but some other versions do not.

"Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." (22:43–44) "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (23:34)

The following verse is not included in many modern versions. Some versions put it into square brackets. Translators are advised not to translate this verse. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include this verse, the translators can include it. If they are translated, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it was probably not original to Luke's Gospel.

"For he was required to release one prisoner during the feast" (23:17)

Chapter 1

Luke 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:46-55, 68-79.

Special concepts in this chapter

"He will be called John"

Most people in the ancient Near East would give a child the same name as someone in their family. People were surprised that Elizabeth and Zechariah named their son John, because there was no one else in their family with that name.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Luke's language is simple and straightforward. He does not use many figures of speech.

Links:

Luke 1:1 Notes Luke intro

Luke 1:1

General Information:

Luke explains why he writes to Theophilus.

of the things that have been accomplished among us

"about those things that have happened among us" or "about those events that have happened among us"

among us

No one knows for sure who Theophilus was. If he was a Christian, the word "us" here would include him and so be inclusive, and if not, it would be exclusive.

Luke 1:2

were eyewitnesses and servants of the word

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An "eyewitness" is a person who saw something happen, and a servant of the word is a person who serves God by telling people God's message. You may need to make it clear how they were servants of the word. Alternate translation: "saw what had happened and served God by telling people his message"

servants of the word

The word "word" is a synecdoche for a message made up of many words. Alternate translation: "servants of the message" or "servants of God's message"

Luke 1:3

accurately investigated

"carefully researched." Luke was careful to find out exactly what happened. He probably talked to the different people who saw what happened to make sure that what he wrote down about these events was correct.

most excellent Theophilus

Luke said this to show honor and respect for Theophilus. This may mean that Theophilus was an important government official. This section should use the style that your culture uses to address people of high status. Some people may prefer to also put this greeting at the beginning and say, "To most excellent Theophilus" or "Dear most excellent Theophilus."

most excellent

"honorable" or "noble"

Theophilus

This name means "friend of God." It may describe this man's character or it may have been his actual name. Most translations have it as a name.

Luke 1:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 1:5

General Information:

Zechariah and Elizabeth are introduced. Verses 5-7 give background information about them.

Connecting Statement:

The angel prophesies the birth of John.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea

The phrase "In the days of" is used to indicate a new event. Alternate translation: "During the time that King Herod ruled over Judea"

there was a certain

"there was a particular" or "there was a." This is a way of introducing a new character in a story. Consider how your language does this.

division

It is understood that this refers to the priests. Alternate translation: "division of priests" or "group of priests"

of Abijah

"who descended from Abijah." Abijah was an ancestor of this group of priests and all of them were descended from Aaron, who was the first Israelite priest.

Luke 1:6

before God

"in God's sight" or "in God's opinion"

all the commandments and statutes of the Lord

"all that the Lord had commanded and required"

Luke 1:7

But

This contrast word shows that what follows here is the opposite of what is expected. People expected that if they did what was right, God would allow them to have children. Although this couple did what was right, they did not have any children.

they were both advanced in their days

This is a euphemism that says that they were very old. Alternate translation: "they had both lived many days" or "they had both lived many years" or "they were both very old"

Luke 1:8

Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a shift in the story from the background information to the participants.

Zechariah was in God's presence, carrying out the priestly duties

It is implied that Zechariah was in God's temple and that these priestly duties were part of worshiping God.

in the order of his division

"when it was his group's turn" or "when the time came for his group to serve"

Luke 1:9

According to the customary way of choosing which priest would ... burn incense

This sentence gives us information about priestly duties.

the customary way

"the traditional method" or "the usual way"

chosen by lot

A lot was a marked stone that was thrown or rolled on the ground in order to decide something. The priests believed that God guided the lot to show them which priest he wanted them to choose.

to burn incense

The priests were to burn sweet-smelling incense as an offering to God each morning and evening on a special altar inside the temple.

Luke 1:10

The whole crowd of people

"A large number of people" or "Many people"

outside

The courtyard was the enclosed area surrounding the temple. Alternate translation: "outside the temple building" or "in the courtyard outside the temple"

at the hour

"at the set time." It is unclear if this was the morning or evening time for the incense offering.

Luke 1:11

Connecting Statement:

While Zechariah does his duty in the temple, an angel comes from God to give him a message.

Now

This word marks the beginning of the action in the story.

appeared to him

"suddenly came to him" or "was suddenly there with Zechariah." This expresses that the angel was present with Zechariah, and not simply a vision.

Luke 1:12

Zechariah ... was troubled ... fear fell on him

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These two phrases mean the same thing, and emphasize how afraid Zechariah was.

When Zechariah saw him

"When Zechariah saw the angel." Zechariah was afraid because the appearance of the angel was frightening. He had not done anything wrong, so he was not afraid that the angel would punish him.

fear fell on him

Fear is described as if it was something that attacked or overpowered Zechariah.

Luke 1:13

Do not be afraid

"Stop being afraid of me" or "You do not need to be afraid of me"

your prayer has been heard

This can be stated in active form. It is implied that God will give Zechariah what he has asked for. Alternate translation: "God has heard your prayer and will give you what you have asked for"

bear you a son

"have a son for you" or "give birth to your son"

Luke 1:14

You will have joy and gladness

The words "joy" and "gladness" mean the same thing and are used to emphasize how great the joy will be. Alternate translation: "you will have great joy" or "you will be very glad"

at his birth

"because of his birth"

Luke 1:15

For he will be great

"This is because he will be great." Zechariah and the "many" will rejoice because John will be "great in the sight of the Lord." The rest of verse 15 tells how God wants John to live.

he will be great in the sight of the Lord

"he will be a very important person for the Lord" or "God will consider him to be very important"

he will be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit will empower him" or "the Holy Spirit will guide him" Make sure it does not sound similar to what an evil spirit might do to a person.

from his mother's womb

"even while he is in his mother's womb" or "even before he is born"

Luke 1:16

Many of the descendants of Israel will be turned to the Lord their God

Here "be turned" is a metaphor for a person repenting and worshiping the Lord. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He will cause many of the people of Israel to repent and worship the Lord their God"

Luke 1:17

will go before the face of the Lord

Before the Lord comes, he will go and announce to the people that the Lord will come to them.

the face of the Lord

Here "the face of" someone can be an idiom that refers to the that person's presence. It is sometimes omitted in translation. Alternate translation: "the Lord"

in the spirit and power of Elijah

"with the same spirit and power that Elijah had." The word "spirit" either refers to God's Holy Spirit or to Elijah's attitude or way of thinking. Make sure that the word "spirit" does not mean ghost or evil spirit.

turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

"persuade fathers to care about their children again" or "cause fathers to restore their relationships with their children"

turn the hearts

The heart is spoken of as if it were something that could be turned to go in a different direction. This refers to changing someone's attitude toward something.

the disobedient

Here this refers to people who do not obey the Lord.

make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him

What the people will be prepared to do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "make ready for the Lord a people who are prepared to believe his message"

Luke 1:18

How can I know this?

"How can I know for sure that what you said will happen?" Here, "know" means to learn by experience, suggesting Zechariah was asking for a sign as proof. Alternate translation: "What can you do to prove to me that this will happen?"

my wife is advanced in her days

This is a euphemism that says that she was very old. See how you translated similar words in [Luke 1:7]

Luke 1:19

I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God

This is stated as a rebuke to Zechariah. The presence of Gabriel, coming directly from God, should be enough proof for Zechariah.

who stands

"who serves"

I was sent to speak to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God sent me to speak to you"

Luke 1:20

Behold

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

silent, unable to speak

These mean the same thing, and are repeated to emphasize the completeness of his silence. Alternate translation: "completely unable to speak" or "not able to speak at all"

not believe my words

"not believe what I said"

at the right time

"at the appointed time"

Luke 1:21

Now

This marks a shift in the story from what happened inside the temple to what happened outside. Alternate translation: "While that was happening" or "While the angel and Zechariah were talking"

Luke 1:22

They realized that he had seen a vision while he was in the temple. He kept on making signs to them and remained silent
These things probably happened at the same time, and Zechariah's signs helped the people understand that he had had a vision. It might be helpful to your audience to change the order to show that. Alternate translation: "He kept on making signs to them and remained silent. So they realized that he had seen a vision while he was in the temple"
a vision
The earlier description indicated that Gabriel actually came to Zechariah in the temple. The people, not knowing that, assumed Zechariah saw a vision.
Luke 1:23
It came about
This phrase moves the story ahead to when Zechariah's service was ended.
he went to his house
Zechariah did not live in Jerusalem, where the temple was located. He traveled to his home town.
Luke 1:24
After these days
The phrase "these days" refers to the time Zechariah was serving in the temple. It is possible to state more clearly what this refers to. Alternate translation: "After Zechariah's time of serving at the temple"
his wife
"Zechariah's wife"
kept herself hidden
"did not leave her house"
Luke 1:25
This is what the Lord has done for me
This phrase refers to the fact that the Lord allowed her to become pregnant.
This is what
This is a positive exclamation. She is very happy with what the Lord has done for her.
looked at me with favor
"to look at" here is an idiom that means "to treat" or "to deal with." Alternate translation: "regarded me kindly" or "had pity on me"
my shame
This refers to the shame she felt when she was not able to have children.
Luke 1:26
In the sixth month
"in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy." It may be necessary to state this clearly if it would be confused with the sixth month of the year.
the angel Gabriel was sent from God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God told the angel Gabriel to go"
Luke 1:27
a virgin engaged to ... Joseph
Mary's parents had agreed that Mary would marry Joseph. Though they had not had sexual relations, Joseph would have thought and spoken of her as his wife.
who was a descendant of David
"he belonged to the same tribe as King David"
the virgin's name was Mary
This introduces Mary as a new character in the story.
Luke 1:28
He came to her
"The angel came to Mary"
Greetings
This was a common greeting. It means: "Rejoice" or "Be glad."
you who are highly favored!
"you who have received great grace!" or "you who have received special kindness!"
The Lord is with you
"with you" here is an idiom that implies support and acceptance. Alternate translation: "The Lord is pleased with you"
Luke 1:29
she was very confused by his words, and she wondered what kind of greeting this could be
Mary understood the meaning of the individual words, but she did not understand why the angel said this amazing greeting to her.
Luke 1:30
Do not be afraid, Mary
The angel does not want Mary to be afraid of his appearance, because God sent him with a positive message.
you have found favor with God
The idiom "to find favor" means to be positively received by someone. The sentence can be altered to show God as the actor. Alternate translation: "God has decided to give you his grace" or "God is showing you his kindness"
Luke 1:31
you will conceive in your womb and bear a son ... Jesus
Mary will bear "a son" who will be called "the Son of the Most High." Jesus is therefore a human son born of a human mother, and he is also the Son of God. These terms should be translated very carefully.
Luke 1:32
the Son of the Most High
Mary will bear "a son" who will be called "the Son of the Most High." Jesus is therefore a human son born of a human mother, and he is also the Son of God. These terms should be translated very carefully.
will be called
Possible meanings are 1) "people will call him" or 2) "God will call him"
Son of the Most High
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
give him the throne of his ancestor David
The throne represents the king's authority to rule. Alternate translation: "give him authority to rule as king as his ancestor David did"
Luke 1:33
there will be no end to his kingdom
The negative phrase "no end" emphasizes that it continues forever. It could also be stated with a positive phrase. Alternate translation: "his kingdom will never end"
Luke 1:34
How will this happen
Though Mary did not understand how it could happen, she did not doubt that it would happen.

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I have not known any man
Mary used this polite expression to say that she had not engaged in sexual activity. Alternate translation: "I am a virgin"
Luke 1:35
The Holy Spirit will overshadow you
The process of Mary's conception would begin with the Holy Spirit coming to her.
the power of the Most High
It was God's "power" that would supernaturally cause Mary to become pregnant even while she still remained a virgin. Make sure this does not imply any physical or sexual union—this was a miracle.
will overshadow you
"will cover you like a shadow"
So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the holy one who will be born they will call the Son of God" or "So the baby that will be born will be holy, and people will call him the Son of God"
the holy one
"the holy child" or "the holy baby"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
Luke 1:36
See, your relative
"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: your relative"
your relative Elizabeth
If you need to state a specific relationship, Elizabeth was probably Mary's aunt or great-aunt.
has also conceived a son in her old age
"Elizabeth has also become pregnant with a son even though she is already very old" or "Elizabeth, even though she is old, has also become pregnant and will bear a son." Make sure it does not sound as though both Mary and Elizabeth were old when they conceived.
the sixth month for her
"the sixth month of her pregnancy"
Luke 1:37
For nothing
"Because nothing" or "This shows that nothing"
nothing will be impossible for God
Elizabeth's pregnancy was proof that God was able to do anything—even enable Mary to become pregnant without her sleeping with a man. The double negatives in this statement can be stated with positive terms. Alternate translation: "everything will be possible for God" or "God can do anything"
Luke 1:38
See, I am the female servant
"Here I am, the female servant" or "I am glad to be the female servant." She is responding humbly and willingly.
I am the female servant of the Lord
Choose an expression that shows her humility and obedience to the Lord. She was not boasting about being the Lord's servant.
Let it be for me
"Let this happen to me." Mary was expressing her willingness for the things to happen that the angel had told her were about to happen.
Luke 1:39
Connecting Statement:
Mary goes to visit her relative Elizabeth, who is going to give birth to John.
arose
This idiom means she not only stood up, but also "got ready." Alternate translation: "started out" or "got ready"
the hill country
"the hilly area" or "the mountainous part of Israel"
Luke 1:40
She went
It is implied that Mary finished her journey before she went in to Zechariah's house. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "When she arrived, she went"
Luke 1:41
Now it happened
The phrase is used to mark a new event in this part of the story.
in her womb
"in Elizabeth's womb"
jumped
moved suddenly
Luke 1:42
cried out with a loud shout and said
The phrases "cried out" and "loud shout" mean the same thing and are used to emphasize how excited Elizabeth was. You may want to combine them into one phrase. Alternate translation: "exclaimed loudly"
Blessed are you among women
The idiom "among women" means "more than any other woman"
the fruit of your womb
Mary's baby is spoken of as if it is the fruit that a plant produces. Alternate translation: "the baby in your womb" or "the baby you will bear"
Luke 1:43
Why has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
Elizabeth is not asking for information. She was showing how surprised and happy she was that the mother of the Lord had come to her. Alternate translation: "How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!"
the mother of my Lord
It can be made clear that Elizabeth was calling Mary "the mother of my Lord" by adding the word "you." Alternate translation: "you, the mother of my Lord"
Luke 1:44
For see
This phrase alerts Mary to pay attention to Elizabeth's surprising statement that follows.
when the sound of your greeting came to my ears
Hearing a sound is spoken of as if the sound came to the ears. Alternate translation: "when I heard the sound of your greeting"
jumped for joy
"moved suddenly with joy" or "turned forcefully because he

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was so happy"

Luke 1:45

Blessed is she who believed ... that were told her from the Lord

Elizabeth is talking about Mary to Mary. Alternate translation: "Blessed are you who believed ... that were told you from the Lord"

Blessed is she who believed

The passive verb can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless her because she believed"

there would be a fulfillment of the things

"the things would actually happen" or "the things would come true"

the things that were told her from the Lord

The word "from" is used here instead of "by" because it was the angel Gabriel whom Mary actually heard speak

Luke 1:46

General Information:

Mary begins a song of praise to the Lord her Savior.

My soul praises

The word "soul" refers to the spiritual part of a person. Mary is saying that her worship comes from deep inside her. Alternate translation: "My inner being praises" or "I praise"

Luke 1:47

my spirit has rejoiced

Both "soul" and "spirit" refer to the spiritual part of a person. Mary is saying that her worship comes from deep inside her. Alternate translation: "my heart has rejoiced" or "I rejoice"

has rejoiced in

"has felt very joyful about" or "was very happy about"

God my Savior

"God, the One who saves me" or "God, who saves me"

Luke 1:48

For he

"This is because he"

looked at

"looked at with concern" or "cared about"

low condition

"poverty." Mary's family was not rich.

For see

This phrase calls attention to the statement that follows.

from now on

"now and in the future"

all generations

"the people in all generations"

Luke 1:49

the Mighty One has

"God, the Powerful One, has"

his name

Here "name" refers to the entire person of God. Alternate translation: "he"

Luke 1:50

His mercy

"God's mercy"

from generation to generation

"from one generation to the next generation" or "throughout every generation" or "to people in every time period"

Luke 1:51

displayed strength with his arm

Here "his arm" is a metonym that stands for God's power. Alternate translation: "shown that he is very powerful"

has scattered those ... hearts

"has caused those ... hearts to run away in different directions"

who were proud about the thoughts of their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. Alternate translation: "who were proud in their thoughts" or "who were proud"

Luke 1:52

He has thrown down princes from their thrones

A throne is a chair that a ruler sits on, and it is a symbol of his authority. If a prince is brought down from his throne, it means he no longer has the authority to reign. Alternate translation: "He has taken away the authority of princes" or "He has made rulers stop ruling"

raised up those of low condition

In this word picture, people who are important are higher than people who are less important. Alternate translation: "has has made humble people important" or "has given honor to people whom others have not honored"

of low condition

"in poverty." See how you translated this in Luke 1:48.

Luke 1:53

He has filled the hungry ... the rich he has sent away empty

The contrast between these two opposite actions should be made clear in the translation if possible.

filled the hungry with good things

Possible meanings are 1) "given the hungry good food to eat" or 2) "given the needy good things."

Luke 1:54

General Information:

The information in verses 54 and 55 can be rearranged, as in the UDB, to make the meaning clearer.

He has given help to

"The Lord has helped"

Israel his servant

If readers confuse this with the man named Israel, it could be translated as "his servant, the nation of Israel" or "Israel, his servants."

so as to

"in order to"

to remember

God cannot forget. When God "remembers," it is an idiom that means God acts upon his earlier promise.

Luke 1:55

General Information:

The information in verses 54 and 55 can be rearranged, as in the UDB, to make the meaning clearer.

as he said to our fathers

"just as he promised our ancestors he would do." This phrase supplies background information about God's promise to Abraham. Alternate translation: "because he promised our ancestors he would be merciful"

his descendants

"Abraham's descendants"

Luke 1:56

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returned to her house
"Mary returned to her (Mary's) house" or "Mary returned to her own house"
Luke 1:57
Now
This word marks the beginning of the next event in the story.
deliver her baby
"give birth to her baby"
Luke 1:58
Her neighbors and her relatives
"Elizabeth's neighbors and relatives"
shown his great mercy to her
"been very kind to her"
Luke 1:59
Now it happened
This phrase is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.
on the eighth day
Here "eighth day" refers to the time after the birth of the baby, counted from the first day, which was the day he was born. Alternate translation: "on the eighth day of the baby's life"
they came to circumcise the child
This was often a ceremony where one person circumcised the baby and friends were there to celebrate with the family. Alternate translation: "they came for the baby's circumcision ceremony"
They would have called him
"They were going to name him" or "They wanted to give him the name"
after the name of his father
"his father's name"
Luke 1:60
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 1:61
by this name
"by that name" or "by the same name"
Luke 1:62
They
This refers to the people who were there for the circumcision ceremony.
made signs
"motioned." Either Zechariah was unable to hear, as well as unable to speak, or the people assumed that he could not hear.
to his father
"to the baby's father"
how he wanted him to be named
"what name Zechariah wanted to give the baby"
Luke 1:63
His father asked for a writing tablet
Since he could not speak, it may be helpful to state this differently. Alternate translation: "His father indicated that he wanted them to give him a writing tablet" or "His father showed that he wanted a writing tablets"
a writing tablet
"something on which to write"
astonished
greatly surprised or amazed
Luke 1:64
his mouth was opened ... his tongue was freed
These two phrases are word pictures that together emphasize that Zechariah was suddenly able to speak.
his mouth was opened and his tongue was freed
These phrases can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God opened his mouth and freed his tongue"
Luke 1:65
Fear came on all who lived around them
"All who lived around Zechariah and Elizabeth were afraid." It may be helpful to state clearly why they were afraid. Alternate translation: "All who lived around them were in awe of God because he had done this to Zechariah"
all who lived around them
The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who lived around them" or "many who lived in that area"
All these matters were spread throughout all the hill country of Judea
The phrase "these matters were spread" is a metaphor for people talking about them. The passive verb here can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "All these matters were talked about by people throughout all the hill country of Judea" or "People throughout the hill country of Judea talked about all these matters"
Luke 1:66
All who heard them
"All who heard about these matters"
stored them in their hearts
People carefully remembering things so that they can think about them later is spoken of as if they were putting those things safely in their hearts. Alternate translation: "kept them in mind" or "thought carefully about these matters" or "thought a lot about these events"
hearts, saying
"hearts. They asked"
What then will this child become?
"What kind of great person will this baby grow up to be?" It is also possible that this question was meant to be a statement of their surprise at what they had heard about the baby. Alternate translation: "What a great man this child will be!"
the hand of the Lord was with him
The phrase "the hand of the Lord" refers to the Lord's power. Alternate translation: "the Lord's power was with him" or "the Lord was working in him powerfully"
Luke 1:67
Connecting Statement:
Zechariah tells what will happen with his son John.
His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit filled his father Zechariah, and Zachariah prophesied"
His father
John's father
prophesied, saying
Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotes in your language. Alternate translation: "prophesied and said" or

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"prophesied, and this is what he said"
Luke 1:68
the God of Israel
"Israel" here refers to the nation of Israel. The relationship between God and Israel could be stated more directly. Alternate translation: "the God who reigns over Israel" or "the God whom Israel worships"
his people
"God's people"
Luke 1:69
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David
The horn of an animal is a symbol of its power to defend itself. To raise up here is to bring into existence or to enable to act. The Messiah is spoken of as if he were a horn with the power to save Israel. Alternate translation: "He has brought to us someone who is in the house of his servant David with the power to save us"
in the house of his servant David
David's "house" here represents his family, specifically, his descendants. Alternate translation: "in the family of his servant David" or "who is a descendant of his servant David"
Luke 1:70
as he spoke
"just as God said"
he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago
God speaking by the prophets' mouths represents God causing his prophets to say what he wanted them to say. Alternate translation: "he caused his holy prophets who lived long ago to say"
Luke 1:71
salvation from our enemies
The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with the verbs "save" or "rescue." Alternate translation: "who will save us from our enemies"
our enemies ... all who hate us
These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are repeated to emphasize how strongly their enemies are against them.
hand
The hand is a metonym for the power that the person uses the hand to exercise. Alternate translation: "power" or "control"
Luke 1:72
to show mercy to
"to be merciful to" or "to act according to his mercy toward"
remember
Here the word "remember" means to keep a commitment or fulfill something.
Luke 1:73
the oath that he swore
These words refer to "his holy covenant" (Luke 1:72).
Luke 1:74
to grant to us
"to make it possible for us"
that we, having been delivered out of the hand of our enemies, would serve him without fear
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that after he rescued us from the hand of our enemies we would serve him without fear"
out of the hand of our enemies
Here "hand" refers to the control or power a person. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "from the control of our enemies"
without fear
This refers back to the fear of their enemies. Alternate translation: "without being afraid of our enemies"
Luke 1:75
in holiness and righteousness
This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "holiness" and "righteousness." Possible meanings are 1) we would serve God in holy and righteous ways. Alternate translation: "doing what is holy and righteous" or 2) we would be holy and righteous. Alternate translation: "being holy and righteous"
before him
This is an idiom which means "in his presence"
Luke 1:76
Yes, and you
Zechariah uses this phrase to begin his direct address to his son. You may have a similar way to direct speech in your language.
you, child, will be called a prophet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as for you, child, people will know that you are a prophet"
of the Most High
These words are a euphemism for God. Alternate translation: "who serves the Most High" or "who speaks for God Most High"
will go before the face of the Lord
Before the Lord comes, he will go and announce to the people that the Lord will come to them. See how you translated this in Luke 1:17.
the face of the Lord
"the face of" someone can be an idiom that refers to the that person's presence. It is sometimes omitted in translation. Alternate translation: "the Lord" See how you translated this in [Luke 1:17]
to prepare his paths
This is a metaphor that means that John will prepare the people to listen to and believe the Lord's message.
Luke 1:77
to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins
The phrase "give knowledge" is a metaphor for teaching. The abstract nouns "salvation" and "forgiveness" can be expressed with the verbs "save" and "forgive." Alternate translation: "to teach his people salvation through the forgiveness of their sins" or "to teach his people how God saves people by forgiving their sins"
Luke 1:78
because of the tender mercy of our God
It might be helpful to state that God's mercy helps people. Alternate translation: "because God is compassionate and merciful to us"
the sunrise from on high
Light is often a metaphor for truth. Here, the Savior giving

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spiritual truth to people is spoken of as if he were a sunrise that shines light on the earth. Alternate translation: "the Savior, who is like a sunrise, will come from on high"
from on high
"from heaven"
Luke 1:79
to shine
Light is often a metaphor for truth. Here, the spiritual truth that the Savior will provide is spoken of as if it is a sunrise that lights up the earth
shine on
"give knowledge to" or "give spiritual light to"
those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death
Darkness is here a metaphor for the absence of spiritual truth. Here, people who lack spiritual truth are spoken of as if they are sitting in darkness. Also "shadow of death" represents the threat of death. Alternate translation: "those who do not know the truth and are in spiritual darkness and fear dying"
guide our feet into the path of peace
Here "guide" is a metaphor for teaching, and "path of peace" is a metaphor for living at peace with God. The phrase "our feet" is a synecdoche that represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "teach us how to live at peace with God"
Luke 1:80
General Information:
This tells briefly about John's growing years.
Now
This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Luke quickly moves from the birth of John to the beginning of his ministry as an adult.
became strong in spirit
"became spiritually mature" or "strengthened his relationship with God"
was in the wilderness
"lived in the wilderness." Luke does not say at what age John began to live in the wilderness.
until
This does not necessarily mark a stopping point. John continued to live out in the desert even after he started preaching publicly.
the day of his public appearance
"when he began to preach in public"
the day
This is used here in the general sense of "the time" or "the occasion."

Chapter 2

Luke 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:14, 29-32.

Links:

Luke 2:1 Notes

Luke 2:1
General Information:
This gives background to show why Mary and Joseph have to move at the time of Jesus's birth.
Now
This word marks the beginning of a new part of the story.
it came about that
This phrase is used to show that this is the beginning of an account. If your language has a way of showing the start of an account, you may use that. Some versions do not include this phrase.
Caesar Augustus
"King Augustus" or "Emperor Augustus." Augustus was the first emperor of the Roman Empire.
sent out a decree ordering
This command was probably carried by messengers throughout the empire. Alternate translation: "sent messengers with a decree ordering"
that a census be taken of all the people living in the world
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they register all the people living in the world" or "that they count all the people in the world and write down their names"
the world
Here the word "world" represents only the part of the world that Caesar August ruled. Alternate translation: "the Empire" or "the Roman world"
Luke 2:2
Quirinius
Quirinius was appointed to be the governor of Syria.
Luke 2:3
everyone went
"everyone started off" or "everyone was going"
his own city
This refers to the cities where people's ancestors lived. People may have lived in a different city. Alternate translation: "the city in which his ancestors lived"
to be registered for the census
"to have his name written in the register" or "to be included in the official count"
Luke 2:4
General Information:
The UDB rearranges verses 4 and 5 into a verse bridge in order to make it easier to shorten the sentences.
Joseph also
This introduces Joseph as a new participant in the story.
to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem
The phrase "the city of David" was a name for Bethlehem

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that tells why Bethlehem was important. Although it was a small town, King David was born there, and there was a prophecy that the Messiah would be born there. Alternate translation: "to Bethlehem, the city of King David" or "to Bethlehem, the town where King David was born"

because he was of the house and family line of David

"because Joseph was a descendant of David"

Luke 2:5

to register

This means to report to the officials there so they could include him in the count. Use a term for an official government count if possible.

along with Mary

Mary traveled with Joseph from Nazareth. It is likely that women were also taxed, so Mary would have needed to travel and be registered as well.

who was engaged to him

"his fiancee" or "who was promised to him." An engaged couple was considered legally married, but there would not have been physical intimacy between them.

Luke 2:6

General Information:

The UDB rearranges verses 6 and 7 into a verse bridge in order to keep together the details about the place they stayed.

Now it came about

This phrase marks the beginning of the next event in the story.

while they were there

"while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem"

the time came for her to deliver her baby

"it was time to give birth to her baby"

Luke 2:7

wrapped him in long strips of cloth

In some cultures mothers comfort their babies by wrapping them tightly in cloth or a blanket. Alternate translation: "wrapped cloths firmly around him" or "wrapped him tightly in a blanket"

laid him in a manger

This was some kind of box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. It was most likely clean and may have had something soft and dry like hay in it as a cushion for the baby. Animals were often kept near the home to keep them secure and to feed them easily. Mary and Joseph stayed in a room that was used for animals.

there was no room for them in the inn

"there was no space for them to stay in the guest room." This was probably because so many people went to Bethlehem to register. Luke adds this as background information.

Luke 2:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 2:9

An angel of the Lord

"An angel from the Lord" or "An angel who served the Lord"

appeared to them

"came to the shepherds"

the glory of the Lord

The source of the bright light was the glory of the Lord, which appeared at the same time as the angel.

Luke 2:10

Do not be afraid

"Stop being afraid"

that will bring great joy to all the people

"that will make all the people very happy"

all the people

Some understand this to refer to the Jewish people. Others understand it to refer to all people.

Luke 2:11

the city of David

This refers to Bethlehem.

Luke 2:12

This is the sign that will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will give you this sign" or "You will see this sign from God"

the sign

"the proof." This could either be a sign to prove that what the angel was saying was true, or it could be a sign that would help the shepherds recognize the baby.

wrapped in strips of cloth

This was the normal way that mothers protected and cared for their babies in that culture. See how you translated this in [Luke 2:7]

lying in a manger

This was some kind of box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. See how you translated this in Luke 2:7.

Luke 2:13

a great multitude from heaven

These words could refer to a literal army of angels, or it could be a metaphor for an organized group of angels. Alternate translation: "a large group of angels from heaven"

praising God

"giving praise to God"

Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest

Possible meanings are 1) "Give honor to God in the highest place" or 2) "Give the highest honor to God."

may there be peace on earth among people with whom he is pleased

"may those people on earth with whom God is pleased have peace"

Luke 2:15

It came about

This phrase is used to mark a shift in the story to what the shepherds did after the angels left.

from them

"from the shepherds"

to each other

"to one another"

Let us ... to us

Since the shepherds were speaking to one another, languages that have inclusive forms for "we" and "us" should use the inclusive form here.

Let us

"We should"

this thing that has happened

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This refers to the birth of the baby, and not to the appearance of the angels.

Luke 2:16

lying in a manger

A manger is a box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. See how you translated this in Luke 2:7.

Luke 2:17

what had been said to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the angels had told the shepherds"

this child

"the baby"

Luke 2:18

what was spoken to them by the shepherds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the shepherds told them"

Luke 2:19

treasuring them in her heart

A person who thinks is something is very valuable or precious is "treasuring" it. Mary considered the things she was told about her son to be very precious. Alternate translation: "carefully remembering them" or "joyfully remembering them"

Luke 2:20

shepherds returned

"shepherds went back to the sheep"

glorifying and praising God

These are very similar and emphasize how excited they were about what God had done. Alternate translation: "talking about and praising God's greatness"

Luke 2:21

General Information:

The laws God gave the Jewish believers told them when to circumcise a boy baby and what sacrifice the parents had to bring.

When it was the end of the eighth day

This phrase shows the passing of time before this new event.

the end of the eighth day

"the end of the eighth day of his life." The day he was born was counted as the first day.

he was named

Joseph and Mary gave him his name.

the name he had been given by the angel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the name the angel had called him"

Luke 2:22

When the required number ... had passed

This shows the passing of time before this new event.

the required number of days

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the number of days that God required"

for their purification

"for them to become ceremonially clean." You can also state God's role. Alternate translation: "for God to consider them clean again"

they brought him up to the temple

"Mary and Joseph brought the baby up to the temple"

to present him to the Lord

"to bring him to the Lord" or "to bring him into the Lord's presence." This was a ceremony acknowledging God's claim on the firstborn children who were male.

Luke 2:23

As it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As Moses wrote" or "They did this because Moses wrote"

Every male who opens the womb

This is an idiom meaning the first male born into a family. This referred to both animals and people. Alternate translation: "The first male that a mother gives birth to" or "Every firstborn male"

Luke 2:24

what was said in the law of the Lord

"that which the law of the Lord also says." This is a different place in the law. It refers to all males, whether firstborn or not.

Luke 2:25

Behold

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

was righteous and devout

These abstract terms can be expressed as actions. Alternate translation: "did what was right and feared God" or "obeyed God's laws and feared God"

consolation of Israel

The word "Israel" is a metonym for the people of Israel. To "console" someone is to give them comfort, or "consolation." The words "consolation of Israel" are a metonym for the Christ or Messiah who would comfort or bring consolation to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "the one who would comfort the people of Israel"

the Holy Spirit was upon him

"the Holy Spirit was with him." God was with him in a special way and gave him wisdom and direction in his life.

Luke 2:26

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit had shown him" or "The Holy Spirit had told him"

he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ

"he would see the Lord's Messiah before he died"

Luke 2:27

Led by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the Holy Spirit directed him"

came

Some languages may say "went."

into the temple

"into the temple courtyard." Only priests could enter the temple building.

the parents

"Jesus's parents"

the custom of the law

"the custom of the law of God"

Luke 2:28

he took him into his arms

"Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms" or "Simeon

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held Jesus in his arms"

Luke 2:29

Now let your servant depart in peace

"I am your servant; let me depart in peace." Simeon was referring to himself.

depart

This is a euphemism meaning "die"

according to your word

"Word" here is a metonym for "promise." Alternate translation: "as you have promised"

Luke 2:30

my eyes have seen

This expression means, "I have personally seen" or "I, myself, have seen"

your salvation

This expression refers to the person who would bring salvation—the infant Jesus—whom Simeon was holding. Alternate translation: "the savior whom you sent" or "the one whom you sent to save"

Luke 2:31

which you

Depending on how you translate the previous phrase, this may need to be changed to "whom you."

have prepared

"have planned" or "caused to happen"

Luke 2:32

A light for revelation to the Gentiles

This metaphor means that the child will help people to understand God's will. The Gentiles understanding God's will is spoken of as if they were people using physical light to see a solid object. You may need to make explicit what it is that the Gentiles will see. Alternate translation: "This child will enable the Gentiles to understand God's will as light allows people to see clearly"

for revelation

It may be necessary to state what is to be revealed. Alternate translation: "that will reveal God's truth"

glory to your people Israel

"he will be the reason that glory will come to your people Israel"

Luke 2:33

what was said about him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Simeon said about him"

Luke 2:34

said to Mary his mother

"said to the child's mother, Mary." Make sure it does not sound like Mary is the mother of Simeon.

Behold

Simeon used this expression to tell Mary that what he is about to say is extremely important to her.

this child is appointed for the downfall and rising up of many people in Israel

The words "downfall" and "rising up" express turning away from God and drawing closer to God. Alternate translation: "this child will cause many people in Israel to fall away from God or to rise closer to God"

Luke 2:35

a sword will pierce your own soul

This metaphor describes the deep sadness that Mary would feel. Alternate translation: "your sadness will be painful as though a sword pierced your soul"

the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he may reveal the thoughts of many people" or "he may reveal what many people secretly think"

Luke 2:36

A prophetess named Anna was there

This introduces a new participant into the story.

Phanuel

This is a man's name.

She was advanced in her days

This is a euphemism that says that she was very old. See how you translated similar words in [Luk 2:7]

seven years

"7 years"

after her virginity

"after she married him"

Luke 2:37

a widow for eighty-four years

Possible meanings are 1) she had been a widow for 84 years or 2) she was a widow and was now 84 years old.

never left the temple

This is probably an exaggeration meaning that she spent so much time in the temple that it seemed as though she never left it. Alternate translation: "was always at the temple" or "was often at the temple"

with fastings and prayers

"by abstaining from food on many occasions and by offering many prayers"

Luke 2:38

came near to them

"approached them" or "went to Mary and Joseph"

the redemption of Jerusalem

Here the word "redemption" is used to refer to the person who would do it. Alternate translation: "the one who would redeem Jerusalem" or "the person who would bring God's blessings and favor back to Jerusalem"

Luke 2:39

Connecting Statement:

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus leave the town of Bethlehem and return to the city of Nazareth for his childhood.

they were required to do according to the law of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the law of the Lord required them to do"

their own town of Nazareth

This phrase means they lived in Nazareth. Make sure it does not sound like they owned the town. Alternate translation: "the town of Nazareth, where they lived"

Luke 2:40

full of wisdom

"becoming wiser" or "learning what was wise"

the grace of God was upon him

"God blessed him" or "God was with him in a special way"

Luke 2:41

His parents went ... Festival of the Passover

This is background information.

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His parents
"Jesus's parents"
Luke 2:42
they again went up
Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.
at the customary time
"at the normal time" or "as they did every year"
the festival
The Festival of the Passover, which involved eating a ceremonial meal.
Luke 2:43
After they had stayed the full number of days for the feast
"When the entire time for celebrating the feast was over" or "After celebrating the feast for the required number of days"
Luke 2:44
They assumed
"They thought"
they traveled a day's journey
"they traveled one day" or "they went as far as people walk in one day"
Luke 2:45
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 2:46
It came about that
This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
in the temple
This refers to the courtyard around the temple. Only the priests were allowed in the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"
in the middle of
This does not mean the exact center. Rather, it means "among" or "together with" or "surrounded by."
the teachers
"the religious teachers" or "those who taught people about God"
Luke 2:47
All who heard him were amazed
They could not understand how a twelve-year-old boy with no religious education could answer so well.
at his understanding
"at how much he understood" or "that he understood so much about God"
his answers
"at how well he answered them" or "that he answered their questions so well"
Luke 2:48
When they saw him
"When Mary and Joseph found Jesus"
why have you treated us this way?
This was an indirect rebuke because he had not gone with them on the way back home. This caused them to worry about him. Alternate translation: "you should not have done this to us!"
Look
This word is often used to show the beginning of a new or important event. It also can be used to show where the action begins. If your language has a phrase that is used in this way, consider whether it would be natural to use it here.
Luke 2:49
Why were you searching for me?
Jesus uses two questions to mildly rebuke his parents, and to begin to tell them that he had a purpose from his heavenly Father that they did not understand. Alternate translation: "You did not need to be concerned about me."
Did you not know ... business?
Jesus uses this second question to try to say that his parents should have known about the purpose for which his Father sent him. Alternate translation: "You should have known ... business."
about my Father's business
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus meant these words literally, to indicate that he was doing the work that his Father had given him, or 2) these words are an idiom that indicate where Jesus was, "in my Father's house." Since the next verse says that his parents did not understand what he was telling them, it would be best not to explain it more.
my Father's business
At age 12, Jesus, the Son of God, understood that God was his real Father
Luke 2:50
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 2:51
he went back home with them
"Jesus went back home with Mary and Joseph"
was obedient to them
"obeyed them" or "was always obeying them"
treasured all these things in her heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "carefully remembered all these things"
Luke 2:52
grow in wisdom and stature
"become wiser and stronger." These refer to mental and physical growth.
increased in favor with God and people
This refers to spiritual and social growth. These could be stated separately. Alternate translation: "God blessed him more and more, and people liked him more and more"

Chapter 3

Luke 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

the poetry in 3:4-6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

John's instructions to the soldiers and tax collectors in this chapter are not complicated. They are things that should have been obvious to them. He instructed them to live justly. (See: justice and Luke 3:12-15)

Genealogy

A genealogy is a list which records a person's ancestors or descendants. Such lists were very important in determining who had the right be king, because the king's authority was usually passed down or inherited from his father. It was also common for other important people to have a recorded genealogy.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Prophecy often involves the use of metaphors to express its meaning. Spiritual discernment is needed for proper interpretation of the prophecy. The prophecy of Isaiah is an extended metaphor describing the ministry of John the Baptist

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"(Herod) had John locked up in prison"

This event can cause confusion because the author says John was imprisoned and then says he was baptizing Jesus. The author probably uses this phrase in anticipation of Herod's imprisonment of John. This would mean that this statement is still in the future at the time of the narrative.

Links:

Luke 3:1 Notes

Luke 3:1

General Information:

Verses 1-3 give background information to tell what is happening when Jesus's cousin John begins his ministry.

Connecting Statement:

As the prophet Isaiah had foretold, John begins to preach good news to the people.

Philip ... Lysanias

These are the names of men.

Iturea and Trachonitis ... Abilene

These are names of territories.

Luke 3:2

during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas

"while Annas and Caiaphas were serving together as the high priest." Annas was the high priest, and the Jews continued to recognize him as such even after the Romans appointed his son-in-law, Caiaphas, to replace him as high priest.

the word of God came

The writer speaks of God's message as though it were a person who moved toward those who heard it. Alternate translation: "God spoke his message"

Luke 3:3

preaching a baptism of repentance

The terms "baptism" and "repentance" could be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "and he preached that people should be baptized to show that they were repenting"

for the forgiveness of sins

They would repent so that God would forgive their sins. The term "forgiveness" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "so that their sins would be forgiven" or "so that God would forgive their sins"

Luke 3:4

General Information:

The author, Luke, quotes a passage from Isaiah the prophet concerning John the Baptist.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

These words introduce a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. They can be stated in active form, and the missing words can be supplied. Alternate translation: "This happened as Isaiah the prophet had written in the book that contains his words:" or "John fulfilled the message that the prophet Isaiah had written in his book:"

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness

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

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

The second command explains or adds more detail to the first.

Make ready the way of the Lord

"Get the road ready for the Lord." Doing this represents preparing to hear the Lord's message when he comes. Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord to come" or "Be ready for the Lord when he comes"

the way

"the path" or "the road"

Luke 3:5

Every valley will be filled ... every mountain and hill will be made low

When people prepare the road for an important person who is coming, they cut down the high places and fill in the low places so that the road will be level. This is part of the metaphor started in the previous verse.

Every valley will be filled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They will fill in every low place in the road"

every mountain and hill will be made low

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will level every mountain and hill" or "they will

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remove every high place in the road"
Luke 3:6
see the salvation of God
This can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "learn how God saves people from sin"
Luke 3:7
to be baptized by him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for John to baptize them"
You offspring of vipers
This is a metaphor. Here "offspring of" means "having the characteristic of." Vipers are poisonous snakes that are dangerous and represent evil. Alternate translation: "You evil poisonous snakes" or "You are evil, like poisonous snakes
Who warned you ... coming?
He was not really expecting them to answer. John was rebuking the people because they were asking him to baptize them so that God would not punish them, but they did not want to stop sinning. Alternate translation: "You cannot flee from God's wrath like this!" or "You cannot escape from God's wrath just by being baptized!"
from the wrath that is coming
The word "wrath" is used here to refer to God's punishment because his wrath precedes it. Alternate translation: "from the punishment that God is sending" or "from God's wrath on which he is about to act"
Luke 3:8
produce fruits that are worthy of repentance
In this metaphor, a person's behavior is compared to fruit. Just as a plant is expected to produce fruit that is appropriate for that kind of plant, a person who says that he has repented is expected to live righteously. Alternate translation: "produce the kind of fruit that shows that you have repented" or "do the good things that show that you have turned away from your sin"
to say within yourselves
"saying to yourselves" or "thinking"
We have Abraham for our father
"Abraham is our ancestor" or "We are Abraham's descendants." If it is unclear why they would say this, you may also add the implied information: "so God will not punish us."
raise up children for Abraham
"create children for Abraham"
from these stones
John was probably referring to the actual stones along the Jordan River.
Luke 3:9
the ax is set against the root of the trees
The ax that is in position so it can cut the roots of a tree is a metaphor for the punishment that is about to begin. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is like the man who has placed his ax against the root of the trees"
every tree ... is chopped down and thrown into the fire
"fire" here is a metaphor for punishment. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he chops down every tree ... and throws it into the fire"
Luke 3:10
asking him, saying
"asking him and said" or "asking John"
Luke 3:11
Connecting Statement:
John begins to respond to questions that people in the crowd ask him.
answered and said to them
"answered them, saying" or "answered them" or "said"
do the same
This refers back to giving to someone what he needs. Alternate translation: "give food to someone who does not have any" or "share extra food just as you shared the extra tunic"
Luke 3:12
to be baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for John to baptize them"
Luke 3:13
Do not collect more money
"Do not ask for more money" or "Do not demand more money." Tax collectors had been collecting more money than they should have been collecting. John tells them to stop doing that.
than you have been ordered to collect
This is passive to show that the tax collector's authority comes from Rome. Alternate translation: "than what the Romans have authorized you to take"
Luke 3:14
What about us? What must we do?
"How about us soldiers, what must we do?" John is not included in the words "us" and "we." The soldiers have implied that John had told the crowd and the tax collector what they must do and want to know what they as soldiers are to do.
do not accuse anyone falsely
It seems that the soldiers were making false charges against people in order to get money. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "in the same way, do not accuse anyone falsely in order to get money from them" or "do not say that an innocent person has done something illegal"
Be content with your wages
"Be satisfied with your pay"
Luke 3:15
as the people
"because the people." This refers to the same people who came to John.
everyone was wondering in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.
"everyone was unsure what to think about John; they asked themselves, 'Could he be the Christ?'" or "no one was sure what to think about John because they were wondering whether he might be the Christ."
Luke 3:16
John answered by saying to them all
John's answer about a greater person coming clearly implies that John is not the Christ. It may be helpful to state this clearly for your audience. Alternate translation: "John clarified that he was not the Christ by saying to them all"
I baptize you with water

"I baptize using water" or "I baptize by means of water"
not worthy even to untie the strap of his sandals
"not important enough even to loosen the straps of his sandals." Untying the straps of sandals was a duty of a slave. John was saying that the one who would come is so great that John was not even worthy enough to be his slave.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire
This metaphor compares literal baptism that brings a person into contact with water to a spiritual baptism that brings them into contact with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
fire
Here the word "fire" may refer to 1) judgment or 2) purification. It is preferred to leave it as "fire"
Luke 3:17
His winnowing fork is in his hand
"He is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready." John speaks of the Christ coming to judge people as if he were a farmer who is ready to separate wheat grain from chaff. Alternate translation: "He is ready to judge people like a farmer who is ready"
winnowing fork
This is a tool for tossing wheat into the air to separate the wheat grain from the chaff. The heavier grain falls back down and the unwanted chaff is blown away by the wind. It is similar to a pitchfork.
to thoroughly clear off his threshing floor
The threshing floor was the place where wheat was stacked in preparation for threshing. To "clear off" the floor is to finish threshing the grain. Alternate translation: "to finish threshing his grain"
to gather the wheat
The wheat is the acceptable harvest that is kept and stored.
will burn up the chaff
The chaff is not useful for anything, so people burn it up.
Luke 3:18
With many other exhortations
"With many other strong urgings"
Luke 3:19
General Information:
Verses 19 and 20 tell what is going to happen to John but has not happened at this time.
Herod the tetrarch
Herod was a tetrarch, not a king. He had only limited rule over the region of Galilee.
When Herod the tetrarch had been reproved
It is implied that John reproved Herod. This can also be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "When Herod the tetrarch had been reproved by John" or "When John reproved Herod the tetrarch")
for marrying his brother's wife Herodias
"because Herod married Herodias, his own brother's wife." This was evil because Herod's brother was still alive. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "because he married his brother's wife, Herodias, while his brother was still alive"
Luke 3:20
he locked John up in prison
Because Herod was tetrarch, he probably locked John up by ordering his soldiers to lock John up. Alternate translation: "he had his soldiers lock John up in prison" or "he told his soldiers to put John in prison"
Luke 3:21
General Information:
The previous verse says that Herod put John in prison. It might be helpful to make it clear that the account starting in verse 21 happened before John was arrested. The UDB does this by starting verse 21 with "But before John was put in prison."
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins his ministry with his baptism.
Now it came about
This phrase marks the beginning of a new event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
when all the people were baptized
"while John baptized all the people." The phrase "all the people" refers to the people present with John.
Jesus also was baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John baptized Jesus also"
the heavens opened
"the sky opened" or "the sky became open." This is more than a simple clearing of clouds, but it's not clear what it means. It possibly means that a hole appeared in the sky.
Luke 3:22
the Holy Spirit in bodily form came down on him like a dove
"in physical form the Holy Spirit came down like a dove onto Jesus"
a voice came from heaven
Here "a voice came from heaven" represents people on earth hearing God in heaven speaking. It can be made clear that God spoke to Jesus. Alternate translation: "a voice from heaven said" or "God spoke to Jesus from heaven, saying"
my beloved Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
Luke 3:23
General Information:
Luke lists the ancestors of Jesus through the line of his supposed father, Joseph.
When
This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jesus's age and ancestors.
thirty years of age
"30 years old"
He was the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph
"It was thought that he was the son of Joseph" or "People assumed that he was the son of Joseph"
Luke 3:24
the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph
This continues the list that begins with the words "He was the son ... of Joseph, the son of Heli" in verse 24. Consider how people normally list ancestors in your language. You should use the same wording throughout the whole list. Possible formats are 1) "He was the son ... of Joseph, the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph" or 2) "He was the son ... of Joseph. Joseph was the son of

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Heli. Heli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph" or 3) "His father ... was Joseph. Joseph's father was Heli. Heli's father was Matthat. Matthat's father was Levi. Levi's father was Melchi. Melchi's father was Jannai. Jannai's father was Joseph"

Luke 3:25

the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos ... Naggai

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:26

the son of Maath ... Joda

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:27

Joda was the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa ... Neri

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that begins in [Luke 3:23]

the son of Salathiel

The name Salathiel may be a different spelling of the name Shealtiel (as some versions have it), but identification is difficult.

Luke 3:28

the son of Melchi ... Er

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:29

the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer ... Levi

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:30

the son of Simeon, the son of Judah ... Eliakim

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:31

the son of Melea ... David

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:32

the son of Jesse ... the son of Nahshon

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:33

the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin ... Judah

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:34

the son of Jacob ... Nahor

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:35

the son of Serug ... Shelah

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:36

the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad ... Lamech

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:37

the son of Methuselah ... Cainan

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:38

the son of Enos ... Adam

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Adam, the son of God

"Adam, created by God" or "Adam, who was from God" or "Adam, the son, we could say, of God"

Chapter 4

Luke 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:10-11, 18-19, which is from the Old Testament.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Jesus was tempted by the devil

While it is true that the devil sincerely believed that he could persuade Jesus to obey him, it is important not to imply that Jesus actually ever really wanted to obey him.

Links:

Luke 4:1 Notes

Luke 4:1

Then Jesus

After John had baptized Jesus.

was led by the Spirit

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

Luke 4:2

Connecting Statement:

Jesus fasts for 40 days, and the devil meets him to try to persuade him to sin.

for forty days he was tempted

Most versions say that the temptation was throughout the forty days. The UDB states "While he was there, the devil kept tempting him" to make this clear.

forty days

"40 days"

he was tempted by the devil

This can be stated in active form, and you can make explicit

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

what it was the devil tempted him to do. Alternate translation: "the devil tried to persuade him to disobey God"

He ate nothing

The word "he" refers to Jesus.

Luke 4:3

If you are the Son of God

The devil challenges Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God.

this stone

The devil either holds a stone in his hand or points to a nearby stone.

Luke 4:4

Jesus answered him, "It is written ... alone.'"

Jesus's rejection of the devil's challenge is clearly implied in his answer. It may be helpful to state this clearly for your audience, as the UDB does. Alternate translation: "Jesus replied, 'No, I will not do that because it is written ... alone.'"'

It is written

The quotation is from Moses's writings in the Old Testament. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses has written in the scriptures"

Man does not live on bread alone

The word "bread" refers to food in general. Food as compared to God, by itself, is not enough to sustain a person. Jesus quotes the scripture to say why he would not turn the stone into bread. Alternate translation: "People cannot live on just bread" or "It is not just food that makes a person live" or "God says there are more important things than food"

Luke 4:5

Then the devil led Jesus up ... world

"Then the devil led Jesus up to a very high place ... world." It is uncertain where the devil led Jesus and how he showed all the kingdoms of the world to him.

in an instant of time

"in an instant" or "instantly"

Luke 4:6

they have been given to me

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are that "them" refers to 1) the authority and splendor of the kingdoms or 2) the kingdoms. Alternate translation: "God has given them to me"

Luke 4:7

if you will bow down ... worship me

These two phrases are very similar. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "if you will bow down in worship to me"

it will be yours

"I will give you all these kingdoms, with their splendor"

Luke 4:8

It is written

Jesus refused to do what the devil asked. It may be helpful to state this clearly. Alternate translation: "No, I will not worship you, because it is written"

answered and said to him

"responded to him" or "replied to him"

It is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses has written in the scriptures"

You will worship the Lord your God

Jesus was quoting a command from the scriptures to say why he would not worship the devil.

You

This refers to the people in the Old Testament who received God's Law. You could use the singular form of 'you' because each person was to obey it, or you could use the plural form of 'you' because all of the people were to obey it.

him

The word "him" refers to the Lord God.

Luke 4:9

the very highest point

This was the corner of the temple roof. If someone fell from there, they would be seriously injured or die.

If you are the Son of God

The devil is challenging Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

throw yourself down

"jump down to the ground"

Luke 4:10

For it is written

The devil implies that his quote from the Psalms means Jesus will not be hurt if he is the Son of God. This can be stated clearly, as the UDB does. Alternate translation: "You will not be hurt, because it is written"

it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the writer has written"

He will give orders

"He" refers to God. The devil partially quoted from the Psalms in an effort to persuade Jesus to jump off the building.

Luke 4:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 4:12

It is said

Jesus tells the devil why he will not do what the devil told him to do. His refusal to do it can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "No, I will not do that, because it is said"

It is said

Jesus quotes from the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses has said" or "Moses has said in the scriptures"

Do not put the Lord your God to the test

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus should not test God by jumping off the temple, or 2) the devil should not test Jesus to see if he is the Son of God. It is best to translate the verse as stated rather than to try to explain the meaning.

Luke 4:13

until another time

"until another occasion"

had finished tempting Jesus

This does not imply that the devil was successful in his

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

temptation—Jesus resisted every attempt. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "had finished trying to persuade Jesus to sin"

Luke 4:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus returns to Galilee, teaches in the synagogue (4:15), and tells the people there that he is fulfilling scripture of Isaiah the prophet (4:17-21).

Then Jesus returned

This begins a new event in the story.

in the power of the Spirit

"and the Spirit was giving him power." God was with Jesus in a special way, enabling him to do things that humans usually could not.

news about him spread

"people spread the news about Jesus" or "people told other people about Jesus" or "knowledge about him was passed on from person to person." Those who heard Jesus told other people about him, and then those other people told even more people about him.

throughout the entire surrounding region

This refers to the areas or places around Galilee.

Luke 4:15

he was praised by all

"everyone said great things about him" or "all the people spoke about him in a good way"

Luke 4:16

where he had been raised

"where his parents had raised him" or "where he lived when he was a child" or "where he grew up"

as was his custom

"as he did each Sabbath." It was his usual practice to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

Luke 4:17

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone gave him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah"

scroll of the prophet Isaiah

This refers to the book of Isaiah written on a scroll. Isaiah had written the words many years before, and someone else had copied them onto a scroll.

the place where it was written

"the place in the scroll with these words." This sentence continues on into the next verse.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

"The Holy Spirit is with me in a special way." When someone says this, he is claiming to speak the words of God.

he anointed me

In the Old Testament, ceremonial oil was poured on a person when they were given power and authority to do a special task. Jesus uses this metaphor to refer to the Holy Spirit being on him to prepare him for this work. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit is upon me to empower me" or "the Holy Spirit gave me power and authority"

the poor

"the poor people"

proclaim freedom to the captives

"tell people who are being held captive that they can go free" or "set free the prisoners of war"

recovery of sight to the blind

"give sight to the blind" or "make the blind be able to see again"

set free those who are oppressed

"set free those who are treated harshly"

Luke 4:19

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

"tell everyone that the Lord is ready to bless his people" or "announce that this is the year that the Lord will show his kindness"

Luke 4:20

rolled up the scroll

A scroll was closed by rolling it like a tube to protect the writing inside it.

attendant

This refers to a synagogue worker who brought out and put away with proper care and reverence the scrolls containing the scriptures.

sat down

It was customary for teachers to be seated while teaching.

were fixed on him

This idiom means "were focused on him" or "were looking intently at him"

Luke 4:21

this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing

Jesus was saying that he was fulfilling that prophecy by his actions and speech at that very time. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am fulfilling what this scripture says right now as you are listening to me"

in your hearing

This idiom means "while you are listening to me"

Luke 4:22

amazed at the gracious words which were coming out of his mouth

"surprised about the gracious things that he was saying." Here "gracious" may refer to 1) how well or how persuasively Jesus spoke, or 2) that Jesus spoke words about God's grace.

Is this not the son of Joseph?

People thought that Joseph was Jesus's father. Joseph was not a religious leader, so they were surprised that his son would preach what he did. Alternate translation: "This is just Joseph's son!" or "His father is only Joseph!"

Luke 4:23

Surely

"Certainly" or "There is no doubt that"

Doctor, heal yourself

If someone claims to be able to heal diseases that he himself has, there is no reason to believe he is really a doctor. People will speak this proverb to Jesus to say that they will only believe he is a prophet if they see him do what they have heard that he did in other places.

Whatever we heard ... do the same in your hometown

The people of Nazareth do not believe Jesus is a prophet because of his low status as Joseph's son. They will not believe unless they personally see him do miracles.

Luke 4:24

Truly I say to you

"It is certainly true." This is an emphatic statement about

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

what follows.

no prophet is received in his own hometown

Jesus makes this general statement in order to rebuke the people. He means that they are refusing to believe the reports of his miracles in Capernaum. They think they already know all about him.

own hometown

"homeland" or "native city" or "country where he grew up"

Luke 4:25

General Information:

Jesus reminds the people who are listening to him in the synagogue about Elijah and Elisha

But in truth I tell you

"I tell you truthfully." Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance, truth, and accuracy of the statement that follows.

widows

Widows are women whose husbands have died and who have not married again.

during the time of Elijah

The people to whom Jesus was speaking would have known that Elijah was one of God's prophets. If your readers would not know that, you can make this implicit information explicit as in the UDB. Alternate translation: "when Elijah was prophesying in Israel"

when the sky was shut up

This is a metaphor. The sky is pictured as a ceiling that was closed, and so no rain would fall from it. Alternate translation: "when no rain fell down from the sky" or "when there was no rain at all"

a great famine

"a serious lack of food." A famine occurs when the crops do not produce enough food for the people for a long period of time.

Luke 4:26

to Zarephath in Sidon, to a widow living there

The people living in the town of Zarephath were Gentiles, not Jews. The people listening to Jesus would have understood that the people of Zarephath were Gentiles. Alternate translation: "to a Gentile widow living in Zarephath in Sidon"

Luke 4:27

none of them were cleansed except Naaman the Syrian

This double negative emphasizes that Naaman was the only one who was cleansed. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the only one of them who was cleansed was Naaman" or "the only one of them whom God cleansed was Naaman"

were cleansed

People who had leprosy were considered to be unclean. When they were healed from leprosy, they were clean. Alternate translation: "were healed"

Naaman the Syrian

A Syrian is a person from the country of Syria. The people of Syria were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "the Gentile Naaman from Syria"

Luke 4:28

All the people in the synagogue were filled with rage when they heard these things

The people of Nazareth were deeply offended that Jesus had cited scriptures where God had helped Gentiles instead of Jews.

Luke 4:29

forced him out of the town

"forced him to leave the town" or "shoved him out of the city"

cliff of the hill

"edge of the cliff"

Luke 4:30

through the middle of them

"through the middle of the crowd" or "between the people who were trying to kill him."

he went to another place

"he went away" or "he went on his way" Jesus went where he had planned to go instead of where the people were trying to force him to go.

Luke 4:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus then goes to Capernaum, teaches the people in the synagogue there, and commands a demon to leave a man (4:35).

Then he

"Then Jesus." This indicates a new event.

went down to Capernaum

The phrase "went down" is used here because Capernaum is lower in elevation than Nazareth.

Capernaum, a city in Galilee

"Capernaum, another city in Galilee"

Luke 4:32

astonished

greatly surprised, greatly amazed

he spoke with authority

"he spoke as one with authority" or "his words had great power"

Luke 4:33

Now ... there was a man

This phrase is used to mark the introduction of a new character into the story; in this case, a demon-possessed man.

who had the spirit of an unclean demon

"who was possessed by an unclean demon" or "who was controlled by an evil spirit"

he cried out with a loud voice

"he shouted loudly"

Luke 4:34

What do we have to do with you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "What do we have in common" or "What right do you have to bother us"

What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?

This question could be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "What do you, Jesus of Nazareth, have to do with us!" or We have nothing to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth!" or "You have no right to bother us, Jesus of Nazareth!"

Luke 4:35

Jesus rebuked the demon, saying

"Jesus scolded the demon, saying" or "Jesus sternly said to the demon"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Come out of him
He commanded the demon to stop controlling the man. Alternate translation: "Leave him alone" or "Do not live in this man any longer"
Luke 4:36
What kind of words are these?
The people were expressing how amazed they were that Jesus had the authority to command demons to leave a person. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "These are amazing words!" or "His words are amazing!"
He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power
"He has authority and power to command the unclean spirits"
Luke 4:37
So news about him began to spread ... the surrounding region
This is a comment about what happened after the story. The spread of the news was caused by the events within the story itself.
news about him began to spread
"reports about Jesus began to spread" or "people began to spread the news about Jesus"
Luke 4:38
Connecting Statement:
Jesus is still in Capernaum, but he is now at the house of Simon.
Then Jesus left
This introduces a new event.
Simon's mother-in-law
"the mother of Simon's wife"
was suffering with
This is an idiom that means "was very sick with"
a high fever
"very hot skin"
pleaded with him on her behalf
This means they asked Jesus to heal her from the fever. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "asked Jesus to heal her from the fever" or "asked Jesus to cure her fever"
Luke 4:39
So he stood
The word "So" makes it clear that he did this because the people pleaded with him on behalf of Simon's mother-in-law.
stood over her
"went to her and leaned over her"
rebuked the fever, and it left her
"spoke sternly to the fever, and it left her" or "commanded the fever to leave her, and it did." It may be helpful to state clearly what he told the fever to do. Alternate translation: "commanded that her skin should become cool, and it did" or "commanded the sickness to leave her, and it did"
rebuked the fever
"rebuked the hotness"
started serving them
Here this means she began to prepare food for Jesus and the other people in the house.
Luke 4:40
laid his hands on
"placed his hands on" or "touched"
Luke 4:41
Demons also came out
It is implied that Jesus made the demons leave the demon-possessed people. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Jesus also forced demons to come out"
crying out and saying
These mean about the same thing, and probably refer to cries of fear or anger. Some translations use only one term. Alternate translation: "screaming" or "shouting"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
rebuked the demons
"spoke sternly to the demons"
would not let them
"did not allow them to"
Luke 4:42
Connecting Statement:
Though the people want Jesus to stay in Capernaum, he goes to preach in other Judean synagogues.
When daybreak came
"At sunrise" or "At dawn"
a solitary place
"a deserted place" or "a place where there were no people"
Luke 4:43
to many other cities
"to the people in many other cities"
this is the reason I was sent here
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is the reason God sent me here"
Luke 4:44
throughout Judea
Since Jesus had been in Galilee, the term "Judea" here probably refers to the entire region where the Jews lived at that time. Alternate translation: "where the Jews lived"

Chapter 5

Luke 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"You will catch men"
Peter, James, and John were fishermen. When Jesus told them that they would catch men, he was using a metaphor to tell them he wanted them to help people believe the good news about him.
Sinners
When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of

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as "sinners." (See: sin)
Fasting and Feasting
People would fast, or not eat food for a long time, when they were sad or were showing God that they were sorry for their sins. When they were happy, like during weddings, they would have feasts, or meals where they would eat much food. (See: fast)
Important figures of speech in this chapter
Irony
Jesus uses irony to condemn the Pharisees. This passage includes "people in good health" and "righteous people." This does not mean that there are people who do not need Jesus. There are no "righteous people." Everybody needs Jesus. (See: and Luke 5:31-32)
Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter
Implicit information
In several parts of this chapter the author left out some implicit information that his original readers would have understood and thought about. Modern readers might not know some of those things, so they might have trouble understanding all that the author was communicating. The UDB often shows how that information can be presented so that modern readers will be able to understand those passages.
Past Events
Parts of this chapter are sequences of events that have already happened. In a given passage, Luke sometimes writes as if the events have already happened while other events are still in progress (even though they are complete at the time he writes). This can cause difficulty in translation by creating an illogical order of events. It may be necessary to make these consistent by writing as if all the events have already happened.
"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter
Links:
Luke 5:1 Notes

Luke 5:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus preaches from Simon Peter's boat at the lake of Gennesaret.
Now it happened
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
listening to the word of God
Possible meanings are 1) "listening to the message God wanted them to hear" or 2) "listening to Jesus's message about God"
the lake of Gennesaret
These words refer to the Sea of Galilee. Galilee was on the west side of the lake, and the land of Gennesaret was on the east side, so it was called by both names. Some English versions translate this as the proper name of the body of water, "the Lake of Gennesaret."
Luke 5:2
washing their nets
They were cleaning their fishing nets in order to use them again to catch fish.
Luke 5:3
one of the boats, which was Simon's, and
"the boat belonging to Simon and"
asked him to put it out in the water
"asked Simon to move the boat"
he sat down and taught the people
Sitting was the normal position for a teacher.
taught the people out of the boat
"taught the people while he sat in the boat." Jesus was in the boat a short distance from the shore and he was speaking to the people who were on the shore.
Luke 5:4
When he had finished speaking
"When Jesus had finished teaching the people"
Luke 5:5
at your word
"because you have told me to do this"
Luke 5:6
General Information:
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Luke 5:7
motioned
They were too far from shore to call, so they made gestures, probably by waving their arms.
they began to sink
"the boats began to sink." The reason could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the boats began to sink because the catch of fish was so heavy" or "the boats began to sink because there were so many fish"
Luke 5:8
fell down at Jesus' knees
Possible meanings are 1) "knelt down before Jesus" or 2) "bowed down at Jesus' feet" or 3) "lay down on the ground at Jesus' feet." Peter did not fall accidentally. He did this as a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.
sinful man
The word here for "man" means "adult male" and not the more general "human being."
Luke 5:9
the catch of fish

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"the large number of fish"
Luke 5:10
partners with Simon
"Simon's partners in his fishing business"
you will catch men
The image of catching fish is being used as a metaphor for gathering people to follow Christ. Alternate translation: "you will fish for people" or "you will gather people for me" or "you will bring people to be my disciples"
Luke 5:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 5:12
Connecting Statement:
Jesus heals a leper in a different city that is not named.
It came about
This phrase marks a new event in the story.
a man full of leprosy
"a man who was covered with leprosy." This introduces a new character in the story.
he fell on his face
Here "fell on his face" is an idiom that means to bow down. Alternate translation: "he knelt and touched the ground with his face" or "he bowed down to the ground"
if you are willing
"if you want to"
you can make me clean
It is understood that he was asking Jesus to heal him. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "please make me clean, because you are able"
make me clean
This refers to ceremonial cleanness, but it is understood that he is unclean because of the leprosy. He is really asking Jesus to heal him of his disease. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "heal me from leprosy so I will be clean"
Luke 5:13
Be clean
This refers to ceremonial cleanness, but it is understood that he is unclean because of the leprosy. He is really asking Jesus to heal him of his disease. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Be healed"
the leprosy left him
"he no longer had leprosy"
Luke 5:14
He instructed him to tell no one but told him, "Go on your way
Jesus's instruction can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "He said, 'Do not tell anyone, but go on your way"
to tell no one
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to not tell anyone that he had been healed"
sacrifice for your cleansing
The law required a person to make a specific sacrifice after they were healed. This allowed the person to be ceremonially clean, and able to again participate in religious rituals.
for a testimony
"as proof of your healing"
to them
Possible meanings are 1) "to the priests" or 2) "to all the people."
Luke 5:15
the report about him
"the news about Jesus." This could mean either "the report about Jesus's healing the man with leprosy" or "the report about Jesus's healing people."
the report about him spread even farther
"the report about him went out even farther." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people kept telling the news about him in other places"
Luke 5:16
the deserted places
"lonely places" or "places where there were no other people"
Luke 5:17
Connecting Statement:
One day when Jesus was teaching in a building, some men brought a paralyzed man for Jesus to heal.
It came about
This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story.
Luke 5:18
Now some men came
These are new people in the story. Your language may have a way of showing that these are new people.
mat
sleeping pad or bed or stretcher
was paralyzed
"could not move himself"
Luke 5:19
They could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, so
In some languages it might be more natural to reorder this. Alternate translation: "But because of the crowd of people, they could not find a way to bring the man inside. So"
because of the crowd
It is clear that the reason they could not enter was that the crowd was so large that there was no room for them.
they went up to the housetop
Houses had flat roofs, and some houses had a ladder or staircase outside to make it easy to go up there. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "they went up to the flat roof of the house"
right in front of Jesus
"directly in front of Jesus" or "immediately in front of Jesus"
Luke 5:20
Seeing their faith, Jesus said
It is understood that they believe Jesus can heal the paralyzed man. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "When Jesus perceived that they believed that he could heal the man, he said to him"
Man
This is a general word that people used when speaking to a man whose name they did not know. It was not rude, but it also did not show special respect. Some languages might use a word like "friend" or "sir."
your sins are forgiven you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are forgiven" or "I forgive your sins"

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Luke 5:21

question this

"discuss this" or "reason about this." What they questioned can be stated. Alternate translation: "discuss whether or not Jesus had authority to forgive sins"

Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

This question shows how shocked and angry they were at what Jesus said. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This man is blaspheming God!" or "He blasphemes God by saying that!"

Who can forgive sins but God alone?

The implied information is that if a person claims to forgive sins he says he is God. This can be written as a clear statement. Alternate translation: "No one can forgive sins but God alone!" or "God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

Luke 5:22

Why are you questioning this in your hearts?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not argue about this in your hearts." or "You should not doubt that I have the authority to forgive sins."

in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings.

Luke 5:23

Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "You may think that it is easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up and walk.'"

easier to say

The unspoken implication is that one thing is easier to say because no one will know what has happened, but the other thing is harder to say because everyone will know what has happened. People could not see if the man's sins were forgiven, but they would all know he was healed if he got up and walked.

Luke 5:24

you may know

Jesus was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees. The word "you" is plural.

the Son of Man

Jesus was referring to himself.

I tell you

Jesus was saying this to the paralyzed man. The word "you" is singular.

Luke 5:25

Immediately he got up

"At once he got up" or "Right away he got up"

he got up

It may be helpful to clearly say that he was healed. Alternate translation: "the man was healed! He got up"

Luke 5:26

filled with fear

"very afraid" or "filled with awe"

extraordinary things

"amazing things" or "strange things"

Luke 5:27

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus leaves the house, he calls Levi, the Jewish tax collector, to follow him.

After these things happened

The phrase "these things" refers to what happened in the previous verses. This signals a new event.

saw a tax collector

"looked at a tax collector with attention" or "looked carefully at a tax collector"

Follow me

To "follow" someone is to become that person's disciple. Alternate translation: "Be my disciple" or "Come, follow me as your teacher"

Luke 5:28

followed him, leaving everything behind

"followed him and left his work as a tax collector"

Luke 5:29

in his house

"in Levi's house"

reclining at the table

It was customary to lie on a couch while eating at a feast and to prop oneself up with the left arm on some pillows. Alternate translation: "eating together" or "eating at the table"

Luke 5:30

to his disciples

"to Jesus's disciples"

Why do you eat ... sinners?

The Pharisees and scribes ask this question to express their disapproval that Jesus's disciples are eating with sinners. Alternate translation: "You should not eat ... sinners!"

sinners

people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins

you eat and drink with ... sinners

The Pharisees and scribes believed that religious people should separate themselves from people they consider to be sinners. The word "you" is plural.

Luke 5:31

Connecting Statement:

At the meal, Jesus speaks with the Pharisees and scribes.

People who are well ... sick

Jesus uses this proverb to begin to tell them that he calls sinners to repentance the way a physician calls sick people to be healed.

physician

"doctor"

only those who are sick

You may need to supply the words that have been omitted. Alternate translation: "only those who are sick need a physician"

Luke 5:32

I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance

Jesus uses irony to condemn the Phraisees because they think of themselves as righteous. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus has to think of himself as a sinner, not as righteous. Jesus does not mean that he thinks there are righteous people who do not need to repent.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the righteous
This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "righteous people"
Luke 5:33
They said to him
"The religious leaders said to Jesus"
Luke 5:34
Can anyone make the wedding attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is still with them?
Jesus uses this question to cause the people to think about a situation that they already know. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one tells the wedding attendants of the bridegroom to fast while he is still with them."
wedding attendants
"guests" or "friends." These are friends who celebrate with a man who is getting married.
the wedding attendants of the bridegroom fast
Fasting is a sign of sadness. The religious leaders understood that the wedding attendants would not fast while the bridegroom was with them.
Luke 5:35
the days will come when
"soon" or "some day"
the bridegroom will be taken away from them
Jesus is comparing himself to the bridegroom, and the disciples to the wedding attendants. He does not explain the metaphor, so the translation should explain it only if necessary.
Luke 5:36
General Information:
Jesus tells a story to the scribes and pharisees who were at Levi's house.
No one tears ... uses it ... he ... he
"No one rips ... uses it ... he ... he" or "People never tear ... use it ... they ... they"
mend
repair
will not fit with
"will not match" or "will not be the same as"
Luke 5:37
new wine
"grape juice." This refers to wine that has not yet fermented.
wineskins
These were bags made out of animal skins. They could also be called "wine bags" or "bags made of skin."
the new wine will burst the skins
When the new wine would ferment and expand, it would break the old skins because they could no longer stretch out. Jesus's audience would have understood how wine expands when it ferments.
the wine will be spilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the wine will spill out of the bags"
Luke 5:38
fresh wineskins
"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to new wineskins, unused.
Luke 5:39
drinking old wine ... wants the new
This metaphor contrasts the old teaching of the religious leaders against the new teaching of Jesus. The point is that people who are used to the old teaching are not willing to listen to the new things that Jesus is teaching.
for he says, 'The old is better.'
It may be helpful to add the implicit information. Alternate translation: "for he says, 'The old is better,' and he is therefore not willing to try the new wine."

Chapter 6

Luke 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Luke 6:20-49 contains many blessings and woes that appear to correspond to Matthew 5-7. This part of Matthew has traditionally been called the "Sermon on the Mount." In Luke, they are not as connected to a teaching on the kingdom of God as they are in Matthew's gospel. (See: kingdomofgod)

Special concepts in this chapter

"Eating the grain"

When the disciples plucked and ate the grain in a field they were walking through on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1), the Pharisees said that they were breaking the law of Moses. The Pharisees said that the disciples were doing work by picking the grain and so disobeying God's command to rest and not work on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees did not think the disciples were stealing. That is because the law of Moses required farmers to allow travelers to pluck and eat small amounts of grain from plants in fields they traveled through or near. (See: lawofmoses and works and sabbath)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Metaphors are pictures of visible objects that speakers use to explain invisible truths. Jesus used a metaphor of a generous grain merchant to teach his people to be generous

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are questions to which the speaker already knows the answer. The Pharisees scolded Jesus by asking him a rhetorical question when they thought he was breaking the Sabbath

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

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Implicit information
Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Luke wrote that the disciples were rubbing the heads of grain between their hands, he expected his reader to know that they were separating the part they would eat from what they would throw away
The twelve disciples
The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:
In Matthew:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.
In Mark:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.
In Luke:
Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.
Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Links:

Luke 6:1 Notes

Luke 6:1
Connecting Statement:
While Jesus and his disciples are walking through grainfields, some Pharisees begin to question the disciples about what they are doing on the Sabbath, which, in God's law, has been set aside for God.
Now it happened
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you can consider using it here.
grainfields
These are large sections of land where people had scattered wheat seed to grow wheat.
heads of grain
These are the topmost parts of the grain plant, which is a kind of large grass. It holds the mature, edible seeds of the plant.
grain, rubbing them between their hands, and eating
They did this to separate the grain seeds. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "grain. They rubbed them in their hands to separate the grains from the husks and ate"
Luke 6:2
General Information:
The word "you" here is plural, and refers to the disciples.
Why are you doing something that is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?
They asked this question to accuse the disciples of breaking the law. It can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Picking grain on the Sabbath is against God's law!"
doing something
The Pharisees considered even the small action of rubbing a handful of grain to be unlawful work. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "doing work"
Luke 6:3
Have you not even read ... him?
Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for not learning from the scriptures. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should learn from what you have read ... him!" or "Certainly you have read ... him!"
Luke 6:4
the bread of the presence
This is the sacred bread that priests placed before God in the tabernacle. It represented God's presence. Alternate translation: "the bread of Yahweh's presence" or "the bread that the priest placed before God" or "the sacred bread"
Luke 6:5
The Son of Man is
Jesus was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am"
is Lord of the Sabbath
The title "Lord" here emphasizes his authority over the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "has the authority to determine what is right for people to do on the Sabbath!"
Luke 6:6
General Information:
It is now another Sabbath day and Jesus is in the synagogue.
Connecting Statement:
The scribes and Pharisees watch as Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath.
It happened
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event in the story.
A man was there
This introduces a new character in the story.
hand was withered
The man's hand was damaged in such a way that he could not stretch it. It was probably almost bent into a fist, making it look small and wrinkled.
Luke 6:7
were watching him closely
"were watching Jesus carefully"
so that they might find
"because they wanted to find"
Luke 6:8

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in the middle of everyone
"in front of everyone." Jesus wanted the man to stand where everyone there could see him.
Luke 6:9
to them
"to the Pharisees"
I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to destroy it?
Jesus asks this question to force the Pharisees to admit that he was right to heal on the Sabbath. The intent of the question is thus rhetorical: to get them to admit what they all know is true rather than to obtain information. However, Jesus says, "I ask you," so this question is not like other rhetorical questions that might need to be translated as statements. This should be translated as a question.
to do good or to do harm
"to help someone or to harm someone"
Luke 6:10
Stretch out your hand
"Hold out your hand" or "Extend your hand"
restored
healed
Luke 6:11
General Information:
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Luke 6:12
General Information:
Jesus chooses twelve apostles after he prays all night.
It happened in those days
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.
in those days
"around that time" or "not long after" or "one day around then"
he went out
"Jesus went out"
Luke 6:13
When it was day
"When it was morning" or "The next day"
he chose twelve of them
"he chose twelve of the disciples"
whom he also named apostles
"whom he also made apostles" or "and he appointed them to be apostles"
Luke 6:14
The names of the apostles were
Luke wrote a list of the names of the apostles. The ULB uses these words to introduce the list.
his brother Andrew
"Simon's brother, Andrew"
Luke 6:15
the Zealot
Possible meanings are 1) "the Zealot" is a title that indicates he was part of the group of people who wanted to free the Jewish people from Roman rule. Alternate translation: "the patriot" or "the nationalist" or 2) "the Zealot" is a description that indicates he was zealous for God to be honored. Alternate translation: "the passionate one"
Luke 6:16
became a traitor
It may be necessary to explain what "traitor" means in this context. Alternate translation: "betrayed his friend" or "turned his friend over to enemies"
Luke 6:17
Connecting Statement:
Though Jesus especially addresses his disciples, there are many people around who listen.
with them
"with the twelve he had chosen" or "with his twelve apostles"
Luke 6:18
to be healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Jesus to heal them"
People who were troubled with unclean spirits were also healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus also healed people who were troubled with unclean spirits"
troubled with unclean spirits
"bothered by unclean spirits" or "controlled by evil spirits"
Luke 6:19
power to heal was coming out from him
"he had power to heal people" or "he was using his power to heal people"
Luke 6:20
Blessed are you
Jesus speaks this phrase three times. Each time, it indicates that God gives favor to certain people or that their situation is positive or good.
Blessed are you who are poor
"You who are poor receive God's favor" or "You who are poor benefit"
for yours is the kingdom of God
Languages that do not have a word for kingdom might say, "for God is your king" or "because God is your ruler."
yours is the kingdom of God
"the kingdom of God belongs to you." This could mean 1) "you belong to God's kingdom" or 2) "you will have authority in God's kingdom."
Luke 6:21
you will laugh
"you will laugh with joy" or "you will be joyful"
Luke 6:22
Blessed are you
"You receive God's favor" or "You benefit" or "How good it is for you"
exclude you
"reject you"
because of the Son of Man
"because you associate with the Son of Man" or "because they reject the Son of Man"
Luke 6:23
in that day
"when they do those things" or "when that happens"
leap for joy
This idiom means "be extremely joyful"
a great reward
"a large payment" or "good gifts"

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Luke 6:24
woe to you
"how terrible it is for you." Jesus speaks this phrase three times. It is the opposite of "blessed are you." Each time, it indicates that God's anger is directed at the people, or that something negative or bad awaits them.
woe to you who are rich
"how terrible it is for you who are rich" or "trouble will come to you who are rich"
your comfort
"what comforts you" or "what satisfies you" or "what makes you happy"
Luke 6:25
who are full now
"whose stomachs are full now" or "who eat much now"
who laugh now
"who are happy now"
Luke 6:26
Woe to you
"How terrible it is for you" or "How sad you should be"
when all men speak
Here "men" is used in the generic sense the includes all people. Alternate translation: "when all people speak" or "when everyone speaks"
that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets
"their ancestors also spoke well of the false prophets"
Luke 6:27
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to speak to his disciples and the crowd who is listening to him as well.
to you who are listening
Jesus now begins to speak to the entire crowd, rather than just to his disciples.
love ... do good
Each of these commands is to be followed continually, not just a single time.
love your enemies and
This does not mean those listening were to only love their enemies and not their friends. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "love your enemies, not only your friends, and"
Luke 6:28
Bless ... pray
Each of these commands is to be followed continually, not just a single time.
Bless those
God is the one who blesses. This can made explicit. Alternate translation: "Ask God to bless those"
those who curse you
"those who habitually curse you"
those who mistreat you
"those who habitually mistreat you"
Luke 6:29
To him who strikes you
"If anyone hits you"
on the one cheek
"on one side of your face"
offer him also the other
It may be helpful to state what the attacker will do to the person. Alternate translation: "turn your face so that he can strike the other cheek also"
do not withhold
"do not prevent him from taking"
Luke 6:30
Give to everyone who asks you
"If anyone asks you for something, give it to him"
do not ask him to give
"do not require him to give" or "do not demand that he give"
Luke 6:31
As you want people to do to you, you should do the same to them
In some languages it may be more natural to reverse the order. Alternate translation: "You should do to people the same as what you want them to do to you" or "Treat people they way you want them to treat you"
Luke 6:32
what reward is there for you?
"what reward will you receive?" or "what praise will you receive for doing that?" This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you will not receive any reward for that." or "God will not reward you for that."
Luke 6:33
General Information:
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Luke 6:34
people from whom you hope to be repaid
Here the word "hope" means to confidently expect that what one desires will happen. The person who hopes in this way believes that what he desires will happen. The verb "to be repaid" can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "people whom you expect will repay you" or "people whom you believe will repay you"
to receive back the same amount
The law of Moses commanded the Jews not to receive interest on money they loaned to other Jews.
Luke 6:35
expecting nothing in return
"not expecting the person to return what you have given him" or "not expecting the person to give you anything"
your reward will be great
"you will receive a great reward" or "you will receive good payment" or "you will get good gifts because of it"
you will be sons of the Most High
It is best to translate "sons" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human son or child.
sons of the Most High
Make sure that the word "sons" is plural so it is not confused with Jesus's title "The Son of the Most High."
unthankful and evil people
"people who do not thank him and who are evil"
Luke 6:36
your Father
This refers to God. It is best to translate "Father" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human father.
Luke 6:37
Do not judge

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"Do not judge people" or "Do not harshly criticize people"
and you
"and as a result you"
you will not be judged
Jesus does not say who will not judge. Possible meanings are 1) "God will not judge you" or 2) "no one will judge you"
Do not condemn
"Do not condemn people"
you will not be condemned
Jesus does not say who will not condemn. Possible meanings are 1) "God will not condemn you" or 2) "no one will condemn you"
you will be forgiven
Jesus does not say who will forgive. Possible meanings are 1) "God will forgive you" or 2) "people will forgive you"
Luke 6:38
it will be given to you
Jesus does not say exactly who will give. Possible meanings are 1) "someone will give it to you" or 2) "God will give it to you"
A good amount—pressed down, shaken together and spilling over—will pour into your lap
Jesus speaks either of God or of people giving generously as if he were speaking of a generous grain merchant. Alternate translation: "God will pour into your lap a generous amount—pressed down, shaken together and spilling over" or "Like a generous grain merchant who presses down the grain and shakes it together and pours in so much grain that it spills over, they will give generously to you"
A good amount
"A generous amount" or "A large amount"
it will be measured back to you
Jesus does not say exactly who will measure. Possible meanings are 1) "they will measure things back to you" or 2) "God will measure things back to you"
Luke 6:39
Connecting Statement:
Jesus includes some examples to make his point.
Can a blind person guide another blind person?
Jesus used this question to get the people to think about something that they already know. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We all know that a blind person cannot guide another blind person."
blind person
The person who is "blind" is a metaphor for a person who has not been taught as a disciple.
If he did
Some languages might prefer, "if one did."
they would both fall into a pit, would they not?
This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "both of them would fall into a hole."
Luke 6:40
A disciple is not greater than his teacher
"A disciple does not surpass his teacher." Possible meanings are 1) "A disciple does not have more knowledge than his teacher" or 2) "A disciple does not have more authority than his teacher."
everyone when he is fully trained
"every disciple who has been trained well" or "every disciple whose teacher has fully taught him"
Luke 6:41
Why do you look ... brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
Jesus uses this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. Alternate translation: "Do not look ... brothers eye while you ignore the log that is in your own eye."
the tiny piece of straw that is in your brother's eye
This is a metaphor that refers to the less important faults of a fellow believer.
tiny piece of straw
"speck" or "splinter" or "bit of dust." Use a word for the smallest thing that commonly falls into a person's eyes.
brother
Here "brother" refers to a fellow Jew or a fellow believer in Jesus.
do not notice the log that is in your own eye
"do not notice that you have a log in your own eye"
the log that is in your own eye
This is a metaphor for a person's most important faults. A log could not literally go into a person's eye. Jesus exaggerates to emphasize that a person should pay attention to his own more important faults before he deals with another person's less important faults.
log
"beam" or "plank"
Luke 6:42
How can you say ... eye?
Jesus asks this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. Alternate translation: "You should not say ... eye."
Luke 6:43
General Information:
People can tell if a tree is good or bad, and what type of tree it is, by the fruit it produces. Jesus uses this as an unexplained metaphor—we know what kind of person someone is when we see his actions.
For there is
"This is because there is." This indicates that what follows is the reason why we should not judge our brother.
good tree
"healthy tree"
rotten fruit
fruit that is decaying or bad or worthless
Luke 6:44
each tree is known
People recognize the kind of tree by the fruit it bears. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people know the type of a tree" or "people recognize a tree"
thornbush
a plant or shrub that has thorns
briar bush
a vine or shrub that has thorns
Luke 6:45
General Information:

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Jesus compares the thoughts of a person to his good or evil treasure. When a good person has good thoughts, he engages in good actions. When an evil person thinks evil thoughts, he engages in evil actions.

The good man

The word "good" here means righteous or moral.

good man

The word "man" here refers to a person, male or female. Alternate translation: "good person"

the good treasure of his heart

Here the good thoughts of a person are spoken of as if they were treasures stored in the heart of that person, and "his heart" is a metonym for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "the good things he keeps deep inside himself" or "the good things he values very intensely"

produces what is good

Producing what is good is a metaphor for doing what is good. Alternate translation: "does what is good"

the evil treasure of his heart

Here the evil thoughts of a person are spoken of as if they were evil things stored in the heart of that person, and "his heart" is a metonym the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "the evil things he keeps deep inside himself" or "the evil things he values very intensely"

out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks

Here "heart" represents the person's mind or inner being. The phrase "his mouth" represents the person as a whole. Alternate translation: "what he thinks in his heart affects what he says with his mouth" or "a person will speak aloud what truly values inside of himself"

Luke 6:46

Lord, Lord

Here the repetition of these words is used as an exclamation. People repeat a name or title in this way when trying to find someone or to get someone's attention.

Luke 6:47

General Information:

In verse 47-48 Jesus compares the person who obeys his teaching to a man who builds a house on rock where it will be safe from floods.

Every person who comes to me and hears my words and obeys them, I will tell you what he is like

It may be clearer to change the order of this sentence. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what every person is like who comes to me and hears my words and obeys them"

Luke 6:48

dug down deep in the ground and built the house's foundation on solid rock

"dug down deep into the ground until he found a large, solid rock. Then he built his house on that rock so that it would be strong and stable." Some cultures may not be familiar with this process of building a house and may need to use another image for a stable foundation.

torrent of water

"fast-moving water" or "river"

flowed against

"crashed against"

shake it

Possible meanings are 1) "cause it to shake" or 2) "destroy it."

because it had been well built

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the man had built it well"

Luke 6:49

General Information:

Jesus compares the person who hears but does not obey his teaching to a man who builds a house that has no foundation and so will collapse when the flood comes.

But the person

"But" shows a strong contrast to the previous person who built with a foundation.

on top of the ground without a foundation

Some cultures may not know that a house with a foundation is stronger. Additional information may be helpful. Alternate translation: "but he did not dig down and build first a foundation"

torrent of water

"fast-moving water" or "river"

flowed against

"crashed against"

collapsed

fell down or came apart

the ruin of that house was complete

"that house was completely destroyed"

Chapter 7

Luke 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 7:27.

Several times in this chapter Luke changes his topic without marking the change. You should not try to make these rough changes smooth.

Special concepts in this chapter

Centurion

The centurion who asked Jesus to heal his slave (Luke 7:2 was doing many unusual things. A Roman soldier would almost never go to a Jew for anything, and most wealthy people did not love or care for their slaves. (See: centurion and faith)

John's Baptism

John baptized people to show that those he was baptizing knew they were sinners and were sorry for their sin. (See: repent and sin)

"Sinners"

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Luke refers to a group of people as "sinners." The Jewish leaders considered these people to be hopelessly ignorant of the law of Moses, and so called them "sinners." In reality, the leaders were sinful. This situation can be taken as irony.

"Feet"

The feet of the people in the ancient Near East were very dirty because they wore sandals and the roads and trails were dusty and muddy. Only slaves washed other people's feet. The woman who washed Jesus's feet was showing him great honor.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 7:1 Notes

Luke 7:1

General Information:

Jesus enters Capernaum, where he heals a centurion's servant.

in the hearing of the people

The idiom "in the hearing" emphasizes that he wanted them to hear what he said. Alternate translation: "to the people who were listening to him" or "to the people who were present" or "for the people to hear"

he entered Capernaum

This begins a new event in the story.

Luke 7:2

who was highly regarded by him

"whom the centurion valued" or "whom he respected"

Luke 7:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 7:4

asked him earnestly

"pleaded with him" or "begged him"

He is worthy

"The centurion is worthy"

Luke 7:5

our nation

"our people." This refers to the Jewish people.

Luke 7:6

continued on his way

"went along"

not far from the house

"near the house"

do not trouble yourself

The centurion was speaking politely to Jesus. Alternate translation: "do not trouble yourself by coming to my house" or "I do not wish to bother you"

come under my roof

This phrase is an idiom that means "come into my house." If your language has an idiom that means "come into my house," think about whether it would be good to use here.

Luke 7:7

just say a word

The servant understood that Jesus could heal the servant just by speaking. Here "word" refers to a command. Alternate translation: "just give the order"

my servant will be healed

The word that is translated here as "servant" is normally translated as "boy." It may indicate that the servant was very young or show the centurion's affection for him.

Luke 7:8

I also am a man who is under authority

"I also have someone over me that I must obey"

under me

"under my authority"

to my servant

The word that is translated here as "servant" is the typical word for a servant.

Luke 7:9

he was amazed at him

"he was amazed at the centurion"

I say to you

Jesus said this to emphasize the surprising thing that he was about to tell them.

not even in Israel have I found such faith.

The implication is that Jesus expected Jewish people to have this kind of faith, but they did not. He did not expect Gentiles to have this kind of faith, yet this man did. You may need to add this implied information. Alternate translation: "I have not found any Israelite who trusts me as much as this Gentile does!"

Luke 7:10

those who had been sent

It is understood that these were the people the centurion sent. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "the people whom the Roman officer had sent to Jesus"

Luke 7:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus goes to the city of Nain, where he heals a man who had died.

Nain

This is the name of a city.

Luke 7:12

behold, a man who had died

The word "behold" alerts us to the introduction of the dead man into the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "there was a dead man who"

a man who had died was being carried out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying out of the city a man who had died"

carried out, the only son of his mother (who was a widow), and a rather large crowd

"carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A rather large crowd." This is background information about the dead man and his mother.

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widow
a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried
Luke 7:13
was deeply moved with compassion for her
"felt very sorry for her"
Luke 7:14
he went up
"he went forward" or "he approached the dead man"
the wooden frame on which they carried the body
This was a stretcher or bed used to move the body to the burial place. It did not have to be something in which the body was buried. Other translations may have the less common "bier" or "funeral couch."
I say to you, arise
Jesus says this to emphasize that the young man needs to obey him. "Listen to me! Arise"
Luke 7:15
The dead man
The man was not still dead; he was now alive. It may be necessary to state this clearly. Alternate translation: "The man who had been dead"
Luke 7:16
Connecting Statement:
This tells what happens as a result of Jesus healing the man who had died.
fear overcame all of them
"fear filled all of them." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they all became very afraid"
A great prophet has been raised among us
They were referring to Jesus, not to some unidentified prophet. "Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to become." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has caused one of us to become a great prophet"
looked upon
This idiom means "cared for"
Luke 7:17
This news about Jesus spread
"This news" refers to the things people were saying in verse 16. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People spread this report about Jesus" or "People told others this report about Jesus"
This news
"This report" or "This message"
Luke 7:18
John's disciples told him about all these things
This introduces a new event in the story.
told him
"told John"
all these things
"all the things Jesus was doing"
Luke 7:19
Connecting Statement:
John sends two of his disciples to question Jesus.
Luke 7:20
the men said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to say, 'Are you ... or should we look for another?'"
This sentence can be rewritten so that it only has one direct quote. Alternate translation: "the men said that John the Baptist had sent them to him to ask, 'Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for another?'" or "the men said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask if you are the one who is coming, or if we should look for another.'"
Luke 7:21
In that hour
"At that time"
from evil spirits
It may be helpful to restate the healing. Alternate translation: "he healed them from evil spirits" or "he set people free from evil spirits"
Luke 7:22
said to them
"said to John's messengers" or "said to the messengers that John sent"
report to John
"tell John"
people who have died are being raised back to life
"dead people are being caused to live again"
the poor
This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "poor people"
Luke 7:23
The person who does not stop believing in me because of my actions is blessed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless the person who does not stop believing in me because of my actions"
The person who does not ... is blessed
"People who do not ... are blessed" or "Anyone who does not ... is blessed" or "Whoever does not ... is blessed." This is not a specific person.
does not stop believing in me because of
"continues to believe in me despite"
believing in me
"trusting me completely"
Luke 7:24
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to speak to the crowd about John the Baptist. He asks rhetorical questions to lead them to think about what John the Baptist is really like.
What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?
This expects a negative answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement. Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a reed shaken by the wind? Of course not!" or "Surely you did not go out to see a reed being shaken by the wind!"
A reed shaken by the wind
Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) a person who easily changes his mind, as reeds are easily moved by the wind, or 2) a person who talks a lot but does not say anything important, as reeds rattle when the wind blows.
Luke 7:25
But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes?
This expects a negative answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement. Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a man dressed in soft clothes? Of course not!" or "You certainly did not go out to see a man dressed in soft clothes!"

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dressed in soft clothes

This refers to expensive clothing. Normal clothing was rough. Alternate translation: "wearing expensive clothing"

kings' palaces

A palace is a large, expensive house that a king lives in.

Luke 7:26

But what did you go out to see? A prophet?

This expects a positive answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement. Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a prophet? Of course you did!" or "But you actually went out to see a prophet!"

Yes, I say to you

Jesus says this to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.

more than a prophet

This phrase means that John was indeed a prophet, but that he was even greater than a typical prophet. Alternate translation: "not just an ordinary prophet" or "much more important than a normal prophet"

Luke 7:27

This is he of whom it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John is the one the prophets wrote about long ago"

See, I am sending

In this verse, Jesus is quoting the prophet Malachi and saying that John is the messenger of which Malachi spoke.

before your face

This idiom means "in front of you" or "to go ahead of you"

your

The word "your" is singular because God was speaking to the Messiah in the quotation.

Luke 7:28

I say to you

Jesus is speaking to the crowd, so "you" is plural. Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the surprising thing he is about to say next.

among those born of women

"among those to whom a woman has given birth." This is a metaphor that refers to all people. Alternate translation: "of all the people who have ever lived"

none is greater than John

"John is the greatest"

the one who is least in the kingdom of God

This refers to anyone who is part of the kingdom that God will establish.

is greater than he is

The spiritual state of people in the kingdom of God will be higher than that of the people before the kingdom was established. Alternate translation: "has higher spiritual status than John"

Luke 7:29

General Information:

Luke, the author of this book, comments on how people responds to John and Jesus.

When all the people heard this, including the tax collectors, they declared that God is righteous, because they had been baptized with the baptism of John

This verse could be reordered to be more clear. Alternate translation: "When all the people who had been baptized by John, including the tax collectors, heard this, they declared that God is righteous"

they declared that God is righteous

"they said that God had shown himself to be righteous" or "they declared that God had acted righteously"

because they had been baptized with the baptism of John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because they had let John baptize them" or "because John had baptized them"

Luke 7:30

rejected God's purpose for themselves

"rejected what God wanted them to do" or "chose to disobey what God told them"

they had not been baptized by John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they did not let John baptize them" or "they rejected John's baptism"

Luke 7:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the people about John the Baptist.

To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like?

Jesus uses these questions to introduce a comparison. They can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is what I compare this generation to. This is what they are like."

I compare ... What are they like

These are two ways of saying that this is a comparison.

the people of this generation

The people living when Jesus spoke.

Luke 7:32

They are like

These words are the beginning of Jesus's comparison. Jesus is saying that the people are like children who are never satisfied with the way other children act.

marketplace

a large, open-air area where people come to sell their goods

and you did not dance

"but you did not dance to the music"

and you did not cry

"but you did not cry with us"

Luke 7:33

eating no bread

Possible meanings are 1) "frequently fasting" or 2) "not eating normal food."

you say, 'He has a demon.'

Jesus was quoting what people were saying about John. This can be stated without the direct quote. Alternate translation: "you say that he has a demon." or "you accuse him of having a demon."

Luke 7:34

The Son of Man came

Jesus expected the people to understand that he was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"

you say, 'Look, he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

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This can be translated as an indirect quote. If you translated "The Son of Man" as "I, the Son of man," you can state this as an indirect statement and use the first person. Alternate translation: "you accuse him of eating and drinking too much and of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners." or "you say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors sinners."

he is a gluttonous man

"he is a greedy eater" or "he continually eats too much food"

a drunkard

"a drunk" or "he continually drinks too much alcohol"

Luke 7:35

wisdom is justified by all her children

This appears to be a proverb that Jesus applied to this situation, probably to teach that wise people would understand that the people should not have rejected Jesus and John.

Luke 7:36

General Information:

It was a custom in that time for onlookers to attend dinners without eating.

Connecting Statement:

A Pharisee invites Jesus to eat at his house.

Now one of the Pharisees

The marks the beginning of a new part of the story and introduces the Pharisee into the story.

reclined at the table to eat

"sat down at the table for the meal." It was the custom at a relaxed meal such as this dinner for men to eat while lying down comfortably around the table.

Luke 7:37

Behold, there was a woman

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

who was a sinner

"who lived a sinful lifestyle" or "who had a reputation for living a sinful life." She may have been a prostitute.

an alabaster jar

"a jar made of soft stone." Alabaster is a soft, white rock. People stored precious things in alabaster jars.

of perfumed oil

"with perfume in it." The oil had something in it that made it smell nice. People rubbed it on themselves or sprinkled their clothing with it in order to smell nice.

Luke 7:38

anointed them with perfumed oil

"poured perfume on them"

Luke 7:39

he thought to himself, saying

"he said to himself"

If this man were a prophet, then he would know who and what type of woman is touching him, that she is a sinner

The Pharisee thought that Jesus was not a prophet because he allowed the sinful woman to touch him. Alternate translation: "Apparently Jesus is not a prophet, because a prophet would know that this woman who is touching him is a sinner"

that she is a sinner

Simon assumed that a prophet would never allow a sinner to touch him. This part of his assumption can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "that she is a sinner, and he would not allow her to touch him"

Luke 7:40

Simon

This was the name of the Pharisee who invited Jesus into his home. This was not Simon Peter.

Luke 7:41

General Information:

To emphasize what he is going to tell Simon the Pharisee, Jesus tells him a story.

A certain moneylender had two debtors

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender"

five hundred denarii ... fifty

"500 days' wages ... 50." "Denarii" is the plural of "denarius." A "denarius" was a silver coin.

the other fifty

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the other debtor owed fifty denarii" or "the other debtor owed 50 days' wages"

Luke 7:42

he forgave them both

"he forgave their debts" or "he canceled their debts"

Luke 7:43

I suppose

Simon was cautious about his answer. Alternate translation: "Probably"

You have judged correctly

"You are right"

Luke 7:44

Jesus turned to the woman

Jesus directed Simon's attention to the woman by turning to her.

You gave me no water for my feet

It was a basic responsibility of a host to provide water and a towel for guests to wash and dry their feet after walking on dusty roads.

You ... but she

Jesus twice uses these phrases to contrast Simon's lack of courtesy with the woman's extreme actions of gratitude.

she has wet my feet with her tears

The woman used her tears in place of the missing water.

wiped them with her hair

The woman used her hair in place of the missing towel.

Luke 7:45

You did not give me a kiss

A good host in that culture would greet his guest with a kiss on the cheek. Simon did not do this.

did not stop kissing my feet

"has continued to kiss my feet"

kissing my feet

The woman kissed the feet of Jesus rather than his cheek as a sign of extreme repentance and humility.

Luke 7:46

You did not ... but she

Jesus continues to contrast Simon's poor hospitality with the actions of the woman.

anoint my head with oil

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"put oil on my head." This was the custom to welcome an honored guest. Alternate translation: "welcome me by anointing my head with oil"

anointed my feet

The woman greatly honored Jesus by doing this. She demonstrated humility by anointing his feet instead of his head.

Luke 7:47

I say to you

This emphasizes the importance of the statement that follows.

her sins, which were many, have been forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has forgiven her many sins"

for she loved much

Her love was the evidence that her sins were forgiven. Some languages require that the object of "love" be stated. Alternate translation: "for she greatly loves the one who forgave her" or "for she loves God very much"

the one who is forgiven little

"anyone who is forgiven only a few things." In this sentence Jesus states a general principle. However, he expected Simon to understand that he showed very little love for Jesus.

Luke 7:48

Then he said to her

"Then he said to the woman"

Your sins are forgiven

"You are forgiven." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I forgive your sins"

Luke 7:49

reclining together

"reclining together around the table" or "eating together"

Who is this that even forgives sins?

The religious leaders knew that only God could forgive sins and did not believe that Jesus was God. This question was probably intended to be an accusation. Alternate translation: "Who does this man think he is? Only God can forgive sins!" or "Why is this man pretending to be God, who alone can forgive sins?"

Luke 7:50

Your faith has saved you

"Because of your faith, you are saved." The abstract noun "faith" could be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "Because you believe, you are saved"

Go in peace

This is a way of saying good-bye while giving a blessing at the same time. Alternate translation: "As you go, do not worry anymore" or "May God give you peace as you go"

Chapter 8

Luke 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Several times in this chapter Luke changes his topic without marking the change. You should not try to make these rough changes smooth.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracles

Jesus made a storm stop by speaking to it, he made a dead girl alive by speaking to her, and he made evil spirits leave a man by speaking to them. (See: miracle)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth (Luke 8:4-15).

Links:

Luke 8:1 Notes

Luke 8:1

General Information:

These verses give background information about Jesus's preaching while traveling.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Luke 8:2

who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom Jesus had set free from evil spirits and healed of diseases"

Mary

One of the "certain women."

Mary who was called Magdalene ... seven demons had been driven out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Mary, whom people called Magdalene ... Jesus had driven out seven demons"

Luke 8:3

Joanna ... Susanna

Two of the "certain women"

Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's manager

Joanna was Chuza's wife, and Chuza was Herod's manager. "Joanna, the wife of Herod's manager, Chuza"

provided for their needs

"financially supported Jesus and his twelve disciples"

Luke 8:4

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
Jesus tells the parable of the soils to the crowd. He explains its meaning to his disciples in 8:11:15.
coming to him
"coming to Jesus"
Luke 8:5
A farmer went out to sow his seed
"A farmer went out to scatter some seed in a field" or "A farmer went out to scatter some seeds in a field"
some fell
"some of the seed fell" or "some of the seeds fell"
it was trampled underfoot
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people walked on it" or "people walked on them"
birds of the sky
This idiom can be translated simply as "birds" or as "birds flew down and" to keep the sense of "sky."
devoured it
"ate it all" or "ate them all"
Luke 8:6
it withered away
"each plant became dry and shriveled up" or "the plants became dry and shriveled up"
it had no moisture
"it was too dry" or "they were too dry." The cause can also be stated. Alternate translation: "the ground was too dry"
Luke 8:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling the parable to the crowd.
choked it
The thorn plants took all the nutrients, water, and sunlight, so the farmer's plants could not grow well.
Luke 8:8
produced a crop
"grew a harvest" or "grew more seeds"
a hundred times greater
This means a hundred times more than the seeds that were sown.
Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" or "If you are willing to listen, listen" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey"
Luke 8:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 8:10
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to speak to his disciples.
The knowledge of ... God has been given to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has given to you the knowledge of ... God" or "God has made you able to understand ... God"
the secrets of the kingdom of God
These are truths that have been hidden, but that Jesus is now revealing them.
for others
"for other people." This refers to the people who rejected the teaching of Jesus and did not follow him.
seeing they may not see
"though they see, they will not perceive." This is a quote from the prophet Isaiah. Some languages may need to state the object of the verbs. Alternate translation: "though they see things, they will not understand them" or "though they see things happen, they will not understand what they mean"
hearing they may not understand
"though they hear, they will not understand." This is a quote from the prophet Isaiah. Some languages may need to state the object of the verbs. Alternate translation: "though they hear instruction, they will not understand the truth"
Luke 8:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to explain the meaning of the parable that he told in Luke 8:5-8.
The seed is the word of God
"The seed is the message from God"
Luke 8:12
The ones along the road are those
"The seeds that fell along the path are those." Jesus tells what happens to the seeds as it relates to people. Alternate translation: "The seeds that fell along the road represent people" or "In the parable, the seeds that fell along the road represent people"
are those who
Jesus speaks of the seeds showing something about people as if the seeds were the people. Alternate translation: "show what happens to people who"
the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "the devil comes and takes away the message of God from their inner thoughts"
takes away
In the parable this was a metaphor of a bird snatching away the seeds. Try to use words in your language that keep that image.
hearts so they may not believe and be saved.
This is the devil's purpose. Alternate translation: "hearts because the devil thinks, 'They must not believe and they must not be saved.'" or "hearts so it will not be that they believe and God saves them."
Luke 8:13
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 8:14
The seeds that fell among the thorns are people
"The seeds that fell among the thorns represent people" or "In the parable the seeds that fell among the thorns represent people"
they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

cares and riches and pleasures of this life choke them"
cares
things that people worry about
pleasures of this life
"the things in this life that people enjoy"
they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and their fruit does not mature
This metaphor refers to the way weeds cut off light and nutrients from plants and keep them from growing. Alternate translation: "as weeds prevent good plants from growing, the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life keep these people from becoming mature"
their fruit does not mature
"they do not bear ripe fruit." Mature fruit is a metaphor for good works. Alternate translation: "so like a plant that does not produce mature fruit, they do not produce good works"
Luke 8:15
the seed that fell on the good soil, these are the ones
"the seed that fell on the good soil represents the people" or "in the parable the seed that fell on the good soil represents the people"
hearing the word
"hearing the message"
with an honest and good heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: "with an honest and good desire"
bear fruit with patient endurance
"produce fruit by enduring patiently" or "produce fruit by continued effort." Fruit is a metaphor for good works. Alternate translation: "like healthy plants that produce good fruit, they produce good works by persevering"
Luke 8:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues with another parable.
No one
This marks the beginning of another parable.
Luke 8:17
nothing is hidden that will not be made known
This double negative can be written as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "everything that is hidden will be made known"
nor is anything secret that will not be known and come into the light
This double negative can be written as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "and everything that is secret will be made known and will come into the light"
Luke 8:18
to the one who has, more will be given to him
It is clear from the context that Jesus is talking about understanding and believing. This can be stated clearly and changed to active form. Alternate translation: "whoever has understanding will be given more understanding" or "God will enable those who believe the truth to understand even more"
the one who does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him
It is clear from the context that Jesus is talking about understanding and believing. This can be stated clearly and changed to active form. Alternate translation: "whoever does not have understanding will lose even what understanding he thinks he has" or "God will cause those who do not believe the truth not to understand even the little that they think they have understood"
Luke 8:19
brothers
These were Jesus's younger brothers—the sons of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus. Since the Father of Jesus was God, and their father was Joseph, they were technically his half-brothers. This detail is not normally translated.
Luke 8:20
He was told
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People told him" or "Someone told him"
wanting to see you
"and they want to see you"
Luke 8:21
My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it
This metaphor expresses that the people who were coming to listen to Jesus were as important to him as his own family was. Alternate translation: "Those who hear the word of God and obey it are like a mother and brothers to me"
the word of God
"the message God has spoken"
Luke 8:22
Connecting Statement:
Jesus and his disciples use a boat to cross Lake Genneseret. The disciples learn more about Jesus's power through the storm that arises.
the lake
This is the lake of Genneseret, which is also called the Sea of Galilee.
They set sail
This expression means they began to travel across the lake in their sailboat.
Luke 8:23
as they sailed
"as they went"
fell asleep
"began to sleep"
A terrible windstorm came down
"A storm of very strong winds began" or "Very strong winds suddenly began to blow"
their boat was filling with water
The strong winds caused high waves which pushed water over the sides of the boat. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the winds caused high waves that started to fill up their boat with water"
Luke 8:24
rebuked
spoke sharply to
the raging of the water
"the violent waves"
they ceased
"the wind and the waves stopped" or "they became still"
Luke 8:25
Where is your faith?

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jesus rebukes them mildly because they do not trust him to take care of them. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have faith!" or "You should trust me!"

Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?

This question expresses shock and confusion over how Jesus is able to control the storm. Alternate translation: "What kind of man is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him!"

Luke 8:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus and his disciples come ashore at Gerasa, where Jesus removes many demons from a man.

the region of the Gerasenes

Gerasenes were people from the city called Gerasa.

across the lake from Galilee

"on the other side of the lake from Galilee"

Luke 8:27

a certain man from the city

"a man from the city of Gerasa"

a certain man from the city who had demons

The man had demons; it was not the city that had demons. Alternate translation: "a certain man from the city, and this man had demons"

who had demons

"who was controlled by demons" or "whom demons controlled"

For a long time he had worn no clothes ... but among the tombs

This is background information about the man who had demons.

he had worn no clothes

"he had not worn clothes"

tombs

These are places where people put dead bodies, possibly caves or small buildings that the man could use for shelter.

Luke 8:28

When he saw Jesus

"When the man who had the demon saw Jesus"

he cried out

"he screamed" or "he shrieked"

fell down before him

"lay down on the ground before Jesus." He did not fall accidentally.

he said with a loud voice

"he said loudly" or "he shouted out"

What have you to do with me

This idiom means "Why are you bothering me?"

Son of the Most High God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Luke 8:29

many times it had seized him

"many times it had taken control of the man" or "many times it had gone into him." This tells about what the demon had done many times before Jesus met the man.

though he was bound ... and kept under guard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "though the people had bound him ... and guarded him"

he would be driven by the demon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the demon would make him go"

Luke 8:30

Legion

Translate this with a word that refers to a large number of soldiers or people. Some other translations say "Army." Alternate translation: "Battalion" or "Brigade"

Luke 8:31

kept begging him

"kept begging Jesus"

Luke 8:32

Now a large herd of pigs was there feeding on the hillside

This is supplied as background information to introduce the pigs.

was there feeding on the hillside

"was nearby eating grass on a hill"

Luke 8:33

So the demons came out

The word "so" is used here to explain that the reason the demons came of out the man was because Jesus had told them that they could go into the pigs.

rushed

ran very fast

the herd ... was drowned

"the herd ... drowned." No one caused the pigs to drown once they were in the water.

Luke 8:34

General Information:

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Luke 8:35

found the man from whom the demons had gone out

"saw the man whom the demons had left"

in his right mind

"sane" or "behaving normally"

sitting at the feet of Jesus

"sitting at the feet" here is an idiom that means "sitting humbly nearby" or "sitting in front of." Alternate translation: "sitting on the ground in front of Jesus"

they were afraid

It may be helpful to state explicitly that they were afraid of Jesus. Alternate translation: "they were afraid of Jesus"

Luke 8:36

those who had seen it

"those who had seen what had happened"

the man who had been possessed by demons had been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus had healed the man whom demons had possessed" or "Jesus had healed the man whom demons had controlled"

Luke 8:37

the region of the Gerasenes

"that area of the Gerasenes" or "the area where the Gerasene people lived." See how you translated this in 8:26

Luke 8:26

they were overwhelmed with great fear

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were very afraid"

and returned

This is not the last thing that Jesus did in that place, so this

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

can also be stated as "in order to return" or "to go back."
returned
The destination can be stated. Alternate translation: "returned across the lake"
Luke 8:38
The man
The events in these verses happened before Jesus left in the boat. It may be helpful to state this clearly at the beginning. Alternate translation: "Before Jesus and his disciples left, the man" or "Before Jesus and his disciples set sail, the man"
Luke 8:39
your home
"your household" or "your family"
give a full account of what God has done for you
"tell them everything about what God has done for you"
Luke 8:40
Connecting Statement:
When Jesus and his disciples return to Galilee on the other side of the lake, he heals the 12-year-old daughter of the ruler of the synagogue as well as a woman who has been bleeding for 12 years (8:43-48).
the crowd welcomed him
"the crowd joyfully greeted him"
Luke 8:41
one of the leaders of the synagogue
"one of the leaders at the local synagogue" or "a leader of the people who met at the synagogue in that city"
fell down at Jesus' feet
Possible meanings are 1) "bowed down at Jesus' feet" or 2) "lay down on the ground at Jesus' feet." Jairus did not fall accidentally. He did this as a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.
Luke 8:42
was dying
"was about to die"
As Jesus was on his way
Some translators may need to first say that Jesus had agreed to go with Jairus. Alternate translation: "So Jesus agreed to go with him. As he was on his way"
the crowds of people pressed together around him
"the people were crowding tightly around Jesus"
Luke 8:43
a woman was there
This introduces a new character in the story.
had been bleeding
"had a flow of blood." She was probably bleeding from her womb even when it was not the normal time for it. Some cultures may have a polite way of referring to this condition.
and could not be healed by anyone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but no one could heal her"
Luke 8:44
touched the edge of his coat
"touched the fringe of his robe." Jewish men wore tassels on the edges of their robes as a part of their ceremonial dress as commanded in God's Law. This is likely what she touched.
Luke 8:45
the crowds of people are all around you and they are pressing in against you
By saying this, Peter was implying that anyone could have touched Jesus. This implicit information can be made explicit if necessary. Alternate translation: "there are many people crowding around you and pressing in against you, so any one of them might have touched you"
Luke 8:46
Someone did touch me
It may be helpful to distinguish this intentional "touch" from the accidental touches of the crowd. Alternate translation: "Someone deliberately touched me"
I know that power has gone out from me
Jesus did not lose power or become weak, but his power healed the woman. Alternate translation: "I know that healing power went out from me" or "I felt my power heal someone"
Luke 8:47
that she could not escape notice
"that she could not keep secret what she had done." It may be helpful to state what she did. Alternate translation: "that she could not keep it a secret that she was the one who had touched Jesus"
she came trembling
"she came trembling with fear"
fell down before him
Possible meanings are 1) "bowed down in front of Jesus" or 2) "lay down on the ground at Jesus's feet." She did not fall accidentally. This was a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.
In the presence of all the people
"In the sight of all the people"
Luke 8:48
Daughter
This was a kind way of speaking to a woman. Your language may have another way of showing this kindness.
your faith has made you well
"because of your faith, you have become well." The abstract noun "faith" could be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "because you believe, you are healed"
Go in peace
This idiom is a way of saying, "Goodbye" and giving a blessing at the same time. Alternate translation: "As you go, do not worry anymore" or "May God give you peace as you go"
Luke 8:49
While he was still speaking
"While Jesus was still speaking to the woman"
synagogue leader
This refers to Jairus (Luke 8:41).
Do not trouble the teacher
This statement implies that Jesus will not be able to do anything to help now that the girl is dead.
the teacher
This refers to Jesus.
Luke 8:50
she will be healed
"she will be well" or "she will live again"

Luke 8:51
When he came to the house
"When they came to the house." Jesus went there with Jairus. Some of Jesus's disciples also went with them.
he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter ... mother
This double negative emphasizes that Peter and the others were the only ones whom Jesus allowed to enter. This could be stated positively. Alternate translation: "he allowed only Peter ... mother to enter with him"
the father of the child
This refers to Jairus.
Luke 8:52
all were mourning and wailing for her
This was the normal way of showing grief in that culture. Alternate translation: "all the people there were showing how sad they were and crying loudly because the girl had died"
Luke 8:53
began to mock him, knowing that she
"laughed at him because they knew the girl"
Luke 8:54
he took her by the hand
"Jesus took hold of the girl's hand"
Luke 8:55
Her spirit returned
"Her spirit returned to her body." The Jews understood that life was the result of the spirit coming into a person. Alternate translation: "She started breathing again" or "She came back to life" or "She became alive again"
Luke 8:56
to tell no one
This could be stated differently. Alternate translation: "not to tell anyone"

Chapter 9

Luke 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"To preach the kingdom of God"
No one knows for sure what the words "kingdom of God" here refer to. Some say it refers to the reign of God on earth, and others say it refers to the gospel message that Jesus died to pay for his people's sins. It is best to translate this as "to preach about the kingdom of God" or "to teach them about how God was going to show himself as king."
Elijah
God had promised the Jews that the prophet Elijah would return before the Messiah came, so some people who saw Jesus do miracles thought Jesus was Elijah (Luke 9:9, Luke 9:19). However, Elijah did come to earth to speak with Jesus (Luke 9:30). (See: prophet and christ and elijah)
"Kingdom of God"
The term "kingdom of God" is used in this chapter to refer to a kingdom that was still in the future when the words were spoken. (See: kingdomofgod)
Glory
Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Luke says in this chapter that Jesus's clothing shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox
A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. An example in this chapter is: "Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." (Luke 9:24).
"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter
"Receiving"
This word appears several times in this chapter and means different things. When Jesus says, "If someone receives a little child like this in my name, he also is receiving me, and if someone receives me, he is also receiving the one who sent me" (Luke 9:48), he is speaking of people serving the child. When Luke says, "the people there did not receive him" (Luke 9:53), he means that the people did not believe in or accept Jesus. (See: believe)

Links:

Luke 9:1 Notes

Luke 9:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus reminds his disciples not to depend on money and their things, gives them power, and then sends them out to various places.
power and authority
These two terms are used together to show that the twelve had both the ability and the right to heal people. Translate this phrase with a combination of words that include both of these ideas.
all demons
Possible meanings are 1) "every demon" or 2) "every kind of demon."
diseases

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

sicknesses
Luke 9:2
sent them out
"sent them to various places" or "told them to go"
Luke 9:3
He said to them
"Jesus said to the twelve." It may be helpful to state that this happened before they went out. Alternate translation: "Before they left, Jesus said to them"
Take nothing
"Do not take anything with you" or "Do not bring anything with you"
staff
large stick that people use for balance when climbing or walking on uneven ground, as well as for defense against attackers
wallet
a bag a traveler uses for carrying what he needs on a journey
bread
This is here used as a general reference to "food."
Luke 9:4
Whatever house you enter
"Any house you enter"
stay there
"remain there" or "temporarily live in that house as a guest"
until you leave
"until you leave that town" or "until you leave that place"
Luke 9:5
Wherever they do not receive you, when you leave
"Here is what you should do in any town where people do not receive you: When you leave"
shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them
To "shake off the dust from your feet" was an expression of strong rejection in that culture. It showed they did not want even the dust of that town to remain on them.
Luke 9:6
they departed
"they left the place were Jesus was"
healing everywhere
"healing wherever they went"
Luke 9:7
General Information:
Verses 7-9 interrupt the story to give information about Herod.
Now Herod
The word "Now" marks a pause in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Herod.
Herod the tetrarch
This refers to Herod Antipas, who was the ruler of one-fourth of Israel.
perplexed
unable to understand, confused
it was said by some
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some people said"
Luke 9:8
still others that one of the prophets of long ago had risen
The word "said" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "still others said that one of the prophets of long ago had risen"
Luke 9:9
I beheaded John. Who is this
Herod assumes that it is impossible for John to rise from the dead. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "It cannot be John because I had his head cut off. So who is this man"
I beheaded John
Herod's soldiers would have carried out executions. Alternate translation: "I commanded my soldiers to cut off John's head"
Luke 9:10
Connecting Statement:
Though the disciples return to Jesus and they go to Bethsaida to spend time together, the crowds follow Jesus for healing and to listen to his teaching. He performs a miracle to provide bread and fish to the crowds as they return home.
apostles returned
"apostles came back to where Jesus was"
everything they had done
This refers to the teaching and healing that they did when they went to the other cities.
Bethsaida
This is the name of a city.
Luke 9:11
General Information:
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Luke 9:12
the day was about to come to an end
"the day was about to end" or "it was near the end of the day." The end of the day was at sunset. Alternate translation: "it was almost sunset"
an isolated place
This was a place far away from where people lived. Alternate translation: "a remote place" or "a place where no one lives"
Luke 9:13
five loaves of bread
A loaf of bread is a lump of dough that is shaped and baked.
two fish—unless we go and buy food for all these people
If "unless" is difficult to understand in your language, you could make a new sentence. "two fish. In order to feed all these people, we would have to go and buy food"
Luke 9:14
about five thousand men
"about 5,000 men." This number does not include the women and children who might have been present.
Have them sit down
"Tell them to sit down"
fifty each
"50 each"
Luke 9:15
So they did this
"This" refers to what Jesus told them to do Luke 9:14. They told the people to sit down in groups of about fifty people.
Luke 9:16

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Taking the five loaves
"Jesus took the five loaves of bread"
up to heaven
This refers to looking up, toward the sky. The Jews believed that heaven was located above the sky.
he blessed them
This refers to the loaves of bread and the fish.
to set before
"to pass out to" or "to give to"
Luke 9:17
were satisfied
This idiom means they ate enough food so they were not hungry. Alternate translation: "they had as much as they wanted to eat"
Luke 9:18
Connecting Statement:
Jesus is praying, with only his disciples near him, and they begin to talk about who Jesus is. Jesus tells them that he will soon die and resurrect and urges them to follow him even if it becomes very hard to do that.
It came about
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event.
praying by himself
"praying alone." The disciples were with Jesus, but he was praying personally and privately by himself.
Luke 9:19
John the Baptist
It may be helpful to restate part of the question here. Alternate translation: "The crowds say you are John the Baptist"
that one of the prophets from long ago has risen
It may be helpful to clarify how this answer relates to Jesus's question. Alternate translation: "that you are one of the prophets from long ago and have risen"
has risen
"has come back to life"
Luke 9:20
Then he said to them
"Then Jesus said to his disciples"
Luke 9:21
he warned and instructed them
The combination of "warned" and "instructed" is a hendiadys that means "strongly warned" or "strictly instructed." Alternate translation: "he strongly warned them" or he strictly instructed them"
them to tell this to no one.
"not to tell anyone." or "that they should not tell anyone." This could be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "them, 'Do not tell anyone.'"
Luke 9:22
The Son of Man must suffer many things
"People will cause the Son of Man to suffer greatly"
The Son of Man ... and he will
Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... and I will"
be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the elders, chief priests, and scribes will reject him"
he will be killed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will kill him"
on the third day
"three days after he dies" or "on the third day after his death"
be raised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make him alive again" or "he will live again"
Luke 9:23
he said
"Jesus said"
to them all
This refers to the disciples who were with Jesus.
come after me
Coming after Jesus represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: "be my disciple" or "be one of my disciples"
must deny himself
"must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"
take up his cross daily and follow me
"carry his cross and follow me every day." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. To follow Jesus represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "must obey me every day even to the point of suffering and dying"
Luke 9:24
General Information:
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Luke 9:25
What profit is there for a person to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit himself?
The implied answer to this question is that it is not good. Alternate translation: "It will not benefit someone at all to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit himself."
to gain the whole world
"to get everything in the world"
lose or forfeit himself
"ruin himself or give up his life"
Luke 9:26
my words
"what I say" or "what I teach"
of him will the Son of Man be ashamed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him"
the Son of Man ... when he comes in his own glory
Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... when I come in my own glory"
the Father
This is an important title for God.
Luke 9:27
But truly I say to you
Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.
there are some standing here who will not taste death
"some of you who are standing here will not taste death"
before they see
Jesus was speaking to the people he was talking about.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Alternate translation: "before you see"

will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God

"Taste death" is an idiom that means "die." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will see the kingdom of God before they die" or "will see the kingdom of God before you die"

Luke 9:28

Connecting Statement:

Eight days after Jesus tells his disciples that some would not die before they saw the kingdom of God, Jesus goes up the mountain to pray with Peter, James, and John, who all fall asleep while Jesus is changed to a dazzling appearance.

these words

This refers to what Jesus said to his disciples in the preceding verses.

Luke 9:29

General Information:

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Luke 9:30

Behold

The word "Behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: "Suddenly"

Luke 9:31

who appeared in glory

This phrase gives information about how Moses and Elijah looked. Some languages would translate it as a separate clause. Alternate translation: "and they appeared in glorious splendor" or "and they were shining brightly"

his departure

"his leaving" or "how Jesus would leave this world." This was a polite way of talking about his death. Alternate translation: "his death"

Luke 9:32

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the main story. Here Luke tells about Peter, James, and John.

heavy with sleep

This idiom means "very sleepy."

they saw his glory

This refers to the brilliant light that surrounded them. Alternate translation: "they saw brilliant light coming from Jesus" or "they saw very bright light coming out of Jesus"

the two men who were standing with him

This refers to Moses and Elijah.

Luke 9:33

As they were going away

"As Moses and Elijah were going away"

shelters

simple, temporary places in which to sit or sleep

Luke 9:34

As he was saying this

"While Peter was saying these things"

they were afraid

These adult disciples were not afraid of clouds. This phrase indicates that some kind of unusual fear came over them with the cloud. Alternate translation: "they were terrified"

they entered into the cloud

This can be expressed in terms of what the cloud did. Alternate translation: "the cloud surrounded them"

Luke 9:35

A voice came out of the cloud

It is understood that the voice could only have belonged to God. Alternate translation: "God spoke to them from the cloud"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

the one who is chosen

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "the one I have chosen" or "I have chosen him"

Luke 9:36

They kept silent ... what they had seen

This is information that tells what happened after the story as a result of the events in the story itself.

kept silent ... told no one

The first phrase refers to their immediate response, and the second refers to what they did in the following days.

Luke 9:37

Connecting Statement:

The next day after Jesus's dazzling appearance, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy that the disciples were unable to make better.

Luke 9:38

Behold, a man from the crowd

The word "behold" alerts us to the new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. English uses "There was a man in the crowd who"

Luke 9:39

You see, a spirit

The phrase "You see" introduces us to the evil spirit in the man's story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There is an evil spirit that"

he foams at the mouth

"foam comes out of his mouth." When a person has a seizure, he can have trouble breathing or swallowing. This causes white foam to form around his mouth.

Luke 9:40

General Information:

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Luke 9:41

Jesus answered and said

"Jesus answered by saying"

You unbelieving and perverse generation

Jesus says this to the crowd that has gathered, and not to his disciples.

perverse generation

"corrupt generation"

how long must I be with you and put up with you?

Here "you" is plural. Jesus uses these questions to express his sadness that the people do not believe. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "I have been with you so long, yet you do not believe. I wonder how long I must put up with you."

Bring your son here

Here "your" is singular. Jesus is speaking directly to the father who addressed him.

Luke 9:42

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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Luke 9:43
they were all amazed at the greatness of God
Jesus performed the miracle, but the crowd recognized that God was the power behind the healing.
everything he was doing
"everything Jesus was doing"
Luke 9:44
Let these words go deeply into your ears
This is an idiom that means they should pay attention. Alternate translation: "Listen carefully and remember" or "Do not forget this"
The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men
This can be stated with an active clause. Here "hands" refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "Someone will betray the Son of Man and put him under the control of men"
The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. The word "hands" is a synecdoche for the people whose hands they are or a metonym for the power that uses those hands. You may need to make explicit who these men are. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men" or "The Son of Man will be betrayed into the power of his enemies" or "I, the Son of Man will be betrayed to my enemies"
Luke 9:45
It was hidden from them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God hid the meaning from them"
Luke 9:46
General Information:
The disciples begin to argue about who will be the most powerful among them.
among them
"among the disciples"
Luke 9:47
knowing the reasoning in their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for their minds. Alternate translation: "knowing the reasoning in their minds" or "knowing what they were thinking"
Luke 9:48
in my name
This refers to a person doing something as a representative of Jesus. Alternate translation: "because of me"
in my name welcomes me
This metaphor could also be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "in my name, it is like he is welcoming me"
the one who sent me
"God, who sent me"
the one who is great
"the one whom God considers to be most important"
Luke 9:49
John answered
"In reply, John said" or "John replied to Jesus." John was responding to what Jesus had said about being the greatest. He was not answering a question.
we saw
John speaks of himself but not Jesus, so "we" here is exclusive.
in your name
This means the person was speaking with the power and authority of Jesus.
Luke 9:50
Do not stop him
This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Allow him to continue"
whoever is not against you is for you
Some modern languages have sayings that mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "if a person does not keep you from working, it is as if he were helping you" or "if someone is not working against you, he is working with you"
Luke 9:51
General Information:
It is now obvious that Jesus has decided to go to Jerusalem.
When the days drew near for him to be taken up
Here "be taken up" implies that Jesus will be taken up to heaven. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the time was coming for him to go up heaven" or "When it was almost time for him to leave this world"
set his face
This idiom means he "firmly decided." Alternate translation: "made up his mind" or "decided"
Luke 9:52
to prepare everything for him
This means to make arrangements for his arrival there, possibly including a place to speak, a place to stay, and food.
Luke 9:53
did not welcome him
"did not want him to stay"
because he had set his face to go to Jerusalem
The Samaritans and the Jews hated each other. Therefore the Samaritans would not help Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem, the Jewish capital.
Luke 9:54
saw this
"saw that the Samaritans did not receive Jesus"
command fire to come down from heaven and destroy them
James and John suggested this method of judgment because they knew that this was how the prophets such as Elijah had judged people who rejected God.
Luke 9:55
he turned and rebuked them
"Jesus turned and rebuked James and John." Jesus did not condemn the Samaritans as the disciples expected.
Luke 9:56
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 9:57
someone
This was not one of the disciples.
Luke 9:58
Foxes have holes ... nowhere to lay his head
Jesus responds with a proverb to teach the man about being Jesus's disciple. Jesus implies that if the man were to

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

follow him, that man too might not have a home. Alternate translation: "Foxes have holes ... nowhere to lay his head. So do not expect that you will have a home"

Foxes

These are land animals similar to small dogs. They sleep in a den or a burrow in the ground.

birds in the sky

"birds that fly in the air"

the Son of Man has ... his head

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, have ... my head"

nowhere to lay his head

"nowhere to rest my head" or "nowhere to sleep." Jesus exaggerates to emphasize that he has no permanent home and that people did not often invite him to stay with them.

Luke 9:59

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk with the people along the road.

Follow me

By saying this Jesus is asking the person to become his disciple and to go with him.

first let me go and bury my father

It is unclear whether the man's father has died and he will bury him immediately, or if the man wants to stay for a longer amount of time until his father dies so he can bury him then. The main point is the man wants to do something else first before he follows Jesus.

first let me go

"before I do that, let me go"

Luke 9:60

Leave the dead to bury their own dead

Jesus does not mean literally that dead people will bury other dead people. Possible meanings of "the dead" are 1) it is a metaphor for those who will soon die, or 2) it is a metaphor for those who do not follow Jesus and are spiritually dead. The main point is that a disciple must not let anything delay him from following Jesus.

the dead

This refers to dead people in general. Alternate translation: "the dead people"

Luke 9:61

I will follow you

"I will join you as a disciple" or "I am ready to follow you"

first let me say goodbye to those in my home

"before I do that, let me tell my people at my home that I am leaving"

Luke 9:62

No one ... fit for the kingdom of God

Jesus responds with a proverb to teach the man about being his disciple. Jesus means that a person is not suitable for the kingdom to God if he focuses on people in his past instead of following Jesus.

No one who puts his hand to the plow

Here "puts his hand to" something is an idiom that means the person starts to do something. Alternate translation: "No one who starts to plow his field"

looks back

Anyone who is looking back while plowing cannot guide the plow where it needs to go. That person must focus on looking forward in order to plow well.

fit for the kingdom of God

"useful for the kingdom of God" or "suitable for the kingdom of God"

Chapter 10

Luke 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to get the food they have planted so they can bring it to their houses and eat it. Harvest can also refer to the food that is gathered. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about Jesus so those people can be part of God's kingdom. (See: harvest and faith)

Neighbor

A neighbor is anyone who lives nearby. The Jews helped their Jewish neighbors who needed help, and they expected their Jewish neighbors to help them. Jesus wanted them to understand that people who were not Jews were also their neighbors, so he told them a parable

Links:

Luke 10:1 Notes

Luke 10:1

General Information:

Jesus sends out 70 more people ahead of him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new event in the story.

seventy

"70." Some versions say "seventy-two" or "72." You may want to include a footnote that says that.

sent them out two by two

"sent them out in groups of two" or "sent them out with two people in each group"

Luke 10:2

He said to them

This was before the men actually went out. Alternate translation: "He had said to them" or "Before they went out he told them"

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few

"There is a big crop, but not enough workers to bring it in." Jesus means there are many people ready to enter God's kingdom, but there are not enough disciples to go teach and

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

help the people.

Luke 10:3

Go on your way

"Go to the cities" or "Go to the people"

I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves

Wolves attack and kill sheep. This metaphor therefore means that there are people who would attempt to harm the disciples that Jesus is sending out. The names of other animals could be substituted. Alternate translation: "when I send you out, people will want to harm you, as wolves attack sheep"

Luke 10:4

Do not carry a money bag, or a traveler's bag, or sandals

"Do not take with you a bag, a traveler's bag, or sandals"

greet no one on the road

"do not greet anyone on the road." Jesus was emphasizing that they should go quickly to the towns and do this work. He was not telling them to be rude.

Luke 10:5

May peace be on this house

This was both a greeting and a blessing. Here "house" refers to those who live in the house. Alternate translation: "May the people in this household receive peace"

Luke 10:6

a son of peace

The phrase "son of peace" here is a metaphor for a person who wants peace with God and with people. Alternate translation: "a peaceful person"

your peace will rest upon him

Here "peace" is described as a living thing that can choose where to stay. Alternate translation: "he will have the peace you blessed him with"

if not

It may be helpful to restate the entire phrase. Alternate translation: "if there is no person of peace there" or "if the owner of the house is not a peaceful person"

it will return to you

Here "peace" is described as a living thing that can choose to leave. Alternate translation: "you will have that peace" or "he will not receive the peace you blessed him with"

Luke 10:7

Remain in that same house

Jesus was not saying that they should stay in the house all day, but that they should sleep at the same house every night they were there. Alternate translation: "Continue to sleep at that house"

for the laborer is worthy of his wages

This is a general principle that Jesus was applying to the men he was sending out. Since they would be teaching and healing the people, the people should provide them with a place to stay and with food.

Do not move around from house to house

Moving around from house to house means going to different houses. It can be made clear that he was talking about staying overnight at different houses. "Do not go sleep at a different house each night"

Luke 10:8

and they receive you

"if they welcome you"

eat what is set before you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "eat whatever food they give you"

Luke 10:9

the sick

This refers to sick people in general. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

The kingdom of God has come close to you

The abstract noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verbs "reign" or "rule." Possible meanings are 1) the kingdom of God will begin soon. Alternate translation: "God will soon rule everywhere as king" or 2) the activities of kingdom of God are happening all around you. Alternate translation: "The proof that God is reigning is all around you"

Luke 10:10

and they do not receive you

"and the people of the city reject you"

Luke 10:11

Even the dust from your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you

This is a symbolic action to show that they reject the people of the city. Alternate translation: "Just as you rejected us, we thoroughly reject you. We even reject the dust from your town that clings to our feet"

we wipe off

Since Jesus was sending these people out in groups of two, it would be two people saying this. So languages that have a dual form of "we" would use it.

But know this: The kingdom of God is near

The phrase "But know this" emphasizes the importance of what is said next. Alternate translation: "But be aware that the kingdom of God is near" or "But be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near"

The kingdom of God is near

The abstract noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verbs "reign" or "rule." See how you translated a similar sentence in [Luke 10:8]

Luke 10:12

I say to you

Jesus was saying this to the 70 people he was sending out. He said this to show that he was about to say something very important.

that day

The disciples would have understood that this refers to the time of final judgment of sinners. Alternate translation: "judgment day"

it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town

"God will not judge Sodom as severely as he will judge that town." Alternate translation: "God will judge the people of that town more severely than he will judge the people of Sodom"

Luke 10:13

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!

Jesus speaks as if the people of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida are there listening to him, but they are not.

If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon

Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the past but did not. Alternate translation: "If someone had performed the miracles for the people of Tyre and Sidon that I performed for you"

they would have repented long ago, sitting

"the wicked people who lived there would have shown that they were sorry for their sins by sitting"

sitting in sackcloth and ashes

"wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes"

Luke 10:14

But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you

It may be helpful to clearly state the reason for their judgment. Alternate translation: "But because you did not repent and believe in me even though you saw me do miracles, God will judge you more severely than he will judge the people of Tyre and Sidon"

at the judgment

"on that final day when God judges everyone"

Luke 10:15

You, Capernaum

Jesus now speaks to the people in the city of Capernaum as if they are listening to him, but they are not.

do you think you will be exalted to heaven?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride. The expression "exalted to heaven" means "greately exalted" or "honored." Alternate translation: "you will certainly not go up to heaven!" or "God will not honor you!"

you will be brought down to Hades

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will go down to Hades" or "God will send you to Hades"

Luke 10:16

The one who listens to you listens to me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "When someone listens to you, it is as if they were listening to me"

the one who rejects you rejects me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "when someone rejects you, it is as if they were rejecting me"

the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "when someone rejects me, it is as if they were rejecting the one who sent me"

the one who sent me

This refers to God the Father, who appointed Jesus for this special task. Alternate translation: "God, who sent me"

Luke 10:17

The seventy returned

Some languages will need to say that the seventy actually went out first, as the UDB does. This is implicit information that can be made explicit.

seventy

You may want to add a footnote: "Some versions have '72' instead of '70.'"

in your name

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

Luke 10:18

I was watching Satan fall from heaven as lightning

Jesus used a simile to compare how God was defeating Satan when his 70 disciples were preaching in the towns to the way lightning strikes.

fall from heaven as lightning

Possible meanings are 1) fall as quickly as lighting strikes, or 2) fall down from heaven as lightning strikes downward. Since both meaning are possible, it may be best to keep the image.

Luke 10:19

authority to tread on serpents and scorpions

"authority to trample on snakes and crush scorpions." Possible meanings are 1) snakes and scorpions are a metaphor for evil spirits. Alternate translation: "the right to defeat evil spirits" or 2) this refers to actual snakes and scorpions.

tread on serpents and scorpions

This implies that they would do this and not be injured. Alternate translation: "walk on snakes and scorpions, which will not hurt you,"

scorpions

Scorpions are small animals with two claws and a poisonous stinger on their tail.

over all the power of the enemy

"I have given you authority to crush the power of the enemy" or "I have given you authority to defeat the enemy." The enemy is Satan.

Luke 10:20

do not rejoice only in this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice even more that your names are engraved in heaven

"do not rejoice only because the spirits submit to you" can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "rejoice that your names are written in heaven even more than you rejoice that the spirits submit to you"

your names are engraved in heaven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has written your names in heaven" or "your names are on the list of people who are citizens of heaven"

Luke 10:21

that same hour

"that same time"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Lord of heaven and earth

The phrase "heaven" and earth" represents everything that exists. Alternate translation: "Master over everyone and everything in heaven and earth"

these things

This refers to Jesus's previous teaching about the authority of the disciples. It may be best to simply say "these things" and let the reader determine the meaning.

the wise and understanding

The words "wise" and "understanding" are nominal adjectives that refer to people with these qualities. Because God had concealed truth from them, these people were not actually wise and understanding, even though they thought they were. Alternate translation: "from people who think they are wise and have understanding"

those who are untaught, like little children

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This refers to those who may not have much education but who are willing to accept Jesus's teachings in the same way that little children willingly listen to those they trust. Alternate translation: "people who may have little education, but who listen to God as little children do"

for so it was well pleasing in your sight

"for it pleased you to do this"

Luke 10:22

All things have been entrusted to me from my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has handed everything over to me"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

no one knows who the Son is except the Father

This double negative emphasizes that the Father is the only one who knows. Alternate translation: "The only one who knows who the Son is, is the Father"

knows ... knows

The word that is translated as "knows" means to know from personal experience. God the Father knows Jesus in this way.

the Son

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.

no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those ... him

This double negative emphasizes that the Son is the only one who knows. Alternate translation: "The only one who knows who the Father is, is the Son"

those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him

"whoever the Son desires to show the Father to"

Luke 10:23

Then he turned around to the disciples and said privately

The word "privately" indicates that he was alone with his disciples. Alternate translation: "Later, when he was alone with his disciples, he turned to them and said"

Blessed are those who see the things that you see

This probably refers to the good works and miracles that Jesus was doing. Alternate translation: "How good it is for those who see the things that you see me doing"

Luke 10:24

and they did not see them

This implies that Jesus was not yet doing those things. Alternate translation: "but they could not see them because I was not doing them yet"

the things that you hear

This probably refers to the teaching of Jesus. Alternate translation: "the things that you have heard me say"

and they did not hear them

This implies that Jesus was not yet teaching. Alternate translation: "but they could not hear them because I had not yet started to teach"

Luke 10:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus replies with a story to a Jewish teacher who wants to test Jesus.

Behold, an expert in the law

This alerts us to a new event and a new person in the story.

stood up

This is an idiom that probably here means "began to act." Your language may have a different way of showing that the expert in the law had been present, listening to Jesus, and was now beginning to act. He was not necessarily sitting before he "stood up" and began to speak.

test him

"challenge Jesus"

Luke 10:26

What is written in the law? How do you read it?

Jesus is not seeking information. He uses these questions to test the Jewish teacher's knowledge. Alternate translation: "Tell me what Moses wrote in the law and what you think it means."

What is written in the law?

This can be asked in active form. Alternate translation: "What did Moses write in the law?"

How do you read it?

"What have you read in it?" or "What do you understand it to say?"

Luke 10:27

You will love ... neighbor as yourself

The man is quoting what Moses wrote in the law.

with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind

Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being. These four phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

your neighbor as yourself

This simile can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

Luke 10:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 10:29

But he, desiring to justify himself, said

"But the expert in the law wanted to find a way to justify himself, so he said" or "But wanting to appear righteous, the expert in the law said"

Who is my neighbor?

The man wanted to know whom he was required to love. Alternate translation: "Whom should I consider to be my neighbor and love as I love myself?" or "Which people are my neighbors that I should love?"

Luke 10:30

Jesus answered him and said

Jesus answers the man by telling a parable. Alternate translation: "In response, Jesus told him this story"

A certain man

This introduces a new character in the parable.

He fell among robbers, who

"He was surrounded by robbers, who" or "Some robbers attacked him. They"

stripped him of his belongings

"took everything he had" or "stole all his things"

half dead

This idiom means "almost dead."

Luke 10:31

By chance

This was not something that any person had planned.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

a certain priest
This expression introduces a new person in the story, but does not identify him by name.
and when he saw him
"and when the priest saw the injured man." A priest is a very religious person, so the audience would assume that he would help the injured man. Since he did not, this phrase could be stated as "but when he saw him" to call attention to this unexpected result.
he passed by on the other side
It is implied that he did not help the man. Alternate translation: "he did not help the injured man but instead walked past him on the other side of the road"
Luke 10:32
a Levite ... the other side
The Levite served in the temple. He would be expected to help his fellow Jewish man. Since he did not, it may are helpful to state that. Alternate translation: "a Levite ... the other side and did not help him"
Luke 10:33
But a certain Samaritan
This introduces a new person in the story without giving his name. We know only that he was from Samaria.
a certain Samaritan
The Jews despised the Samaritans and would have assumed that he would not help the injured Jewish man.
When he saw him
"When the Samaritan saw the injured man"
he was moved with compassion
"he felt sorry for him"
Luke 10:34
bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them
He would have put the oil and wine on the wounds first. Alternate translation: "he put wine and oil on the wounds and wrapped them with cloth"
pouring oil and wine on them
Wine was used to clean the wound, and oil was probably used to prevent infection. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "pouring oil and wine on them to help heal them"
his own animal
"his own pack animal." This was an animal that he used to carry heavy loads. It was probably a donkey.
Luke 10:35
two denarii
"two day's wages." "Denarii" is the plural of "denarius."
the host
"the innkeeper" or "the person who took care of the inn"
whatever extra you spend, when I return, I will repay you
This could be reordered. Alternate translation: "when I return, I will repay you whatever extra amount you spend"
Luke 10:36
Which of these three do you think ... robbers?
This could be written as two questions. Alternate translation: "What do you think? Which of these three men ... robbers?"
was a neighbor
"showed himself to be a true neighbor"
to him who fell among the robbers
"to the man whom the robbers attacked"
Luke 10:37
He said, "The one who showed mercy to him."
"The expert in the law said, 'The one who showed mercy to him.'"
Go and do the same
Here "do the same" refers to showing mercy to others. Alternate translation: "In the same way, go and show mercy to anyone else who needs help" or "In the same way, go and help everyone you can"
Luke 10:38
General Information:
Jesus comes to Martha's house, where her sister Mary listens to Jesus with great attention.
Now
This word is used here to mark a new event.
as they were traveling along
"as Jesus and his disciples were traveling along"
a certain village
This introduces the village as a new location, but does not name it.
a certain woman named Martha
This introduces Martha as a new character. Your language may have a way of introducing new people.
Luke 10:39
sat at the Lord's feet
This was the normal and respectful position for a learner at that time. Alternate translation: "sat on the floor near Jesus"
heard his word
This refers to everything that Jesus taught while at Martha's house. Alternate translation: "listened to the Lord teach"
Luke 10:40
overly busy
"very busy" or "too busy"
do you not care ... alone?
Martha is complaining that the Lord is allowing Mary to sit listening to him when there is so much work to do. She respects the Lord, so she uses a rhetorical question to make her complaint more polite. Alternate translation: "it seems like you do not care ... alone."
Luke 10:41
Martha, Martha
Jesus repeats Martha's name for emphasis. Alternate translation: "Dear Martha" or "You, Martha"
Luke 10:42
only one thing is necessary
Jesus is contrasting what Mary is doing with what Martha is doing. It may be helpful to make this explicit. Alternate translation: "the only thing that is really necessary is to listen to my teaching" or "listening to my teaching is more necessary than preparing a meal"
which will not be taken away from her
Possible meanings are 1) "and I will not take this opportunity away from her" or 2) "and she will not lose what she has gained as she was listening to me"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 11

Luke 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULB sets the lines in 11:2-4 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are a special prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Lord's Prayer

When Jesus's followers asked him to teach them how to pray, he taught them this prayer. He did not expect them to use the same words every time they prayed, but he did want them to know what God wanted them to pray about.

Jonah

Jonah was an Old Testament prophet who was sent to the Gentile city of Nineveh to tell them to repent. When he told them to repent, they repented. (See: prophet and sin and repent)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Washing

The Pharisees would wash themselves and the things they ate with. They would even wash things that were not dirty. The law of Moses did not tell them to wash these things, but they would wash them anyway. This was because they thought that if they obeyed both the rules that God had made and some rules that God had not made, God would think that they were better people. (See: lawofmoses and clean)

Links:

Luke 11:1 Notes

Luke 11:1

General Information:

The is the beginning of the next part of the story. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Luke 11:2

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to his disciples"

Father

Jesus is commanding the disciples to honor the name of God the Father by addressing him as "Father" when praying to him. This is an important title for God.

may your name be honored as holy

"cause everyone to honor your name." "Name" often refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "may all people honor you"

May your kingdom come

The action of God ruling over everyone is spoken of as if it were God himself. Alternate translation: "May you come and rule over everyone"

Luke 11:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples how to pray.

Give us

This is an imperative, but it should be translated as a request, rather than as a command. It may be helpful to add something such as "please" to it to make this clear. Alternate translation: "Please give us"

our daily bread

Bread was an inexpensive food that people ate every day. It is used here to refer to food in general. Alternate translation: "the food we need each day"

Luke 11:4

Forgive us ... Do not lead us

These are imperatives, but they should be translated as requests, rather than as commands. It may be helpful to add something such as "please" to them to make this clear. Alternate translation: "Please forgive us ... Please do not lead us"

Forgive us our sins

"Forgive us for sinning against you" or "Forgive our sins"

as we forgive

"since we also forgive"

who is in debt to us

"who has sinned against us" or "who has done wrong things to us"

Do not lead us into temptation

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Lead us away from temptation"

Luke 11:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about prayer.

lend to me three loaves of bread

"let me borrow three loaves of bread" or "give me three loaves of bread and I will pay you later." The host does not have any food ready to give to his guest.

three loaves of bread

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food. Alternate translation: "some food"

Luke 11:6

Connecting Statement:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jesus finishes asking a question that begins in verse 5.

since a friend ... to set before him'?

Jesus finishes asking the question that begins with the words "Which of you will have a friend" in verse 5. The whole question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Suppose you have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend to me three loaves of bread, since a friend ... to set before him.'"

just came in from the road

It is implied that the visitor has come far from his home. Alternate translation: "was traveling and just came to my house"

anything to set before him

"any food ready to give him"

Luke 11:7

I am not able to get up

"It is not convenient for me to get up"

give bread to you

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food. Alternate translation: "give you some food"

Luke 11:8

I say to you

Jesus was speaking to the disciples. The word "you" is plural.

give bread to you ... give you as many loaves of bread

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food. Alternate translation: "give you some food ... give you as much food"

give bread to you because you are ... your ... you ... you need

Jesus addresses the disciples as if they were the ones asking for bread. Alternate translation: "give bread to him because he is ... his ... him ... he needs"

because of your shameless persistence

The phrase can be reworded to eliminate the abstract noun "persistence." Alternate translation: "because you persist shamelessly" or "because you boldly continue to ask him"

Luke 11:9

ask ... seek, and you will find ... knock

Jesus gives these commands to encourage his disciples to pray continually. Some languages may also require more information with these verbs. Use the form of "you" that would be most appropriate in this context. Alternate translation: "keep asking for what you need ... keep seeking what you need from God, and you will find it ... keep knocking on the door"

it will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will give it to you" or "you will receive it"

knock

To knock at a door is to hit it a few times to let a person inside the house know you are standing outside. It can also be translated using the way people in your culture show that they have arrived, such as "call out" or "cough" or "clap." Here, it means a person should keep praying to God until he answers.

it will be opened to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will open the door for you" or "God will welcome you inside"

Luke 11:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 11:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching his disciples about prayer.

Which father among you ... will ... a fish?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. It could also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "None of you fathers ... would ... a fish."

Luke 11:12

Or ... egg, will you give a scorpion to him?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. It could also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "And you would never give him a scorpion ... egg."

scorpion

A scorpion is similar to a spider, but it has a tail with a poisonous sting. If scorpions are not known where you are, you could translate this as "poisonous spider" or "spider that stings"

Luke 11:13

if you who are evil know

"since you who are evil know" or "even though you are sinful, you know"

how much more will ... give ... him?

Jesus again uses a question to teach his disciples. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you can be sure that ... will give ... him."

Luke 11:14

Now

The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.

Jesus was driving out a demon

It may be helpful to add extra information. Alternate translation: "Jesus was driving a demon out of a person" or "Jesus was making a demon leave a person"

demon that was mute

The demon has power to prevent people from speaking. Alternate translation: "demon that caused the man to be unable to speak"

Now

This word is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. When the demon comes out of the man, some of the people criticize Jesus, and that leads to Jesus teaching about evil spirits.

When the demon had gone out

It may be helpful to add extra information. Alternate translation: "When the demon had gone out of the man" or "When the demon left the man"

the man who had been mute spoke

"the man who had been unable to speak now spoke"

Luke 11:15

General Information:

Jesus is accused of using Satan's power to drive a demon

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

out of a mute man.

By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he is driving out demons

"He is driving out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons"

Beelzebul

another name for Satan

Luke 11:16

Others tested him

"Other people tested Jesus." They wanted him to prove that his authority was from God.

and sought from him a sign from heaven

"and asked him to give a sign from heaven" or "by demanding that he give a sign from heaven." This was how they wanted him to prove that his authority was from God.

Luke 11:17

General Information:

Jesus begins to respond to the crowd.

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate

"kingdom" here refers to the people in it. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If people of a kingdom fight among themselves, they will destroy their kingdom"

a house divided against itself falls

Here "house" refers to a family. Alternate translation: "if family members fight each other, they will ruin their family"

falls

"crashes down and is destroyed." This image of the house collapsing refers to the destruction of a family when the members fight each other.

Luke 11:18

If Satan is divided against himself

"Satan" here is referring to the demons who follow Satan as well as to Satan himself. Alternate translation: "If Satan and members of his kingdom are fighting among themselves"

If Satan ... how will his kingdom stand?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If Satan ... his kingdom will not last." or "If Satan ... his kingdom will fall apart."

For you say I cast out demons by Beelzebul

"For you say that it is by the power of Beelzebul that I make demons leave people." The next part of his argument can be stated explicitly: Alternate translation: "For you say that it is by the power of Beelzebul that I make demons leave people. That would mean that Satan is divided against himself"

Luke 11:19

If I ... by whom do your followers drive them out?

"If I ... by whose power do your followers force demons to leave people?" Jesus uses a question to teach the people. The meaning of Jesus's question can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "If I ... then we must agree that your followers also drive out demons by Beelzebul's power. But you do not believe that it is true."

they will be your judges

"your followers who cast out demons by God's power will judge you for saying that I cast out demons by Beelzebul's power"

Luke 11:20

by the finger of God

The "finger of God" refers to God's power.

then the kingdom of God has come to you

"this shows that God's kingdom has come to you"

Luke 11:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins a parable about a strong man who is defeated by a stronger man.

When a strong man ... are safe

The "strong man" here is a metaphor for Satan.

his own palace

Possible meanings of the word "palace" are 1) the entire premises of the "strong man" or 2) it refers to the courtyard of a palace and is a synecdoche for the palace. If you have a word for the house and other areas close to it that the strong man can constantly guard, you may want to use it here.

his possessions are safe

"no one can steal his things"

Luke 11:22

a stronger man

The stronger man in the parable is a metaphor for Jesus, who is stronger than Satan.

takes away the armor

"removes the weapons and protection"

plunders the man's possessions

"steals his possessions" or "takes away anything that he wants"

Luke 11:23

The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters

This refers to any person or any group of people. "Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters" or "Those who are not with me are against me, and those who do not gather with me scatter"

one who is not with me

"one who does not support me" or "one who does not work with me"

is against me

"works against me"

the one who does not gather with me scatters

Jesus is referring to gathering disciples who follow him. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "anyone who does not cause people to come and follow me causes them to go away from me"

Luke 11:24

waterless places

This refers to "desolate places" where the evil spirits wander.

Finding none

"If the spirit does not find any rest there"

my house from which I came

This refers to the person in which he used to live. Alternate translation: "the person in whom I used to live"

Luke 11:25

finds the house had been swept clean and put in order

This metaphor speaks about the person as if he were a house that is swept clean, with things put in their places. It

is implied that the house is still empty. This can be stated in active form with that information made explicit. Alternate translation: "finds that the person is like a house that someone has swept clean and organized by putting everything where it belongs, but has left empty" or "finds that the person is like a house that is clean and organized, but empty"
Luke 11:26
worse than the first
The word "first" refers to the condition of the man while he had the unclean spirit before it left him. Alternate translation: "worse than his condition was before the spirit left"
Luke 11:27
General Information:
This is a break in Jesus's teachings. A woman speaks a blessing and Jesus responds.
It happened that
This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
raised her voice above the crowd
This idiom means "spoke loudly above the noise of the crowd"
Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you
The parts of a woman's body are used to refer to the whole woman. Alternate translation: "How good it is for the woman who bore you and nursed you at her breasts" or "How happy the woman who bore you and nursed you at her breasts must be"
Luke 11:28
Rather, blessed are they
"It is even better for those"
hear the word of God
"hear the message God has spoken"
and keep it
"and obey it"
Luke 11:29
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues teaching the crowd.
As the crowds were increasing
"As more people were joining the crowd" or "As the crowd was growing larger"
This generation is an evil generation. It seeks ... to it
Here "generation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "The people living at this time are evil people. They seek ... to them" or "You people living at this time are evil people. You seek ... to you"
It seeks a sign
The information about what kind of sign it seeks can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "It wants me to perform a miracle as proof that I have come from God"
no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah
This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"
no sign will be given to it
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not give it a sign"
the sign of Jonah
"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for Jonah"
Luke 11:30
For just as Jonah became a sign ... so too ... this generation
This means that Jesus will serve as a sign from God for the Jews of that day in exactly the same way as Jonah served as a sign from God to the people of Nineveh.
Son of Man will
Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"
this generation
"the people living today"
Luke 11:31
Queen of the South
This refers to the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was a kingdom south of Israel.
will rise up
"will appear"
she came from the ends of the earth
This idiom means that she came from very far away. Alternate translation: "she came a very great distance" or "she came from a place very far away"
someone greater than Solomon is here
Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, who am greater than Solomon, am here"
Luke 11:32
The men of Nineveh
It may be helpful to state explicitly that this refers to the ancient city of Nineveh. Alternate translation: "The men who lived in the ancient city of Nineveh"
The men
This includes both men and woman. Alternate translation: "The people"
this generation of people
"the people of this time"
for they repented
"for the people of Nineveh repented"
someone greater than Jonah is here
Jesus is speaking about himself. It may be helpful to explicitly state that they have not listened to him. Alternate translation: "even though I am greater than Jonah, you still have not repented"
Luke 11:33
General Information:
Jesus begins a parable in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others.
puts it in a hidden place or under a basket
"hides it or puts in under a basket"
but on a lampstand
The understood subject and verb in this clause may be supplied. Alternate translation: "but a person places it on a lampstand" or "but a person puts it on a table"
Luke 11:34
General Information:
Jesus continues his parable, in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or

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accept his teaching as being in darkness.

Your eye is the lamp of the body

In this part of the metaphor, the things they saw Jesus do provided understanding just as an eye provides light for the body. Alternate translation: "Your eye is like the lamp of the body"

Your eye

The eye is a metonym for vision.

the body

The body is a synecdoche for a person's life.

When your eye is good

Here "eye" here is a metonym for vision. Alternate translation: "When your vision is good" or "when you see well"

the whole body is filled with light

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the light will fill your whole body" or "you will be able to see everything clearly"

when your eye is bad

Here "eye" is a metonym for vision. Alternate translation: "When your vision is bad" or "when you see poorly"

your body is full of darkness

"you will not be able to see anything"

Luke 11:35

General Information:

Jesus continues his parable, in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or accept his teaching as being in darkness.

watch out that the light in you is not darkness

"look carefully to make sure that what you think is light is not actually darkness"

Luke 11:36

General Information:

Jesus ends his parable.

If then your whole body is full of light, not having any member in darkness

Jesus speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or accept his teaching as being in darkness.

not having any member in darkness

"with none of its parts in darkness"

then your whole body will be like when a lamp shines its brightness on you

Jesus states the same truth he has just presented as a metaphor, but this time he uses a simile. He speaks of people who are full of truth as if they are a lamp that shines brightly.

Luke 11:37

General Information:

Jesus finishes teaching the crowd, and a Pharisee invites Jesus to eat at his house.

When he had finished speaking

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

at his house

This refers to the Pharisee's house.

reclined

It was the custom at a relaxed meal such as this dinner for men to eat while lying down comfortably around the table. You might want to translate using the word your language uses for the way people's bodies are when they eat. Alternate translation: "sat down at the table"

Luke 11:38

wash

The Pharisees had a rule that people must wash their hands in order to be ceremonially clean before God. Alternate translation: "wash his hands" or "wash his hands in order to be ritually clean"

Luke 11:39

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak to the Pharisee using a metaphor. He compares the way they clean cups and bowls to how they clean themselves.

the outside of cups and bowls

Washing of the outside of containers was a part of the ritual practices of the Pharisees.

but the inside of you is filled with robbery and evil

This part of the metaphor contrasts the careful way they clean the outside of the dishes with the way they ignore their own internal condition.

Luke 11:40

You senseless men

This expression can refer to men or women, even though all of the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking to here were men.

Did not the one who made the outside also make the inside?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees for not understanding that what is in their hearts matters to God. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The one who made the outside also made the inside!"

Luke 11:41

Give what is inside as alms

This refers to what they should be doing with their cups and bowls. Alternate translation: "Give what is inside your cups and bowls as alms" or "Be generous to the poor"

all things will be clean for you

"you will be completely clean" or "you will be clean both inside and outside"

Luke 11:42

you tithe mint and rue and every other garden herb

"you give God one tenth of your mint and rue and other herbs from your garden." Jesus was giving an example of how extreme the Pharisees were in giving a tenth of their income.

mint and rue

These are herbs. People put just a little bit of these leaves into their food to give it flavor. If people do not know what mint and rue are, you can use the name of herbs they know or a general expression such as "herbs."

every other garden herb

Possible meanings are 1) "every other vegetable" 2) "every other garden herb" or 3) "every other garden plant."

the love of God

"to love God" or "love for God." God is the one who is loved.

without failing to do the other things also

"without failing" emphasizes that this should always be

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

done. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "and to always do the other good things as well"

Luke 11:43

the front seats

"the best seats"

respectful greetings

"you like people to greet you with special honor"

Luke 11:44

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the Pharisees.

you are like unmarked graves that people walk over without knowing it

The Pharisees are like unmarked graves because they look ceremonially clean, but they cause people around them to become unclean.

unmarked graves

These graves were holes dug in the ground where a dead body was buried. They did not have the white stones that people normally place over graves so that others would see them.

without knowing it

When the Jews walked over a grave, they would become ceremonially unclean. These unmarked graves caused them to accidentally do that. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "without realizing it and become ceremonially unclean"

Luke 11:45

General Information:

Jesus begins to respond to a Jewish teacher.

One of the experts in the law

This introduces a new character into the story.

what you say insults us too

Jesus's comments about the Pharisees also seemed to apply to the teachers of the Jewish laws.

Luke 11:46

Woe to you, teachers of the law!

Jesus makes it clear that he intended to condemn the actions of the teachers of the law along with the Pharisees.

you put people under burdens that are hard to carry

"you put burdens on people that are too heavy and they cannot carry them." Jesus speaks about someone giving people many rules as if the person were giving them heavy things to carry. Alternate translation: "you burden people by giving them too many rules to follow"

touch the burdens with one of your own fingers

Possible meanings are 1) "do anything at all to help people carry those burdens" or 2) "make any effort to carry those burdens yourselves."

Luke 11:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 11:48

So you are witnesses and you consent

Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees and teachers of the law. They know about the murder of the prophets, but do not condemn their ancestors for killing them. Alternate translation: "So, rather than denouncing them, you confirm and agree"

Luke 11:49

For this reason

This refers back to the previous statement that the teachers of the law burdened people with rules.

God's wisdom said

"wisdom" is treated as if it was able to speak for God. Alternate translation: "God in his wisdom said" or "God wisely said"

I will send to them prophets and apostles

"I will send prophets and apostles to my people." God had declared beforehand that he would send prophets and apostles to the ancestors of the Jewish audience to whom Jesus was speaking.

they will persecute and kill some of them

"my people will persecute and kill some of the prophets and apostles." God had declared beforehand that the ancestors of the Jewish audience to whom Jesus was speaking would persecute and kill the prophets and apostles.

Luke 11:50

this generation will be charged for all the blood of the prophets shed since the foundation of the world

God will hold the people to whom Jesus is speaking responsible for the murder of the prophets by their ancestors. Alternate translation: "God will hold this generation responsible for the deaths of all the prophets whom people have killed since the foundation of the world"

for all the blood of the prophets shed

The "blood ... shed" refers to the blood that was spilled when the prophets were killed. Alternate translation: "for all the murders of the prophets"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

Luke 11:51

Zechariah

This was probably the priest in the Old Testament who rebuked the people of Israel for idolatry. This was not the Father of John the Baptist.

who was killed

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the people killed"

Luke 11:52

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes responding to the Jewish teacher.

you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering

Jesus speaks about life in God's kingdom as if it were in a house that the teachers will neither enter nor allow others to enter. This means the teachers do not truly know God, and they prevent others from knowing him as well by teaching about scripture things that are not true. Alternate translation: "you have made it impossible for people to know how to live in God's kingdom; you do not want to live in it yourselves, and you keep others from knowing"

the key of knowledge

Possible meanings are 1) "the key that opens the door to knowledge," in which case "knowledge" is what is behind the door, or 2) "the key, which is the knowledge of how to open the door," in which case Jesus is not telling what is

behind the door.
you do not enter in yourselves
"you yourselves do not go in to get knowledge"
Luke 11:53
General Information:
This is the end of the part of the story where Jesus eats at the Pharisee's house.
After Jesus left there
"After Jesus left the Pharisee's house"
argued with him about many things
The scribes and Pharisees did not argue in order to defend their views, but to try to trap Jesus so they could accuse him of breaking the law of God.
Luke 11:54
lying in wait to catch him in something he might say
The scribes and Pharisees hoped Jesus would say something wrong so that they could accuse him of breaking God's law. They did not want to learn from him.
lying in wait to catch him
The writer speaks of the Pharisees as if they were thieves hiding by the side of a road waiting for someone to come by whom they could overpower and rob. In this case, they were waiting for Jesus to say something for which they could accuse him. Alternate translation: "waiting and hoping to accuse him"

Chapter 12

Luke 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Blasphemy against the Spirit"
No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)
Servants
God expects his people to remember that everything in the world belongs to God. God gives his people things so they can serve him. He wants them to please him by doing what he wants them to do with everything he has given them. One day Jesus will ask his servants what they have done with everything he gave them to use. He will give a reward to those who have done what he wanted them to do, and he will punish those who have not.
Division
Jesus knew that those who did not choose to follow him would hate those who did choose to follow him. He also knew that most people love their families more than they love anyone else. So he wanted his followers to understand that following and pleasing him had to be more important to them than having their family love them (Luke 12:51-56).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 12:1 Notes

Luke 12:1
General Information:
Jesus begins to teach his disciples in front of thousands of people.
In the meantime
This is probably while the scribes and Pharisees were looking for a way to trap him. The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.
when many thousands of the people ... they trampled on each other
This is background information that tells the setting of the story.
many thousands of the people
"a very great crowd"
they trampled on each other
This is probably an exaggeration to emphasize that so many people were crowded close together that they would step on each other. Alternate translation: "they were stepping on each other" or "they were stepping on one another's feet"
he began to say to his disciples first of all
"Jesus first started speaking to his disciples, and said to them"
Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy
Just as yeast spreads through a whole lump of bread dough, their hypocrisy was spreading through the whole community. Alternate translation: "Guard yourself against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which is like yeast" or "Be careful that you do not become hypocrites like the Pharisees. Their evil behavior influences everyone just as yeast affects a lump of dough"
Luke 12:2
But there is
The word "But" connects this verse to the previous verse about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed
"everything that is hidden will be shown." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will find out about everything that people do secretly"
nothing hidden that will not be known
This means the same thing as the first part of the sentence

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in order to emphasize its truth. It can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will learn about everything that others try to hide"

Luke 12:3

whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light

Here "darkness" is a metonym for "night" which is a metonym for "private. And "light" is a metonym for "day" which is a metonym for "public. The phrase "will be heard" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whatever you have said privately at night, people will hear it in the daylight"

spoken in the ear

whispered

in the inner rooms

"in a closed room." This refers to private speech. Alternate translation: "in privacy" or "secretly"

will be proclaimed

"will be shouted loudly." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will proclaim"

upon the housetops

Houses in Israel had flat roofs, so people could go up and stand on top of them. If readers would be distracted trying to imagine how people would get up on the house tops, this could also be translated with a more general expression, such as "from a high place so that everyone will be able to hear."

Luke 12:4

I say to you, my friends

Jesus readdresses his disciples to mark a shift in his speech to a new topic, in this case, to speak about not being afraid.

they have no more that they can do

"they cannot cause any more harm"

Luke 12:5

Fear the one who, after ... has authority

The phrase "the one" refers to God. This could be reworded. Alternate translation: "Fear God who, after ... has authority" or "Fear God, because after ... he has authority"

after he has killed

"after he kills you"

has authority to throw you into hell

This is a general statement about God's authority to judge people. It does not mean this will happen to the disciples. Alternate translation: "has authority to throw people into hell"

Luke 12:6

Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. Alternate translation: "You know that five sparrows are sold for only two small coins."

sparrows

very small, seed-eating birds

not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God

This could be stated in active form and in positive form. Alternate translation: "God never forgets any of them" or "God indeed remembers every sparrow"

Luke 12:7

even the hairs of your head are all numbered

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows even how many hairs are on your head"

Do not fear

The reason for the fear is not stated. Possible meanings are 1) "Do not be afraid of what will happen to you" or 2) "So do not be afraid of people who could hurt you."

You are more valuable than many sparrows

"You are worth more to God than many sparrows"

Luke 12:8

I say to you

Jesus readdresses his audience to mark a shift in his speech to a new topic, in this case, to speak about confession.

everyone who confesses me before men

What is confessed can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "whoever tells others that he is my disciple" or "anyone who acknowledges before others that he is loyal to me"

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man"

Luke 12:9

he who denies me before men will be denied

"I will deny before the angels of God that I know anyone who denies me" or "I, the Son of Man will deny before the angels of God that I know anyone who denies me"

denies me

"claims that he does not know me" or "claims that he is not my disciple"

before men

where people can hear

will be denied

"will be treated as though I do not know him" or "will be treated as if he is not my disciple"

Luke 12:10

Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man

"Everyone who says something bad about the Son of Man"

it will be forgiven him

"he will be forgiven." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive him for that"

blasphemes against the Holy Spirit

"speaks evil against the Holy Spirit"

but to him ... it will not be forgiven

This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "but he ... God will not forgive him" or "but he ... God will consider him guilty forever"

Luke 12:11

When they bring you

It is not stated who brings them into judgment.

before the synagogues

"into the synagogues to question you before the religious leaders"

rulers ... authorities

It may be necessary to combine these into one statement. Alternate translation: "other people who have power in the country"

Luke 12:12

in that hour

"at that time" or "then"

Luke 12:13

General Information:

This is a break in Jesus's teachings. A man asks Jesus to do

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

something and Jesus responds to him.

divide the inheritance with me

In that culture, inheritances came from the father, usually after the father had died. You may need to make explicit that the speaker's father had probably died. Alternate translation: "share my father's property with me now that our father is dead"

Luke 12:14

Man

Possible meanings are 1) this is simply a way to address a stranger or 2) Jesus is rebuking the man. Your language might have a way of addressing people in either of these ways. Some people do not translate this word at all.

who appointed me a judge or a mediator over you?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the man. Alternate translation: "no one appointed me a judge or mediator over you." or "I am not your judge or mediator."

you

This word refers to the man and his brother and so is plural.

Luke 12:15

He said to them

The word "them" here probably refers to the whole crowd of people. Alternate translation: "And Jesus said to the crowd"

keep yourselves from all greedy desires

"guard yourself from every form of greed." Alternate translation: "do not allow yourself to love having things" or "do not let the urge to have more things control you"

a person's life

This is a general statement of fact. It does not refer to any specific person. Some languages have a way of expressing that.

the abundance of his possessions

"how many things he owns" or "how much wealth he has"

Luke 12:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his teaching by telling a parable.

Then Jesus told them

Jesus was probably still speaking to the entire crowd.

yielded abundantly

"grew a very good harvest"

Luke 12:17

What will I do, because I do not have a place to store my crops?

This question reflects what the man was thinking to himself. Alternate translation: "I do not know what to do, because I do not have any place big enough to store all my crops!"

Luke 12:18

barns

buildings where farmers store the crops they have harvested

all of my grain and other goods

"all of my grain and the other good things that I own"

Luke 12:19

I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ... years. Rest ... merry."

"I will say to myself, 'I have ... years. Rest ... merry.'" or "I will tell myself that I have ... years, so I can rest ... merry."

many goods

"many good things" or "many possessions"

Luke 12:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus quotes how God responds to the rich man, as he finishes telling his parable.

tonight your soul is required of you

The "soul" refers to the life of a person. Alternate translation: "you will die tonight" or "I will take your life from you tonight"

the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

"who will own what you have stored up?" or "who will have what you prepared?" God uses a question to make the man realize that he would no longer possess those things. Alternate translation: "the things that you have prepared will belong to someone else!"

Luke 12:21

stores up treasure

"saves up valuable things"

is not rich toward God

has not used his time and possessions for the things that are important to God

Luke 12:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching his disciples in front of the crowd.

Therefore

"For that reason" or "Because of what this story teaches"

I say to you

"I want to tell you something important" or "you need to listen carefully to this"

about your body, what you will wear

"about your body and what you will wear" or "about having enough clothes to put on your body"

Luke 12:23

life is more than food

This is a general statement of value. Alternate translation: "life is more important than the food you eat"

the body is more than clothes

"your body is more important than the clothes you wear"

Luke 12:24

ravens

This refers either to 1) crows, a kind of bird that eats mostly grain, or 2) ravens, a kind of bird that eats the flesh of dead animals. Jesus's audience would have considered the ravens worthless since the Jewish people could not eat these types of birds.

storeroom ... barn

These are places where food is stored.

How much more valuable you are than the birds!

This is an exclamation, not a question. Jesus emphasizes the fact that people are much more valuable to God then birds.

Luke 12:25

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

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "None of you can make your life any longer by being anxious!"

add a cubit to his lifespan

This is a metaphor because a cubit is a measure of length rather than of time. The image is of a person's life stretched out as if it were a board, a rope, or some other physical

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

object.
cubit
the length from a man's elbow to the end of his fingers
Luke 12:26
If then you are not able to do such a very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?
Jesus uses another question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "Since you cannot do even this small thing, you should not worry about the other things."
Luke 12:27
Think about the lilies—how they grow
"Think about how the lilies grow."
lilies
Lilies are beautiful flowers that grow wild in the fields. If your language does not have a word for lily, you can use the name of another flower like that or translate it as "flowers"
neither do they spin
The process of making thread or yard for cloth is called "spinning." It may be helpful to make this explicit. Alternate translation: "neither do they make thread in order to make cloth" or "and they do not make yarn"
Solomon in all his glory was
"Solomon, who had great wealth, was" or "Solomon, who wore beautiful clothes, was"
Luke 12:28
If God so clothes the grass in the field, which
"If God clothes the grass in the field like that, and it" or "If God gives the grass in the field such beautiful clothing, and it." God making the grass beautiful is spoken of as if God were putting beautiful clothes on the grass. Alternate translation: "If God makes the grass in the field beautiful like this, and it"
is thrown into the oven
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone throws it into a fire"
how much more will he clothe you
This is an exclamation, not a question. Jesus emphasizes that he will certainly take care of people even better than he does the grass. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he will certainly clothe you even better"
Luke 12:29
Do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink
"Do not focus on what you will eat and drink" or "Do not greatly desire more to eat and drink"
Luke 12:30
all the nations of the world
Here "nations" refers to "unbelievers." Alternate translation: "all people of other nations" or "all the unbelievers in the world"
your Father
This is an important title for God.
Luke 12:31
seek his kingdom
"focus on God's kingdom" or "greatly desire God's kingdom"
these things will be added to you
"these things also will be given to you." "These things" refers to food and clothing. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will also give you these things"
Luke 12:32
little flock
Jesus is calling his disciples a flock. A flock is a group of sheep or goats that a shepherd cares for. As a shepherd cares for his sheep, God cares for Jesus's disciples. Alternate translation: "small group" or "dear group"
your Father
This is an important title for God.
Luke 12:33
give alms
It may be helpful to state what they receive. Alternate translation: "give alms from the money you earn from the sales"
Make for yourselves purses ... treasure in the heavens
The purses and treasure in the heavens are the same thing. They both represent God's blessing in heaven.
Make for yourselves
This is the result of giving to the poor. Alternate translation: "In this way you will make for yourselves"
purses which will not wear out
"money bags that will not get holes in them"
does not run out
"does not diminish" or "does not become less"
no thief comes near
"thieves do not come near"
no moth destroys
"moths do not destroy"
moth
A "moth" is a small insect that eats holes in fabric. You may need to use a different insect, such as an ant or termite.
Luke 12:34
where your treasure is, there your heart will be also
"your heart will be focused on where you store your treasure"
your heart
Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts.
Luke 12:35
General Information:
Jesus begins to tell a parable.
Keep your loins girded
These words are a metaphor for being ready to do hard work. People in Jesus's culture wore long flowing robes. They would tuck these robes into their belts to keep them out of the way while they worked. Alternate translation: "Always be ready to serve" or "Be dressed and ready to serve"
and your lamps lit
This is a metaphor or metonym for staying awake at night and another metaphor for always being ready to work, even when it would otherwise be time to rest. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "keep your lamps burning"
Luke 12:36
be like people waiting expectantly for their master
Jesus commands the disciples to be ready for him to return the same way servants should be ready for their master to return.
waiting expectantly

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

If your language has a word for one person waiting and looking for someone he expects will come soon, you may want to use it here.

returns from the marriage feast

"returns home from a marriage feast"

open the door for him

This refers to the door of the master's house. It was the responsibility of his servants to open it for him.

Luke 12:37

Blessed are

"How good it is for"

whom the master will find watching when he comes

"whose master finds them waiting for him when he returns" or "who are ready when the master returns"

he will gird himself to serve and have them sit down

Because the servants have been faithful and ready to serve their master, the master will now reward them by serving them.

he will gird himself to serve

"he will tuck in his robe to serve." If people are not familiar with robes, this can also be translated in a more general way. Alternate translation: "he will dress himself to serve"

Luke 12:38

in the second watch of the night

The second watch was between 9:00 p.m. and midnight. Alternate translation: "late at night" or "just before midnight"

or if even in the third watch

The third watch was from midnight to 3:00 a.m. Alternate translation: "or if he comes very late at night"

Luke 12:39

had known the hour

"had known when"

he would not have let his house be broken into

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he would not have let the thief break into his house"

Luke 12:40

because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect

The similarity between a thief (Luke 12:39) and the Son of Man is that people do not know when either one will come, so they need to be ready. Jesus is not saying that he himself is a thief.

the Son of Man is coming

Jesus is talking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am coming"

Luke 12:41

General Information:

Here there is a stop in the story as Peter asks Jesus a question about the previous parable.

Luke 12:42

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell another parable.

Who then is ... right time?

Jesus uses a question to answer Peter's question indirectly. He expected those who wanted to be faithful managers to understand that the parable was about them. Alternate translation: "I said it for everyone who is ... right time."

the faithful and wise manager

Jesus tells another parable about how servants should be faithful while they wait for their master to return.

whom his lord will set over his other servants

"whom his lord puts in charge of his other servants"

Luke 12:43

Blessed is that servant

"How good it is for that servant"

whom his lord finds doing that when he comes

"if his lord finds him doing that work when he comes back"

Luke 12:44

Truly I say to you

This expression means they should pay special attention to what he is about to say.

will set him over all his property

"will put him in charge of all his property"

Luke 12:45

that servant

This refers to the servant whose lord has put him in charge of the other servants.

says in his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "thinks to himself"

My lord delays his return

"My master will not return soon"

male servants and female servants

The words that are translated here as "male servants and female servants" are normally translated as "boys" and "girls." They may indicate that the servants were young or that they were dear to their master. If your language can shorten this phrase to "male and female servants," you may want to do so here.

Luke 12:46

in a day when he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know

The words "day" and "hour" form a merism of time that refers to any time, and the words "expect" and "know" have similar meanings, so the two phrases here are parallel to emphasize that the coming of the lord will be a total surprise to the servant. However, the phrases should not be combined unless your language has no different words for "know" and "expect" or "day" and "hour." Alternate translation: "at a time when the servant is not expecting him"

cut him in pieces and appoint a place for him with the unfaithful

Possible meanings are 1) this is an exaggeration for the master dealing out harsh punishment toward the slave, or 2) this describes the manner in which the servant will be executed and buried as punishment.

Luke 12:47

That servant, having known his lord's will and not having prepared or done according to his will, will be beaten with many blows

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "But as for the servant who knows his lord's will does not prepare or do according to it, the master will beat him with many blows"

his lord's will ... according to his will

"what his master wanted him to do ... it"

Luke 12:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling the parable.

But the one ... few blows

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Both the servant who knows the master's will and the servant who does not know it are punished, but the words that begin with "That servant" (verse 47) show the servant who intentionally disobeyed his master was punished more severely than the other servant.

But everyone who has been given much, from them much will be required

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They will require more of anyone who has received much" or "The master will require more of everyone he has given much to"

from the one ... much, even more will be asked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the master will ask even more of the one ... much" or "the master will require even more of the one ... much"

the one who has been entrusted with much

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one to whom the master has given much property to take care of" or "the one to whom the master has given much responsibility"

Luke 12:49

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples.

I came to cast fire upon the earth

"I came to throw fire on the earth" or "I came to set the earth on fire." Possible meanings are 1) Jesus has come to judge people or 2) Jesus has come to purify believers or 3) Jesus has come to cause division among people.

how I wish that it were already kindled

This exclamation emphasizes how much he wants this to happen. Alternate translation: "I wish very much that it was already lit" or "how I wish that it had already begun"

Luke 12:50

I have a baptism to be baptized with

Here "baptism" refers to what Jesus must suffer. Just as water covers a person during baptism, suffering will overwhelm Jesus. Alternate translation: "I must go through a baptism of terrible suffering" or "I must be overwhelmed by suffering as a person being baptized is covered by water"

But

The word "but" is used to show that he cannot cast the fire on the earth until after he goes through his baptism.

how I am distressed until it is completed

This exclamation emphasizes how distressed he was. Alternate translation: "I am terribly distressed and will be so until I complete this baptism of suffering"

Luke 12:51

Do you think that I came to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division

Jesus asks a question to let them know that he is going to correct their wrong understanding. You may need to supply the words "I came" that are omitted in the second sentence. Alternate translation: "You think that I came to bring peace on the earth, but I tell you I did not. Instead, I came to bring division"

division

"hostility" or "discord"

Luke 12:52

there will be five in one house

It may be helpful to state that this refers to people. Alternate translation: "there will be five people in one house"

against ... against

"will oppose ... will oppose"

Luke 12:53

against

"will oppose"

Luke 12:54

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak to the crowd.

When you see a cloud rising ... happens

This condition normally meant rain was coming in Israel.

A shower is coming

"Rain is coming" or "It is going to rain"

Luke 12:55

When a south wind is blowing

This condition normally meant hot weather was coming in Israel.

Luke 12:56

the earth and the heavens

"the earth and the sky"

how is it that you do not know how to interpret the present time?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the crowd. Jesus uses this question to convict them. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you should know how to interpret the present time."

Luke 12:57

Why do you not judge what is right for yourselves?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the crowd. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You yourselves should discern what is right."

for yourselves

"on your own initiative"

Luke 12:58

For when you go ... prison

Jesus presents a situation here that continues through verse 59. This may be a parable to teach Jesus's hearers that they need to repent of their sins before God condemns them on the day of judgment. Alternate translation: "If when you go ... prison"

when you go

Though Jesus is talking to a crowd, the situation he is presenting is something that a person would go through alone. So in some languages the word "you" would be singular.

be reconciled with him

"be reconciled with your adversary"

the judge

This refers to the magistrate, but the term here is more specific and threatening.

does not deliver you

"does not take you"

Luke 12:59

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the situations that begins in verse 58.

the very last bit of money

"the entire amount of money that your adversary

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

demands"

Chapter 13

Luke 13 General Notes

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Unknown events

The people and Jesus speak about two events that they knew about but about which no one today knows anything except what Luke has written (Luke 13:1-5). Your translation should tell only what Luke tells.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "those who are least important will be first, and those who are most important will be last" (Luke 13:30).

Links:

Luke 13:1 Notes

Luke 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is still speaking in front of the crowd. Some people in the crowd ask him a question and he begins to respond. This continues the story that begins in Luke 12:1.

At that time

This phrase connects this event to the end of chapter 12, when Jesus was teaching a crowd of people.

whose blood Pilate mixed with their own sacrifices

Here "blood" refers to the death of the Galileans. They were probably killed while they were offering their sacrifices. This could be stated explicitly as in the UDB.

whose blood Pilate mixed with their own sacrifices

Pilate probably ordered his soldiers to kill people rather than doing it himself. Alternate translation: "whom Pilate's soldiers killed as they were sacrificing animals"

Luke 13:2

Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful ... way?

"Were these Galileans more sinful ... way?" or "Does this prove that these Galileans were more sinful ... way?" Jesus uses this question to challenge the understanding of the people. He answers the question in verse 3.

Luke 13:3

No, I tell you. But if you do not repent ... same way

Jesus answers the question he asked in 13:2. Jesus explains that the Galileans who were killed were not more sinful than other Galileans.

No, I tell you

Here "I tell you" emphasizes "no." Alternate translation: "They certainly were not more sinful" or "You are wrong to think that their suffering proves that they were more sinful"

all of you will perish in the same way

"all of you also will die." The phrase "in the same way" means they will experience the same result, not that they will die by the same method.

perish

die

Luke 13:4

Or those

This is Jesus's second example of people who suffered. Alternate translation: "Or consider those" or "Think about those"

eighteen people

"18 people"

Siloam

This is the name of an area in Jerusalem.

do you think they were worse sinners ... Jerusalem?

Jesus uses this question to challenge the understanding of the people. He answers the question in 13:4. Alternate translation: "does this prove that they were more sinful ... Jerusalem?"

they were worse sinners

The crowd assumed that they died in this terrible way because they were especially sinful. This could be explicitly stated. Alternate translation: "they died because they were worse sinners"

other men

"other people." The word here is the general term for a person.

Luke 13:5

No, I say

Jesus answers the question he asked in 13:4. Alternate translation: "They certainly did not die because they were more sinful"

perish

die

Luke 13:6

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell the crowd a parable to explain his last statement, "But if you do not repent, all of you will also perish."

Someone had a fig tree planted in his vineyard

The owner of a vineyard had another person plant a fig tree in the vineyard.

vineyard

Possible meanings are 1) this was a garden where grapes were grown, or 2) this was a garden where fruit trees were grown. Alternate translation: "garden" or "orchard"

Luke 13:7

Why let it waste the ground?

The man uses a question to emphasize that the tree is useless and the gardener should cut it down. Alternate translation: "Do not let it waste the ground."

Luke 13:8

leave it alone

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"do not do anything to the tree" or "do not cut it down"
put manure on it
"put manure in the soil." Manure is animal dung. People put it in the ground to make the soil good for plants and trees. Alternate translation: "put fertilizer on it"
Luke 13:9
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling his parable. This is the end of the story that began in Luke 12:1.
If it bears fruit next year, good
It may be helpful to state what will happen. Alternate translation: "If it has figs on it next year, good; we can allow it to keep growing"
cut it down
The servant was making a suggestion; he was not giving a command to the owner. Alternate translation: "tell me to cut it down" or "I will cut it down"
Luke 13:10
General Information:
Verses 10-11 give background information about the setting of this part of the story and about a crippled woman who is introduced into the story.
Now
The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.
during the Sabbath
"on a Sabbath day." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.
Luke 13:11
Behold, a woman was there
The word "behold" here alerts us to a new person in the story.
eighteen years
"18 years"
a spirit of weakness
"an evil spirit that made her weak"
Luke 13:12
Woman, you are freed from your weakness
"Woman, you are healed from your disease." This can be expressed with an active verb: Alternate translation: "Woman, I have set you free from your weakness"
Woman, you are freed from your weakness
By saying this, Jesus healed her. This can be expressed with a sentence that shows that he was causing it to happen, or by a command. Alternate translation: "Woman, I now free you from your weakness" or "Woman, be freed from your weakness"
Luke 13:13
He placed his hands on her
"He touched her"
she was made straight again
This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she was able to stand up straight again"
Luke 13:14
was indignant
"was very angry"
answered and said
"said" or "responded"
be healed then
This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let someone heal you during those six days"
on the Sabbath day
"on a Sabbath day." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.
Luke 13:15
The Lord answered him
"The Lord responded to the synagogue ruler"
Hypocrites
Jesus speaks directly to the synagogue ruler, but the plural form includes the other religious rulers also. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "You and your fellow religious leaders are hypocrites"
Does not each of you untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead it to drink on the Sabbath?
Jesus uses a question to get them to think about something they already knew. Alternate translation: "Every one of you unties his ox or his donkey from the stall and leads it to drink on the Sabbath."
ox ... donkey
These are animals that people care for by giving them water.
on the Sabbath
"on a Sabbath." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.
Luke 13:16
daughter of Abraham
This is an idiom that means, "descendant of Abraham"
whom Satan bound
Jesus compares people tying animals to the way Satan restricted the woman with this disease. Alternate translation: "whom Satan kept crippled by her illness" or "whom Satan bound with this disease"
eighteen long years
"18 long years." The word "long" here emphasizes that eighteen years was a very long time for the woman to suffer. Other languages may have other ways of emphasizing this.
should her bonds not be untied ... day?
Jesus uses a question to tell the synagogue rulers that they are wrong. Jesus speaks about the women's disease as if it were ropes that bound her. This can be translated as an active statement. Alternate translation: "it is right to release her from the bonds of this illness ... day."
Luke 13:17
As he said these things
"When Jesus said these things"
the glorious things he did
"the glorious things Jesus was doing"
Luke 13:18
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to tell a parable to the people in the synagogue.
What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?
Jesus uses two questions to introduce what he is about to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the kingdom of God is like and what I can compare it to."

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

what can I compare it to?
This is basically the same as the previous question. Some languages can use both questions, and some would use only one.
Luke 13:19
It is like a mustard seed
Jesus compares the kingdom to a mustard seed. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed"
a mustard seed
A mustard seed is a very small seed that grows into a large plant. If this seed is not known, the phrase can be translated with the name of another seed like it or simply as "a small seed."
threw into his garden
"planted in his garden." People planted some kinds of seeds by throwing them so that they scattered in the garden.
a big tree
The word "big" is an exaggeration that contrasts the tree with the tiny seed. Alternate translation: "a very large shrub"
birds of heaven
"birds of the sky." Alternate translation: "birds that fly in the sky" or "birds"
Luke 13:20
To what can I compare the kingdom of God?
Jesus uses another question to introduce what he is about to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you another thing to which I can compare to the kingdom of God."
Luke 13:21
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the people in the synagogue. This is the end of this part of the story.
It is like yeast
Jesus compares the kingdom of God to yeast in bread dough. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God is like yeast"
like yeast
Only a little bit of yeast is needed to make a lot of dough rise. This can be made clear, as it is in the UDB.
three measures of flour
This is a large amount of flour, since each measure was about 13 liters. You may need to use a term that your culture uses to measure flour. Alternate translation: "a large amount of flour"
Luke 13:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 13:23
are only a few people to be saved?
This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will God save only a few people?"
Luke 13:24
General Information:
Jesus responds to a question by using a metaphor about entering God's kingdom.
Struggle to enter through the narrow door
"Work hard to go through the narrow doorway." Jesus is speaking about the entrance to God's kingdom as if it were a small doorway to a house. Since Jesus is talking to a group, the "you" implied in this command is plural.
the narrow door
The fact that the door is narrow implies that it is difficult to go through it. Translate it in a way to keep this restrictive meaning.
many will try to enter, but will not be able to enter
It is implied that they will not be able to enter because of the difficulty of entering. The next verse explains the difficulty.
Luke 13:25
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to talk about entering into God's kingdom.
Once the owner
"After the owner"
the owner of the house
This refers to the owner of the house with the narrow door in the previous verses. This is a metaphor for God as the ruler of the kingdom.
you will stand outside
Jesus was talking to a crowd. The form of "you" is plural. He is addressing them as if they will not enter through the narrow door into the kingdom.
pound the door
"hit on the door." This is an attempt to gain the owner's attention.
Luke 13:26
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 13:27
Get away from me
"Go away from me"
Luke 13:28
crying and the grinding of teeth
These actions are symbolic acts, indicating great regret and sadness. Alternate translation: "crying and grinding of teeth because of your great regret"
when you see
Jesus continues to speak to the crowd as if they will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
but you are thrown out
"but you yourselves will have been thrown outside." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but God will have forced you outside"
Luke 13:29
from the east, west, north, and south
This means "from every direction."
be seated at a table in the kingdom of God
It was common to speak of the joy in God's kingdom as a feast. Alternate translation: "they will feast in the kingdom of God"
Luke 13:30
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to talk about entering into God's kingdom. This is the end of this conversation.
will be first ... will be last
Being first represents being important or honored. Alternate translation: "will be the most important ... will be the least important" or "God will honor ... God will shame"
Luke 13:31

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Connecting Statement:
This is the next event in this part of the story. Jesus is still on his way towards Jerusalem when some Pharisees speak to him about Herod.
In that same hour
"Right at that time" or "Soon after Jesus finished speaking"
Go and leave here because Herod wants to kill you
Translate this as a warning to Jesus. They were advising him to go somewhere else and be safe.
Herod wants to kill you
Herod would order people to kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "Herod wants to send his men to kill you"
Luke 13:32
that fox
Jesus was calling Herod a fox. A fox is a small wild dog. Possible meanings are 1) Herod was not much of a threat at all 2) Herod was deceptive.
Luke 13:33
In any case
"Nevertheless" or "However" or "Whatever happens"
it is not acceptable for a prophet to be destroyed outside of Jerusalem
The Jewish leaders claimed to serve God and that Jerusalem was their holy city, but it was in Jerusalem that their ancestors had killed many of God's prophets, and Jesus knew that they would kill him there also. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "it is only in Jerusalem that it is acceptable for prophets to be destroyed" or "even though you think you are serving God and Jerusalem is your holy city, you disobey God by killing his prophets, and in doing so you defile Jerusalem"
to be destroyed
"to be killed"
Luke 13:34
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes responding to the Pharisees. This is the end of this part of the story.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem
Jesus speaks as if the people of Jerusalem are there listening to him. Jesus says this twice to show how sad he is for them.
who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you
If it would be strange to address the city, you can make it clear that Jesus was really addressing the people in the city: "you people who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you"
those sent to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those God has sent to you"
How often I desired
"I so often desired." This is an exclamation and not a question.
to gather your children
The people of Jerusalem are described as her "children." Alternate translation: "to gather your people" or "to gather the people of Jerusalem"
the way a hen gathers her brood under her wings
This describes how a hen protects her young from harm by covering them with her wings.
Luke 13:35
your house is abandoned
This is a prophecy about something that would happen soon. It means that God has stopped protecting the people of Jerusalem, so enemies can attack them and drive them away. Possible meanings are 1) God will abandon them. Alternate translation: "God will abandon you" or 2) their city will be empty. Alternate translation: "your house will be abandoned"
you will not see me until you say
"you will not see me until the time comes when you will say" or "the next time you see me, you will say"
the name of the Lord
Here "name" refers to the Lord's power and authority.

Chapter 14

Luke 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 3 says, "Jesus asked the experts in the Jewish law and the Pharisees, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?'" Many times, the Pharisees got angry with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. In this passage, Jesus dumbfounds the Pharisees. It was normally the Pharisees who tried to trap Jesus.

Changes of subject

Many times in this chapter Luke changes from one subject to another without marking the changes.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Parable

Jesus told the parable in Luke 14:15-24 to teach that the kingdom of God will be something that everyone can enjoy. But people will refuse to be part of it. (See: and kingdomofgod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Links:

Luke 14:1 Notes

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Luke 14:1

General Information:

It is the Sabbath, and Jesus is at a Pharisee's house. Verse 1 gives background information for the event that follows.

It happened one Sabbath

This indicates a new event.

to eat bread

"to eat" or "for a meal." Bread was an important part of a meal and is used in this sentence to refer to a meal.

watching him closely

They wanted to see if they could accuse him of doing anything wrong.

Luke 14:2

Behold, there in front of him was a man

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. English uses "There in front of him was a man"

was suffering from edema

Edema is swelling caused by water building up in parts of the body. Some languages may have a name for this condition. Alternate translation: "was suffering because parts of his body were swollen with water"

Luke 14:3

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not

"Does the law permit us to heal on the Sabbath, or does it forbid it"

Luke 14:4

But they kept silent

The religious leaders refused to answer Jesus's question.

So Jesus took hold of him

"So Jesus took hold of the man who suffered from edema"

Luke 14:5

Which of you who has a son or an ox ... will not immediately pull him out?

Jesus uses a question because he wanted them to admit that they would help their son or ox, even on the Sabbath. Therefore, it was right for him to heal people even on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "If one of you has a son or an ox ... you would surely pull him out immediately."

Luke 14:6

They were not able to give an answer

They knew the answer and that Jesus was right, but they did not want to admit that he was correct. Alternate translation: "They had nothing to say"

Luke 14:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to the guests at the house of the Pharisee who had invited him to a meal.

those who were invited

It may be helpful to identify these people, and to state this in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the leader of the Pharisees had invited to the meal"

the seats of honor

"the seats for honored people" or "the seats for important people"

Luke 14:8

When you are invited by someone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When someone invites you"

When you ... than you

These occurrences of "you" are singular. Jesus is speaking to the group as if to each individual person.

because someone may have been invited who is more honored than you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the host may have invited a person who is more important than you are"

Luke 14:9

say to you ... your place ... you will proceed

These occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular. Jesus is speaking to the group as if to each individual person.

both of you

This occurrence of "you" refers to the two people who want the same seat of honor.

in shame

"you will feel ashamed and"

the lowest place

"the least important place" or "the place for the least important person"

Luke 14:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the people at the Pharisee's house.

when you are invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone invites you"

the lowest place

"the seat meant for the least important person"

go up higher

"move to a seat for a more important person"

Then you will be honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then the one who invited you will honor you"

Luke 14:11

who exalts himself

"who tries to look important" or "who takes an important position"

will be humbled

"will be shown to be unimportant" or "will be given an unimportant position." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will humble"

humbles himself

"who chooses to look unimportant" or "who takes an unimportant position"

will be exalted

"will be shown to be important" or "will be given an important position." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will exalt"

Luke 14:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking at the Pharisee's house, but addresses his host directly.

the man who had invited him

"the Pharisee who had invited him to his house for a meal"

When you give

"you" is singular because Jesus is speaking directly to the Pharisee that invited him.

do not invite

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This probably does not mean they can never invite these people. More likely it means they should invite others as well. Alternate translation: "do not only invite" or "do not always invite"

as they may

"because they might"

invite you in return

"invite you to their dinner or banquet"

you will be repaid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in this way they will repay you"

Luke 14:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Pharisee who had invited him to his home.

invite the poor

It may be helpful to add "also" since this statement is probably not exclusive. Alternate translation: "also invite the poor"

Luke 14:14

you will be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"

they cannot repay you

"they cannot invite you to a banquet in return"

you will be repaid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will repay you"

in the resurrection of the just

This refers to the final judgment. Alternate translation: "when God brings the righteous people back to life"

Luke 14:15

General Information:

One of the men at the table speaks to Jesus and Jesus responds to him by telling a parable.

one of them who sat at the table

This introduces a new person.

Blessed is he

The man was not talking about a specific person. Alternate translation: "Blessed is anyone" or "How good it is for everyone"

he who will eat bread

The word "bread" is used to refer to the whole meal. Alternate translation: "he who will eat at the meal"

Luke 14:16

But Jesus said to him

Jesus begins telling a parable.

A certain man prepared a large dinner and invited many

The reader should be able to infer that the man probably had his servants prepare the meal and invite the guests.

A certain man

This phrase is a way of referring to the man without giving any specific information about his identity.

invited many

"invited many people" or "invited many guests"

Luke 14:17

At the dinner hour

"At the time for the dinner" or "When the dinner was about to begin"

those who were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those he had invited"

Luke 14:18

General Information:

All of the people who were invited gave the servant excuses about why they could not come to the banquet.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling his parable.

to make excuses

"to say why they could not come to the dinner"

The first said to him

The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out

Please excuse me

"Please forgive me" or "Please accept my apology"

Luke 14:19

Another said

The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out

five pairs of oxen

Oxen were used in pairs to pull farming tools. Alternate translation: "10 oxen to work in my fields"

I am going to try them out

He wanted to use the oxen and see how well they worked together pulling farm tools.

Luke 14:20

another man said

The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out

married a wife

Use an expression that is natural in your language. Some languages may say "gotten married" or "taken a wife."

Luke 14:21

became angry

"became angry with the people he had invited"

bring in here

"invite in here to eat the dinner"

Luke 14:22

The servant said

It may be necessary to state clearly the implied information that the servant did what the master commanded him. Alternate translation: "After the servant went out and did that, he came back and said"

what you commanded has been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have done what you commanded"

Luke 14:23

the highways and hedges

This refers to roads and paths outside of the city. Alternate translation: "the main roads and paths outside of the city"

compel them to come in

"demand that they come in"

compel them

The word "them" refers to anyone the servants find. "compel anyone you find to come in"

that my house may be filled

"so that people may fill my house"

Luke 14:24

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes his parable.
For I say to you
The word "you" is plural, so it is unclear to whom it is addressed.
those men
The word here for "men" means "male adults" and not just people in general.
who were invited
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom I invited"
will taste my dinner
"will enjoy the dinner I have prepared"
Luke 14:25
General Information:
Jesus begins to teach the crowds that were traveling with him.
Luke 14:26
If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father ... he cannot be my disciple
Here, "hate" is an exaggeration for the lesser love people are to show to people other than Jesus. Alternate translation: "If anyone comes to me and does not love me more than he loves his father ... he cannot be my disciple" or "Only if a person loves me more than he loves his own father ... can he be my disciple"
Luke 14:27
Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple
This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Only he who carries his own cross and comes after me can be my disciple" or "If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must carry his own cross and follow me"
carry his own cross
Jesus does not mean every Christian must be crucified. The Romans often made people carry their own crosses before they crucified them as a sign of their submission to Rome. This metaphor means they must submit to God and be willing to suffer in any way to be Jesus's disciples.
Luke 14:28
General Information:
Jesus continues to explain to the crowd that it is important to count the cost of being a disciple.
For which of you who desires to build a tower does not first sit down and count the cost to calculate if he has what he needs to complete it?
Jesus uses this question to prove that people count the cost of a project before they begin it. Alternate translation: "If a person wanted to build a tower, he would certainly first sit down and determine if he had enough money to complete it."
tower
This may have been a watchtower. "a tall building" or "a high lookout platform"
Luke 14:29
Otherwise
It may be helpful to give more information. Alternate translation: "If he does not first count the cost"
when he has laid a foundation
"when he has built a base" or "when he has completed the first part of the building"
is not able to finish
It is understood that he was not able to finish because he did not have enough money. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "does not have enough money to be able to finish"
Luke 14:30
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 14:31
General Information:
Jesus continues to explain to the crowd that it is important to count the cost of being a disciple.
Or
Jesus used this word to introduce another situation where people count the cost before making a decision.
what king ... will not sit down first and take advice ... men?
Jesus uses another question to teach the crowd about counting the cost. Alternate translation: "you know that a king ... would sit down first and take counsel ... men."
take advice
Possible meanings are 1) "think carefully " or 2) "listen to his advisors."
ten thousand ... twenty thousand
"10,000 ... 20,000"
Luke 14:32
If not
It may be helpful to restate the information given in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "If he realizes that he will not be able to defeat the other king"
conditions of peace
"terms to end the war" or "what the other king wants him to do in order to end the war"
Luke 14:33
any one of you who does not give up all his possessions cannot be my disciple
This can be stated with positive verbs. Alternate translation: "only those of you who give up all your possessions can be my disciples"
give up all his possessions
"leave behind all that he has"
Luke 14:34
Salt is good
"Salt is useful." Jesus is teaching a lesson about those who want to be his disciple.
how can it be made salty again?
Jesus uses a question to teach the crowd. Alternate translation: "it cannot be made salty again." or "no one can make it salty again."
Luke 14:35
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes teaching the crowd.
manure pile
People use manure to fertilize gardens and fields. Salt without taste is so useless it is not even worth mixing with manure. Alternate translation: "compost heap" or "fertilizer"
It is thrown away
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

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"Someone just throws it away"

He who has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 8:8]

He who ... let him

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 8:8]

Chapter 15

Luke 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The parable of the prodigal son

[Luke 15:11-32]

Special concepts in this chapter

Sinners

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. But Jesus told three parables

Links:

Luke 15:1 Notes

Luke 15:1

General Information:

We do not know where this takes place; it simply occurs one day when Jesus is teaching.

Now

This marks the beginning of a new event.

all the tax collectors

This is an exaggeration to stress that there were very many of them. Alternate translation: "many tax collectors"

Luke 15:2

This man welcomes sinners

"This man lets sinners into his presence" or "This man associates with sinners"

This man

They were talking about Jesus.

even eats with them

The word "even" shows that they thought it was bad enough that Jesus allowed sinners to come to him, but it was worse that he would eat with them.

Luke 15:3

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell several parables. These parables are situations about things that anyone could experience. They are not about particular people. The first parable is about what a person would do if one of his sheep was lost.

to them

Here "them" refers to the religious leaders.

Luke 15:4

Which one of you ... will not leave ... until he finds it?

Jesus uses a question to remind the people that if any of them lost one of their sheep, they would certainly go looking for it. Alternate translation: "Each of you ... would certainly leave ... until he finds it."

Which one of you, if he has a hundred sheep ... loses ... he finds it

Since the parable starts with "Which one of you," some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: "Which one of you, if you have a hundred sheep ... lose ... you find it"

hundred ... ninety-nine

"100 ... 99"

Luke 15:5

Then when he has found it, he lays ... rejoices

Since the parable starts in the previous verse with "Which one of you," some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: "Then when you have found it you will lay ... rejoice"

lays it across his shoulders

This is the way a shepherd carries a sheep. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "lays it across his shoulders to carry it home"

Luke 15:6

When he comes to the house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors

Since the parable starts in the verse 4 with "Which one of you," some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: "When you come home you will call together your friends and your neighbors"

When he comes to the house

"When the owner of the sheep comes home" or "When you come home." Refer to the owner of the sheep as you did in the previous verse.

Luke 15:7

even so

"in the same way" or "as the shepherd and his friends and neighbors would rejoice"

there will be joy in heaven

"everyone in heaven will rejoice"

ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent

Jesus uses sarcasm to say that the Pharisees were wrong to think that they did not need to repent. Your language may have a different way to express this idea. Alternate translation: "ninety-nine persons like you, who think they are righteous and do not need to repent"

ninety-nine

"99"

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Luke 15:8
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a woman with 10 sliver coins.
Or what woman ... would not light a lamp ... and seek diligently until she has found it?
Jesus uses a question to remind the people that if they lost a silver coin, they would certainly look for it diligently. Alternate translation: "Any woman ... would certainly light a lamp ... and seek diligently until she has found it."
Luke 15:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 15:10
Even so
"In the same way" or "Just as people would rejoice with the woman"
over one sinner who repents
"when one sinner repents"
Luke 15:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a young man who asks his father for his part of the inheritance.
A certain man
This introduces a new character in the parable. Some languages might say "There was a man who"
Luke 15:12
give me
The son wanted his father to give it to him immediately. Languages that have a command form that means that they want it done immediately should use that form.
the portion of the wealth that falls to me
"the part of your wealth that you plan for me to receive when you die"
between them
"between his two sons"
Luke 15:13
gathered together all he owned
"packed his things" or "put his things in his bag"
living recklessly
"living without thinking about the consequences of his actions" or "living wildly"
Luke 15:14
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Jesus explains how the younger son went from having plenty to being in need.
a severe famine spread through that country
"a drought occurred there and the entire country did not have enough food"
to be in need
"to lack what he needed" or "to not have enough"
Luke 15:15
He went
The word "he" refers to the younger son.
hired himself out to
"took a job with" or "began to work for"
one of the citizens of that country
"a man of that country"
to feed pigs
"to give food to the man's pigs"
Luke 15:16
was longing to eat
"wished very much that he could eat." It is understood that this is because he was very hungry. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "he was so hungry that he would have happily eaten"
carob pods
These are the husks of beans that grow on the carob tree. Alternate translation: "carob bean pods" or "bean husks"
Luke 15:17
came to himself
This idiom means he realized what the truth was, that he had made a terrible mistake. Alternate translation: "clearly understood his situation"
How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread
This is part of an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "All my father's hired servants have more than enough bread to eat"
bread
This is a synecdoche for any kind and all kinds of food. Alternate translation: "food"
perishing from hunger
This is probably not an exaggeration. Jesus may have meant that the young man in his parable was actually starving then.
perishing
"dying" or "being destroyed"
Luke 15:18
I will get up
This is an idiom that means he will begin to act. It does not mean that he was sitting or lying down when he said these words.
I have sinned against heaven
Jewish people sometimes avoided saying the word "God" and used the word "heaven" instead. Alternate translation: "I have sinned against God"
Luke 15:19
I am no longer worthy to be called your son
"I was once worthy to be called your son, but not now." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You called me son in the past, but now I am not worthy for you to call me son"
make me as one of your hired servants
"hire me as an employee" or "hire me and I will become one of your servants." This is a request, not a command. It may be helpful to add "please" as the UDB does.
Luke 15:20
So the young son got up and left and came toward his father
"So he left that country and started going back to his father." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, the young man was in need and had decided to go home.
got up
This is an idiom that means he began to act. It does not mean that he had been sitting or lying down. See how you translated similar words in [Luke 15:18]
While he was still far away

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"While he was still far away from his home" or "While he was still far away from his father's house"

was moved with compassion

"had pity on him" or "loved him deeply from his heart"

embraced him and kissed him

The father did this to show his son that he loved him and was glad that the son was coming home. If people think that it is strange or wrong for a man to embrace or hug and kiss his son, you can substitute a way that men in your culture show affection to their sons. Alternate translation: "welcomed him affectionately"

Luke 15:21

sinned against heaven

Jewish people sometimes avoided saying the word "God" and used the word "heaven" instead. See how you translated this in [Luke 15:18]

I am no longer worthy to be called your son

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Luke 15:18]

Luke 15:22

best robe

"the best robe in the house." Alternate translation: "the best coat" or "the best garment"

put a ring on his hand

A ring was a sign of authority that men wore on one of their fingers.

sandals

Wealthy people of that time wore sandals. However, in many cultures the modern equivalent would be "shoes."

Luke 15:23

fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf. Alternate translation: "the best calf" or "the young animal we have been making fat"

kill it

The implied information that they were to cook the meat can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "kill it and cook it"

Luke 15:24

my son was dead, and now he is alive

This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he were dead. Alternate translation: "it is as if my son were dead and became alive again" or "I felt like my son had died, but he is now alive"

He was lost, and now he is found

This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he had been lost. Alternate translation: "It is as if I had lost my son and now I have found him" or "My son went to where I could not bring him back, but now he has returned home"

Luke 15:25

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Jesus starts to tell about the older son in a new part of the story.

out in the field

It is implied that he was out in the field because he was working there.

Luke 15:26

one of the servants

The word that is translated here as "servant" is normally translated as "boy." It may indicate that the servant was very young.

what these things might be

"what was happening"

Luke 15:27

the fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:23]

he has received him in good health

"your father has received your brother, and your brother is healthy" or "your brother is well and has returned to your father"

Luke 15:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 15:29

these many years

"for many years"

I slaved for you

"I worked extremely hard for you" or "I worked as hard as a slave for you"

never neglected a command of yours

"never disobeyed any of your commands" or "always obeyed everything you told me to do"

a young goat

A young goat was smaller and less expensive than a fatted calf. Alternate translation: "even a young goat"

Luke 15:30

your son

"that son of yours." The older son refers to his brother this way in order to show how angry he is.

devoured your living

Food is a metaphor for money. After one eats food, the food is no longer there and there is nothing to eat. The money that the brother had received was no longer there and there was no more to spend. Alternate translation: "wasted all your wealth" or "thrown away all your money"

with prostitutes

Possible meanings are 1) he assumed this is how his brother spent the money or 2) he speaks of prostitutes to exaggerate the sinfulness of his brother's actions in the "country far away"

fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:23]

Luke 15:31

The father said to him

The word "him" refers to the older son.

Child

"My dear child" or "My dear son." The father was addressing his son tenderly.

Luke 15:32

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

this brother of yours
The father was reminding the older son that the one who just came home was his brother.
this brother of yours was dead, and is now alive
This metaphor speaks of the brother being gone as if he were dead. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:24]
he was lost, and has now been found
This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he had been lost. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:24]

Chapter 16

Luke 16 General Notes

Links:

Luke 16:1 Notes

Luke 16:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a master and the manager of his debtors. This is still the same part of the story and the same day that began in [Luke 15:3]
Jesus also said to the disciples
The last section was directed at Pharisees and scribes, though Jesus's disciples may have been part of the crowd listening.
There was a certain rich man
This introduces a new character in the parable.
it was reported to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people reported to the rich man"
wasting his possessions
"foolishly managing the rich man's wealth"
Luke 16:2
What is this that I hear about you?
The rich man uses a question to scold the manager. Alternate translation: "I have heard what you are doing."
Give an account of your management
"Set your records in order to pass on to someone else" or "Prepare the records you have written about my money"
Luke 16:3
What should I do ... job?
The manager asks this question of himself, as a means of reviewing his options. Alternate translation: "I need to think about what I should do ... job."
my master
This refers to the wealthy man. The manager was not a slave. Alternate translation: "my employer"
I do not have strength to dig
"I am not strong enough to dig the ground" or "I am not able to dig"
Luke 16:4
when I am removed from my management job
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when I lose my management job" or "when my master takes away my management job"
people will welcome me into their houses
This implies that those people will provide a job, or other things that he needs to live.
Luke 16:5
his master's debtors
"the people who were in debt to his master" or "the people who owed things to his master." In this story the debtors owed olive oil and wheat.
Luke 16:6
He said ... He said to him
"The debtor said ... The manager said to the debtor"
A hundred baths of olive oil ... fifty
A bath is about 22 liters. Alternate translation: "I owe 2,200 liters of olive oil ... 1,100 liters"
hundred ... fifty
"100 ... 50"
Take your bill
A "bill" is a piece of paper that tells how much someone owes.
Luke 16:7
the manager said to another ... He said ... He said to him
"the manager said to another debtor ... The debtor said ... The manager said to the debtor"
A hundred cors of wheat
A cor is about 220 liters. You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "I owe 22,000 liters of wheat" or "I owe one hundred large baskets of wheat"
write eighty
"write eighty cors of wheat." You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "write 17,600 liters of wheat" or "write eighty large baskets of wheat"
eighty
"80"
Luke 16:8
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling the parable about the master and the manager of his debtors. In verse 9, Jesus continues to teach his disciples.
The master then commended
The text does not say how the master learned of the manager's action.
commended
"praised" or "spoke well of" or "approved of"
he had acted shrewdly
"he had acted cleverly" or "he had done a sensible thing"
the sons of this world
This refers to those who, like the unrighteous manager, do not know or care about God. Alternate translation: "the people of this world" or "worldly people"
the sons of light
Here "light" is a metaphor for everything godly. Alternate

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

translation: "the people of God" or "godly people"
Luke 16:9
I say to you
"I" refers to Jesus. The phrase "I say to you" marks the end of the story and now Jesus tells the people how to apply the story to their lives.
make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth
The focus here is on using the money to help other people. Alternate translation: "make people your friends by helping them with worldly wealth"
by means of unrighteous wealth
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus uses hyperbole when he calls money "unrighteous" because it has no eternal value. Alternate translation: "by using money, which has no eternal value" or "by using worldly money" or 2) Jesus uses metonymy when he calls money "unrighteous" because people sometimes earn it or use it in unrighteous ways. Alternate translation: "by using even money that you earned dishonestly"
they may welcome
Possible meanings are 1) "the friends you helped with your money may welcome" or 2) "God and his angels may welcome"
eternal dwellings
This refers to heaven, where God lives.
Luke 16:10
He who is faithful ... is also faithful ... he who is unrighteous ... is also unrighteous
"People who are faithful ... are also faithful ... people who are unrighteous ... are also unrighteous." This would include women.
faithful in very little
"faithful even with small things." Make sure this does not sound like they are not very faithful.
unrighteous in very little
"unrighteous even in small things." Make sure this does not sound like they are not often unrighteous.
Luke 16:11
unrighteous wealth
See how you translated this in [Luke 16:9]
who will trust you with true wealth?
Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "no one will trust you with true wealth." or "no one will give you true wealth to manage."
true wealth
This refers to wealth that is more genuine, real, or lasting than money.
Luke 16:12
who will give you money of your own?
Jesus uses this question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "no one will give you wealth for yourself."
Luke 16:13
No servant can
"A servant cannot"
serve two masters
It is implied that he cannot "serve two different masters at the same time"
for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other
These two clauses are essentially the same. The only significant difference is that the first master is hated in the first case, but the second master is hated in the second case.
he will hate
"the servant will hate"
be devoted to one
"love one very strongly"
despise the other
"hold the other in contempt" or "hate the other"
despise
This means essentially the same as "hate" in the previous clause.
You cannot serve
Jesus was talking to a group of people, so languages that have a plural form of "you" would use that.
Luke 16:14
General Information:
This is a break in Jesus teachings, as verse 14 tells us background information about how the Pharisees ridiculed Jesus. In verse 15, Jesus continues teaching and responds to the Pharisees.
Now
This word marks a shift to the background information.
who were lovers of money
"who loved having money" or "who where very greedy for money"
they ridiculed him
"the Pharisees ridiculed Jesus"
Luke 16:15
He said to them
"And Jesus said to the Pharisees"
You justify yourselves in the sight of men
"You make yourselves look good to other people"
God knows your hearts
Here "hearts" refers to the desires of people. Alternate translation: "God understands your true desires" or "God knows your motives"
That which is exalted among men is detestable in the sight of God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those things that men think are very important are things that God hates"
Luke 16:16
The law and the prophets
This refers to all of God's word that had been written up to that time.
were in effect
"had authority" or "were what people needed to obey"
John came
This refers to John the Baptist. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist came"
the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am teaching people about the good news of the kingdom of God"
everyone tries to force their way into it
This refers to the people who were listening to and accepting the teaching of Jesus. Alternate translation: "many people are doing everything they can to enter it"
Luke 16:17

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to become invalid
This contrast could be stated in the reverse order. Alternate translation: "even the smallest stroke of the letter of the law will last longer than heaven and earth will exist"
than for one stroke of a letter
A "stroke" is the smallest part of a letter. It refers to something in the law that may seem to be insignificant. Alternate translation: "than for even the smallest detail of the law"
become invalid
"disappear" or "cease to exist"
Luke 16:18
Everyone who divorces his wife
"Anyone who divorces his wife" or "Any man who divorces his wife"
commits adultery
"is guilty of adultery"
he who marries one
"any man who marries a woman"
Luke 16:19
General Information:
These verses give background information about the story Jesus begins to tell about the rich man and Lazarus.
Connecting Statement:
As Jesus continues teaching the people he begins to tell a story. It is about a rich man and Lazarus.
Now
This marks a shift in Jesus's speech as he begins to tell a story that will help people understand what he was teaching them.
a certain rich man
This phrase introduces a person in Jesus's story. It is not clear if this is a real person or if it is simply a person in a story that Jesus tells in order to make a point.
who was clothed in purple and fine linen
"who wore clothing made with fine linen and purple dye" or "who wore very expensive clothes." Purple dye and fine linen cloth were very expensive.
was enjoying every day his great wealth
"enjoyed eating expensive food every day" or "continued to spend much money, buying whatever he desired"
Luke 16:20
A certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People had laid a certain beggar named Lazarus at his gate"
A certain beggar named Lazarus
This phrase introduces another person in Jesus's story. It is not clear if this is a real person or simply a person in a story that Jesus tells in order to make a point.
at his gate
"at the gate to the rich man's house" or "at the entrance to the rich man's property"
covered with sores
"with sores all over his body"
Luke 16:21
longing to eat what fell
"wishing he could eat the scraps of food that fell"
Even the dogs came
The word "Even" here shows that what follows is worse than what has already been told about Lazarus. Alternate translation: "In addition to that, the dogs came" or "Worse yet, the dogs came"
dogs
The Jews considered dogs to be unclean animals. Lazarus was too sick and weak to stop the dogs from licking his wounds.
Luke 16:22
It came about that
This phrase is used here to mark an event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
was carried away by the angels
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angels carried him away"
to Abraham's side
This implies that Abraham and Lazarus were reclining next to each other at a feast, which was a customary style of feasting. The joy in heaven is often represented in the scriptures by the idea of a feast.
was buried
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people buried him"
Luke 16:23
at his side
This implies that Abraham and Lazarus were reclining next to each other at a feast, which was the customary style of feasting. The joy in heaven is often represented in the scriptures by the idea of a feast.
in Hades, being in torment
"he went to Hades, where, suffering in terrible pain"
he lifted up his eyes
This idiom means "he looked up"
Luke 16:24
he cried out and said
"the rich man called out to say" or "he shouted out to Abraham"
Father Abraham
Abraham was the ancestor of all the Jews, including the rich man.
have mercy on me
"please have pity on me" or "please be merciful to me"
and send Lazarus
"by sending Lazarus" or "and tell Lazarus to come to me"
he may dip the tip of his finger
This indicates the smallness of the amount requested. Alternate translation: "he may wet the tip of his finger"
I am in anguish in this flame
"I am in terrible pain in this flame" or "I am suffering terribly in this fire"
Luke 16:25
Child
The rich man was one of Abraham's descendants.
good things
"fine things" or "pleasant things"
in like manner evil things
"in like manner received evil things" or "in like manner

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

received things that caused him to suffer"
in like manner
This refers the fact that they both received something while they lived on earth. It is not saying that what they received was the same. Alternate translation: "while he was living received"
he is comforted here
"he is comfortable here" or "he is happy here"
in agony
"suffering"
Luke 16:26
Besides all this
"In addition to this reason"
a great chasm has been put in place
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has placed a huge ravine between you and us"
a great chasm
"a steep, deep and wide valley" or "a big separation" or "a huge ravine"
those who want to cross over ... cannot
"those people who want to cross over the chasm ... cannot" or "if anyone wants to cross over ... he cannot"
Luke 16:27
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 16:28
in order that he may warn them
"so that Lazarus may warn them"
this place of torment
"this place where we suffer torment" or "this place where we suffer terrible pain"
Luke 16:29
They have Moses and the prophets
It is implied that Abraham refused to send Lazarus to the rich man's brothers. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "No, I will not do that, because your brothers have what Moses and the prophets wrote long ago"
Moses and the prophets
This refers to their writings. Alternate translation: "what Moses and the prophets wrote"
let them listen to them
"your brothers should pay attention to Moses and the prophets"
Luke 16:30
if someone would go to them from the dead
The rich man would like this to happen. Alternate translation: "if a person who has died would go to them" or "if someone who has died would go and warn them"
from the dead
The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"
Luke 16:31
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling the story about the rich man and Lazarus.
If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets
Here "Moses and the prophets" represent the things that they wrote. Alternate translation: "If they do not pay attention to what Moses and the prophets wrote"
neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "neither will a person who comes back from the dead be able to convince them" or "they will not believe even if a person comes back from the dead"
rises from the dead
The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them is to become alive again.

Chapter 17

Luke 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Old Testament Examples
Jesus used the lives of Noah and of Lot to teach his followers. Noah was ready for the flood when it came, and they needed to be ready for him to return, because he would not warn them when he came. Lot's wife loved the evil city she had been living in so much that God also punished her when he destroyed it, and they needed to love Jesus more than anything else,
Those who read your translation may need help so they can understand what Jesus was teaching here.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions
Jesus asked his disciples three questions (Luke 17:7-9) to teach them that even those who serve him well are righteous only because of his grace. (See: and grace and righteous)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter
Paradox
A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will save it" (Luke 17:33).

Links:

Luke 17:1 Notes

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Luke 17:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching, but he directs his attention back to his disciples. This is still the same part of the story and the same day that began in Luke 15:3.

It is certain there will be stumbling blocks

"Things that tempt people to sin will certainly happen"

to that person through whom they come

"to anyone who causes the temptations to come" or "to any person who causes people to be tempted"

Luke 17:2

It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble

You may need to make explicit that Jesus is comparing the punishment for causing people to sin to being thrown into the sea. Alternate translation: "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than that he should suffer the more severe punishment for causing one of these little ones to stumble" or "He would suffer less if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than if he should cause one of these little ones to stumble"

if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea

This was a terrible punishment. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if they were to put a millstone around his neck and throw him into the sea" or "if someone were to put a heavy stone around his neck and push him into the sea"

for him ... his neck ... he were ... he should

The words "him," "his," and "he" refer to "that person" through whom things that cause people to sin come.

a millstone

This is a very large, heavy circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Alternate translation: "a heavy stone"

these little ones

This here refers to people whose faith is still weak. Alternate translation: "these people whose faith is small"

to stumble

This was a way of referring to unintentional sin. Alternate translation: "to sin"

Luke 17:3

If your brother sins

This is a conditional statement that talks about an event that will probably happen in the future.

your brother

"brother" is here used in the sense of someone with the same belief. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

rebuke him

"tell him strongly that what he did was wrong" or "correct him"

Luke 17:4

seven times in the day, and seven times

The number seven in the Bible is a symbol for completeness. Alternate translation: "many times in a day, and each time"

Luke 17:5

General Information:

There is a brief break in Jesus's teachings as the disciples speak to him. Then Jesus continues teaching.

Increase our faith

"Please give us more faith" or "Please add more faith to our faith"

Luke 17:6

If you had faith like a mustard seed, you

A mustard seed is a very small seed. Jesus implies that they do not have even a small amount of faith. Alternate translation: "If you had faith that was even as small as a mustard seed, you" or "Your faith is not as big as a mustard seed—but if it were, you"

mulberry tree

If this type of tree is not familiar, it may be helpful to substitute another type of tree. Alternate translation: "fig tree" or "tree"

Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Uproot yourself and plant yourself in the sea" or "Take your roots out of the ground, and put your roots down into the ocean"

it would obey you

"the tree would obey you." This result is conditional. It would happen only if they had faith.

Luke 17:7

But which of you, who ... sheep, will say ... sit down to eat'?

Jesus asks his disciples a question to help them think about the role of a servant. This could be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But none of you who ... sheep would say ... sit down to eat.'"

a servant plowing or keeping sheep

"a servant that plows your field or takes care of your sheep"

Luke 17:8

Will he not say to him ... eat and drink'?

Jesus uses a second question explain how the disciples would actually treat a servant. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "He would certainly say to him ... eat and drink'"

put a belt around your clothes and serve me

"tie your clothes at your waist and serve me" or "dress up properly and take care of me." People would tie their clothes closely around their waist so that their clothes would not get in their way while they worked.

Then afterward

"Then after you serve me"

Luke 17:9

He does not thank the servant ... commanded, does he?

Jesus uses this question to show how people treat servants. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "He would not thank the servant ... commanded."

the things that were commanded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things you commanded him to do"

does he?

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"right?" or "is this not true?"
Luke 17:10
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes teaching. This is the end of this part of the story.
you also
Jesus was speaking to his disciples, so languages that have a plural form of "you" would use it.
that you are commanded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has commanded you"
We are unworthy servants
This is an exaggeration to express that they did not do anything worthy of praise. Alternate translation: "We are ordinary slaves" or "We servants do not deserve your praise"
Luke 17:11
General Information:
This begins the story of Jesus healing 10 men of leprosy.
It came about that
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
as he traveled to Jerusalem
"as Jesus and the disciples were traveling to Jerusalem"
Luke 17:12
General Information:
This is the beginning of the background information and the setting of the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers.
a certain village
This phrase does not identify the village.
there he was met by ten men who were lepers
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ten men who were lepers met him" or "ten men who had leprosy met him"
They stood far away from him
This was a respectful gesture, because lepers were not allowed to approach other people.
Luke 17:13
General Information:
This is the end of the background information and the setting of the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers.
they lifted up their voices
The idiom "to lift up one's voice" means to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "they called with loud voices" or "they called aloud"
have mercy on us
They were specifically asking to be healed. Alternate translation: "please show us mercy by healing us"
Luke 17:14
show yourselves to the priests
Lepers were required to have the priests verify that their leprosy was healed. Alternate translation: "show yourselves to the priests so they can examine you"
they were cleansed
When people were healed, they were no longer ceremonially unclean. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they were healed of their leprosy and so became clean" or "they were cured of their leprosy"
Luke 17:15
saw that he was healed
"realized that he was healed" or "realized that Jesus had healed him"
he turned back
"he went back to Jesus"
with a loud voice glorifying God
"and glorified God loudly"
Luke 17:16
He fell on his face at Jesus' feet
"he knelt down and put his face close to Jesus' feet." He did this to honor Jesus.
Now he was a Samaritan
The word "now" is used to mark a break in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the man who returned to Jesus.
Luke 17:17
Then Jesus said
Jesus responded to what the man did, but he was speaking to the group of people around him. Alternate translation: "So Jesus said to the crowd"
Were not the ten cleansed?
This is the first of three rhetorical questions. Jesus used them to show the people around him how surprised and disappointed he was that only one of the ten men came back to glorify God. Alternate translation: "Ten men were healed." or "God healed ten men."
Where are the nine?
"Why did not the other nine come back?" This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "The other nine men should have come back, too."
Luke 17:18
Were there no others who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?
This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "There were no others who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner!" or "God healed ten men, yet only this foreigner came back to give glory to God!"
this foreigner
Samaritans had non-Jewish ancestors and they did not worship God in the same way that the Jews did.
Luke 17:19
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus healing the 10 lepers.
Your faith has made you well
"Because of your faith you have become well." The idea of "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "Because you believe, you are well again"
Luke 17:20
General Information:
We do not know where this event takes place; it simply happens one day when Jesus is talking with the Pharisees.
Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come,
This is the beginning of a new event. Some translations start it with "One day" or "Once." It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, 'When will the kingdom of God come?'"
The kingdom of God does not come with careful observing

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

People thought that they would be able to see signs of the kingdom coming. The idea of signs can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God does not come with signs that people can observe"
Luke 17:21
the kingdom of God is within you
The idea of the noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verb "rules." Alternate translation: "God rules within you"
the kingdom of God is within you
Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who were hostile to him. Possible meanings are 1) the word "you" refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God is within people" or 2) the word translated "within" means "among." Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God is among you"
Luke 17:22
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach his disciples.
The days are coming when
The idea of days days coming represents something being soon. Alternate translation: "A time is coming when" or "Soon"
you will desire to see
"you will want very much to see" or "you will wish to experience"
one of the days of the Son of Man
This refers to the kingdom of God. Alternate translation: "one of the days when the Son of Man will rule as king"
the Son of Man
Jesus is speaking about himself.
but you will not see it
"you will not experience it"
Luke 17:23
Look, there! Look, here!
This refers to seeking the Messiah. Alternate translation: "Look, the Messiah is over there! He is over here!"
do not go out or run after them
The purpose of going out can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "do not go with them to look"
Luke 17:24
as the lightning shines brightly ... so will the Son of Man be
When lightning flashes, people can see it clearly. This is a metaphor for the way the Son of Man will appear: when he does, everyone will see him clearly. Alternate translation: "as the people can see lightning clearly when it flashes ... so they will clearly see the Son of Man"
so will the Son of Man be in his day
This refers to the future kingdom of God. Alternate translation: "it will be like that on the day when the Son of Man comes to reign"
so will the Son of Man be
Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "so will I, the Son of Man, be"
Luke 17:25
But first he must suffer
"But first the Son of Man must suffer." Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.
be rejected by this generation
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of this generation must reject him"
Luke 17:26
As it happened ... even so will it also happen
"As people were doing things ... even so people will be doing the same things"
in the days of Noah
The "days of Noah" refers to the time during Noah's life just before God punished the people of the world. Alternate translation: "when Noah was living"
in the days of the Son of Man
The "days of the Son of Man" refers to the period just before the Son of Man will come. Alternate translation: "when the Son of Man is about to come"
Luke 17:27
They ate, they drank, they married, and they were given in marriage
People were doing ordinary things. They did not know or care that God was about to judge them.
they were given in marriage
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "parents were allowing their daughters to marry men"
the ark
"the ship" or "the barge"
destroyed them all
This does not include Noah and his family who were in the ark. Alternate translation: "destroyed all those who were not in the boat"
Luke 17:28
they were eating and drinking
"the people of Sodom were eating and drinking"
Luke 17:29
it rained fire and sulfur from heaven
"fire and burning sulfur fell from the sky like rain"
destroyed them all
This does not include Lot and his family. Alternate translation: "destroyed all those who stayed in the city"
Luke 17:30
After the same manner it will be
"It will be like that." Alternate translation: "In the same way people will not be ready"
in the day that the Son of Man is revealed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the Son of Man appears" or "when the Son of man comes"
the Son of Man is revealed
Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am revealed"
Luke 17:31
let him who is on the housetop not go down
"whoever is on the housetop must not go down" or "if anyone is on his housetop, he must not go down." This is a statement of what people should not do, not a command to the hearers.
on the housetop
Their housetops were flat and people could walk or sit on them.
his goods
"his possessions" or "his things"
return
They are not to go back to the house to get anything. They

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

are to flee quickly.
Luke 17:32
Remember Lot's wife
"Remember what happened to Lot's wife" This is a warning. She looked back toward Sodom and God punished her along with the people of Sodom. Alternate translation: "Do not do what Lot's wife did"
Luke 17:33
Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it
"People who try save their lives will lose them" or "Whoever tries to save his old way of life will lose his life"
but whoever loses his life will save it
"but people who lose their lives will save them" or "but whoever abandons his old way of life will save his life"
Luke 17:34
I tell you
As Jesus continues to address his disciples, he emphasizes the importance of what he is telling them.
in that night
This refers to what will happen if he, the Son of Man, comes during the night.
there will be two people in one bed
The emphasis is not on these two people, but on the fact that some people will be taken away and the others will be left.
bed
"couch" or "cot"
One will be taken, and the other will be left
"One person will be taken and the other person will be left behind." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take one person and leave the other" or "Angels will take one and leave behind the other"
Luke 17:35
There will be two women grinding grain together
The emphasis is not on these two women or their activity, but on the fact that some people will be taken away and the others will be left.
grinding grain together
"grinding grain together"
Luke 17:36
General Information:
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Luke 17:37
General Information:
The disciples ask Jesus a question about his teaching and he answers them.
Where, Lord?
"Lord, where will this happen?"
Where there is a body, there will the vultures also be gathered together
Apparently this is a proverb that means "It will be obvious" or "You will know it when it happens." Alternate translation: "As vultures gathering shows that there is a dead body, so these things show that the Son of Man is coming"
vultures
Vultures are large birds that fly together and eat the flesh of dead animals that they find. You could describe these birds this way or use the word for local birds that do this.

Chapter 18

Luke 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus told two parables (Luke 18:1-8 and Luke 18:9-14) and then taught that his followers were to be humble (Luke 18:15-17), to use everything they owned to help the poor (Luke 18:18-30), and to expect him to die soon (Luke 18:31-34). Then they all began to walk to Jerusalem, and Jesus healed a blind man (Luke 18:35-43).

Special concepts in this chapter

Judges

People expected judges always to do what God said was right and to make sure that other people did what was right. But some judges did not care about doing right or making sure others did right. Jesus called this kind of judge unjust. (See: justice)

Pharisees and tax collectors

The Pharisees thought that they themselves were the best examples of righteous good people, and they thought that tax collectors were the most unrighteous sinners. (See: righteous and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 18:1 Notes

Luke 18:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to tell a parable as he continues to teach his disciples. This is the same part of the story that began in [Luke 17:20]
Then he
"Then Jesus"
Luke 18:2
saying
A new sentence could begin here (if the comma at the end of the previous verse is changed to a period): "He said"
a certain city

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Here "certain city" is a way to let the listener know that the narrative that follows takes place in a city, but the name of the city itself is not important.

did not respect people

"did not care about other people"

Luke 18:3

Now there was a widow

Jesus uses this phrase to introduce a new character to the story.

widow

A widow is a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried. Jesus's hearers would have thought of her as a person who had no one to protect her from those who wanted to harm her.

she came often to him

The word "him" refers to the judge.

Help me get justice against

"Give me a just ruling against"

my opponent

"my enemy" or "the person who is trying to harm me." This is an opponent in a lawsuit. It is not clear whether the widow is suing the opponent or the opponent is suing the widow.

Luke 18:4

man

This refers here to "people" in general.

Luke 18:5

causes me trouble

"bothers me"

wear me out

"exhaust me"

by her constant coming

"by continually coming to me"

Luke 18:6

General Information:

Jesus has finished telling his parable and is now commenting about it to his disciples.

Listen to what the unjust judge says

"Think about what the unjust judge just said." Translate this in a way that people will understand that Jesus has already told what the judge said.

Luke 18:7

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of an explanation of the parable in Luke 18:1-5.

Now

This word indicates that Jesus has ended the parable and has started explaining its meaning.

will not God also bring ... night?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "God will also certainly bring ... night!"

his chosen ones

"the people he has chosen"

Will he delay long over them?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "He will certainly not delay long over them!"

Luke 18:8

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the explanation of the parable in Luke 18:1-5 that began in Luke 18:7.

when the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find faith on the earth?

Jesus asks this question so that his hearers will stop thinking that God is slow to help those who call to him for justice and will understand that the real problem is that they do not truly have faith in God. Alternate translation: "when the Son of Man comes, you need to be sure that he will find that you truly have faith in him." or "when the Son of Man comes, he will find few on earth who believe."

the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man come, will I indeed find"

Luke 18:9

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell another parable to some other people who were persuaded that they themselves were righteous.

Then he

"Then Jesus"

to some

"to some people"

who trusted in themselves that they were righteous

"who had convinced themselves that they were righteous" or "who thought they were righteous"

despised

strongly disliked or hated

Luke 18:10

into the temple

"into the temple courtyard"

Luke 18:11

The Pharisee stood and prayed these things about himself

The meaning of the Greek text of this phrase is not clear. Possible meanings are 1) "The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself in this way" or 2) "The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed."

robbers

Robbers are people who steal from other people by forcing the other people to give things to them, or by threatening to harm them if they refuse to give what the robbers ask for.

or even like this tax collector

The Pharisees believed that tax collectors were as sinful as robbers, unrighteous people, and adulterers. This could be made explicit. Alternate translation: "and I am certainly not like this sinful tax collector, who cheats people"

Luke 18:12

all that I get

"everything I earn"

Luke 18:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his parable.

standing at a distance

"stood away from the Pharisee." This was a sign of humility. He did not feel worthy to be near the Pharisee.

lift up his eyes to heaven

To "lift up his eyes" means to look at something. Alternate translation: "look toward heaven" or "look upward"

hit his breast

This is a physical expression of great sorrow, and shows

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this man's repentance and humility. Alternate translation: "hit his breast to show his sorrow"

God, have mercy on me, a sinner

"God, please be merciful to me. I am a sinner" or "God, please have mercy on me even though I have committed many sins"

Luke 18:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus comments on what the parable teaches.

this man went back down to his house justified

He was justified because God forgave his sin. Alternate translation: "God forgave the tax collector"

rather than the other

"rather than the other man" or "and not the other man." Alternate translation: "but God did not forgive the Pharisee"

because everyone who exalts himself

With this phrase, Jesus switches from the story to state the general principle that the story illustrates.

will be humbled

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

will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will greatly honor"

Luke 18:15

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in the part of the story which began in Luke 17:20. Jesus welcomes the children and talks about them.

touch them, but

This could also be translated as separate sentences: "touch them. But"

they rebuked them

"the disciples tried to stop the parents from bringing their children to Jesus"

Luke 18:16

Jesus called them to him

"Jesus told the people to bring their infants to him"

Permit the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them

These two sentences have similar meaning and they are combined for emphasis. Some languages emphasize in a different way. Alternate translation: "You must certainly allow the children to come to me"

belongs to such ones

This could be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "belongs to people who are like these little children"

Luke 18:17

Truly I say to you

"Surely I say to you." Jesus used this expression to emphasize the importance of what he was about to say.

whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a child will definitely not enter it

God requires people to accept his rule over them with trust and humility. Alternate translation: "whoever wants to enter God's kingdom must receive it with trust and humility like a child"

Luke 18:18

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in the part of the story which began in Luke 17:20. Jesus begins to talk with a ruler about entering the kingdom of heaven.

A certain ruler

This introduces a new character in the story. It only identifies him by his position.

what must I do

"what do I need to do" or "what is required of me"

inherit eternal life

"receive life that does not end." The term "inherit" usually refers to the property that a man left to his children when he dies. Therefore, this metaphor may mean he understood himself to be a child of God and desired for God to give him eternal life.

Luke 18:19

Why do you call me good? No one is good, except God alone

Jesus asks the question because he knows that the ruler will not like Jesus's answer to the ruler's question in verse 18. Jesus does not expect the ruler to answer Jesus's question. Jesus wants the ruler to understand that Jesus's answer to the ruler's question comes from God, who alone is good. Alternate translation: "You know that no one is good, except God alone, so to call me good is to compare me with God"

No one is good, except God alone

This double negative emphasizes that God is the only one who is good. Alternate translation: "The only one who is good is God"

Luke 18:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 18:21

All these things

"All of these commandments"

Luke 18:22

When Jesus heard that

"When Jesus heard the man say that"

he said to him

"he answered him"

One thing you still lack

"You still need to do one more thing" or "There is one thing that you have not yet done"

sell all that you have

"sell all your possessions" or "sell everything that you own"

distribute it to the poor

"give away the money to the poor people"

come, follow me

"come with me as my disciple"

Luke 18:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 18:24

How difficult it is ... kingdom of God!

This is an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "It is so very hard ... kingdom of God!"

Luke 18:25

a camel to go through a needle's eye

It is impossible for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle. Jesus was probably using hyperbole to mean it is extremely difficult for a rich man to enter God's kingdom.

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needle's eye
The needle's eye is the hole in a sewing needle through which the thread is passed.
Luke 18:26
Those hearing it said
"The people who listening to Jesus said"
Then who can be saved?
It is possible that they were asking for an answer. But it is more likely that they used the question to emphasize their surprise at what Jesus said. Alternate translation: "Then no one can be saved from sin!" or in active form: "Then God will not save anyone!"
Luke 18:27
are impossible with people are possible with God
"people cannot do are possible for God to do" or "people cannot do, God can do"
Luke 18:28
Well, we
This phrase refers only to the disciples, and contrasts them with the rich ruler.
we have left
"we have given up" or "we have left behind"
everything that is our own
"all our wealth" or "all our possessions"
Luke 18:29
Truly, I say to you
Jesus uses this expression to stress the importance of what he is about to say.
there is no one who
This expression is intended to include not only the disciples, but also everyone else who has made the same sacrifices.
Luke 18:30
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the conversation about entering the kingdom of heaven.
who will not receive
This could be stated in positive form. First the words "there is not one who" in the previous verse
in this time
"in this present world"
in the age to come, eternal life
"he will also receive eternal life in the age to come"
Luke 18:31
Connecting Statement:
This is the next event in this part of the story that began in Luke 17:20. Jesus is talking to his disciples alone.
gathered the twelve to himself
Jesus took the twelve disciples to a place away from other people where they could be alone.
See, we are going up to Jerusalem
This indicates a significant change in the ministry of Jesus as he goes to Jerusalem for the final time.
that have been written by the prophets
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the prophets have written"
the prophets
This refers to the Old Testament prophets.
Son of Man
Jesus speaks of himself as "the Son of Man." Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man,"
will be accomplished
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will happen" or "will occur"
Luke 18:32
For he will be given over to the Gentiles
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the Jewish leaders will give him over to the Gentiles"
he
Jesus speaks of himself. Alternate translation: "I"
will be mocked, and shamefully treated, and spit upon
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will mock him, treat him shamefully, and spit on him"
Luke 18:33
him ... him ... he
Jesus speaks of himself. Alternate translation: "me ... me ... I"
on the third day
This refers to the third day after his death. However, the disciples did not yet understand this, so it is best not to add this explanation when translating this verse.
Luke 18:34
General Information:
This verse is not part of the main story, but rather a comment about this part of the story.
They understood none of these things
"They did not understand any of these things"
these things
This refers to Jesus's description of how he would suffer and die in Jerusalem, and that he would rise from the dead.
this word was hidden from them
This can be stated in active form, but it is not clear whether it is God or Jesus who hid the word from them. Alternate translation: "Jesus hid his message from them" or "God prevented them from understanding the meaning of what Jesus was telling them"
the things that were said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Jesus said"
Luke 18:35
General Information:
Jesus heals a blind man as he approaches Jericho. These verses give background information and information about the setting of the story.
It came about
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.
a certain blind man was sitting
"there was a blind man sitting." Here "certain" means only that the man is an important new participant in the story. Luke does not mention his name.
Luke 18:36
and hearing
and hearing
It may be helpful to start a new sentence here after changing the comma at the end of the previous verse (verse 35) to a period. Alternate translation: "When he heard"
Luke 18:37

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They told him
"People in the crowd told the blind man"
Jesus of Nazareth
Jesus came from the town of Nazareth, which was located in Galilee.
was passing by
"was walking past him"
Luke 18:38
So
This word marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, the crowd had told the blind man that Jesus was walking by.
cried out
"called out" or "shouted"
Son of David
Jesus was a descendant of David, Israel's most important king.
have mercy on me
"show me pity" or "show me compassion"
Luke 18:39
The ones who were walking ahead
"The people who were walking at the front of the crowd"
to be quiet
"to be silent" or "not to shout"
cried out all the more
This could mean that he cried out louder or that he cried out more persistently.
Luke 18:40
that the man be brought to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people to bring the blind man to him"
Luke 18:41
to receive my sight
"to be able to see"
Luke 18:42
Receive your sight
This is a command, but Jesus is not commanding the man to do anything. Jesus is healing the man by commanding him to be healed. Alternate translation: "You will now receive your sight"
Your faith has healed you
These words are a metonym. It was because of the man's faith that Jesus healed the man. Alternate translation: "I have healed you because you have believed in me"
Luke 18:43
glorifying God
"giving glory to God" or "praising God"

Chapter 19

Luke 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After Jesus helped a man named Zacchaeus repent of his sins

Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinner"

The Pharisees referred to a group of people as "sinners." The Jewish leaders thought these people were sinful, but in reality the leaders were also sinful. This can be taken as irony.

Servants

God expects his people to remember that everything in the world belongs to God. God gives his people things so they can serve him. He wants them to please him by doing what he wants them to do with everything he has given them. One day Jesus will ask his servants what they have done with everything he gave them to use. He will give a reward to those who have done what he wanted them to do, and he will punish those who have not.

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on a donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey had a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 21:1-7 and Mark 11:1-7 and Luke 19:29-36 and John 12:14-15)

Spreading garments and branches

When a king would enter one of the cities he ruled, people would cut branches from trees and would take off the clothes that they wore to stay warm in cold weather and spread them all on the road so the king would ride over them. They did this to honor the king and show that they loved him.

The merchants in the temple

Jesus forced the people who were selling animals in the temple to leave. He did this to show everyone that he had authority over the temple and that only those who were righteous, who did what God said was good, could be in it. (See: righteous)

Links:

Luke 19:1 Notes

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Luke 19:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 begin to give background information for the events that follow.

Luke 19:2

Behold, there was a man there

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a man who was"

He was a chief tax collector and was rich

This is background information about Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:3

General Information:

This verse completes the background information begun in [Luke 19:1-2]

He was trying

"Zacchaeus was trying"

because he was small in height

"because he was short"

Luke 19:4

So he ran

The author has finished giving the background to the event and now begins to describe the event itself.

a sycamore tree

"a sycamore fig tree." It produces small round fruit about 2.5 centimeters across. Alternate translation: "a fig tree" or "a tree"

Luke 19:5

the place

"the tree" or "where Zacchaeus was"

Luke 19:6

So he hurried

"So Zacchaeus hurried"

Luke 19:7

they all complained

The Jews hated the tax collectors and did not think any good person should associate with them.

He has gone in to visit a man who is a sinner

"Jesus has gone into the house of a sinner to visit him"

a sinner

"an obvious sinner" or "a real sinner"

Luke 19:8

the Lord

This refers to Jesus.

restore four times the amount

"return to them four times as much as I took from them"

Luke 19:9

salvation has come to this house

It was understood that salvation comes from God. Alternate translation: "God has saved this household"

this house

The word "house" here refers to the people living in the house or the family.

he too

"this man too" or "Zacchaeus also"

son of Abraham

Possible meanings are 1) "descendant of Abraham" and 2) "person who has faith as Abraham did."

Luke 19:10

the Son of Man came

Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"

the people who are lost

"the people who have wandered away from God" or "those who by sinning have wandered away from God"

Luke 19:11

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell a parable to the crowd. This verse gives background information about why Jesus tells the parable.

that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately

The Jews believed that the Messiah would establish the kingdom as soon as he came to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "that Jesus would immediately begin to rule over God's kingdom"

Luke 19:12

A certain nobleman

"A certain man who was a member of the ruling class" or "A certain man from an important family"

to receive for himself a kingdom

This is the image of a lesser king going to a greater king. The greater king would give the lesser king the right and authority to rule over his own country.

Luke 19:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

He called

"The nobleman called." It may be helpful to state that the man did this before he left to receive his kingdom. Alternate translation: "Before he left, he called"

gave them ten minas

"gave each of them one mina"

ten minas

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work, so ten minas would have been about three years' wages. Alternate translation: "ten valuable coins" or "a large amount of money"

Conduct business

"Trade with this money" or "Use this money in order to earn more"

Luke 19:14

his citizens

"the people of his country"

a delegation

"a group of people to represent them" or "several messengers"

Luke 19:15

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

having received the kingdom

"after he had become king"

to be called to him

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to come to him"

what profit they had made

"how much money they had earned"

Luke 19:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

The first

"The first servant"

came before him

"came before the nobleman"

your mina has made ten minas more

It is implied that the servant was the one who caused the profit. Alternate translation: "I used your mina to make a profit of ten more minas"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

Luke 19:17

Well done

"You have done well." Your language may have a phrase that an employer would use to show approval, such as "Good job."

very little

This refers to the one mina, which the nobleman apparently did not consider to be a lot of money.

Luke 19:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

The second

"The second servant"

Your mina, lord, has made five minas

It is implied that the servant was the one who caused the profit. Alternate translation: "Lord, I used your mina to make a profit of five more minas"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

Luke 19:19

You take charge over five cities

"You will have authority over five cities"

Luke 19:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

Another came

"Another servant came"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

kept safely in a cloth

"wrapped in a cloth and stored away"

Luke 19:21

a demanding person

"a stern man" or "a man who expects a lot from his servants"

You take up what you did not put in

This was probably a proverb. A person who takes out of storage or out of a bank things that he did not put in is a metaphor for someone who benefits from other people's hard work. Alternate translation: "You take out what you did not put in" or "You are like a person who takes out what other people put in"

you reap what you did not sow

This was probably a proverb. A person who harvests food that someone else has planted is a metaphor for someone who benefits from other people's hard work. Alternate translation: "you are like a person who reaps the fruit of what other people sowed"

Luke 19:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

By your own words

His "words" refer to all that he had said. Alternate translation: "Based on what you have said"

You knew that I am a demanding person

The nobleman was repeating what the servant had said about him. He was not saying that it was true. Alternate translation: "You say that I am a demanding person"

Luke 19:23

why did you not put my money ... interest?

The nobleman uses a question to rebuke the wicked servant. Alternate translation: "you should have put my money ... interest."

put my money in the bank

"lent my money to a bank." Cultures that do not have banks might translate it as "let someone borrow my money."

bank

A bank is a business that safely holds money for people. A bank lends that money to others for a profit. Therefore it pays an extra amount, or interest, to the people who keep their money in the bank.

I would have collected it with interest

"I could have collected that amount plus the interest it would have earned" or "I would have gained a profit from it"

interest

Interest is money that a bank pays people who put their money in the bank.

Luke 19:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

The nobleman

The nobleman had become king. See how you translated this in Luke 19:12.

them that stood by

"the people who were standing near them"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

Luke 19:25

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he has ten minas.
"he already has ten minas!"
Luke 19:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.
I say to you
It can be stated clearly that the nobleman is speaking. Alternate translation: "And the nobleman replied, 'I say to you" or "But the nobleman said 'I tell you this"
everyone who has will be given more
It is implied that what he has is the money he earned by using his mina faithfully. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone who uses well what he has been given, I will give him more" or "to everyone who uses well what I have given him I will give more"
from him that has not
It is implied that the reason he does not have money is because he did not use his mina faithfully. Alternate translation: "from the person who does not use well what I have given him"
will be taken away
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will take away from him"
Luke 19:27
these enemies of mine
Since the enemies were not right there, some languages would say "those enemies of mine."
Luke 19:28
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about the nobleman and his servants. This verse tells us what Jesus does after this part of the story.
When he had said these things
"When Jesus had said these things"
going up to Jerusalem
Jerusalem was higher than Jericho, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.
Luke 19:29
General Information:
Jesus approaches Jerusalem.
It came about that
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
when he came near
The word "he" refers to Jesus. His disciples were also traveling with him.
Bethphage
Bethphage is a village on the Mount of Olives, which is across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem.
the mountain that is called Olives
"the hill that is called the Mount of Olives" or "the hill that is called 'Olive Tree Mountain'"
Luke 19:30
a colt
"a young donkey" or "a young riding animal"
that has never been ridden
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that no one has ever ridden"
Luke 19:31
If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say
The inner quote can also be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "If any one asks you why you are untying it, say"
Luke 19:32
Those who were sent
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The two disciples that Jesus sent"
Luke 19:33
the owners
"the owners of the colt"
Luke 19:34
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 19:35
threw their cloaks upon the colt
"put their robes on the young donkey." Cloaks are outer robes.
set Jesus on it
"helped Jesus get up on and ride on the colt"
Luke 19:36
they spread their cloaks
"people spread their cloaks." This is a sign of giving honor to someone.
Luke 19:37
As he was now approaching
"As Jesus was going near." Jesus's disciples were traveling with him.
where the Mount of Olives descends
"where the road goes down from the Mount of Olives"
mighty works which they had seen
"great things they had seen Jesus do"
Luke 19:38
Blessed is the king
They were saying this about Jesus.
in the name of the Lord
Here "name" refers to power and authority. Also, "Lord" refers to God.
Peace in heaven
"May there be peace in heaven" or "We want to see peace in heaven"
glory in the highest
"may there be glory in the highest" or "we want to see glory in the highest." The words "the highest" refer to heaven, which is a metonym for God, who lives in heaven. Alternate translation: "Let everyone give glory to God in the highest heaven"
Luke 19:39
in the multitude
"in the large crowd"
rebuke your disciples
"tell your disciples to stop doing these things"
Luke 19:40
I tell you
Jesus said this to emphasize what he would say next.
if these were silent
Jesus is describing something that could have happened but did not. Some translators may need to make it clear what

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jesus was implying when he said this. Alternate translation: "I will not rebuke them, for if these people were to be silent"

the stones would cry out

"the stones would call out praises"

Luke 19:41

the city

This refers to Jerusalem.

he wept over it

To weep over something means to weep because of something. The word "it" refers to the city of Jerusalem, but it represents the people who lived in that city. Alternate translation: "he cried about the people of Jerusalem"

Luke 19:42

If only you had known ... bring you peace

Jesus expresses his sadness that the people of Jerusalem had missed the opportunity to be at peace with God.

you

The word "you" is singular because Jesus is speaking to the city. But if this would be unnatural in your language, you could use a plural form of "you" to refer to the people of the city.

they are hidden from your eyes

"your eyes" refer to the ability to see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you can no longer see them"

Luke 19:43

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking.

For

What follows is the reason for Jesus's sadness.

the days will come upon you when your enemies

This indicates that they will experience difficult times. Some languages do not talk about time "coming." Alternate translation: "in the future these things will happen to you: Your enemies" or "soon you will endure troublesome times. Your enemies"

you ... your

The word "you" is singular because Jesus is speaking to the city as he would to a woman. But if this would be unnatural in your language, you could use a plural form of "you" to refer to the people of the city.

barricade

This refers to a wall to keep the people from getting out of the city.

Luke 19:44

They will strike you down to the ground, and your children with you

Jesus is speaking to the people of the city as if he were speaking to the city itself as he would speak to a woman. He speaks of the people who live in the city as if they are the woman's children, and thus the city's children. To strike down a city is to destroy its walls and buildings, and to strike down its children is to kill those who live in it. Alternate translation: "They will completely destroy you and kill all who live in you" or "They will completely destroy your city and kill all of you"

They will not leave one stone upon another

"They will not leave any of the stones in place." Jesus uses hyperbole here to emphasize the extent of the devastation that enemies will cause in Jerusalem. The enemies will completely destroy the city, which is built of stones. Alternate translation: "They will destroy Jerusalem"

you did not recognize

"you were not aware of" or "you were not grateful during"

the time of your visitation

The abstract noun "visitation" can be translated as a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "the time when God visited you" or "the time during which God was with you."

visitation

This is a "visit" by an overseer to make sure that things are going well with those over whom he is in charge, not a casual social visit.

Luke 19:45

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in this part of the story. Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus entered the temple

You may need to make explicit that he first entered Jerusalem, where the temple was located. Alternate translation: "Jesus entered Jerusalem and then went to the temple courtyard"

entered the temple

Only priests were allowed to enter the temple building. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

cast out

"throw out" or "force out"

Luke 19:46

It is written

This is a quotation from Isaiah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The scriptures say" or "A prophet wrote these words in the scriptures"

My house

The word "My" refers to God and "house" refers to the temple.

house of prayer

"a place where people pray to me"

a den of robbers

Jesus speaks of the temple as if it were a place where thieves come together. Alternate translation: "a place where thieves hide"

Luke 19:47

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of this part of the story. Verses 47-48 tell about ongoing action that continues after the main part of the story ends.

in the temple

"in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"

destroy him

This hyperbole refers to killing Jesus. Alternate translation: "kill him"

Luke 19:48

were listening to him intently

"were paying close attention to what Jesus was saying"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 20

Luke 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 20:17, 42-43, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Using questions to trap people

When Jesus asked the Pharisees who gave John the authority to baptize (Luke 20:4), they could not answer because any answer they gave would give someone a reason to say that they were wrong (Luke 20:5-6). They thought that they would be able to say that Jesus was wrong when they asked him if people should pay taxes to Caesar (Luke 20:22), but Jesus gave them an answer that they had not thought of.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. In this chapter, Jesus quotes a psalm that records David calling his son "Lord," that is, "master." However, to the Jews, ancestors were greater than their descendants. In this passage, Jesus is trying to lead his hearers to the true understanding that the Messiah will himself be divine, and that he himself is the Messiah. (Luke 20:41-44).

Links:

Luke 20:1 Notes

Luke 20:1

Connecting Statement:

The chief priests, scribes, and elders question Jesus in the temple.

It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

in the temple

"in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"

Luke 20:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 20:3

General Information:

Jesus responds to the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

He answered and said to them

"Jesus replied"

I will also ask you a question, and you tell me

The words "I will ... ask you a question" are a statement. The words "you tell me" are a command.

Luke 20:4

Was it from heaven or from men

Jesus knows that John's authority comes from heaven, so he is not asking for information. He asks the question so the Jewish leaders will have to tell what they think to all who are listening. This question is rhetorical, but you will probably have to translate it as a question. Alternate translation: "Do you think John's authority to baptize people came from heaven or from men" or "Was it God who told John to baptize people, or did people tell him to do it"

from heaven

"from God." Jewish people avoided referring to God by his name "Yahweh." Often they used the word "heaven" to refer to him.

Luke 20:5

They reasoned

"They discussed" or "They considered their answer"

with themselves

"among themselves" or "with each other"

If we say, 'From heaven,' he

Some languages might prefer an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "If we say that John's authority is from heaven, he"

From heaven

"From God." Jewish people avoided referring to God by his name "Yahweh." Often they used the word "heaven" to refer to him. See how these words are translated in [Luke 20:4]

he will say

"Jesus will say"

Luke 20:6

if we say, 'From men,'

Some languages might prefer an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "if we say that John's authority is from men,"

stone us

"kill us by throwing stones on us." God's Law commanded that his people stone those of his people who mocked him or his prophets.

Luke 20:7

So they answered

"So the chief priests, scribes and elders answered." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they had reasoned with themselves (Luke 20:5-6), and they did not have an answer they wanted to say.

they answered that they did not know where it came from.

This could be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "they said, 'We do not know where it came from.'"

where it came from

"where John's baptism came from." Alternate translation: "where John's authority to baptize came from" or "who authorized John to baptize people"

Luke 20:8

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Neither will I tell you
"And I will not tell you." Jesus knew they were not willing to tell him the answer, so he responded in the same manner. Alternate translation: "Just as you will not tell me, I will not tell you"
Luke 20:9
General Information:
Jesus begins to tell a parable to the people in the temple courtyard.
rented it out to vine growers
"allowed some vine growers to use it in exchange for payment" or "allowed some vine growers to use it and pay him later." Payment might be in the form of money or a portion of the harvest.
vine growers
These are people who tend grape vines and grow grapes. Alternate translation: "grape farmers"
Luke 20:10
the appointed time
"the time they had agreed to pay him." This would have been at the harvest time.
of the fruit of the vineyard
"some of the grapes" or "some of what they produced in the vineyard." It could also refer to the things they made from grapes or the money they earned by selling the grapes.
sent him away empty-handed
An empty hand is a metaphor for "nothing." Alternate translation: "sent him away without paying him" or "sent him away without the grapes"
Luke 20:11
beat him
"beat that servant"
treated him shamefully
"humiliated him"
sent him away empty-handed
Having an empty hand is a metaphor for having nothing. Alternate translation: "sent him away without paying him" or "sent him away without any grapes"
Luke 20:12
yet a third
"even a third servant" or "yet another servant." The word "yet" hints at the fact that the landowner should not have had to send the second servant, but he went beyond that and sent a third servant.
wounded him
"injured that servant"
threw him out
"threw him out of the vineyard"
Luke 20:13
What will I do?
This question emphasizes that the vineyard owner thought carefully about what he was going to do. Alternate translation: "Here is what I will do:"
Luke 20:14
when the vine growers saw him
"when the farmers saw the owner's son"
Let us kill him
They were not asking permission. The said this to encourage each other to kill the heir.
Luke 20:15
They threw him out of the vineyard
"The vine growers forced the son out of the vineyard"
What then will the lord of the vineyard do to them?
Jesus uses a question to get his listeners to pay attention to what the owner of the vineyard will do. Alternate translation: "So now, listen to what the lord of the vineyard will do to them."
Luke 20:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes telling his parable to the crowd.
May it never be
"May it never happen"
Luke 20:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues teaching the crowd.
But Jesus looked at them
"But Jesus stared at them" or "But he looked straight at them." He did this to hold them accountable to understand what he was saying.
What is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone ... cornerstone'?
Jesus uses a question to teach the crowd. Alternate translation: "You should be able to understand that which is written: 'The stone ... cornerstone.'"
that which is written
"this scripture"
The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone
This is the first of three metaphors in a prophecy from the book of Psalms. This one refers to the Messiah as if he were a stone that builders chose not to use, but that God made the most important stone.
The stone that the builders rejected
"The stone that the builders said was not good enough to use for building." In those days people used stones to build the walls of houses and other buildings.
the builders
This refers to the religious rulers who are rejecting Jesus as Messiah.
the cornerstone
"the chief stone of the building" or "the most important stone of the building"
Luke 20:18
Everyone who falls ... broken to pieces
This second metaphor speaks of people who reject the Messiah as if they fall over a stone and are injured.
will be broken to pieces
This is a result of falling onto the stone. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will break up into pieces"
the one on whom it falls
"the one that stone falls on." This third metaphor speaks about the Messiah judging those who reject him as if he were a large stone that would crush them.
Luke 20:19
sought to lay hands on him
In this verse, to "lay hands on" someone is to arrest that person. Alternate translation: "looked for a way to arrest Jesus"
in that very hour

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"immediately"

they were afraid of the people

This is the reason that they did not arrest Jesus right away. The people respected Jesus, and the religious leaders were afraid of what the people might do if they arrested him. Alternate translation: "they did not arrest him because they were afraid of the people"

Luke 20:20

they sent out spies

"the scribes and chief priests sent spies to watch Jesus"

that they might find fault with his speech

"because they wanted to accuse Jesus of saying something bad"

to the rule and to the authority of the governor

"Rule" and "authority" are two ways of saying that they wanted the governor to judge Jesus. It can be translated with one or both expressions. Alternate translation: "so that the governor would punish Jesus"

Luke 20:21

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the next event in the story. Some time has passed since Jesus was questioned in the temple by the chief priests. The spies are now questioning Jesus.

They asked him

"The spies asked Jesus"

Teacher, we know ... way of God

The spies were trying to deceive Jesus. They did not believe these things about Jesus.

we know

"we" refers only to the spies.

are not partial to anyone

Possible meanings are 1) "you tell the truth even if important people do not like it" or 2) "you do not favor one person over another"

but you teach the truth about the way of God

This is part of what the spies were saying that they knew about Jesus.

Luke 20:22

Is it lawful ... or not?

They hoped that Jesus would say either "yes" or "no." If he said "yes," then the Jewish people would be angry with him for telling them to pay taxes to a foreign government. If he said "no," then the religious leaders could tell the Romans that Jesus was teaching the people to break the Roman laws.

Is it lawful

They were asking about God's law, not about Caesar's law. Alternate translation: "Does our law permit us"

Caesar

Because Caesar was the ruler of the Roman government, they could refer to the Roman government by Caesar's name.

Luke 20:23

But Jesus understood their craftiness

"But Jesus understood how tricky they were" or "But Jesus saw that they were trying to trap him." The word "their" refers to the spies.

Luke 20:24

a denarius

This is a Roman silver coin worth a day's wages.

Whose image and name is on it?

Jesus uses a question to respond to those who were trying to trick him. Alternate translation: "Tell me, whose image and name do you see on it?"

image and name

"picture and name"

Luke 20:25

He said to them

"Then Jesus said to them"

Caesar

Here "Caesar" refers to the Roman government.

and to God

The word "give" is understood from the previous phrase. It can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "and give to God"

Luke 20:26

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of this event about the spies and the part of the story which began in Luke 20:1.

They were not able to find fault with what he had said

"The spies could not find anything wrong with what he said"

but marveling at his answer, they were silent

"but they were amazed at his answer and did not say anything"

Luke 20:27

General Information:

We do not know where this takes place, though it possibly takes place in the temple courtyard. Jesus is talking with some Sadducees.

the ones who say that there is no resurrection

This phrase identifies the Sadducees as being the group of Jews that say that no one would rise from the dead. It does not imply that some Sadducees believed that there is a resurrection and some did not.

Luke 20:28

if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and being childless

"if a man's brother dies when he has a wife but does not have children"

the man should take the brother's wife

"the man should marry his dead brother's widow"

raise up children for his brother

The Jews considered the first son born to a woman who married her dead husband's brother as if he were the son of the woman's first husband. This son inherited the property of his mother's first husband and carried on his name.

Luke 20:29

General Information:

The Sadducees tell Jesus a short story in verses 29-32. This is a story they made up as an example. In verse 33, they ask Jesus a question about the story they told.

There were seven brothers

This may have happened, but it is probably a story that they made up to test Jesus.

the first

"brother number one" or "the oldest"

died childless

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"died without having any children" or "died, but did not have any children"
Luke 20:30
the second as well
The Sadducees kept the story short by not repeating many of the details. Alternate translation: "the second married her and the same thing happened" or "the second brother married her and died without having any children"
the second
"brother number two" or "the oldest brother who was still alive"
Luke 20:31
The third took her
"The third married her"
The third
"Brother number three" or "The oldest brother who was still alive"
and in the same way the seven also left no children and died
The speakers kept the story short by omitting details. Alternate translation: "in the same way the rest of the seven brothers married her and died without having any children"
the seven
"all seven of the brothers" or "each of the seven brothers"
Luke 20:32
General Information:
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Luke 20:33
Connecting Statement:
The Sadducees finish asking Jesus their question.
In the resurrection
"When people are raised from the dead" or "When dead people become alive again." Some languages have a way of showing that the Sadducees did not believe that there would be a resurrection, such as "In the supposed resurrection" or "When dead people are supposedly raised from the dead."
Luke 20:34
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to answer the Sadducees.
The sons of this age
"The people of this world" or "The people of this time." This is in contrast with those in heaven or the people who live after the resurrection.
marry and are given in marriage
In that culture they spoke of men marrying women and women being given in marriage to their husband. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "get married"
Luke 20:35
those who are regarded as worthy in that age
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people in that age whom God will consider to be worthy"
to receive the resurrection from the dead
"to be raised from the dead" or "to rise from death"
from the dead
From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To receive resurrection from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
will neither marry nor be given in marriage
In that culture they spoke of men marrying women and women being given in marriage to their husband. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not marry" or "will not get married." This is after the resurrection.
Luke 20:36
Neither can they die anymore
This is after the resurrection. Alternate translation: "They will not be able to die anymore"
are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection
"are children of God because he has brought them back from the dead"
Luke 20:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes answering the Sadducees.
But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed
The word "even" is here because the Sadducees might not have been surprised that some scriptures say that the dead are raised, but they did not expect Moses to have written something like that. Alternate translation: "But even Moses showed that dead people rise from the dead"
the dead are raised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God causes the dead to live again"
in the place concerning the bush, where he calls the Lord
The implied information can be supplied. Alternate translation: "in the scripture about the burning bush, where he wrote about the Lord being"
the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob
"the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." They all worshiped the same God.
Luke 20:38
Now
This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Jesus explains how this story proves that people rise from the dead.
he is not the God of the dead, but of the living
These two phrases have similar meaning. They are used together for emphasis. Some languages have different ways of showing emphasis. Alternate translation: "the Lord is the God of living people only"
but of the living
"but the God of living people." Since these people died physically, they must still be alive spiritually. Alternate translation: "but the God of people whose spirits are alive, even though their bodies may have died"
because all live to him
"because in God's sight they all are still alive" or "because their spirits are alive in God's presence"
Luke 20:39
Some of the scribes answered
"Some of the scribes said to Jesus." There were scribes present when the Sadducees were questioning Jesus.
Luke 20:40
For they
It is unclear if this refers to the scribes, or the Sadducees, or both. It is best to keep the statement general.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

they did not dare ask him any more questions
"they were afraid to ask him any more questions" or "they did not risk asking him any more questions." They understood that they did not know as much as Jesus did, but they did not want to say that. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they did not ask him any more tricky questions because they feared that his wise answers would make them appear foolish again"
Luke 20:41
General Information:
Jesus asks the scribes a question.
How do they say ... son?
"Why do they say ... son?" Jesus uses a question to make the scribes think about who the Messiah is. Alternate translation: "Let's think about them saying ... son." or "I will talk about them saying ... son."
they say
The prophets, the religious rulers, and the Jewish people in general knew that the Messiah was the son of David. Alternate translation: "everyone says" or "people say"
David's son
"King David's descendant." The word "son" is used here to refer to a descendant. In this case it refers to the one who would reign over God's kingdom.
Luke 20:42
The Lord said to my Lord
This is a quotation from the book of Psalms which says "Yahweh said to my Lord." But the Jews stopped saying "Yahweh" and often said "Lord" instead. Alternate translation: "The Lord God said to my Lord" or "God said to my Lord"
my Lord
David was referring to the Christ as "my Lord."
Sit at my right hand
To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"
Luke 20:43
until I make your enemies your footstool
The Messiah's enemies are spoken of as if they were furniture on which he would rest his feet. This was an image of submission. Alternate translation: "until I make your enemies like a footstool for you" or "until I conquer your enemies for you"
Luke 20:44
David therefore calls the Christ 'Lord,'
In the culture of that time, a father was more respected than a son. David's us of the title 'Lord' for the Christ implies that he was greater than David.
so how is he David's son?
"so how can the Christ be David's son?" This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "and this shows that the Christ is not merely David's descendant"
Luke 20:45
Connecting Statement:
Jesus now directs his attention to his disciples and speaks mainly to them.
Luke 20:46
Beware of
"Be on guard against"
who desire to walk in long robes
Long robes would show that they were important. Alternate translation: "who like to walk around wearing their important robes"
Luke 20:47
They also devour widows' houses
"They also eat up widows' houses." The scribes are spoken of as if they were hungry animals that eat up the widows' houses. The word "houses" is a synecdoche for both where the widow lives and all the possessions she puts in her home. Alternate translation: "They also take away from widows all their possessions"
for a show they make long prayers
"they pretend to be righteous and make long prayers" or "they make long prayers so that people will see them"
Men like this will receive greater condemnation
"They will receive a more severe judgment." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly punish them very severely"

Chapter 21

Luke 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus told his disciples much about what would happen before he returned.

Special concepts in this chapter

"For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,'"
Jesus taught that before he returned many people would falsely claim to be him returning. It will also be a time when many people will hate Jesus's followers and even want to kill them.
"Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"
The Jews spoke of the time between when the Babylonians forced their ancestors to go to Babylon and the time when the Messiah would come as "the times of the Gentiles," the time when the Gentiles would rule over the Jews.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 21:1 Notes

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Luke 21:1
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins teaching his disciples, but it is uncertain whether this occurs on the same day that the Sadducees question Jesus
gifts
You may need to make explicit what the gifts are. Alternate translation: "gifts of money"
treasury
The "treasury" means the boxes in the temple courtyard where people put money as a gift to God.
Luke 21:2
a certain poor widow
This is a way of introducing a new character to the story.
two mites
"two small coins" or "two tiny copper coins." These were the least valuable of the coins people used then. Alternate translation: "two pennies" or "two small coins of little value"
Luke 21:3
Truly I say to you
This means that what Jesus was about to say was very important.
I say to you
Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural.
this poor widow put in more than all of them
God considers her gift, a small amount of money, more significant than the large amounts of money the men gave. Alternate translation: "the small gift of this widow is more valuable than the larger gifts of the rich men"
Luke 21:4
gave gifts out of their abundance
"have a lot of money but only gave a small portion of it"
out of her poverty
"who has very little money"
Luke 21:5
Connecting Statement:
Jesus switches from talking about the widow to teaching about the temple.
offerings
things people had given to God
Luke 21:6
these things that you see
This refers to the beautiful temple and its decorations.
the days will come when
"there will be a time when" or "someday"
when not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down
Jesus uses hyperbole here to emphasize the extent of the devastation that enemies will cause to the temple. The enemies will completely destroy the temple, which is built of stones. Alternate translation: "when all these things will be destroyed" or "when enemies will destroy all of these things"
not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "every stone will be removed from its place and torn down"
left on another which will not be torn down
A new sentence can be started here, and it can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "left on another. They will all be torn down" or "left on another. Enemies will tear down every stone"
Luke 21:7
they asked him
"the disciples asked Jesus" or "Jesus's disciples asked him"
these things
This refers to what Jesus has just said about enemies destroying the temple.
Luke 21:8
that you are not deceived
Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural. Alternate translation: "that you do not believe lies" or "that no one deceives you"
in my name
People coming in his name claim to represent him. Alternate translation: "claiming to be me" or "claiming to have my authority"
I am he
"I am the Christ" or "I am the Messiah"
Do not go after them
"Do not believe them" or "Do not become their disciples"
Luke 21:9
wars and riots
Here "wars" probably refers to fighting between countries, and "riots" probably refers to people fighting against their own leaders or against others in their country. Alternate translation: "wars and rebellions" or "wars and revolutions"
do not be terrified
"do not let these things terrify you" or "do not be afraid"
the end
Possible meanings are: (1) The end of the era in which the disciples to whom Jesus spoke were in at the time. Alternate translation: "the end of the age" or (2) The end of the heavens and earth as we know them. Alternate translation: "the end of the world"
will not happen immediately
Implied word can be supplied here. Alternate translation: "will not happen immediately after the wars and riots" or "will not happen immediately after those things happen"
Luke 21:10
Then he said to them
"Then Jesus said to his disciples." Since this is a continuation of Jesus speaking from the previous verse, some languages may prefer not to say "Then he said to them."
Nation will rise against nation
Here "nation" is a metonym for the people of the nation, and "rise against" is a metonym for attack. The word "nation" represents nations in general, not one particular nation. Alternate translation: "The people of one nation will attack the people of other nations" or "The people of some nations will attack the people of other nations"
Nation
This refers to ethnic groups of people rather than to

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

countries.

kingdom against kingdom

The words "will rise" are understood from the previous phrase and mean attack. Alternate translation: "kingdom will rise against kingdom" or "the people of some kingdoms will attack the people of other kingdoms"

Luke 21:11

in various places famines and plagues

The words "there will be" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "there will be famines and plagues in many places" or "there will be times of hunger and diseases in different places"

terrifying events

"events that terrify people" or "events that cause people to be very afraid"

Luke 21:12

these things

This refers to the terrible things that Jesus has said will happen.

they will lay their hands on you

"they will grab you." This expression refers to people exercising authority over the disciples. Alternate translation: "they will arrest you"

they will

"people will" or "enemies will"

you

Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural.

delivering you over to the synagogues

The word "synagogues" is a metonym for the people in the synagogues, specifically the leaders. Alternate translation: "giving you over to the leaders of the synagogues" or "taking you to the synagogues so that the people there can do to you whatever they want to do"

and prisons

"and delivering you over to the prisons" or "and putting you in prisons"

because of my name

The word "name" is here used to refer to Jesus himself. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you follow me"

Luke 21:13

for your testimony

"for you to tell them your testimony about me"

Luke 21:14

Therefore

"Because of this," referring to everything Jesus has said, beginning in [Luke 21:10]

resolve in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. Alternate translation: "make up your mind" or "decide firmly"

not to prepare your defense ahead of time

"not to figure out ahead of time what you will say in order to defend yourself against their accusations"

Luke 21:15

wisdom that all your adversaries will not be able to resist or contradict

"wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict"

I will give you words and wisdom

"I will tell you what wise things to say"

words and wisdom

These can be combined into one phrase. Alternate translation: "words of wisdom" or "wise words"

contradict

show to be false

Luke 21:16

you will be given over also by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will give you over to the authorities"

they will put some of you to death

"they will kill some of you." Possible meanings are 1) "the authorities will kill some of you" or 2) "those who deliver you up will kill some of you." The first meaning is more likely.

Luke 21:17

You will be hated by everyone

This can be translated in active form. The word "everyone" emphasizes how many people will hate the disciples, either through 1) exaggeration Alternate translation: "It will seem like you are hated by everyone" or "It will seem like everyone hates you" or 2) a generalization. Alternate translation: "You will be hated by most people" or "Most people will hate you"

because of my name

"my name" here refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you follow me"

Luke 21:18

But not a hair from your head will perish

Jesus speaks of one of the smallest parts of a person. He is emphasizing that the whole person will not perish. Jesus had already said that some of them would be put to death, so some understand this to mean that they would not be harmed spiritually. Alternate translation: "But these things cannot really harm you" or "Even every hair on your head will be safe"

Luke 21:19

In your endurance

"By holding firm." This can be stated in the opposite way. Alternate translation: "If you do not quit"

you will gain your lives

"you will save yourselves"

Luke 21:20

Jerusalem surrounded by armies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "armies surrounding Jerusalem"

that its desolation is near

The word "desolation," which describes a place that is empty, is a metonym for Jerusalem after it has been destroyed and the Jews can no longer live there. Alternate translation: "that it will soon be destroyed" or "that they will soon destroy it"

Luke 21:21

flee

run away from danger

in the country

This refers to the rural areas outside Jerusalem, and not to the nation. Alternate translation: "outside the city"

enter the city

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"enter Jerusalem"
Luke 21:22
these are days of vengeance
"these are days of punishment" or "this will be the time when God will punish this city"
all the things that are written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the things that the prophets wrote in the scriptures long ago"
will be fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will happen"
Luke 21:23
to those who are nursing
"to mothers who are nursing their babies"
there will be great distress upon the land
Possible meanings are 1) the people of the land will be distressed or 2) there will be physical disasters in the land.
wrath to this people
"there will be wrath to the people at that time." God will bring this wrath. Alternate translation: "this people will experience God's anger" or "God will be very angry and will punish this people"
Luke 21:24
They will fall by the edge of the sword
"They will be killed by the edge of the sword." Here "fall by the edge of the sword" represents being killed by enemy soldiers. Alternate translation: "Enemy soldiers will kill them"
they will be led captive into all the nations
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their enemies will capture them and take them to other countries"
into all the nations
The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize that they will be led into many countries. Alternate translation: "into many other countries"
Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles
Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles will conquer Jerusalem and occupy it or 2) the Gentiles will destroy the city of Jerusalem or 3) the Gentiles will destroy the people of Jerusalem.
trampled by the Gentiles
This metaphor speaks of Jerusalem as if the people of other nations was walking on it and crushing it down with their feet. This refers to domination. Alternate translation: "conquered by the Gentiles" or "destroyed by the other nations"
the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the period of the Gentiles has come to an end"
Luke 21:25
The nations will be in distress
Here "the nations" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "The people of the nations will be distressed"
distress, anxious because of the roar of the sea and waves
"distress because they will be anxious about the roar of the sea and its waves" or "distress, and the loud noise of the sea and its rough movements will frighten them." This seems to refer to unusual storms or disasters involving the seas.
Luke 21:26
the things which are coming upon the world
"the things that will happen in the world" or "the things that will happen to the world"
the powers of the heavens will be shaken
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God will shake the sun, moon, and stars so they will not move in their normal ways" or 2) "God will trouble the powerful spirits in the heavens." The first is recommended.
Luke 21:27
Son of Man coming
Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "me, the Son Man, coming"
coming in a cloud
"coming down in a cloud"
with power and great glory
Here "power" probably refers to his authority to judge the world. Here "glory" may refer to a bright light. God sometimes shows his greatness with a very bright light. Alternate translation: "powerfully and gloriously" or "and he will be powerful and very glorious"
Luke 21:28
stand up
Sometimes when people are afraid, they crouch down in order to avoid being seen or hurt. When they are no longer afraid, they get up. Alternate translation: "stand up with confidence"
lift up your heads
Lifting the head is a metonym for looking up. When they lift their heads up, they will be able to see their rescuer coming to them. Alternate translation: "look up"
because your redemption is coming near
God, who redeems, is spoken of as if he were the redemption that he causes. The word "redemption" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "because God will soon redeem you"
redemption
God rescuing his people from those who want to harm them is spoken of as if he were buying back people who had become slaves because they could not pay their debts. Alternate translation: "rescue" or "salvation"
Luke 21:29
Connecting Statement:
As Jesus continues teaching his disciples, he tells them a parable.
Luke 21:30
When they sprout buds
"When new leaves start to grow"
summer is already near
"summer is about to start." Summer in Israel follows the sprouting of fig tree leaves and is the time when the figs ripen. Alternate translation: "harvest time is ready to start"
Luke 21:31
So also, when you see these things happening
The appearance of the signs that Jesus just described signal the arrival of the kingdom of God just as appearance of the leaves of the fig tree signal the arrival of summer.
the kingdom of God is near

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"God will soon establish his kingdom." Alternate translation: "God will soon rule as king"
Luke 21:32
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues teaching his disciples.
Truly I say to you
This expression emphasizes the importance of what Jesus is about to say.
this generation
Possible meanings are 1) the generation that will see the first of the signs Jesus speaks of or 2) the generation Jesus is speaking to. The first is more likely.
will not pass away until
This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will still be alive when"
Luke 21:33
Heaven and earth will pass away
"Heaven and earth will cease to exist." The word "heaven" here refers to the sky and the universe beyond it.
my words will never pass away
"my words will never cease to exist" or "my words will never fail." Jesus uses "words" here to refer to everything he says.
will never pass away
This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will remain forever"
Luke 21:34
so that your hearts are not burdened
The "heart" here refers to the mind and thoughts of the person. Alternate translation: "so that you are not occupied"
are not burdened
Jesus here speaks of the following sins as if they were a physical weight that a person had to carry.
excessive drinking ... drunkenness
"drinking too much wine and becoming drunk." Excessive drinking is the action, and intoxication is the effect of that action.
the worries of life
"the things you worry about as you live every day"
that day does not close on you suddenly
The rest of this sentence, "like a trap," is in verse 35. Just as a trap closes on an animal when the animal does not expect it, that day will happen when people do not expect it. Alternate translation: "that day does not happen when you are not expecting it, as when a trap closes suddenly on an animal" or "that day does not surprise you like a trap"
that day
This refers to the day when the Messiah returns. Alternate translation: "the day when the Son of Man comes"
Luke 21:35
like a trap
The first part of this statement, “that day does not close on you suddenly,” is in verse 34. Just as a trap closes on an animal when the animal does not expect it, that day will happen when people do not expect it. Alternate translation: “that day does not happen when you are not expecting it, as when a trap closes suddenly on an animal” or “that day does not surprise you like a trap”
it will come upon everyone
"it will affect everyone" or "the events of that day will affect everyone"
on the face of the whole earth
The surface of the earth is spoken of as if it were the outward part of the face of a person. Alternate translation: "on the surface of the whole earth" or "on the entire earth"
Luke 21:36
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes teaching his disciples.
be alert
"be ready for my coming"
strong enough to escape all these things
Possible meanings are 1) "strong enough to endure these things" or 2) "able to avoid these things."
these things that will take place
"these things that will happen." Jesus has just told them about terrible things that will happen, such as persecution, war, and captivity.
to stand before the Son of Man
"to stand with confidence before the Son of Man." This probably refers to when the Son of Man judges everyone. A person who is not ready will be afraid of the Son of Man and will not stand with confidence.
Luke 21:37
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story that begins in [Luke 20:1]
during the days he was teaching
"during the daytime he would teach" or "he would teach each day." The following verses tell about things that Jesus and the people did each day during the week before he died.
in the temple
Only priests were allowed in the temple. Alternate translation: "at the temple" or "in the temple courtyard"
at night he went out
"at night he would go out of the city" or "he went out each night"
Luke 21:38
All of the people
The word "all" is probably an exaggeration to emphasize that the crowd was very large. Alternate translation: "A very large number of people in the city" or "Almost everyone in the city"
came early in the morning
"would come early each morning"
to hear him in the temple
"to hear him teach in the temple courtyard"

Chapter 22

Luke 22 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

The eating of the body and blood

Luke 22:19-20 describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At that time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist," or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

The new covenant

Some people think that Jesus established the new covenant during the supper. Others think he established it after he went up to heaven. Others think it will not be established until Jesus comes again. Your translation should say no more about this than the ULB does. (See: covenant)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 22:1 Notes

Luke 22:1

General Information:

Judas agrees to betray Jesus. These verses give background information about this event.

Now

This word is used here to introduce a new event.

Festival of Unleavened Bread

The festival was called by this name because during the festival the Jews did not eat bread that was made with yeast. Alternate translation: "festival when they would eat unleavened bread"

was approaching

"was almost ready to begin"

Luke 22:2

seeking how

"looking for an opportunity" or "thinking of ways in which"

they could put Jesus to death

The priests and scribes did not have the authority to kill Jesus themselves, but they hoped to get others to kill him. Alternate translation: "they could get someone to put Jesus to death" or "they could get someone to kill Jesus"

afraid of the people

Possible meanings are 1) "scared of what the people might do" or 2) "scared that the people would make Jesus king."

Luke 22:3

General Information:

This is the beginning of the action in this part of the story.

Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot

What happened might have been similar to demon possession, but other demon-possessed people are obviously unable to control any of their own actions. Here Judas Iscariot seems to do everything he desires, but Satan was somehow at work in a special way. Whatever the intended meaning, Satan "entering" Judas Iscariot is a metaphor for Satan taking control of Judas Iscariot. Alternate translation: "Satan took control of Judas, the one called Iscariot"

Luke 22:4

chief priests

"the leaders of the priests"

captains

officers of the temple guards

how he would betray Jesus to them

"how he would help them arrest Jesus"

Luke 22:5

They were glad

"The chief priests and captains were glad"

to give him money

"to give Judas money"

Luke 22:6

He consented

"He agreed"

looked for an opportunity to give him over to them away from the crowd

This is an ongoing action that continues after this part of the story ends.

away from the crowd

"privately" or "when there was no crowd around him"

Luke 22:7

General Information:

Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare for the Passover meal. This verse gives background information about the event.

the day of unleavened bread

"the day of bread without yeast." This was the day the Jews would take all bread made with yeast out of their homes. Then they would celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed

Each family or group of people would kill a lamb and eat it together, so many lambs were killed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people had to kill a lamb for their Passover meal"

Luke 22:8

prepare

This is a general word meaning "make ready." Jesus was not necessarily telling Peter and John to do all the cooking.

so that we may eat it

Jesus was including Peter and John when he said "we." Peter and John would be part of the group of the disciples that would eat the meal.

Luke 22:9

you want us to make preparations

The word "us" does not include Jesus. Jesus would not be part of the group that would prepare the meal.

make preparations

"make preparations for the meal" or "prepare the meal"

Luke 22:10

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He answered them
"Jesus answered Peter and John"
Look
Jesus used this word to tell them to pay close attention and to do exactly what he tells them.
a man bearing a pitcher of water will meet you
"you will see a man carrying a pitcher of water"
bearing a pitcher of water
"carrying a jar with water in it." He probably would be carrying the jar on his shoulder.
Follow him into the house
"Follow him, and go into the house"
Luke 22:11
The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room, where I ... my disciples?"
The quote beginning with "Where is the guest room" is a direct quote of what Jesus, the teacher, wants to say to the master of his house. It can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Our teacher asks where the guest room is in which he ... his disciples." or "Our teacher says to show us the guest room where he ... us and the rest of his disciples."
The Teacher
This refers to Jesus.
eat the Passover
"eat the Passover meal"
Luke 22:12
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues giving instructions to Peter and John.
He will show you
"The owner of the house will show you"
upper room
"room upstairs." If your community does not have houses with rooms above other rooms, you may need to consider how to describe buildings in the city.
Luke 22:13
So they went
"So Peter and John went"
Luke 22:14
Connecting Statement:
This is the next event in the part of the story about the Passover. Jesus and his disciples are sitting to eat the Passover meal.
When the hour came
"When it was time to eat the meal"
he sat down
"Jesus sat down"
Luke 22:15
I have greatly desired
"I have wanted very much"
before I suffer
Jesus is referring ahead to his death. The word for "suffer" here means to go through an unusually difficult or painful experience.
Luke 22:16
For I say to you
Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.
until it is fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) until the purpose of the Passover Festival is accomplished. Alternate translation: "until God fulfills it" or "until God completes the purpose of the Passover Festival" or 2) "until we celebrate the final Passover Festival"
Luke 22:17
took a cup
"picked up a cup of wine"
when he had given thanks
"when he had given thanks to God"
he said
"he said to his apostles"
share it among yourselves
They were to share the contents of the cup, and not the cup itself. Alternate translation: "share the wine in the cup among yourselves" or "each of you drink some of the wine from the cup"
Luke 22:18
For I say to you
This phrase is used to emphasize the importance of what Jesus will say next.
fruit of the vine
This refers to the juice that is squeezed from the grapes that grow on grapevines. Wine is made from fermented grape juice.
until the kingdom of God comes
"until God establishes his kingdom" or "until God rules in his kingdom"
Luke 22:19
bread
This bread did not have yeast in it, so it was flat.
he broke it
"he ripped it" or "he tore it." He may have divided it into many pieces or he may have divided it into two pieces and given them to the apostles to divide among themselves. If possible, use an expression that would apply to either situation.
This is my body
Possible meanings are 1) "This bread is my body" and 2) "This bread represents my body."
my body, which is given for you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "my body, which I will give for you" or "my body, which I will sacrifice for you"
Do this
"Eat this bread"
in remembrance of me
"in order to remember me"
Luke 22:20
This cup
The word "cup" refers to the wine in the cup. Alternate translation: "The wine in this cup" or "This cup of wine"
the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you
Here "blood, which is poured out" represents death. Jesus's death will establish the new covenant that God will make with his people. Alternate translation: "the new covenant that God will put into effect because I have shed my blood for you"
Luke 22:21

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Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his apostles.
The hand of the one who betrays me
The hand here is a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Jesus speaks of Judas betraying him as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "The person who is about to betray me" or "The man who is ready to betray me"
Luke 22:22
For the Son of Man indeed goes
"For, indeed, the Son of Man will go" or "For the Son of Man will die"
the Son of Man indeed goes
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, indeed go"
as it has been determined
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as God has determined" or "as God has planned"
But woe to that man through whom he is betrayed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man" or "But how terrible it will be for that man who betrays the Son of Man"
Luke 22:23
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Luke 22:24
Then there arose also a quarrel among them
"Then the apostles began to argue among themselves"
was considered to be greatest
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "was the most important" or "the people thought was most important"
Luke 22:25
He said to them
"Jesus said to the apostles"
are lords over them
"rule forcefully over the Gentiles"
are called
Their people probably did not think that those rulers did good to them. Alternate translation: "like to be called" or "call themselves"
Luke 22:26
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues teaching his apostles.
it must not be like this with you
"you should not act like that"
the youngest
Older people were respected in that culture. The leaders were usually older people and were called "elders." The youngest person would be the least likely to lead, and the least important. Alternate translation: "the least important"
and the one who leads like the one who serves
Words from the phrase before this apply to this phrase. Alternate translation: "and let the one who leads become like the one who serves"
the one who serves
"a servant"
Luke 22:27
For
This connects Jesus's commands in verse 26 with this whole verse. It means that the most important person should serve because Jesus is a servant.
For who is greater ... serves?
"For who is more important ... serves?" Jesus uses this question to begin to explain to the apostles who is truly great. Alternate translation: "I want you to think about who is greater ... serves."
the one who sits at the table
"the one who is dining"
Is it not the one who sits at the table?
Jesus uses another question to teach the disciples. Alternate translation: "Of course the one who sits at the table is more important than the servant!"
Yet I am among you as one who serves
"But I am with you to be a servant" or "But I am with you to show you how a servant acts." The word "yet" is here because there is a contrast between what people would expect Jesus to be like and what he really was like.
Luke 22:28
have continued with me in my trials
"have stayed with me as I have struggled" or "have stayed with me while Satan has tempted me"
Luke 22:29
I set you over a kingdom, even as my Father has set me over a kingdom
Some languages may need to change the order. Alternate translation: "Just as my father has given a kingdom to me, I give a kingdom to you"
I set you over a kingdom
"I make you rulers in God's kingdom" or "I give you authority to rule in the kingdom" or "I will make you kings"
even as my Father has set me over a kingdom
"just as my Father has given me authority to rule as king in his kingdom"
Luke 22:30
you will sit on thrones
Kings sit on thrones. Sitting on a throne is a symbol of ruling. Alternate translation: "you will work as kings" or "you will do the work of kings"
Luke 22:31
General Information:
Jesus speaks directly to Simon.
Simon, Simon
Jesus said his name twice to show that what he was about to say to him was very important.
to have you, that he might sift you
The word "you" refers to all of the apostles. Languages that have different forms of "you" should use the plural form.
sift you as wheat
This means that Satan wanted to test the disciples to find something wrong. Alternate translation: "test you like someone passes grain through a sieve"
Luke 22:32
But I have prayed for you
The word "you" here refers specifically to Simon. Languages that have different forms of "you" should use the singular form.
that your faith may not fail

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This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "that you will continue to have faith" or "that you will continue to trust me"

After you have turned back again

Here "turned back again" is a metaphor for starting to believe in someone again. Alternate translation: "After you start believing in me again" or "After you start serving me again"

strengthen your brothers

"encourage your brothers to be strong in their faith" or "help your brothers believe in me"

your brothers

This refers to the other disciples. Alternate translation: "your fellow believers" or "the other disciples"

Luke 22:33

General Information:

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Luke 22:34

the rooster will not crow this day before you deny three times that you know me

The order of the parts of the verse can be reversed. Alternate translation: "you will deny three times that you know me before the rooster crows this day"

the rooster will not crow this day before you deny

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "the rooster will crow this day only after you deny" or "before the rooster crows today, you will deny"

the rooster will not crow

Here, the crowing of the rooster refers to a certain time of day. Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. Therefore, this refers to dawn.

rooster

a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up

this day

The Jewish day begins at sunset. Jesus was speaking after the sun had set. The rooster would crow just before morning. The morning was part of "this day." Alternate translation: "tonight" or "in the morning"

Luke 22:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus turns his attention back to speaking to all of his disciples.

Jesus said to them, "When ... did you lack anything?" They answered, "Nothing."

Jesus uses a question to help the apostles remember how well the people provided for them as they traveled. Though this is a rhetorical question and Jesus is not asking for information, you should translate it as a question unless only a statement would cause the disciples to reply that they had lacked nothing.

When I sent you out

Jesus is talking to his apostles, so the word "you" is plural.

purse

A purse is a bag for holding money. Here it is used to refer to "money."

a bag of provisions

"travelers' bag" or "bag of food"

Nothing

It may be helpful to some audiences to include more about the conversation. Alternate translation: "We did not lack anything" or "We had everything we needed"

Luke 22:36

and likewise a bag of provisions

"and let him also take a bag of provisions" or "and also a bag of provisions"

The one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak

Jesus was not referring to a specific person who did not have a sword. Alternate translation: "If anyone does not have a sword, he should sell his cloak"

cloak

"coat" or "outer garment"

Luke 22:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking with his disciples.

what is written about me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what a prophet wrote about me in the scriptures"

must be fulfilled

The apostles would have understood that God would cause everything written in the scriptures to happen. Alternate translation: "God will fulfill" or "God will cause to happen"

He was counted with the lawless ones

Here Jesus is quoting the scriptures. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People counted him as a member of the group of lawless men"

the lawless ones

"those who break the law" or "the criminals"

For what is predicted about me is being fulfilled

Possible meanings are 1) "For what the prophet predicted about me is about to happen" or 2) "For my life is coming to an end"

Luke 22:38

they said

This refers to at least two of Jesus's apostles.

It is enough

Possible meanings are 1) they have enough swords. "We now have enough swords." or 2) Jesus wants them to stop talking about having swords. "No more of this talk about swords."

Luke 22:39

General Information:

Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Luke 22:40

that you do not enter into temptation

"that you are not tempted" or "that nothing tempts you and causes you to sin"

Luke 22:41

about a stone's throw

"about the distance that someone can throw a stone." Alternate translation: "a short distance" or with an estimated measurement like "about thirty meters"

Luke 22:42

Father, if you are willing

Jesus will bear the guilt of every person's sin on the cross. He prays to his Father, asking if there is another way.

Father

This is an important title for God.

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remove this cup from me
Jesus refers to what he will soon experience as if it were a cup of bitter liquid that he would have to drink. Alternate translation: "allow me to not drink from this cup" or "allow me to not experience what is about to happen"
Nevertheless not my will, but yours be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "However, do what is according to your will rather than what is according to my will"
Luke 22:43
appeared to him
"appeared to Jesus"
strengthening him
"encouraging him"
Luke 22:44
Being in agony, he prayed
"He was suffering greatly, and so he prayed"
he prayed more earnestly
"he prayed more intensely"
his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground
"his sweat was falling to the ground like large drops of blood"
Luke 22:45
When he rose up from his prayer, he
"When Jesus got up after praying, he" or "After praying, Jesus got up and he"
found them sleeping because of their sorrow
"saw that they were sleeping because they were tired from their sadness"
Luke 22:46
Why are you sleeping?
Possible meanings are 1) "I am surprised that you are sleeping now." or 2) "You should not be sleeping now!"
that you may not enter into temptation
"so that you may not be tempted" or "so that nothing tempts you and causes you to sin"
Luke 22:47
behold, a crowd appeared
The word "behold" alerts us to a new group in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "there was a crowd that appeared"
leading them
Judas was showing the people where Jesus was. He was not telling the crowd what to do. Alternate translation: "leading them to Jesus"
to kiss him
"to greet him with a kiss" or "to greet him by kissing him." When men greeted other men who were family or friends, they would kiss them on one cheek or both cheeks. If your readers would find it embarrassing to say that a man would kiss another man, you could translate it in a more general way: "to give him a friendly greeting."
Luke 22:48
are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?
Jesus uses a question to rebuke Judas for betraying him with a kiss. Normally a kiss is a sign of love. Alternate translation: "it is a kiss you are using to betray the Son of Man!"
the Son of Man with
Jesus is using this term to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man, with"
Luke 22:49
those who were around Jesus
This refers to Jesus's disciples.
what was happening
This refers to the priests and soldiers coming to arrest Jesus.
strike with the sword
The question is about the type of fight they should engage in
Luke 22:50
one of them
"one of the disciples"
struck the servant of the high priest
"struck the servant of the high priest with a sword"
Luke 22:51
That is enough
"Do not do any more of that"
touched his ear
"touched the servant where his ear had been cut off"
Luke 22:52
Do you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?
"Do you come out with swords and clubs because you think I am a robber?" Jesus uses this question to scold the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "You know that I am not a robber, yet you come out to me bringing swords and clubs."
Luke 22:53
I was daily with you
"I was among you every day"
in the temple
Only priests entered the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courts" or "at the temple"
lay your hands on me
In this verse, to lay hands on someone is to arrest that person. Alternate translation: "arrest me"
this is your hour
"this is the time for you to do whatever you want"
the authority of darkness
It may be helpful to repeat the reference to time. "Darkness" is a metonym for Satan. Alternate translation: "the time of the authority of darkness" or "the time when God is allowing Satan to do whatever he wants"
Luke 22:54
led him away
"led Jesus away from the garden where they had arrested him"
into the high priest's house
"into the courtyard of the high priest's house"
Luke 22:55
they had kindled a fire
"some people had made a fire." The fire was to keep the people warm during the cool night. Alternate translation: "some people started a fire to keep warm"
the middle of the courtyard
This was the courtyard at the high priest's house. It had walls around it, but no roof.
in the midst of them

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"together with them"
Luke 22:56
he sat in the light of the fire
He sat near the fire and its line shone on him.
and looked straight at him and said
"and she looked straight at Peter and said to the other people in the courtyard"
This man also was with him
The woman was telling the people about Peter being with Jesus. She probably did not know Peter's name.
Luke 22:57
But Peter denied it
"But Peter said that it was not true"
Woman, I do not know him
Peter did not know the woman's name. He was not insulting her by calling her "woman." If people would think he was insulting her, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a woman he does not know, or you could leave out the word.
Luke 22:58
You are also one of them
"You are also one of those who were with Jesus"
Man, I am not
Peter did not know the man's name. He was not insulting him by calling him "Man." If people would think he was insulting him, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a man he does not know, or you could leave out the word.
Luke 22:59
insisted and said
"said insistently" or "said loudly"
Truly this man
Here "this man" refers to Peter. The speaker probably did not know Peter's name.
he is a Galilean
The man could probably tell Peter was from Galilee from the way he talked.
Luke 22:60
Man
Peter did not know the man's name. He was not insulting him by calling him "Man." If people would think he was insulting him, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a man he does not know, or you could leave out the word. See how you translated this in Luke 22:58.
I do not know what you are saying
"I do not know what you are talking about." This expression means that Peter completely disagrees with the man. Alternate translation: "what you said is not true at all" or "what you said is completely false"
while he was speaking
"while Peter was speaking"
a rooster crowed
Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. See how you translated a similar phrase in Luke 22:34.
Luke 22:61
Turning, the Lord looked at Peter
"The Lord turned and looked at Peter"
the word of the Lord
"what Jesus had said" when Jesus had said that Peter would betray Jesus
a rooster crows
Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. See how you translated a similar phrase in Luke 22:34.
today
The Jewish day started at sundown and continued to the next evening. Jesus had spoken the previous evening about what would happen shortly before dawn or at dawn. Alternate translation: "tonight"
deny me three times
"deny three times that you know me"
Luke 22:62
Peter went outside
"Peter went out of the courtyard"
Luke 22:63
General Information:
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Luke 22:64
They put a cover over him
"They covered his eyes so that he could not see"
Prophesy! Who is the one who hit you?
The guards did not believe that Jesus was a prophet. Rather, they believed that a real prophet would know who hit him even if he could not see. They called Jesus a prophet, but they were teasing him and showing him why they did not think that he was a prophet. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are a prophet. Tell us who hit you!" or "Hey prophet, who hit you?"
Prophesy!
"Speak words from God!" The implied information is that God would have to tell Jesus who struck him since Jesus was blindfolded and could not see.
Luke 22:65
General Information:
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Luke 22:66
General Information:
It is now the next day and Jesus is brought before the council.
As soon as it was day
"At dawn the next morning"
They led him into the Council
Possible meanings are 1) "The elders had Jesus brought into the Council" or 2) "The guards led Jesus into the council of the elders." Some languages may avoid saying who led him by using the pronoun "they" or by using a passive verb: "Jesus was led into the council"
Luke 22:67
and said
A new sentence can be started here if a period is put at the end of the previous verse. Alternate translation: "The elders said to Jesus"
If you are the Christ, tell us
"Tell us if you are the Christ"
If I tell you, you will not believe
This was a way for Jesus to respond without giving them a

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

reason to say that he was guilty of blasphemy. Alternate translation: "If I tell you, you will not believe me"
Luke 22:68
if I ask you, you will not answer
This was a way for Jesus to rebuke them without giving them a reason to convict him. These words, along with "If I tell you, you will not believe" (verse 67), show that Jesus did not believe that the council really wanted to know the truth.
Luke 22:69
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the council.
from now on
"from this day" or "starting from today"
the Son of Man will
Jesus uses this phrase to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"
seated at the right hand of the power of God
To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "seated in the place of honor beside the power of God"
the power of God
"the all-powerful God." Here "power" refers to his supreme authority.
Luke 22:70
Then you are the Son of God?
The council asked this question because they wanted Jesus to explicitly confirm their understanding that he was saying he was the Son of God. Alternate translation: "So when you said that, did you mean that you are the Son of God?"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
You say that I am
"Yes, it is just like you say"
Luke 22:71
Why do we still need a witness?
They use a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "We have no further need for witnesses!"
heard from his own mouth
The phrase "his own mouth" refers to his speech. Alternate translation: "heard him say himself that he was the Son of God"

Chapter 23

Luke 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULB sets the last line of this chapter apart because it is more connected with chapter 24 than with chapter 23.

Special concepts in this chapter

Accuse
The chief priests and scribes accused Jesus of doing evil because they wanted Pilate to kill Jesus. But they were accusing him falsely, because Jesus had never done what they accused him of doing.
"The curtain of the temple was split in two"
The curtain in the temple was an important symbol that showed that people needed to have someone speak to God for them. They could not speak to God directly because all people are sinful and God hates sin. God split the curtain to show that Jesus's people can now speak to God directly because Jesus has paid for their sins.
The tomb
The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Luke 23:53) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"I find no fault in this man"
Pilate was saying that he did not know of any reason why he should punish Jesus: Jesus had not broken any laws. Pilate was not saying that Jesus was perfect.

Links:

Luke 23:1 Notes

Luke 23:1
General Information:
Jesus is brought before Pilate.
The whole company of them
"All of the Jewish leaders" or "All the members of the Council"
rose up
This is an idiom that means that they began to act decisively.
before Pilate
To appear before someone means to enter into their authority. Alternate translation: "to be judged by Pilate"
Luke 23:2
We found
"We" refers only the Council members, and not to Pilate of any other people nearby.
misleading our nation
"causing our people to do things that are not right" or

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"causing trouble by telling lies to our people"
forbidding to give tribute
"telling them not to pay taxes"
to Caesar
Caesar represents the Emperor of Rome. Alternate translation: "to the Emperor"
Luke 23:3
Pilate asked him
"Pilate asked Jesus"
You say so
Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said" or 2) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so"
Luke 23:4
multitudes
large groups of people
I find no guilt in this man
"I do not find this man guilty of anything"
Luke 23:5
stirs up
"causes trouble among"
all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to this place
This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "all Judea. He began causing trouble in Galilee and now is causing trouble here"
Luke 23:6
heard this
"heard that Jesus began to teach in Galilee"
he asked whether the man was a Galilean
Pilate wanted to know from which area Jesus came because he wanted to have a lower-ranking government official judge Jesus. If Jesus were from Galilee, Pilate could have Herod judge Jesus because Herod had authority over Galilee.
the man
This refers to Jesus.
Luke 23:7
he learned
"Pilate found out"
he was under Herod's authority
The passage does not state the implied fact that Herod was the ruler of Galilee. Alternate translation: "Jesus was under the authority of Herod because Herod ruled over Galilee"
he sent
"Pilate sent"
who himself
This refers to Herod.
in those days
"at that time"
Luke 23:8
he was very glad
"Herod was very glad"
he had wanted to see him
"Herod had wanted to see Jesus"
He had heard about him
"Herod had heard about Jesus"
he hoped to see some sign done by him
Here the word "hope" means to expect that something one desires might happen. Alternate translation: "Herod expected that he might see some sign done by him"
to see some sign done by him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to see him do some kind of sign" or "that he might see Jesus do some sign"
sign
a miracle that would show that Jesus was more than a mere man
Luke 23:9
Herod questioned Jesus in many words
"Herod asked Jesus a lot of questions"
answered him nothing
"did not reply" or "did not give Herod an answer"
Luke 23:10
the scribes stood
"the scribes were standing there"
vigorously accusing him
They were showing great anger and using strong words and accusing him of many things.
Luke 23:11
Herod with his soldiers
"Herod and his soldiers"
dressed him in splendid clothes
"put beautiful clothes on him." The translation should not imply that this was done to honor or care for Jesus. They did it to mock Jesus and to make fun of him.
Luke 23:12
Herod and Pilate had become friends with each other that very day
The implied information is that they became friends because Herod appreciated Pilate allowing him to judge Jesus. Alternate translation: "Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day because Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod for judgment"
before this they had been enemies with each other
This information is enclosed in parentheses to show that it is background information. Use a format that your audience would understand.
Luke 23:13
called together the chief priests and the rulers and the crowd of people
"called the chief priests and the rulers and the crowd of people to come meet together"
the crowd of people
It is not likely that Pilate asked a crowd to come. The crowd was probably still there waiting to see what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the crowd that was still there"
Luke 23:14
this man
This refers to Jesus.
like a man who
"saying that he"
misleading the people
"urging the people to act badly" or "trying to get the people to rebel against the government"
I, having questioned him before you,
"I have questioned Jesus in your presence and." It is implied

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

that they were witnesses to the proceedings. Alternate translation: "I have questioned Jesus with you here as witnesses, and I"

find no guilt in this man

"do not think that he is guilty"

Luke 23:15

Connecting Statement:

Pilate continues speaking to the Jewish leaders and to the crowd.

No, nor does Herod

We can understand what Herod did not do from what Pilate said about himself in verse 14. Alternate translation: "Nor does Herod find guilt in this man" or "Even Herod thinks he is innocent"

nor does Herod, for

"nor does Herod, because" or "nor does Herod. We know this because"

he sent him back to us

"Herod sent Jesus to return to us." The word "us" refers to Pilate, his soldiers, and the priests and scribes, but not those who were listening to Pilate.

nothing worthy of death has been done by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he has not done anything to deserve a death sentence"

Luke 23:16

I will therefore punish him

Because Pilate had found no fault in Jesus he should have released him without punishment. It is not necessary to try to make this statement fit logically into the translation. Pilate punished Jesus, whom he knew to be innocent, only because he was afraid of the crowd.

Luke 23:17

General Information:

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Luke 23:18

General Information:

Verse 19 tells us background information about who Barabbas is.

they cried out all together

"all the people in the crowd shouted"

Away with this man, and release

"Take this man away! Release." They are asking him to have his soldiers kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "Take this man away and execute him! Release"

release to us

"us" refers to the crowd only, and not to Pilate and his soldiers.

Luke 23:19

Barabbas was a man ... for murder

This is background information that Luke gives about who Barabbas was.

who had been put into prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Romans had put in prison"

a certain rebellion in the city

"trying to persuade the people of the city to rebel against the Roman government"

Luke 23:20

addressed them again

"spoke to them again" or "spoke again to the people in the crowd and to the religious rulers"

desiring to release Jesus

"because he wanted to set Jesus free"

Luke 23:21

General Information:

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Luke 23:22

He said to them a third time

"Pilate said to the crowd again, for the third time"

what evil has this man done?

Pilate uses this question to cause the crowd to understand that Jesus is innocent. Alternate translation: "this man has not done anything wrong!"

I have found no guilt deserving death in him

"I have not learned of anything he has done for which I should put him to death"

after punishing him, I will release him

As in Luke 23:16, Pilate should have released Jesus without punishment because he was innocent. However, he offered to punish Jesus to appease the crowd.

I will release him

"I will set him free"

Luke 23:23

they were insistent

"the crowd insisted"

with loud voices

"with shouting"

for him to be crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to have his soldiers crucify Jesus"

Their voices convinced Pilate

"The crowd kept shouting until they convinced Pilate"

Luke 23:24

to grant their demand

"to do what the crowd requested"

Luke 23:25

He released the one they asked for

Pilate released Barrabas from prison. Alternate translation: "Pilate freed Barabbas, whom the crowd had asked be released"

who had been put in prison ... murder

This is background information about where Barrabas was at that time. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Romans had put in prison ... murder"

he delivered up Jesus to their will

"Pilate commanded the soldiers to bring Jesus to them to do whatever the crowd wanted to do"

Luke 23:26

As they led him away

"While the soldiers led Jesus away from where Pilate was"

seized

The Roman soldiers had the authority to compel people to carry their loads. Do not translate this in a way that indicates that Simon was arrested or had done anything wrong.

one Simon of Cyrene

"a man named Simon, from the city of Cyrene"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

coming from the country
"who was coming into Jerusalem from the countryside"
laid the cross on him
"put the cross on his shoulders"
following Jesus
"and he followed behind Jesus"
Luke 23:27
A great crowd
"A large crowd"
great crowd of the people, and of women
The woman were part of the large crowd, and not a separate crowd.
mourned for him
"mourned for Jesus"
were following him
This does not mean that they were Jesus's disciples. It simply means they were walking along behind him.
Luke 23:28
turning to them
This indicates that Jesus turned to face the women and address them directly.
Daughters of Jerusalem
The "daughter" of a city means the women of the city. This was not rude. It was a normal form of address to a group of women from one location. Alternate translation: "You women who are from Jerusalem"
do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children
The person is a metonym for what happens to the person. Alternate translation: "do not weep about the bad things that will happen to me. Instead, weep because worse things will happen to you and to your children" or "you are weeping because bad things are happening to me, but you will weep even more when worse things happen to you and your children"
Luke 23:29
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.
For see
This introduces the reason why the women of Jerusalem should weep for themselves.
the days are coming
"there will soon be a time"
in which they will say
"when people will say"
the barren
"women who have not given birth to children"
the wombs that did not bear ... the breasts that did not nurse
These clauses are used to more fully describe "the barren." Those women neither gave birth nor nursed children. It may be helpful to combine these together with "the barren." Alternate translation: "the women who have never given birth to children or nursed babies"
they
This can refer to either the Romans or the Jewish leaders, or to people in general.
Luke 23:30
Then
at that time
to the hills
Words are left out to keep the phrase short. Alternate translation: "they will say to the hills"
Luke 23:31
For if they do these things while the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?
Jesus uses a question to help the crowd understand that people are doing bad things now in good times, so certainly they will do worse things in the bad times in the future. Alternate translation: "You can see that they are doing these bad things while the tree is green, so you can be sure that they will do worse things when the tree is dry."
the tree is green
The green tree is a metaphor for something that is good. If your language has a similar metaphor, you should use it here.
it is dry
The dry wood is a metaphor for something that will be useful only to burn.
Luke 23:32
Other men, two criminals, were led away with him to be put to death
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The soldiers led away with Jesus two criminals to execute them also"
Other men, two criminals
"Two other men who were criminals" or "Two criminals." Luke avoids saying "other criminals" because Jesus was innocent, even though he was treated as a criminal. Luke calls the other two men criminals, but not Jesus.
Luke 23:33
When they came
The word "they" includes the soldiers, the criminals, and Jesus.
they crucified him
"the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus"
one on his right and one on his left
"they crucified one criminal on Jesus's right side and the other criminal on Jesus's left side"
Luke 23:34
Father, forgive them
The word "them" refers to those who were crucifying Jesus. Jesus speaks to his Father with compassion toward the men crucifying him.
Father
This is an important title for God.
for they do not know what they are doing
"because they do not understand what they are doing." The Roman soldiers did not understand that they were crucifying the Son of God. Alternate translation: "for they do not really know whom they are crucifying"
they cast lots
The soldiers participated in a type of gambling. Alternate translation: "they gambled"
cast lots, dividing up his garments
"cast lots to decide who among the soldiers would take home each piece of Jesus's clothing"
Luke 23:35
The people stood
"The people were standing there"
him

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This refers to Jesus.

He saved others. Let him save himself

Luke records the ironic words of the rulers. The only way Jesus could save others was by dying instead of saving himself.

Let him save himself

"Jesus should be able to save himself." They said this to mock Jesus. They did not believe he could save himself. Alternate translation: "We would like to see him prove who he is by saving himself from the cross"

the chosen one

"the one that God has chosen"

Luke 23:36

him

Jesus

approaching him

"coming close to Jesus"

offering him vinegar

"offering Jesus vinegar to drink." Vinegar is a cheap drink that common people drink. The soldiers were mocking Jesus by giving a cheap drink to someone who claims to be a king.

Luke 23:37

If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself

The soldiers were mocking Jesus. Alternate translation: "We do not believe you are the King of the Jews, but if you are, prove us wrong by saving yourself"

Luke 23:38

a sign over him

"a placard at the top of Jesus's cross that stated"

This is the King of the Jews

The people who put this sign above Jesus were mocking him. They did not really think he was a king.

Luke 23:39

insulted him

"reviled Jesus"

Are you not the Christ? Save yourself

The criminal uses a question to mock Jesus. Alternate translation: "You claim to be the Christ. Save yourself" or "If you really were the Christ, you would save yourself"

Save yourself and us

The criminal did not really think that Jesus could rescue them from the cross.

Luke 23:40

the other rebuked him

"the other criminal rebuked him"

Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

The criminal uses a question to scold the other criminal. Alternate translation: "You should fear God, because you are under the same sentence of condemnation."

you are under the same sentence of condemnation

"the government has condemned you to be punished in the same way"

Luke 23:41

We indeed ... for we ... we deserve

These usages of "we" refer only to the two criminals, and not to Jesus or the other people.

We indeed are here justly

"Truly we deserve this punishment"

this man

This refers to Jesus.

Luke 23:42

Then he said

"The criminal also said"

remember me

"think about me and treat me well"

come into your kingdom

To "come into" a kingdom means to begin to rule. Alternate translation: "begin to rule as king"

Luke 23:43

Truly I say to you, today

"Truly" adds emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate translation: "I want you to know that today"

paradise

This is the place that righteous people go to when they die. Jesus was assuring the man that he would be with God and God would accept him. Alternate translation: "the place where the righteous people live" or "the place where people live well"

Luke 23:44

about the sixth hour

"about noon." This reflects the custom at the time of counting hours beginning with daybreak at 6 a.m.

darkness came over the whole land

"the entire land became dark"

until the ninth hour

"until 3 p.m." This reflects the custom at the time of counting hours beginning with daybreak at 6 a.m.

Luke 23:45

as the sun turned dark

This does not refer to sundown. Rather, the light of the sun turned dark during the middle of the day. Use a term to describe the sun becoming dark rather than the sun going down.

the curtain of the temple

"the curtain inside the temple." This was the curtain that separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple.

the curtain of the temple was split in two

"the curtain of the temple was torn into two pieces." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God tore the temple curtain into two pieces"

Luke 23:46

Crying with a loud voice

"Shouting loudly." It may be helpful to show how this is related to the events of the previous verses. Alternate translation: "When that happened, Jesus shouted loudly"

Father

This is an important title for God.

into your hands I commit my spirit

"The phrase "into your hands" refers to God's care. Alternate translation: "I entrust my spirit to your care" or "I give my spirit to you, knowing you will care for it"

Having said this

"After Jesus said this"

he died

"Jesus died"

Luke 23:47

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the centurion
This was the title for the Roman officer who was in charge of the other Roman soldiers. He supervised the crucifixion.
what was done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the things that had happened"
this was a righteous man
"this man did nothing wrong" or "this man did not do anything wrong"
Luke 23:48
multitudes
large groups of people
who came together
"who gathered together"
witness this sight
"see this event" or "observe what was happening"
the things that were done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what had happened"
returned beating
"returned to their homes beating"
beating their breasts
This was a symbol of sorrow and regret. Alternate translation: "hitting their own chests to show that they were sorrowful"
Luke 23:49
followed him
"traveled with Jesus"
at a distance
"some distance away from Jesus"
these things
"what happened"
Luke 23:50
General Information:
The author begins to give background information about the man who buried Jesus's body.
Behold, there was a man
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a man who was"
the Council
"the Jewish Council"
Luke 23:51
General Information:
The author finishes giving background information about the man who buried Jesus's body. It may be helpful to reorder some of the information in this verse and the previous verse with a verse bridge, as the UDB does.
with their plan and action
What the decision was can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "with either the Council's decision to kill Jesus or with their action in killing him"
a city of the Jews
"a city in which most people were Jews"
Luke 23:52
This man, approaching Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus
"This man went to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus, to bury it."
Luke 23:53
He took it down
"Joseph took Jesus's body from the cross." He probably had help, so this may be a synecdoche. Alternate translation: "Joseph and some helpers took it down"
wrapped it in fine linen
"wrapped the body in a fine linen cloth." This was the normal burial custom at that time.
that was cut in stone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone had cut in a rock cliff"
where no one had ever been laid
This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "No one had ever before put a body in that tomb"
Luke 23:54
the Day of the Preparation
"the day when people got ready for the Jewish day of rest called the Sabbath"
the Sabbath was about to begin
For the Jews, the day began at sunset. Alternate translation: "it was soon going to be sunset, the start of the Sabbath"
Luke 23:55
who had come with Jesus out of Galilee
"who had traveled with Jesus from the region of Galilee"
followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "walked along behind Joseph and the men who were with him; the women saw the tomb and how the men laid Jesus's body inside the tomb"
Luke 23:56
They returned
"The women went to the houses where the women were staying"
prepared spices and ointments
Because they had had no time to honor Jesus by putting fragrant spices and ointments on his body on the day he died, they were going to do it on the morning of the first day of the week. Alternate translation: "prepared spices and ointments to put on Jesus's body"
they rested
"the women did no work"
according to the commandment
"according to the Jewish law" or "as the Jewish law required." According to the law, they were not allowed to prepare his body on the Sabbath.

Chapter 24

Luke 24 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (Luke 24:1) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead.

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It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

The faith of the women

Most of Luke's original readers would have thought of women as less important than men, but Luke carefully shows that some women loved Jesus very much and had more faith than the twelve disciples had.

Resurrection

Luke wants his readers to understand that Jesus came alive again in a physical body (Luke 24:38-43).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

"On the third day"

Jesus told his followers that he would become alive again "on the third day" (Luke 18:33). He died on a Friday afternoon (before sunset) and became alive again on a Sunday, so he became alive again "on the third day" because the Jews said that the day began and ended at sunset, and they counted any part of the day as a day. Friday was the first day, Saturday was the second day, and Sunday was the third day.

Two men in bright shining robes

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 28:1-2 and Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 and John 20:12)

Links:

Luke 24:1 Notes

Luke 24:1

General Information:

The women (Luke 23:55) return to the tomb with spices to put on Jesus's body.

Very early on the first day of the week

"Before dawn on Sunday"

they came to the tomb

"the women arrived at the tomb." These were the women spoken of in Luke 23:55.

the tomb

This tomb was cut in the rock of a cliff.

bringing the spices

These were the same spices they prepared in Luke 23:56.

Luke 24:2

They found the stone

"They saw that the stone was"

the stone rolled away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that someone had rolled the stone"

the stone

This was a large, cut, round stone big enough to completely block the doorway to the tomb. It required several men to roll it.

Luke 24:3

did not find the body of the Lord Jesus

You can state explicitly that they did not find it because it was not there. Alternate translation: "the body of the Lord Jesus was not there"

Luke 24:4

General Information:

Two angels appear and begin speaking to the women.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Luke 24:5

were terrified

"became very afraid"

bowed down their faces to the earth

"bowed low to the ground." This action expresses their humility and submission to the men.

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

The men use a question to mildly criticize the women for looking in a tomb for a living person. Alternate translation: "You are looking for a living person among dead people!" or "You should not be looking for someone who is alive in a place where they bury dead people!"

Why do you seek

Here "you" is plural, referring to the women who came.

Luke 24:6

but has been raised

"but he has been made alive again." "Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has made him alive again"

Remember how

"Remember what"

to you

The word "you" is plural. It refers to the women and possibly the other disciples in addition.

Luke 24:7

Connecting Statement:

The angels finish speaking to the women.

that the Son of Man

This is the beginning of an indirect quote. It can also be translated with a direct quote, as in the UDB.

the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men and be crucified

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The phrase "must be" means this is something that would certainly happen because God had already decided that it would happen. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "it was necessary that they hand the Son of Man over to sinful men who would crucify him"

into the hands

Here "hands" refers to power or control.

third day

The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day.

Luke 24:8

remembered his words

Here "words" refers to the statement that Jesus made. Alternate translation: "remembered what Jesus said"

Luke 24:9

Connecting Statement:

The women go to tell the apostles about what they found at the tomb.

the eleven and all the rest

"the eleven apostles and all the rest of the disciples who were with them"

the eleven

This is Luke's first reference to the "eleven" because there had always been twelve before. But Judas left the twelve and betrayed Jesus.

Luke 24:10

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke gives the names of some of the women who came from the tomb and told the apostles what had happened there.

Luke 24:11

But this message seemed like idle talk to the apostles

"But the apostles thought that what the women said was foolish talk"

Luke 24:12

Yet Peter

This phrase contrasts Peter to the other apostles. He did not dismiss what the women said, but ran to the tomb to see for himself.

rose up

This is an idiom that means "began to act." Whether Peter was sitting or standing when he decided to act is not important. Alternate translation: "started out"

stooping

Peter had to bend over in order to see inside the tomb because tombs cut in solid rock were very low. Alternate translation: "bending himself at the waist"

the linen cloths by themselves

"only the linen cloths." This refers to the cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus's body when he was buried in [Luke 23:53]

departed to his home

"went away to his home"

Luke 24:13

General Information:

Two of the disciples are on their way to Emmaus.

Behold

The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.

two of them

"two of the disciples"

that very day

"that same day." This refers to the day when the women found the tomb to be empty.

Emmaus

This is the name of a town.

sixty stadia

"eleven kilometers." A "stadium" was 185 meters.

Luke 24:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 24:15

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. It starts with Jesus approaching them. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Jesus himself

The word "himself" emphasizes the fact that the very Jesus they were talking about actually appeared to them. So far the women had seen the angels, but no one had seen Jesus.

Luke 24:16

their eyes were prevented from recognizing him

"their eyes were kept from recognizing Jesus." The men's ability to recognize Jesus is spoken of as their eyes' ability to recognize him. This can be stated in active form. It is most likely that it was God who prevented them from recognizing Jesus. Alternate translation: "something happened to them so they could not recognize him" or "God prevented them from recognizing him"

Luke 24:17

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to the two men"

Luke 24:18

Cleopas

This is the name of a man.

Are you the only person ... days?

Cleopas uses this question to show his surprise that this man appears not to know about the things that have happened in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "You must be the only person ... days."

Are you

Here "you" is singular.

Luke 24:19

What things

"What things have happened" or "What things have taken place"

a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people

This means that God caused Jesus to be mighty and that the people saw that he was mighty. Alternate translation: "a prophet to whom God gave power to do and teach great things that were amazing to all the people"

Luke 24:20

delivered him up

"gave him over"

to be condemned to death and crucified him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in

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order for the governor to put Jesus to death by crucifying him"

Luke 24:21

Connecting Statement:

The two men continue responding to Jesus.

But we hoped that he was the one

Here the word "hope" means "expect" or "think" that something might be true. By saying "we hoped" the two men show that they no longer think that Jesus is the one who will redeem Israel. Alternate translation: "But we thought that he might be the one"

who was going to redeem Israel

The Romans ruled over the Jews. Alternate translation: "who would free the Israelites from our Roman enemies"

Yes, and what is more,

This introduces another reason why they believed Jesus would not free Israel. Alternate translation: "Now that does not seem possible because"

the third day

The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day. See how you translated this in [Luke 24:7]

since all these things happened

"since all the many actions that led up to the death of Jesus have taken place"

Luke 24:22

But also

This introduces another reason why it the men did not understand what was happening concerning Jesus.

of our company

"in our group"

having been at the tomb

The women were the ones who were at the tomb.

Luke 24:23

a vision of angels

"angels in a vision"

Luke 24:24

Connecting Statement:

The two men finish responding to Jesus.

they did not see him

"they did not see Jesus"

Luke 24:25

Jesus said to them

Jesus is speaking to the two disciples.

slow of heart to believe

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. Alternate translation: "your minds are slow to believe" or "you are slow to believe"

Luke 24:26

Was it not necessary ... glory?

Jesus uses a question to remind the disciples about what the prophets said. Alternate translation: "It was necessary ... glory."

to enter into his glory

This refers to Jesus beginning to rule and to receive honor and glory.

Luke 24:27

beginning from Moses

Moses wrote the first books of the Bible. Alternate translation: "beginning with the writings of Moses"

Jesus interpreted to them

"Jesus explained to them"

Luke 24:28

Jesus acted as though he were going further

The two men understood from his actions that he was going on to another destination. Perhaps he kept walking on the road when they turned off to enter the gate into the village. There is no indication that Jesus deceived them with words.

Luke 24:29

they compelled him

You may need to make explicit what they compelled him to do. This is probably an exaggeration to show that they needed to speak with him for a long time before they could change his mind. The word "compel" means to use physical force, but it seems that they persuaded him using only words. Alternate translation: "they were able to persuade him to stay"

it is toward evening and the day is almost over

The Jewish day ended at sundown.

Jesus went in

"Jesus entered the house"

stay with them

"stay with the two disciples"

Luke 24:30

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

the bread

This refers to bread made without yeast. It does not refer to food in general.

blessed it

"gave thanks for it" or "thanked God for it"

Luke 24:31

Then their eyes were opened

Their "eyes" represent their understanding. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then they understood" or "Then they realized"

they knew him

"they recognized him." These disciples had known him before his death.

he vanished out of their sight

This means that suddenly he was no longer there. It does not mean that he became invisible.

Luke 24:32

Was not our heart burning ... scriptures?

They use a question to emphasize how amazed they were about their encounter with Jesus. The intense feelings they had while talking to Jesus are spoken of as if they were a fire burning inside them. Alternate translation: "Our hearts were burning ... scriptures."

within us

The two men were speaking to each other. The word "us" is dual inclusive for languages that make these distinctions.

while he opened to us the scriptures

Jesus did not open a book or scroll. "opened" refers to their understanding. Alternate translation: "while he explained

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the scriptures to us" or "while he enabled us to understand the scriptures"
Luke 24:33
Connecting Statement:
The two men go to Jerusalem to the eleven disciples to tell them about Jesus.
They rose up
"They" refers to the two men.
rose up
"got up" or "stood up"
the eleven
This refers to Jesus's apostles. Judas was no longer included with them.
Luke 24:34
saying
"and those people told the two men"
Luke 24:35
So they told
"So the two men told them"
the things that happened on the way
This refers to Jesus appearing to them while they were on their way to the village of Emmaus.
how Jesus was recognized by them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "how they recognized Jesus"
in the breaking of the bread
"when Jesus broke the bread" or "when Jesus tore the bread"
Luke 24:36
General Information:
Jesus appears to the disciples. When the two men previously arrived at the house where the Eleven were, Jesus was not with them.
Jesus himself
The word "himself" focuses on Jesus and the surprise of Jesus actually appearing to them. Most of them had not seen him after his resurrection.
in the midst of them
"among them"
Peace be to you
"May you have peace" or "May God give you peace!" The word "you" is plural.
Luke 24:37
But they were terrified
"But" indicates a strong contrast. Jesus told them to be at peace, but they were very afraid instead.
terrified and filled with fear
"startled and afraid." These two phrases mean about the same thing, and are used together to emphasize their fear.
a spirit
Here it refers to the spirit of a dead person.
Luke 24:38
Why are you troubled?
Jesus uses a question to comfort them. Alternate translation: "Do not be frightened."
Why do questions arise in your heart?
Jesus uses a question to mildly rebuke them. Jesus was telling them not to doubt that he was alive. The word "heart" is a metonym for a persons' mind. Alternate translation: "Do not doubt in your minds!" or "Stop doubting!"
Luke 24:39
Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me having
Jesus asks them to confirm by touch that he is not a ghost. It may be helpful to combine and reorder these two sentences. Alternate translation: "Touch me and feel that I have flesh and bones that a ghost would not have"
flesh and bones
This is a way of referring to the physical body.
Luke 24:40
his hands and his feet
It is understood that his hands and feet contained the nail marks from his crucifixion that would prove it was really Jesus. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the wounds in his hands and his feet"
Luke 24:41
They still could not believe it because of joy
"They were so full of joy that they still could not believe it was really true"
Luke 24:42
General Information:
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Luke 24:43
ate it before them
Jesus does this to prove that he has a physical body. Spirits would not be able to eat food.
before them
"in front of them" or "while they were watching"
Luke 24:44
when I was with you
"when I was with you before"
all that was written ... Psalms must be fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would fulfill all that was written ... Psalms" or "God would cause all that was written ... Psalms to happen"
all that was written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms
The words "law of Moses," "the Prophets," and "the Psalms" are proper names for parts of the Hebrew Bible. This can be stated in active form and using common nouns. Alternate translation: "all that Moses wrote in the law, all that the prophets wrote, and all that the writers of the Psalms wrote about me"
Luke 24:45
Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures
To "open the mind" is an idiom that means to enable someone to understand. Alternate translation: "Then he enabled them to understand the scriptures"
Luke 24:46
Thus it is written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what people long ago wrote"
rise again from the dead
In this verse the words "rise again" mean "come alive again." The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld.
the third day

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The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day. See how you translated this in [Luke 24:7]

Luke 24:47

Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Followers of the Christ should preach to people in all the nations that they need to repent and that they need God to forgive their sins through Jesus"

in his name

His "name" here refers to his authority. Alternate translation: "by the Christ's authority"

all the nations

"all the ethnic communities" or "all the people groups"

beginning from Jerusalem

"starting in Jerusalem"

Luke 24:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the disciples.

You are witnesses

"You are to tell others that what you saw about me is true." The disciples had observed Jesus's life, death, and resurrection and could describe to other people what he did.

Luke 24:49

I am sending you what my Father promised

"I will give you what my Father promised to give you." God had promised to give the Holy Spirit. The UDB makes this explicit.

Father

This is an important title for God.

you are clothed with power

God's power will cover them in the same way that clothes cover a person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you receive power"

from on high

"from above" or "from God"

Luke 24:50

Jesus led them out

"Jesus led the disciples outside the city"

He lifted up his hands

This was the action that priests performed when they blessed the people.

Luke 24:51

It happened

"It came about." This introduces a new event in the story.

while he was blessing them

"while Jesus was asking God to do good to them"

was carried

Since Luke does not specify who carried Jesus up, we do not know if it was God himself or one or more angels. If your language would have to specify who did the carrying, it would be better to use "went" instead, as the UDB does.

Luke 24:52

General Information:

These verses tell us about the ongoing actions of the disciples as the story ends.

they worshiped him

"the disciples worshiped Jesus"

and returned

"and then returned"

Luke 24:53

continually in the temple

This is an exaggeration to express that they went into the temple courtyard every day.

in the temple

Only priests were allowed into the temple building. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

blessing God

"praising God"

Introduction to the Gospel of John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Gospel of John

Introduction about who Jesus is (1:1-18) Jesus is baptized, and he chooses twelve disciples (1:19-51) Jesus preaches, teaches, and heals people (2-11) The seven days before Jesus's death (12-19) Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (12:1-11) Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem (12:12-19) Some Greek men want to see Jesus (12:20-36) The Jewish leaders reject Jesus (12:37-50) Jesus teaches his disciples (13-17) Jesus is arrested and undergoes trial (18:1-19:15) Jesus is crucified and buried (19:16-42) Jesus rises from the dead (20:1-29) John says why he wrote his gospel (20:30-31) Jesus meets with the disciples (21)

What is the Gospel of John about?

The Gospel of John is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. John said that he wrote his gospel "so that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (20:31).

John's Gospel is very different from the other three Gospels. John does not include some of the teachings and events that the other writers included in their gospels. Also, John wrote about some teachings and events that are not in the other gospels.

John wrote much about the signs Jesus did to prove that what Jesus said about himself was true. (See: sign)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of John" or "The Gospel According to John." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as, "The Good News About Jesus That John Wrote."

Who wrote the Gospel of John?

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

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why does John write so much about the final week of Jesus's life?

John wrote much about Jesus's final week. He wanted his readers to think deeply about Jesus's final week and his death on the cross. He wanted people to understand that Jesus willingly died on the cross so that God could forgive them for sinning against him. (See: sin)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What do the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" mean in the Gospel of John?

John often used the words "remain," "reside", and "abide" as metaphors. John spoke of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if Jesus's word "remained" in the believer. Also, John spoke of someone being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person "remained" in the other person. Christians are said to "remain" in Christ and in God. The Father is said to "remain" in the Son, and the Son is said to "remain" in the Father. The Son is said to "remain" in believers. The Holy Spirit is also said to "remain" in the believers.

Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. For example, Jesus intended to express the idea of the Christian being spiritually together with him when he said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). The UDB uses the idea of "will be joined to me, and I will be joined to him." But translators may have to find other ways of expressing the idea.

In the passage, "If my words remain in you" (John 15:7), the UDB expresses this idea as, "If you live by my message." Translators may find it possible to use this translation as a model.

What are the major issues in the text of the Gospel of John?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions. Translators are advised not to translate these verses. However, if the translators work in regions where there are older versions of the Bible that include these verses, the translators can include them. If they are translated, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to John's Gospel.

"waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord occasionally went down into the pool and stirred the water and whoever went first after the stirring of the water, was made well from the disease they had." (5:3-4) "going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (8:59)

The following passage is included in most older and modern versions of the Bible. But it is not in the earliest copies of the Bible. Translators are advised to translate this passage. It should be put inside of square brackets ([]) to indicate that it may not have been original to John's Gospel.

The story of the adulterous woman (7:53–8:11)

Chapter 1

John 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:23, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Word"

John uses the phrase "the Word" to refer to Jesus (John 1:1, 14). John is saying that God's most important message to all people is actually Jesus, a person with a physical body. (See: wordofgod)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

"Children of God"

When people believe in Jesus, they go from being "children of wrath" to "children of God." They are adopted into the "family of God." This is an important image that is used many times in the New Testament. (See: believe and adoption)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

John uses the metaphors of light and darkness and of the Word to tell the reader that he will be writing more about good and evil and about what God wants to tell people through Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"In the beginning"

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Some languages and cultures speak of the world as if it has always existed, as if it had no beginning. But "very long ago" is different from "in the beginning," and you need to be sure that your translation communicates correctly.
"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

John 1:1 Notes John intro

John 1:1
In the beginning
This refers to the very earliest time before God created the heavens and the earth.
the Word
This refers to Jesus. Translate as "the Word" if possible. If "Word" is feminine in your language, it could be translated as "the one who is called the Word."
John 1:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:3
All things were made through him
This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God made all things through him"
without him there was not one thing made that has been made
This can be translated with an active verb. If your language does not permit double negatives, these words should communicate that the opposite of "all things were made through him" is false. Alternate translation: "God did not make anything without him" or "with him there was every thing made that has been made" or "God made with him every thing that God has made"
John 1:4
In him was life, and the life was the light of men
"In him was life" is a metonym for causing everything to live. And, "light" here is a metaphor for "truth." Alternate translation: "He is the one who caused everything to live. And he revealed to people what is true about God"
In him
Here "him" refers to the one who is called the Word.
life
Here use a general term for "life." If you must be more specific, translate as "spiritual life."
John 1:5
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it
Here "light" is a metaphor for what is true and good. Here "darkness" is a metaphor what is false and evil. Alternate translation: "The truth is like a light shining into a dark place, and no one in the dark place could put out the light"
John 1:6
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:7
testify about the light
Here "light" is a metaphor for the revelation of God in Jesus. Alternate translation: "show how Jesus is like the true light of God"
John 1:8
General Information:
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John 1:9
The true light
Here light is a metaphor that represents Jesus as the one who both reveals the truth about God and is himself that truth.
John 1:10
He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him
"Even though he was in this world, and God created everything through him, people still did not recognize him"
the world did not know him
The "world" is a metonym that stands for all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people did not know who he really was"
John 1:11
He came to his own, and his own did not receive him
"He came to his own fellow countrymen, and his own fellow countrymen did not accept him either"
receive him
"accept him." To receive someone is to welcome him and treat him with honor in hopes of building a relationship with him.
John 1:12
believed in his name
The word "name" is a metonym that stands for Jesus's identity and everything about him. Alternate translation: "believed in him"
he gave the right
"he gave them the authority" or "he made it possible for them"
children of God
The word "children" is a metaphor that represents our relationship to God, which is like children to a father.
John 1:13
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:14
The Word
This refers to Jesus. Translate as "the Word" if possible. If "Word" is feminine in your language, it could be translated as "the one who is called the Word." See how you translated this in John 1:1.
became flesh
Here "flesh" represents "a person" or "a human being." Alternate translation: "became human" or "became a human being"
the one and only who came from the Father
The phrase "the one and only" means that he is unique, that no one else is like him. The phrase "who came from the Father" means that he is the Father's child. Alternate translation: "the unique Son of the Father" or "the only Son

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of the Father"
Father
This is an important title for God.
full of grace
"full of kind acts towards us, acts we do not deserve"
John 1:15
He who comes after me
John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase "comes after me" means that John's ministry has already started and Jesus's ministry will start later.
is greater than I am
"is more important than I am" or "has more authority than I have"
for he was before me
Be careful not to translate this in a way that suggests that Jesus is more important because he is older than John in human years. Jesus is greater and more important than John because he is God the Son, who has always been alive.
John 1:16
fullness
This word refers to God's grace that has no end.
grace after grace
"blessing after blessing"
John 1:17
General Information:
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John 1:18
the only God
This phrase refers to God the Son. Alternate translation: "the only Son, who is himself God"
the only God
The Greek word that is translated here as "only" is translated by some as "only begotten." This means the only one that comes or procedes from God. The phrases "Son" and "procedes from" can be used to express some of the meaning of the word "begotten." Alternate translation: "the only begotten God" or "the only begotten Son, who is himself God" or "the only Son who proceeds from God and is himself God"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 1:19
the Jews sent
The word "Jews" here represents the "Jewish leaders." Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders sent"
John 1:20
He confessed—he did not deny, but confessed
The phrase "he did not deny" says in negative terms the same thing that "He confessed" says in positive terms. This emphasizes that John was telling the truth and was strongly stating that he was not the Christ. Your language may have a different way of doing this.
John 1:21
What are you then?
"What then is the case, if you are not the Messiah?" or "What then is going on?" or "What then are you doing?"
John 1:22
Connecting Statement:
John continues to speak with the priests and Levites.
they said to him
"the priests and Levites said to John"
we ... us
the priests and Levites, not John
John 1:23
He said
"John said"
I am a voice, crying in the wilderness
John is saying that Isaiah's prophecy is about himself. The word "voice" here refers to the person who is crying out in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "I am the one calling out in the wilderness"
Make the way of the Lord straight
Here the word "way" is used as a metaphor. Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord's arrival the same way that people prepare the road for an important person to use"
John 1:24
Now some from the Pharisees
This is background information about the people who questioned John.
John 1:25
General Information:
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John 1:26
General Information:
Verse 28 tells us background information about the setting of the story.
John 1:27
who comes after me
John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase "comes after me" means that John's ministry has already started and Jesus's ministry will start later.
me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie
Untying sandals was the work of a slave or servant. These words are a metaphor for the most unpleasant work of a servant. Alternate translation: "me, whom I am not worthy to serve in even the most unpleasant way" or "me. I am not even worthy to untie the strap of his sandal"
John 1:28
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:29
Lamb of God
This is a metaphor that represents God's perfect sacrifice. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" because he was sacrificed to pay for people's sins.
world
The word "world" is a metonym and refers to all the people in the world.
John 1:30
The one who comes after me is more than me, for he was before me
See how you translated this in John 1:15.
John 1:31
General Information:
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John 1:32
like a dove
Possible meanings: 1) the Spirit descended in the form of a

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

dove or 2) the Spirit descended in the way a dove descends.
heaven
The word "heaven" refers to the "sky."
John 1:33
The one on whom
"The one upon whom"
he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit
"he is the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit"
John 1:34
the Son of God
Some copies of this text say "Son of God"; others say "chosen one of God."
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
John 1:35
Again, the next day
This is another day. It is the second day that John sees Jesus.
John 1:36
Lamb of God
This is a metaphor that represents God's perfect sacrifice. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" because he was sacrificed to pay for people's sins. See how you translated this same phrase in [John 1:29]
John 1:37
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:38
General Information:
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John 1:39
tenth hour
"hour 10." This phrase indicates a time in the afternoon, before dark, at which it would be too late to start traveling to another town, possibly around 4 p.m.
John 1:40
General Information:
These verses give us information about Andrew and how he brought his brother Peter to Jesus. This happened before they went and saw where Jesus was staying in John 1:39.
John 1:41
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:42
son of John
This is not John the Baptist. "John" was a very common name.
John 1:43
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:44
Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter
This is background information about Philip.
John 1:45
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:46
Nathaniel said to him
"Nathaniel said to Philip"
Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?
This remark appears in the form of a question in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "No good thing can come out of Nazareth!"
John 1:47
in whom is no deceit
This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "a completely truthful man"
John 1:48
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 1:49
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
John 1:50
Because I said to you, 'I ... tree,' do you believe?
This remark appears in the form of a question to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "You believe only because I said, 'I ... tree'!"
John 1:51
Truly, truly
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true.

Chapter 2

John 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Wine
The Jews drank wine at many meals and especially when they were celebrating special events. They did not believe that it was a sin to drink wine.
Driving out the money changers
When Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, he showed that he had authority over the temple and over all of Israel.
"He knew what was in man"
Jesus knew what other people were thinking only because he was and is the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"His disciples remembered"
John used this phrase to stop telling the main history and to tell about something that happened much later. It was right after he scolded the pigeon sellers (John 2:16) that the Jewish authorities spoke to him. It was after Jesus became alive again that his disciples remembered what the prophet had written long before and that Jesus had talkid about the temple

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of his body (John 2:17 and John 2:22).

Links:

John 2:1 Notes

John 2:1

General Information:

Jesus and his disciples are invited to a wedding. These verse give background information about the setting of the story.

Three days later

Most interpreters read this as on the third day after Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel to follow him. The first day occurs in John 1:35 and the second in John 1:43.

John 2:2

Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "Someone invited Jesus and his disciples to the wedding"

John 2:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 2:4

Woman

This refers to Mary. If it is impolite for a son to call his mother "woman" in your language, use another word that is polite, or leave it out.

why do you come to me?

This question is asked to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "this has nothing to do with me." or "you should not tell me what to do."

My time has not yet come

The word "time" is a metonym that represents the right occasion for Jesus to show that he is the Messiah by working miracles. Alternate translation: "It is not yet the right time for me to perform a mighty act"

John 2:5

General Information:

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John 2:6

two to three metretes

You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "75 to 115 liters"

John 2:7

to the brim

This means "to the very top" or "completely full."

John 2:8

the head waiter

This refers to the person in charge of the food and drink.

John 2:9

but the servants who had drawn the water knew

This is background information.

John 2:10

drunk

unable to tell the difference between cheap wine and expensive wine because of drinking too much alcohol

John 2:11

Connecting Statement:

This verse is not part of the main story, but rather it gives a comment about the story.

Cana

This is a place name.

revealed his glory

Here "his glory" refers to the mighty power of Jesus. Alternate translation: "showed his power"

John 2:12

went down

This indicates that they went from a higher place to a lower place. Capernaum is northeast of Cana and is at a lower elevation.

his brothers

The word "brothers" includes both brothers and sisters. All Jesus's brothers and sisters were younger than he was.

John 2:13

General Information:

Jesus and his disciples go up to Jerusalem to the temple.

went up to Jerusalem

This indicates that he went from a lower place to a higher place. Jerusalem is built on a hill.

John 2:14

were sitting there

The next verse makes it clear that these people are in the temple courtyard. That area was intended for worship and not for commerce.

sellers of oxen and sheep and pigeons

People are buying animals in the temple courtyard to sacrifice them to God.

money changers

Jewish authorities required people who wanted to buy animals for sacrifices to exchange their money for special money from the "money changers."

John 2:15

So

This word marks an event that happens because of something else that has happened first. In this case, Jesus has seen the money changers sitting in the temple.

John 2:16

Stop making the house of my Father a marketplace

"Stop buying and selling things in my Father's house"

the house of my Father

This is a phrase Jesus uses to refer to the temple.

my Father

This is an important title that Jesus uses for God.

John 2:17

it was written

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written"

your house

This term refers to the temple, God's house.

consume

The word "consume" points to the metaphor of "fire." Jesus's love for the temple is like a fire that burns within him.

John 2:18

sign

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This refers to an event that proves something is true.
these things
This refers to Jesus's actions against the money changers in the temple.
John 2:19
Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up
Jesus dared them to destroy the temple so that he could raise it up in three days. That would be the sign that he had authority to drive the sellers and animals out of the temple area. Jesus knew that they would not destroy the temple building. You can translate the words "destroy" and "raise" using the usual words for tearing down and rebuilding a building. If a command form in your language would indicate that Jesus truly intended for them to destroy the temple, it can be translated as a condition with the word "if" instead. Alternate translation: "If you destroy this temple, I will rebuild it in three days"
raise it up
"cause it to stand"
John 2:20
forty-six years ... three days
"46 years ... 3 days"
you will raise it up in three days?
The Jewish authorities misunderstood Jesus's words and thought that Jesus wanted to tear down the literal temple and build it again in three days. "Raise" is an idiom for "rebuild." Alternate translation: "you will rebuild it in three days?" or "you cannot possibly rebuild it in three days!"
John 2:21
General Information:
This is the beginning of a comment on the story. It tells about something that happens later.
John 2:22
General Information:
This is the end of a comment on the story. It tells about something that happens later.
believed
Here "believe" means to accept something or trust that it is true.
this statement
This refers back to Jesus's statement in John 2:19.
John 2:23
Now when he was in Jerusalem
The word "now" introduces us to a new event in the story.
believed in his name
Here "name" is a metonym that represents the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed in him" or "trusted in him"
the signs that he did
Miracles can also be called "signs" because they are used as evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.
John 2:24
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 2:25
about man, for he knew what was in man
Here the word "man" represents people in general. Alternate translation: "about people, for he knew what was in people"

Chapter 3

John 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

John 3:1 Notes

John 3:1
General Information:
Nicodemus comes to see Jesus.
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story and to introduce Nicodemus.
John 3:2
we know
Here "we" is exclusive, referring only to Nicodemus and the other members of the Jewish council.
John 3:3
Connecting Statement:
Jesus and Nicodemus continue talking.
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
born again
"born from above" or "born of God"
he cannot see the kingdom of God
Possible meanings of seeing the kingdom of God are 1) seeing the place God rules over or 2) knowing what God's kingdom is like or 3) belonging to the kingdom of God.
John 3:4
How can a man be born when he is old?
Nicodemus uses this question to emphasize that this cannot happen. Alternate translation: "A man certainly cannot be born again when he is old!"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?
Nicodemus also uses this question to emphasize his belief that a second birth is impossible. "Certainly, he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb!
a second time
"again" or "twice"
womb
the part of a woman's body where a baby grows
John 3:5
Truly, truly
You can translate this in the same way you did in John 3:3.
born of water and the Spirit
There are two possible meanings: 1) "baptized in water and in the Spirit" or 2) "born physically and spiritually"
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God
Entering God's kingdom means that the people belong to God, God rules over them, and they will live with him forever. AT: "he cannot belong to the kingdom of God"
John 3:6
General Information:
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John 3:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to Nicodemus.
You must be born again
"You must be born from above"
John 3:8
The wind blows wherever it wishes
In the source language, wind and Spirit are the same word. The speaker here refers to the wind as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit is like a wind that blows wherever it wants"
John 3:9
How can these things be?
This question adds emphasis to the statement. Alternate translation: "This cannot be!" or "This is not able to happen!"
John 3:10
Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?
Jesus knows that Nicodemus is a teacher. He is not looking for information. Alternate translation: "You are a teacher of Israel, so I am surprised you do not understand these things!" or "You are a teacher of Israel, so you should understand these things!"
Are you a teacher ... yet you do not understand
The word "you" is singular and refers to Nicodemus.
John 3:11
you do not accept
The word "you" is plural and refers either the Pharisees [John 3:1]
Truly, truly
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
we speak
When Jesus said "we," he was not including Nicodemus.
John 3:12
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues responding to Nicodemus.
I told you ... you do not believe ... how will you believe if I tell you
In all three places "you" is plural and refers to Jews in general.
how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?
This question emphasizes the disbelief of Nicodemus and the Jews. Alternate translation: "you certainly will not believe if I tell you about heavenly things!"
heavenly things
spiritual things
John 3:13
No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven
This double negative emphasizes that he who descended from heaven is the only one who has ascended into heaven. Alternate translation: "The only one who has ascended into heaven is he who descended from heaven"
John 3:14
Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up
This figure of speech is called a simile. Some people will "lift up" Jesus just as Moses "lifted up" the bronze serpent in the wilderness.
in the wilderness
The wilderness is a dry, desert place, but here it refers specifically to the place where Moses and the Israelites walked around for forty years.
John 3:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 3:16
God so loved the world
Here "world" is a metonym that refers to everyone in the world.
loved
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
John 3:17
For God did not send the Son into the world in order to condemn the world, but in order to save the world through him
These two clauses mean nearly the same thing, said twice for emphasis, first in the negative and then in the positive. Some languages may indicate emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: God""s real reason for sending his Son into the world was to save it"
to condemn
"to punish." Usually "punish" implies that the person who has been punished is then accepted by God. When a person is condemned, he is punished but never accepted by God.
John 3:18
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
John 3:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes responding to Nicodemus.
The light has come into the world
The word "light" is a metaphor for God's truth that is

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revealed in Jesus. Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. If your language does not allow people to speak of themselves in the third person, you may need to specify who the light is. The "world" is a metonym for all of the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "The one who is like a light has revealed God's truth to all people" or "I, who am like a light, have come into the world"

men loved the darkness

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for evil.

John 3:20

so that his deeds will not be exposed

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that the light will not show the things he does" or "so that the light does not make clear his deeds"

John 3:21

plainly seen that his deeds

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "people may clearly see his deeds" or "everyone may clearly see the things he does"

John 3:22

After this

This refers to after Jesus had spoken with Nicodemus. See how you translated this in John 2:12.

John 3:23

Aenon

This word means "springs," as of water.

Salim

a village or town next to the Jordan River

because there was much water there

"because there were many springs in that place"

were being baptized

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "John was baptizing them" or "he was baptizing them"

John 3:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 3:25

Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and a Jew

This can be stated in an active form for clarity. Alternate translation: "Then John's disciples and a Jew began to argue"

a dispute

a fight using words

John 3:26

you have testified, look, he is baptizing,

In this phrase, "look" is a command meaning "pay attention!" Alternate translation: "you have testified, 'Look! He is baptizing,'" or "you have testified. 'Look at that! He is baptizing,'"

John 3:27

A man cannot receive anything unless

"Nobody has any power unless"

it has been given to him from heaven

Here "heaven" is used as a metonym to refer to God. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has given it to him"

John 3:28

You yourselves

This "You" is plural and refers to all the people John is talking to. Alternate translation: "You all" or "All of you"

I have been sent before him

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God sent me to arrive before him"

John 3:29

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist continues speaking.

The bride belongs to the bridegroom

Here the "bride" and "bridegroom" are metaphors. Jesus is like the "bridegroom" and John is like the friend of the "bridegroom."

This, then, is my joy made complete

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So then I rejoice greatly" or "So I rejoice much"

my joy

The word "my" refers to John the Baptist, the one who is speaking.

John 3:30

He must increase

"He" refers to the bridegroom, Jesus, who will continue to grow in importance.

John 3:31

He who comes from above is above all

"He who comes from heaven is more important than anyone else"

He who is from the earth is from the earth and speaks about the earth

John means that Jesus is greater than he is since Jesus is from heaven, and John was born on the earth. Alternate translation: "He who is born in this world is like everyone else who lives in the world and he speaks about what happens in this world"

He who comes from heaven is above all

This means the same thing as the first sentence. John repeats this for emphasis.

John 3:32

He testifies about what he has seen and heard

John is speaking about Jesus. Alternate translation: "The one from heaven tells about what he has seen and heard in heaven"

no one accepts his testimony

Here John exaggerates to emphasize that only a few people believe Jesus. Alternate translation: "very few people believe him"

John 3:33

He who has received his testimony

"Anyone who believes what Jesus says"

has confirmed

"proves" or "agrees"

John 3:34

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist finishes speaking.

For the one whom God has sent speaks

"This Jesus, whom God has sent to represent him, speaks"

For he does not give the Spirit by measure

"For he is the one to whom God gave all the power of his Spirit"

John 3:35

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Father ... Son
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
given ... into his hand
This means to be put in his power or control.
John 3:36
He who believes
"A person who believes" or "Anyone who believes"
the wrath of God stays on him
The abstract noun "wrath" can be translated with the verb "punish." Alternate translation: "God will continue to punish him"

Chapter 4

John 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

John 4:4-38 forms one story centered on the teaching of Jesus as the "living water," the one who gives eternal life to all who believe in him. (See: believe)

Special concepts in this chapter

"It was necessary for him to pass through Samaria"
Jews avoided traveling through the region of Samaria because the Samaritans were descendants of ungodly people. So Jesus had to do what most Jews did not want to do. (See: godly and kingdomofisrael)
"The hour is coming"
Jesus used these words to begin prophecies about times that could be shorter or longer than sixty minutes. "The hour" in which true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth is longer than sixty minutes.
The proper place of worship
Long before Jesus lived, the Samaritan people had broken the law of Moses by setting up a false temple in their land (John 4:20). Jesus explained to the woman that it was no longer important where people worshiped (John 4:21-24).
Harvest
Harvest is when people go out to get the food they have planted so they can bring it to their houses and eat it. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about Jesus so those people can be part of God's kingdom. (See: faith)
"The Samaritan woman"
John probably told this story to show the difference between the Samaritan woman, who believed, and the Jews, who did not believe and later killed Jesus. (See: believe)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"In spirit and truth"
The people who truly know who God is and enjoy worshiping him and love him for who he is are the ones who truly please him. Where they worship is not important.

Links:

John 4:1 Notes

John 4:1
General Information:
John 4:1-6 gives the background to the next event, Jesus's conversation with a Samaritan woman.
Connecting Statement:
A long sentence begins here.
Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John
"Now Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. When he knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was doing this"
Now when Jesus knew
The word "now" is used here to mark a break in the main events. Here John starts to tell a new part of the narrative.
John 4:2
Jesus himself was not baptizing
The reflexive pronoun "himself" adds emphasis that it was not Jesus who was baptizing, but his disciples.
John 4:3
he left Judea and went back again to Galilee
You may need to rearrange the entire sentence that begins with the words "Now when Jesus" in verse 1. "Now Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were). The Pharisees heard that Jesus was doing this. When Jesus knew that the Pharisees learned what he was doing, he left Judea and went back again to Galilee"
John 4:4
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:5
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:6
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:7
Give me some water
This is a polite request, not a command.
John 4:8

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

For his disciples had gone
He did not ask his disciples to draw water for him because they had gone.
John 4:9
Then the Samaritan woman said to him
The word "him" refers to Jesus.
How is it that you, being a Jew, are asking me, being a Samaritan woman, for something to drink?
This remark appears in the form of a question to express the Samaritan woman's surprise that Jesus asked her for a drink. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe that you, being a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink!"
have no dealings with
"do not associate with"
John 4:10
living water
Jesus uses the metaphor "living water" to refer to the Holy Spirit, who works in a person to transform and bring new life.
John 4:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:12
You are not greater, are you, than our father Jacob ... livestock?
This remark occurs in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You are not greater than our father Jacob ... livestock!"
our father Jacob
"our ancestor Jacob"
drank from it
"drank water that came from it"
John 4:13
will be thirsty again
"will need to drink water again"
John 4:14
the water that I will give him will become a fountain of water in him
Here the word "fountain" is a metaphor for life-giving spring of water. Alternate translation: "the water that I will give him will become like a spring of water in him"
eternal life
Here "life" refers to the "spiritual life" that only God can give.
John 4:15
Sir
In this context, the Samaritan woman is addressing Jesus as "Sir," which is a term of respect or politeness.
draw water
"get water" or "pull water up from the well" using a container and rope
John 4:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:17
You have said correctly
"You spoke well when you said" or "You chose your words skillfully when you said." Jesus is acknowledging that what she had said was strictly true but was hiding a fact about her that she expected Jesus to disapprove of. He was saying neither that it was a good thing that she had no husband nor that her answer showed that she was morally good.
John 4:18
What you have said is true
Jesus said this to emphasize the words "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'" in verse 17. He wanted the woman to know that he knew she was telling the truth.
John 4:19
Sir
In this context the Samaritan woman is addressesing Jesus as "sir," which is a term of respect or politeness.
I see that you are a prophet
"I can understand that you are a prophet"
John 4:20
Our fathers
"Our forefathers" or "Our ancestors"
John 4:21
Believe me
To believe someone is to acknowledge what the person has said is true.
you will worship the Father
Eternal salvation from sin comes from God the Father, who is Yahweh, the God of the Jews.
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 4:22
You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know
Jesus means that God revealed himself and his commands to the Jewish people, not to the Samaritans. Through the Scriptures the Jewish people know who God is better than the Samaritans.
for salvation is from the Jews
This means that God has chosen the Jews as his special people who will tell all other people about his salvation. It also means that the Christ, the one who will save the world, will be a Jew. It does not mean the Jewish people will save others from their sins. Alternate translation: "for all people will know about God's salvation because of the Jews"
salvation is from the Jews
Eternal salvation from sin comes from God the Father, who is Yahweh, the God of the Jews.
John 4:23
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Samaritan woman.
However, the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will
"However, it is now the right time for true worshipers to"
the Father
This is an important title for God.
in spirit and truth
Possible meanings are the "spirit" here is 1) the inner person, the mind and heart, what a person thinks and what he loves, different from where he goes to worship and what ceremonies he performs, or 2) the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "in the Spirit and in truth" or "with the Spirit's help and in truth"
in ... truth
thinking correctly of what is true about God
John 4:24

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General Information:
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John 4:25
I know that the Messiah ... Christ
Both of these words mean "God's promised king."
he will explain everything to us
This statement implies that he will tell them everything they need to know. Alternate translation: "he will tell us everything we need to know"
John 4:26
General Information:
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John 4:27
At that moment his disciples returned
"Just as Jesus was saying this, his disciples returned from town"
Now they were wondering why he was speaking with a woman
It was very unusual for a Jew to speak with a woman he did not know, especially if that woman was a Samaritan.
no one said, "What ... looking for?" or "Why ... her?"
Possible meanings are 1) "no one asked Jesus, 'What ... looking for?' or 'Why ... her?'" or 2) "no one asked the woman, 'What ... looking for?' or asked Jesus, 'Why ... her?'"
John 4:28
General Information:
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John 4:29
Come, see a man who told me everything that I have ever done
The Samaritan woman exaggerates to show that she is impressed by how much Jesus knows about her. Alternate translation: "Come see a man who knows very much about me, even though I have never met him before"
This could not be the Christ, could it?
The woman is not sure that Jesus is the Christ, so she asks a question that expects "no" for an answer, but she also asks a question instead of making a statement because she wants the people to decide for themselves.
John 4:30
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:31
In the meantime
"While the woman was going into town"
the disciples were urging him
"the disciples were telling Jesus" or "the disciples were encouraging Jesus"
John 4:32
I have food to eat that you do not know about
Here Jesus is not talking about literal "food," but is preparing his disciples for a spiritual lesson in John 4:34.
John 4:33
No one has brought him anything to eat, have they?
The disciples think Jesus is talking about literal "food." They begin asking each other this question, expecting a "no" response. Alternate translation: "Surely no one brought him any food while we were in town!"
John 4:34
My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work
Here "food" is a metaphor that represents "obeying God's will." Alternate translation: "Just as food satisfies a hungry person, obeying God's will is what satisfies me"
John 4:35
Do you not say
"Is this not one of your popular sayings"
look up and see the fields, for they are already ripe for harvest
The words "fields" and "ripe for harvest" are metaphors. The "fields" represent people. The words "ripe for harvest" mean that people are ready to receive the message of Jesus, like fields that are ready to be harvested. Alternate translation: "look up and see the the people! They are ready to believe my message, like crops in the fields that are ready for people to harvest them"
John 4:36
and gathers fruit for everlasting life
Here "fruit for everlasting life" is a metaphor that represents people who believe Christ's message and receive eternal life. Alternate translation: "and the people who believe the message and receive eternal life are like the fruit that a harvester gathers"
John 4:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.
One sows, and another reaps
The words "sows" and "reaps" are metaphors. The one who "sows" shares the message of Jesus. The one who "reaps" helps the people to receive the message of Jesus. Alternate translation: "One person plants the seeds, and another person reaps the crops"
John 4:38
you have entered into their labor
"you are now joining in their work"
John 4:39
believed in him
To "believe in" someone means to "trust in" that person. Here this also means that they believed he was the Son of God.
He told me everything that I have done
This is an exaggeration. The woman was impressed by how much Jesus knew about her. Alternate translation: "He told me many things about my life"
John 4:40
General Information:
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John 4:41
his word
Here "word" is a metonym that stands for the message that Jesus proclaimed. Alternate translation: "his message"
John 4:42
world
The "world" is a metonym for all the believers throughout the world. Alternate translation: "all the believers in the world"
John 4:43
General Information:
Jesus goes down to Galilee and heals a boy. Verse 44 gives us background information about something Jesus had said previously.
from there

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from Judea
John 4:44
For Jesus himself declared
The reflexive pronoun "himself" is added to emphasize that Jesus had "declared" or said this.. You can translate this in your language in a way that will give emphasis to a person.
a prophet has no honor in his own country
"people do not show respect or honor to a prophet of their own country" or "a prophet is not respected by the people in his own community"
John 4:45
at the festival
Here the festival is the Passover.
John 4:46
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the author starts a new part of the story. If you have a way of doing this in your language, you may consider using it.
royal official
someone who is in the service of the king
John 4:47
General Information:
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John 4:48
Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe
"Unless ... not believe" here is a double negative. In some languages it is more natural to translate this statement in a positive form. Alternate translation: "You will believe only if you see a signs and wonders"
John 4:49
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:50
believed the word
Here "word" is a metonym that refers to the message that Jesus spoke. Alternate translation: "believed the message"
John 4:51
While
This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. As the official was going home, his servants were coming to meet him on the road.
John 4:52
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 4:53
So he himself and his whole household believed
The reflexive pronoun "himself" is used here to emphasize the word "he." If you have a way of doing this in your language, you may consider using it.
John 4:54
sign
Miracles can also be called "signs" because they are used as indicators or evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

Chapter 5

John 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Healing water
Many of the Jews believed that God would heal people who got into some of the pools in Jerusalem when the waters were "stirred up."
Testimony
Testimony is what one person says about another person. What a person says about himself is not as important as what other people say about that person. Jesus told the Jews that God had told them who Jesus was, so he did not need to tell them who he was. This was because God had told the writers of the Old Testament what his Messiah would do, and Jesus had done everything they had written that he would do.
The resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment
God will make some people alive again and because he gives them his grace, they will live with him forever. But he will make some people alive again and because he will treat them justly, they will live apart from him forever.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The Son, the Son of God, and the Son of Man
Jesus refers to himself in this chapter as the "Son"

Links:

John 5:1 Notes

John 5:1
General Information:
This is the next event in the story, in which Jesus goes up to Jerusalem and heals a man. These verses give background information about the setting of the story.
After this
This refers to after Jesus healed the official's son. See how you translated this in John 3:22.
there was a Jewish festival
"the Jews were celebrating a festival"
went up to Jerusalem
Jerusalem is located on the top of a hill. Roads to Jerusalem went up and down smaller hills. If your language has a different word for going up a hill than for walking on level ground, you may use it here.
John 5:2

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pool
This was a hole in the ground that people filled with water. Sometimes they lined the pools with tiles or other stonework.
Bethesda
a place name
roofed porches
roofed structures with at least one wall missing and attached to buildings
John 5:3
A large number of people
"Many people"
John 5:4
General Information:
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John 5:5
General Information:
Verse 5 introduces the man lying beside the pool to the story.
was there
"was at the Bethesda pool" (John 5:1)
thirty-eight years
"38 years"
John 5:6
he realized
"he understood" or "he found out"
he said to him
"Jesus said to the paralyzed man"
John 5:7
Sir, I do not have
Here the word "sir" is a polite form of address.
when the water is stirred up
This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "when the angel moves the water"
into the pool
This was a hole in the ground that people filled with water. Sometimes they lined the pools with tiles or other stonework. See how you translated "pool" in John 5:2.
another steps down before me
"someone else always goes down the steps into the water before me"
John 5:8
Get up
"Stand up"
take up your bed, and walk
"pick up your sleeping mat, and walk"
John 5:9
the man was healed
"the man became healthy again"
Now that day
The writer uses the word "now" to show that the words that follow are background information.
John 5:10
So the Jews said to him
The Jews (especially the leaders of the Jews) became angry when they saw the man carrying his mat on the Sabbath.
It is the Sabbath
"It is God's Day of Rest"
John 5:11
He who made me healthy
"The man who made me well"
John 5:12
They asked him
"The Jewish leaders asked the man who was healed"
John 5:13
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 5:14
Jesus found him
"Jesus found the man he had healed"
See
The word "See" is used here to draw attention to the words that follow.
John 5:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 5:16
Now
The writer uses the word "now" to show that the words that follow are background information.
the Jews
Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche which represent the "Jewish leaders." Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
John 5:17
is working
This refers to doing labor, including anything that is done to serve other people.
My Father
This is an important title for God.
John 5:18
making himself equal to God
"saying that he was like God" or "saying that he had as much authority as God"
John 5:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Jewish leaders.
Truly, truly
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
whatever the Father is doing, the Son does in the same way
Jesus, as the Son of God, followed and obeyed his Father's leadership on earth, because Jesus knew the Father loved him.
Son ... Father
These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.
John 5:20
you will be amazed
"you will be surprised" or "you will be shocked"
For the Father loves the Son
Jesus, as the Son of God, followed and obeyed his Father's leadership on earth, because Jesus knew the Father loved him.
loves
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. God himself is love

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and is the source of true love.
John 5:21
Father ... Son
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
life
This refers to "spiritual life."
John 5:22
For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son
The word "for" marks a comparison. The Son of God carries out judgment for God the Father.
John 5:23
honor the Son just as ... the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father
God the Son must be honored and worshiped just like God the Father. If we fail to honor God the Son, then we also fail to honor God the Father.
John 5:24
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
he who hears my word
Here "word" is a metonym that represents the message of Jesus. Alternate translation: "anyone who hears my message"
will not be condemned
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will not receive condemnation" or "God will not condemn him"
John 5:25
Truly, truly
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live
The voice of Jesus, the Son of God, will raise dead people from the grave.
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
John 5:26
For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has also given to the Son so that he has life in himself
The word "For" marks a comparison. The Son of God has the power to give life, just as the Father does.
Father ... Son
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
life
This means spiritual life.
John 5:27
Father ... Son of Man
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
the Father has given the Son authority to carry out judgment
The Son of God has the authority of God the Father to judge.
John 5:28
Do not be amazed at this
"This" refers to the fact that Jesus, as the Son of Man, has the power to give eternal life and to carry out judgment.
hear his voice
"hear my voice"
John 5:29
to the resurrection of life
This tells what will happen to those who have done good. Alternate translation: "will rise to live" or "will rise and live"
to the resurrection of judgment
This tells what will happen to those who have done evil. Alternate translation: "will rise to be judged" or "will rise and be judged"
John 5:30
the will of him who sent me
The word "him" refers to God the Father.
John 5:31
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 5:32
There is another who testifies about me
"There is someone else who tells people about me"
another
This refers to God.
the testimony that he gives about me is true
"what he tells people about me is true"
John 5:33
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 5:34
the testimony that I receive is not from man
"I do not need people's testimony"
that you might be saved
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so God can save you"
John 5:35
John was a lamp that was burning and shining, and you were willing to rejoice in his light for a while
Here "lamp" and "light" are metaphors. John taught the people about God and this was like a lamp shining its light into the dark. Alternate translation: "John taught you about God and this was like a lamp shining its light. And for a while what John said made you happy"
John 5:36
the works that the Father has given me to accomplish ... that the Father has sent me
God the Father has sent God the Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus completes what the Father gives him to do.
Father
This is an important title for God.
the very works that I do, testify about me that the Father has sent me
Here Jesus says that the miracles "testify" or "tell the people" about him. Alternate translation: "what I do, shows the people that God has sent me"
John 5:37
The Father who sent me has himself testified
The reflexive pronoun "himself" emphasizes that it is the Father, not someone less important, who has testified.
John 5:38
You do not have his word remaining in you, for you are not believing in the one whom he has sent

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"You do not believe in the one he has sent. That is how I know that you do not have his word remaining in you"

You do not have his word remaining in you

Jesus speaks of people living according to God's word as if they were houses and God's word were a person that lived in houses. Alternate translation: "You do not live according to his word" or "You do not obey his word"

his word

"the message he spoke to you"

John 5:39

in them you have eternal life

"you will find eternal life if you read them" or "the scriptures will tell you how you can have eternal life"

John 5:40

you are not willing to come to me

"you refuse to believe my message"

John 5:41

receive glory

The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give to a person who has glory or is glorious. Alternate translation: "receive praise"

receive

accept

John 5:42

you do not have the love of God in yourselves

This can mean 1) "you really do not love God" or 2) "you have really not received God's love."

John 5:43

in my Father's name

Here the word "name" is a metonym that represents God's power and authority. Alternate translation: "with my Father's authority"

Father

This is an important title for God.

receive

welcome as a friend

If another should come in his own name

The word "name" is a metonym that represents authority. Alternate translation: "If another should come in his own authority"

John 5:44

How can you believe, you who accept glory ... God?

This remark appears in the form of a question in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "There is no way you can believe because you accept glory ... God!"

believe

This means to trust in Jesus.

accept glory ... seeking the glory

The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give to a person who has glory or is glorious. Alternate translation: "accept praise ... seeking the praise"

John 5:45

in whom you have hoped

Here the word "hope" means "expect" or "trust," and the person who hopes in this way believes that he will receive what he hopes for. It can be stated clearly what they hoped for in Moses. Alternate translation: "whom you expect to help you" or "whom you trust to defend you before the Father you"

John 5:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 5:47

If you do not believe his writings, how are you going to believe my words?

This remark appears in the form of a question to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "You do not believe his writings, so you will never believe my words!"

my words

"what I say"

Chapter 6

John 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

King

The king of any nation was the richest and most powerful person in that nation. The people wanted Jesus to be their king because he gave them food and so they thought he would make the Jews into the richest and most powerful nation in the world. They did not understand that Jesus came to die so God could forgive his people's sins and that the world would persecute his people.

Important metaphors in this chapter

Bread

Bread was the most common and important food in Jesus's day, and so the word "bread" was their general word for "food." It is often difficult to translate the word "bread" into the languages of people who do not eat bread because the general word for food in some languages refers to food that did not exist in Jesus's culture. Jesus used the word "bread" to refer to himself. He wanted them to understand that they need him so they can have eternal life.

Eating the flesh and drinking the blood

When Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves," he knew that before he died he would tell his followers to do this by eating bread and drinking wine. In the event this chapter describes, he expected that his hearers would understand that he was using a metaphor but would not understand what the metaphor referred to. (See: flesh and blood)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Parenthetical Ideas

Several times in this passage, John explains something or gives the reader some context to better understand the story.

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These explanation are intended to give the reader some additional knowledge without interrupting the flow of the narrative. The information is placed inside parentheses.
"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

John 6:1 Notes

John 6:1
General Information:
Jesus has traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee. A crowd has followed him up a mountainside. These verses tell the setting of this part of the story.
After these things
The phrase "these things" refers to the events in John 5:1-46 and introduces the event that follows.
Jesus went away
It is implied in the text that Jesus traveled by boat and took his disciples with him. Alternate translation: "Jesus traveled by boat with his disciples"
John 6:2
A great crowd
"A large number of people"
signs
This refers to the miracles that are used as evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over everything.
John 6:3
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:4
Now the Passover, the Jewish festival, was near
John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about when the events happened.
John 6:5
General Information:
The action in the story begins in verse 5.
John 6:6
But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do
John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to explain why Jesus asked Philip where to buy bread.
for he himself knew
The reflexive pronoun "himself" makes it clear that the word "he" refers to Jesus. Jesus knew what he would do.
John 6:7
Two hundred denarii worth of bread
The word "denarii" is the plural of "denarius." Alternate translation: "The amount of bread that costs two hundred days' wages"
John 6:8
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:9
loaves
Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that are shaped and baked. These were probably small dense, round loaves.
what are these among so many?
This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that they do not have enough food to feed everyone. Alternate translation: "these few loaves and fishes are not enough to feed so many people!"
John 6:10
sit down
"lie down"
Now there was much grass in the place
John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about the place where this event happens.
So the men sat down, about five thousand in number
While the crowd probably included women and children (John 6:4-5), here John is counting only the men.
John 6:11
giving thanks
Jesus prayed to God the Father and thanked him for the fish and the loaves.
he gave it
"he" here represents "Jesus and his disciples." Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples gave it"
John 6:12
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:13
General Information:
Jesus withdraws from the crowd. This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus feeding the crowd on the mountain.
they gathered
"the disciples gathered"
left over
the food that no one had eaten
John 6:14
this sign
Jesus feeding the 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish
the prophet
the special prophet who Moses said would come into the world
John 6:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:16
Connecting Statement:
This is the next event in the story. Jesus's disciples go out onto the lake in a boat.
John 6:17
It was dark by this time, and Jesus had not yet come to them
Use your language's way of showing that this is background information.

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John 6:18
General Information:
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John 6:19
they had rowed
Boats usually had two, four, or six people rowing with rowers on each side working together. Your culture may have different ways of making a boat go across a large body of water.
about twenty-five or thirty stadia
A "stadium" is 185 meters. Alternate translation: "about five or six kilometers"
John 6:20
Do not be afraid
"Stop being afraid!"
John 6:21
they were willing to receive him into the boat
It is implied that Jesus gets into the boat. Alternate translation: "they gladly received him into the boat"
John 6:22
the sea
"the Sea of Galilee"
there was no other boat there except the one
This double negative emphasizes that the one boat is the only one that was there. Alternate translation: "there was only that one boat there"
John 6:23
However, there were ... the Lord had given thanks
Use your language's way of showing that this is background information.
boats that came from Tiberias
Here, John provides more background information. The next day, after Jesus fed the people, some boats with people from Tiberius came to see Jesus. However, Jesus and his disciples had left the night before.
John 6:24
General Information:
The people go to Capernaum to find Jesus. When they see him, they start asking him questions.
John 6:25
General Information:
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John 6:26
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
John 6:27
eternal life which the Son of Man will give you, for God the Father has set his seal on him
God the Father has given his approval to Jesus, the Son of Man, to give eternal life to those who believe in him.
Son of Man ... God the Father
These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.
has set his seal on him
To "set a seal" on something means to place a mark on it to show to whom it belongs. This means that the Son belongs to the Father and that the Father approves of him in every way.
John 6:28
General Information:
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John 6:29
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:30
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:31
Our fathers
"Our forefathers" or "Our ancestors"
heaven
This refers to the place where God lives.
John 6:32
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
it is my Father who is giving you the true bread from heaven
The "true bread" is a metaphor for Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Father gives to you the Son as the true bread from heaven"
my Father
This is an important title for God.
John 6:33
gives life to the world
"gives spiritual life to the world"
the world
Here the "world" is a metonym for all of the people in the world who trust in Jesus.
John 6:34
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:35
I am the bread of life
Through metaphor, Jesus compares himself with bread. Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. Alternate translation: "Just as food keeps you alive physically, I can give you spiritual life"
believes in
This means to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, to trust him as Savior, and to live in a way that honors him.
John 6:36
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:37
Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me
God the Father and God the Son will save forever those who believe in Jesus.
Father
This is an important title for God.
he who comes to me I will certainly not throw out
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will keep everyone who comes to me"
John 6:38
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.
him who sent me
"my Father, who sent me"
John 6:39

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I would lose not one of all those
Here litotes is used to emphasize that Jesus will keep everyone that God gives to him. Alternate translation: "I should keep all of them"
will raise them up
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "will cause them to live again"
John 6:40
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:41
Connecting Statement:
The Jewish leaders interrupt Jesus as he is speaking to the crowd.
grumbled
talked unhappily
I am the bread
Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. See how you translated this in [John 6:35]
John 6:42
Is not this Jesus son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?
This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders believe that Jesus is no one special. Alternate translation: "This is just Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know!
How then does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?
This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders do not believe that Jesus came from heaven. Alternate translation: "He is lying when he says that he came from heaven!"
John 6:43
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the crowd and now also to the Jewish leaders.
John 6:44
raise him up
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cause him to live again"
draws
This can mean 1) "pulls" or 2) "attracts."
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 6:45
It is written in the prophets
This is a passive statement that can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "The prophets wrote"
Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me
The Jews thought Jesus was the "son of Joseph" (John 6:42), but he is the Son of God because his Father is God, not Joseph. Those who truly learn from God the Father believe in Jesus, who is God the Son.
John 6:46
Connecting Statement:
Jesus now continues speaking to the crowd and the Jewish leaders.
Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God—he has seen the Father
"I am not saying that anyone has seen the Father. Only he who is from God-he has seen the Father"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 6:47
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
he who believes has eternal life
God gives "eternal life" to those who trust in Jesus, the Son of God.
John 6:48
I am the bread of life
Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. See how you translated this in [John 6:35]
John 6:49
Your fathers
"Your forefathers" or "Your ancestors"
died
This refers to physical death.
John 6:50
This is the bread
Here "bread" is a metaphor that points to Jesus who is the one who gives spiritual life just as bread sustains physical life. Alternate translation: "I am like the true bread"
not die
"live forever." Here the word "die" refers to spiritual death.
John 6:51
living bread
This means "the bread that causes people to live" (John 6:35).
for the life of the world
Here "the world" is a metonym that represents the lives of all the people in the world. Alternate translation: "that will give life to all the people in the world"
John 6:52
Connecting Statement:
Some Jews who are present begin to argue among themselves and Jesus responds to their question.
How can this man give us his flesh to eat?
This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders are reacting negatively to what Jesus has said about "his flesh." Alternate translation: "There is no way that this man can give us his flesh to eat!"
John 6:53
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood
Here the phrases "eat the flesh" and "drink his blood" are a metaphor that shows how trusting in Jesus, the Son of Man, is like receiving spiritual food and drink. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.
you will not have life in yourselves
"you will not receive eternal life"
John 6:54
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to all those listening to him.

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Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life
The phrases "eats my flesh" and "drinks my blood" are a metaphor for trusting Jesus. Just as people need food and drink in order to live, people need to trust Jesus in order to have eternal life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor more clear than Jesus did.
raise him up
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "cause him to live again"
at the last day
"on the day when God judges everyone"
John 6:55
my flesh is true food ... my blood is true drink
The phrases "true food" and "true drink" are a metaphor that means Jesus gives life to those who trust in him. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.
John 6:56
remains in me, and I in him
"has a close relationship with me"
John 6:57
so he who eats me
The phrase "eats me" is a metaphor for trusting Jesus. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.
living Father
Possible meanings are 1) "the Father who gives life" or 2) "the Father who is alive."
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 6:58
This is the bread that has come down from heaven
Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I am the bread that has come down from heaven"
This is the bread that has come down from heaven
The bread is a metaphor for what gives life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.
He who eats this bread will live forever
Jesus spoke about himself as "this bread." Alternate translation: "He who eats me, the bread, will live forever"
He who eats this bread
Here "eats this bread" is a metaphor for trusting Jesus. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.
the fathers
"the forefathers" or "the ancestors"
John 6:59
Jesus said these things in the synagogue ... in Capernaum
Here John gives background information about when this event happened.
John 6:60
Connecting Statement:
Some of the disciples ask a question and Jesus responds, as he continues speaking to the crowd.
who can hear it?
The disciples use this question to emphasize that they cannot do this. Alternate translation: "no one can hear it!" or "it is too hard to hear!"
hear it
Possible meanings are 1) "hear it" is a synecdoche for "understand it" or 2) "hear it" is a synecdoche for "agree with it"
John 6:61
Does this offend you?
"Does this shock you?" or "Does this upset you?"
John 6:62
Then what if you should see the Son of Man going up to where he was before?
Jesus offers this remark in the form of a question to emphasize that his disciples will see other things that are also hard to understand. Alternate translation: "Then you will not know what to think when you see me, the Son of Man, going up into heaven!"
John 6:63
profits
The word "profit" means to cause good things to happen.
words
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus's words in [John 6:32-58]
The words that I have spoken to you
"What I have told you"
are spirit, and they are life
Possible meanings are 1) "are about the Spirit and eternal life" or 2) "are from the Spirit and give eternal life" or 3) "are about spiritual things and life."
John 6:64
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.
For Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones ... who it was who would betray him
Here John gives background information about what Jesus knew would happen.
John 6:65
no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father
Whoever wants to believe must come to God through the Son. Only God the Father allows people to come to Jesus.
Father
This is an important title for God.
come to me
"follow me and receive eternal life"
John 6:66
no longer walked with him
Jesus went from one place to another by walking, so it is literally true that they did not walk where and when he walked, but the reader should also be able to understand that this metaphor indicates that they no longer wanted to hear what he had to say.
his disciples
Here "his disciples" refers to the general group of people who followed Jesus.
John 6:67
the twelve
This is an ellipsis for "the twelve disciples," a specific group of twelve men who followed Jesus for his entire ministry. Alternate translation: "the twelve disciples"
John 6:68

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Lord, to whom would we go?
Simon Peter gives this remark in the form of a question to emphasize that he desires to follow only Jesus. Alternate translation: "Lord, we could never follow anyone but you!"
John 6:69
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 6:70
Did not I choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?
Jesus gives this remark in the form of a question to draw attention to the fact that one of the disciples will betray him. Alternate translation: "I chose you all myself, yet one of you is a servant of Satan!"
John 6:71
General Information:
Verse 71 is not part of the main story. Here John comments on what Jesus said.

Chapter 7

John 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This whole chapter concerns the concept of believing Jesus to be the Messiah. Some people believed this to be true while others rejected it. Some were willing to recognize his power and even the possibility that he was a prophet, but most were unwilling to believe that he was the Messiah. (See: christ and prophet)
Translators may wish to include a note at verse 53 to explain to the reader why they have chosen or chosen not to translate verses 7:53-8:11.

Special concepts in this chapter

"My time has not yet come"
This phrase and "his hour had not yet come" are used in this chapter to indicate that Jesus is in control of the events unfolding in his life.
"Living water"
This is an important image used in the New Testament. It is a metaphor. Because this metaphor is given in a desert environment, it probably emphasizes that Jesus is able to give life sustaining nourishment.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Prophecy
Jesus gives a prophecy about his life without an explicit statement in John 7:33-34.
Irony
Nicodemus explains to the other Pharisees that the Law requires him to hear directly from a person before making a judgment about them. The Pharisees in turn made a judgment about Jesus without speaking to Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Did not believe in him"
Jesus's brothers did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. (See: believe)
"The Jews"
This term is used in two different ways in this passage. It is used specifically in reference to the Jewish leaders who were trying to kill him (John 7:1). It is also used in reference to the people of Judea in general who had a positive opinion of Jesus (John 7:13). The translator may wish to use the terms "Jewish leaders" and "Jewish people" or "Jews (leaders)" and "Jews (in general)."

Links:

John 7:1 Notes

John 7:1
General Information:
Jesus is in Galilee speaking to his brothers. These verses tell about when this event occurred.
After these things
These words tell the reader that the writer will begin talking about a new event. "After he finished speaking with the disciples" (John 6:66-71) or "Some time later"
traveled
The reader should understand that Jesus is probably walking rather than riding on an animal or in a vehicle.
the Jews were seeking to kill him
Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders." Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders were making plans to kill him"
John 7:2
Now the Jewish Festival of Shelters was near
"Now the time for the festival of the Jews was near" or "Now it was almost time for the Jewish festival of Shelters"
John 7:3
brothers
This refers to the actual younger brothers of Jesus, the sons of Mary and Joseph.
the works that you do
The word "works" refers to the miracles that Jesus had performed.
John 7:4
he himself

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The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that emphasizes the word "he."
the world
Here "the world" is a metonym for all of the people in the world. Alternate translation: "all people" or "everyone"
John 7:5
For even his brothers did not believe in him
This sentence is a stop from the main story. Here John gives background information about the brothers of Jesus.
his brothers
All of Jesus's brothers were younger than he was. This can be made explicit in the translation as long as it does not suggest that Jesus also had older brothers. Alternate translation: "his younger brothers"
John 7:6
My time has not yet come
The word "time" is a metonym. Jesus is implying that it is not the right time for him to bring his ministry to a close. Alternate translation: "It is not the right time for me to end my work"
your time is always ready
"any time is good for you"
John 7:7
The world cannot hate you
Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "The people in the world cannot hate you"
I testify about it that its works are evil
"I tell them that what they are doing is evil"
John 7:8
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his brothers.
my time has not yet been fulfilled
Here Jesus is implying that if he goes to Jerusalem, he will bring his work to an end. Alternate translation: "It is not the right time for me to go to Jerusalem"
John 7:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 7:10
General Information:
The setting of the story has changed. Jesus and his brothers are now at the festival.
when his brothers
All of Jesus's brothers were younger than he was. This can be made explicit in the translation as long as it does not suggest that Jesus also had older brothers. Alternate translation: "when his younger brothers"
he also went up
Jerusalem is at a higher elevation than Galilee where Jesus and his brothers were previously.
not publicly but in secret
These two phrases mean the same thing. The idea is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "very secretly"
John 7:11
The Jews were looking for him
Here the word "Jews"is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders." The word "him" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders were looking for Jesus"
John 7:12
he leads the crowds astray
Here "leads ... astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "he deceives the people"
John 7:13
fear
This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others.
the Jews
The word "Jews" is a synecdoche for the leaders of the Jews who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
John 7:14
General Information:
Jesus is now teaching the Jews in the temple.
John 7:15
How does this man know so much?
The remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize the Jewish leaders' surprise that Jesus has so much knowledge. Alternate translation: "It is amazing how much he knows about the scriptures!"
John 7:16
but is of him who sent me
"but comes from God, the one who sent me"
John 7:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.
John 7:18
but whoever seeks the glory of him who sent him, that person is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him
"when a person only seeks to honor the one who sent him, that person is speaking the truth. He does not lie"
John 7:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.
Did not Moses give you the law?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "It was Moses who gave you the law"
keeps the law
"obeys the law"
Why do you seek to kill me?
Jesus questions the motives of the Jewish leaders who want to kill him for breaking the law of Moses. He implies that the leaders themselves do not keep that same Law. Alternate translation: "You break the Law yourselves and yet you want to kill me!"
John 7:20
You have a demon
"This shows that you are crazy, or maybe a demon is controlling you!"
Who seeks to kill you?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "No one is trying to kill you!"
John 7:21
one work

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"one miracle" or "one sign"
you all marvel
"you all are shocked"
John 7:22
not that it is from Moses, but from the ancestors
Here John provides additional information about circumcision.
on the Sabbath you circumcise a man
Jesus implies that the act of circumcision also involves work. Alternate translation: "you circumcise a male baby on the Sabbath. That is working too"
on the Sabbath
"on the Jewish Day of Rest"
John 7:23
If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken
"If you circumcise a male baby on the Sabbath so that you do not break the law of Moses"
why are you angry with me because I made a man completely healthy on the Sabbath?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "you should not be angry with me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath!"
on the Sabbath
"on the Jewish Day of Rest"
John 7:24
Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteously
Jesus implies that the people should not decide what is right, based only on what they can see. Behind the action is a motive that cannot be seen. Alternate translation: "Stop judging people according to what you see! Be more concerned with what is right according to God"
John 7:25
Is not this the one they seek to kill?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "This is Jesus whom they are seeking to kill!"
John 7:26
they say nothing to him
This implies that the Jewish leaders are not opposing Jesus. Alternate translation: "they say nothing to oppose him"
It cannot be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ, can it?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Maybe they have decided that he is truly the Messiah!"
John 7:27
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 7:28
cried out
"spoke in a loud voice"
in the temple
Jesus and the people were actually in the courtyard of the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"
You both know me and know where I come from
John uses irony in this statement. The people believe that Jesus is from Nazareth. They do not know that God sent him from heaven and that he was born in Bethlehem. Alternate translation: "You all know me and you think you know where I come from"
of myself
"on my own authority." See how you translated "of himself" in John 5:19.
he who sent me is true
"God is the one who sent me and he is true"
John 7:29
General Information:
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John 7:30
his hour had not yet come
The word "hour" is a metonym that represents the right time for Jesus to be arrested, according to God's plan. Alternate translation: "it was not the right time to arrest him"
John 7:31
When the Christ comes, will he do more signs than what this one has done?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "When the Christ comes, surely he will not be able to do more signs than this man has done!"
signs
This refers to the miracles that prove that Jesus is the Christ.
John 7:32
General Information:
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John 7:33
I am still with you for a short amount of time
"I will remain with you for only a short period of time"
then I go to him who sent me
Here Jesus refers to God the Father, who sent him.
John 7:34
where I go, you will not be able to come
"you will not be able to come to the place where I am"
John 7:35
The Jews therefore said among themselves
The "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the leaders of the Jews who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said among themselves"
the dispersion
This refers to the Jews that were spread all across the Greek world, outside of Palestine.
John 7:36
What is this word that he said
This "word" is a metonym which stands for the meaning of the message that Jesus had shared, which the Jewish leaders had failed to understand. Alternate translation: "What is he talking about when he said"
John 7:37
General Information:
Some time has passed. It is now the last day of the festival and Jesus speaks to the crowd.
great day
It is "great" because it is the last, or most important, day of the festival.
If anyone is thirsty

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Here the word "thirsty" is a metaphor that means one's great desire for the things of God, just as one "thirsts" for water. Alternate translation: "Anyone who desires the things of God like a thirsty man desires water"

let him come to me and drink

The word "drink" is a metaphor that means to receive the spiritual life that Jesus provides. Alternate translation: "let him come to me and quench his spiritual thirst"

John 7:38

He who believes in me, just as the scripture says

"As the scripture says about anyone who believes in me"

rivers of living water will flow

The "rivers of living water" is a metaphor that represents the life that Jesus provides for those who are spiritually "thirsty." Alternate translation: "spiritual life will flow like rivers of water"

living water

Possible meanings are 1) "water that gives life" or 2) "water that causes people to live."

from his belly

Here the belly represents the inside of a person, specifically the non-physical part of a person. Alternate translation: "from inside of him" or "from his heart"

John 7:39

General Information:

In this verse the author gives information to clarify what Jesus is talking about.

But he

Here "he" refers to Jesus.

the Spirit had not yet been given

John implies that the Spirit would later come to live in those who trusted Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Spirit had not yet come to live in the believers"

because Jesus was not yet glorified

Here the word "glorified" refers to the time when God would honor the Son after his death and resurrection.

John 7:40

This is indeed the prophet

By saying this, the people are indicating that they believe Jesus is the prophet like Moses that God had promised to send. Alternate translation: "This is indeed the prophet who is like Moses that we have been waiting for"

John 7:41

Does the Christ come from Galilee?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "The Christ cannot come from Galilee!"

John 7:42

Have the scriptures not said that the Christ will come from the descendants of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "The scriptures teach that Christ will come from the line of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was!"

Have the scriptures not said ... was?

The scriptures are referred to as if they were actually speaking as a person speaks. Alternate translation: "Did the prophets not write in the scriptures ... was?" or "The prophets wrote in the scriptures ... was."

where David was

"where David lived"

John 7:43

So there arose a division in the crowds because of him

The crowds could not agree about who or what Jesus was.

John 7:44

but no one laid hands on him

To lay hands on someone is an idiom which means to grab him or to hold onto him. Alternate translation: "but no one grabbed him to arrest him"

John 7:45

the officers

"the temple guards"

John 7:46

Never has anyone spoken like this

The officers exaggerate to show how impressed they are by what Jesus said. You may need to make explicit that the officers were not claiming to know everything that every person in all times and places had ever said. Alternate translation: "We have never heard anyone say such amazing things as this man!"

John 7:47

So the Pharisees

"Because they said that, the Pharisees"

answered them

"answered the officers"

Have you also been deceived?

The remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. The Pharisees are shocked at the response of the officers. Alternate translation: "You have been deceived too!"

John 7:48

Have any of the rulers believed in him, or any of the Pharisees?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "None of the rulers or Pharisees have believed in him!"

John 7:49

the law

This is a reference to the law of the Pharisees and not the law of Moses.

But this crowd that does not know the law, they are cursed

"As for this crowd that does not know the law, God will cause them to perish!"

John 7:50

one of the Pharisees, who came to him earlier

John provides this information to remind us of who Nicodemus is. Your language may have a special way to mark background information.

John 7:51

Does our law judge a man ... what he does?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Our Jewish law does not allow us to judge a man ... what he does!"

Does our law judge a man ... does?

Here Nicodemus speaks of the law as if it were a person. If this is not natural in your language, you may translate it with a personal subject. Alternate translation: "Do we judge

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a man ... does?" or "We do not judge a man ... does."
John 7:52
Are you also from Galilee?
The Jewish leaders know that Nicodemus is not from Galilee. They ask this question as a way of scoffing at him. Alternate translation: "You must also be one of those inferior persons from Galilee!"
Search and see
This is an ellipsis. You may wish to include the information that does not appear. Alternate translation: "Search carefully and read what is written in the Scriptures"
no prophet comes from Galilee
This probably refers to the belief that Jesus was born in Galilee.
John 7:53
General Information:
The best early texts do not have 7:53-8:11. The ULB has set them apart in square brackets

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Chapter 8

John 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Translators may wish to include a note at verse 1 to explain to the reader why they have chosen to translate or to not translate verses 8:1-11.

Special concepts in this chapter

A light and darkness
The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: light and darkness and righteous)
I AM
John records Jesus as saying these words four times in this book, three times in this chapter. They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew word for "I AM," by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses. For these reasons, many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: yahweh).
The Scribes and Pharisees' trap
The Scribes and Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus. They wanted him to say either that they should keep the law of Moses by killing a woman whom they had found committing adultery or that they should disobey the law of Moses and forgive her sin. Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him and that they did not really want to keep the law of Moses. He knew this because the law said that both the woman and the man should die, but they did not bring the man to Jesus. (See: adultery)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

John 8:1 Notes

John 8:1
General Information:
While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.
Connecting Statement:
Verse 1 tells us where Jesus went at the end of the previous chapter.
John 8:2
all the people
This is a general way of speaking. It means "many people."
John 8:3
The scribes and the Pharisees brought
Here the phrase "the scribes and the Pharisees" is a synecdoche that represents some of the members of these two groups. Alternate translation: "Some scribes and Pharisees brought" or "Some men who taught the Jewish laws and some who were Pharisees brought"
a woman caught in the act of adultery
This is a passive statement. You may translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "a woman whom they had found committing adultery"
John 8:4
General Information:
While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.
John 8:5
such people
"people like that" or "people who do that"
what do you say about her?
"so you tell us. What should we do about her?"
John 8:6
to trap him
This means to use a trick question.
so that they might have something to accuse him about
What they would accuse him of can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "so that they could accuse him of saying something wrong" or "so that they could accuse him of not obeying the law of Moses or the Roman law"
John 8:7
General Information:
While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.

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When they continued
The word "they" refers to the scribes and Pharisees.
The one among you who has no sin
The abstract noun "sin" can be expressed with the verb sin. Alternate translation: "The one among you is has never sinned" or "If any one of you has never sinned"
let him
"let that person"
John 8:8
he stooped down
"he bent down"
John 8:9
General Information:
While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.
one by one
"one after another"
John 8:10
Woman, where are your accusers
When Jesus called her "woman," he was not trying to make her feel insignificant. If people in your language group would think that he was doing that, this can be translated without the word "Woman."
John 8:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 8:12
General Information:
Jesus is speaking to a crowd near the treasury in the temple after either the events of [John 7:1-52]
I am the light of the world
Here the "light" is a metaphor for the revelation that comes from God. Alternate translation: "I am the one who gives light to the world"
the world
This is a metonym for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of the world"
he who follows me
This is an idiom that means "everyone who does what I teach" or "everyone who obeys me"
will not walk in the darkness
To "walk in darkness" is a metaphor for living a sinful life. Alternate translation: "will not live as if he were in the darkness of sin"
light of life
The "light of life" is a metaphor for the truth from God that gives spiritual life. Alternate translation: "truth that brings eternal life"
John 8:13
You testify about yourself
"You are just saying these things about yourself"
your testimony is not true
The Pharisees are implying that the witness of only one person is not true because it cannot be verified. Alternate translation: "you cannot be your own witness" or "what you say about yourself may not be true"
John 8:14
Even if I testify about myself
"Even if I say these things about myself"
John 8:15
the flesh
"human standards and the laws of men"
I judge no one
Possible meanings are 1) "I do not judge anyone yet" or 2) "I am not judging anyone now."
John 8:16
if I judge
Possible meanings are 1) "if I judge people" or 2) "whenever I judge people"
my judgment is true
Possible meanings are 1) "my judgment will be right" or 2) "my judgment is right."
I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me
Jesus, the Son of God, has authority because of his special relationship with his Father.
I am not alone
The implied information is that Jesus is not alone in his judgment. Alternate translation: "I am not alone in how I judge" or "I do not judge alone"
I am with the Father who sent me
The Father and the Son judge together. Alternate translation: "the Father who sent me also judges with me" or "the Father who sent me judges as I do"
the Father
This is an important title for God. If your language must state whose Father this is, you could say "my Father" since Jesus switches to that in the following verses.
John 8:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Pharisees and other people about himself.
Yes, and in your law
The word "Yes" shows that Jesus is adding to what he was saying before.
it is written
This is a passive phrase. You may translate it in an active form with a personal subject. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote"
the testimony of two men is true
The logic implied here is that one person can verify the words of another. Alternate translation: "if two men say the same thing, then people know it is true"
John 8:18
I am he who testifies about myself
Jesus testifies about himself. Alternate translation: "I give evidence to you about myself"
the Father who sent me testifies about me
The Father also testifies about Jesus. You could make it explicit that this means Jesus's testimony is true. Alternate translation: "my Father who sent me also brings evidence about me. So you should believe that what we tell you is true"
the Father
This is an important title for God. If your language must state whose Father this is, you could say "my Father" since Jesus switches to that in the following verses.
John 8:19
You know neither me nor my Father; if you had known me, you would

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have known my Father also
Jesus indicates that to know him is to also know the Father. Both Father and Son are God. "Father" is an important title for God.
my Father
This is an important title for God.
John 8:20
General Information:
Here there is a break in Jesus's speaking where the author give us background information regarding where Jesus had been teaching. Some languages may require the information about the setting to be placed at the beginning of this part of the story in [John 8:12]
his hour had not yet come
The word "hour" is a metonym for the time for Jesus to die. Alternate translation: "it was not yet the right time for Jesus to die"
John 8:21
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.
die in your sin
Here the word "die" refers to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "die while you are still sinful" or "you will die while you are sinning"
you cannot come
"you are not able to come"
John 8:22
The Jews said
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders." Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said" or "The Jewish authorities said"
John 8:23
You are from below
"You were born in this world"
I am from above
"I came from heaven"
You are of this world
"You belong to this world"
I am not of this world
"I do not belong to this world"
John 8:24
you will die in your sins
"you will die without God's forgiving your sins"
that I AM
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus expects the people to understand that he is referring to what he already has already said about himself: "I am from above."
John 8:25
They said
The word "They" refers to the Jewish leaders (John 8:22).
John 8:26
these things I say to the world
Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "these things I say to all the people"
John 8:27
the Father
This is a special title for God. Some languages may require the use of a possessive before the noun. Alternate translation: "his Father"
John 8:28
When you have lifted up
This refers to placing Jesus on the cross to kill him.
lifted up the Son of Man
Jesus used the title "Son of Man" to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "lifted me, the Son of Man, up"
I AM
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "I am the one I claim to be."
As the Father taught me, I speak these things
"I am only saying what my Father taught me to say." The word "Father" is an important title for God.
John 8:29
He who sent me
The word "He" refers to God.
John 8:30
As Jesus was saying these things
"As Jesus spoke these words"
many believed in him
"many people trusted him"
John 8:31
remain in my word
This is an idiom that means "to obey Jesus." Alternate translation: "obey what I have said"
my disciples
"my followers"
John 8:32
the truth will set you free
This is personification. Jesus speaks of "the truth" as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "if you obey the truth, God will set you free"
the truth
This refers to what Jesus reveals about God. Alternate translation: "what is true about God"
John 8:33
how can you say, 'You will be set free'?
This remark appears in the form of a question to express the Jewish leaders' shock at what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: "We do not need to be set free!"
John 8:34
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
is the slave of sin
Here the word "slave" is a metaphor. This implies that "sin" is like a master for the one who sins. Alternate translation: "is like a slave to sin"
John 8:35
in the house forever
Here "house" is a metonym for "family." Alternate translation: "as a permanent member of a family"
the son remains forever
This is an ellipsis. You may translate it by including the implied words. Alternate translation: "the son is a member of the family forever"
John 8:36

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free
It is implied that Jesus is talking about freedom from sin, which is a metaphor for being able not to sin. Alternate translation: "if the Son sets you free, you will truly be able to refrain from sin"
if the Son sets you free
"Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "If I, the Son, set you free"
John 8:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.
my word has no place in you
Here "word" is a metonym for the "teachings" or "message" of Jesus, which the Jewish leaders do not accept. Alternate translation: "you do not accept my teachings" or "you do not allow my message to change your life"
John 8:38
I say what I have seen with my Father
"I am telling you about the things I saw when I was with my Father"
you also do what you heard from your father
The Jewish leaders do not understand that by "your father" Jesus is referring to the devil. Alternate translation: "you also continue doing what your father has told you to do"
John 8:39
father
forefather
John 8:40
Abraham did not do this
"Abraham never tried to kill anyone who told him the true revelation from God"
John 8:41
You do the works of your father
Jesus implies that their father is the devil. Alternate translation: "No! You are doing the things that your real father did"
We were not born in sexual immorality
Here the Jewish leaders imply that Jesus does not know who his real father is. Alternate translation: "We do not know about you, but we are not illegitimate children" or "We were all born from proper marriages"
we have one Father: God
Here the Jewish leaders claim God as their spiritual Father. This is an important title for God.
John 8:42
love
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
John 8:43
Why do you not understand my words?
Jesus is using this question mainly to rebuke the Jewish leaders for not listening to him. Alternate translation: "I will tell you why you do not understand what I say!"
It is because you cannot hear my words
Here "words" is a metonym for the "teachings" of Jesus. Alternate translation: "It is because you will not accept my teachings.
John 8:44
You are of your father, the devil
"You belong to your father, Satan"
the father of lies
Here "father" is a metaphor for the one who originates all lies. Alternate translation: "he is the one who created all lies in the beginning"
John 8:45
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.
because I speak the truth
"because I tell you true things about God"
John 8:46
Which one of you convicts me of sin?
Jesus uses this question to emphasize that he has never sinned. Alternate translation: "None of you can show that I have ever sinned!"
If I speak the truth
"If I say things that are true"
why do you not believe me?
Jesus uses this question to scold the Jewish leaders for their unbelief. Alternate translation: "you have no reason for not believing in me!"
John 8:47
the words of God
Here "words" is a metonym for the "message" of God. Alternate translation: "the message of God" or "the truth that comes from God"
John 8:48
The Jews
The "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders"
Do we not truly say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?
The Jewish leaders use this question to accuse Jesus and to dishonor him. Alternate translation: "We are certainly right in saying that you are a Samaritan and that a demon lives in you!"
John 8:49
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 8:50
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues answering the Jews.
there is one seeking and judging
This refers to God.
John 8:51
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
keeps my word
Here "word" is a metonym for the "teachings" of Jesus. Alternate translation: "obeys my teachings" or "does what I say"
see death
This is an idiom that means to experience death. Here Jesus is referring to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "die spiritually"
John 8:52
Jews

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Here "Jews" is a metonym for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jewish leaders"

If anyone keeps my word

"If anyone obeys my teaching"

taste death

This is an idiom that means to experience death. The Jewish leaders mistakenly assume that Jesus is speaking only about physical death. Alternate translation: "die"

John 8:53

You are not greater than our father Abraham who died, are you?

The Jewish leaders use this question to emphasize that Jesus is not greater than Abraham. Alternate translation: "You are certainly not greater than our father Abraham who indeed died!"

father

forefather

Who do you make yourself out to be?

The Jews use this question to rebuke Jesus for thinking that he is more important than Abraham. Alternate translation: "You should not think that you are so important!"

John 8:54

it is my Father who glorifies me—about whom you say that he is your God

The word "Father" is an important title for God. No one knows God the Father like Jesus, the Son of God. Alternate translation: "it is my Father who honors me, and you say that he is your God"

John 8:55

keep his word

Here "word" is a metonym for what God says. Alternate translation: "I obey what he says to do"

John 8:56

my day

This is a metonym for what Jesus would accomplish during his life. Alternate translation: "what I would do during my life"

he saw it and was glad

"he foresaw my coming through God's revelation and he rejoiced"

John 8:57

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus speaking with the Jews in the temple, which began in John 8:12.

The Jews said to him

Here the "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said to him"

You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?

The Jewish leaders use this question to express their shock that Jesus claims to have seen Abraham. Alternate translation: "You are less than fifty years old. You could not have seen Abraham!"

John 8:58

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

I AM

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "before Abraham existed, I existed."

John 8:59

Then they picked up stones to throw at him

The Jewish leaders are outraged at what Jesus has said. Here it is implied that they wanted to kill him because he had made himself equal to God. Alternate translation: "Then they picked up stones to kill him because he claimed to be equal with God"

Chapter 9

John 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Who sinned?"

Many of the Jews of Jesus's time believed that if a person was blind or deaf or crippled, it was because he or his parents or someone in his family had sinned. This was not the teaching of the law of Moses. (See: sin and lawofmoses)

"He does not keep the Sabbath"

The Pharisees thought that Jesus was working, and so breaking the Sabbath, by making mud. (See: sabbath)

Important metaphors in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Seeing and being blind

Jesus calls the Pharisees blind because they see that Jesus is able to heal blind people but they still do not believe that God sent him

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

John 9:1 Notes

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John 9:1

General Information:

As Jesus and his disciples are walking along, they come across a blind man.

Now

This word shows that the author is about to describe a new event.

as Jesus passed by

Here "Jesus" is a synecdoche for Jesus and the disciples. Alternate translation: "as Jesus and his disciples passed by"

John 9:2

who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?

This question reflects the ancient Jewish belief that sin caused all illnesses and other deformities. The rabbis also taught that it was possible for a baby to sin while still in the womb. Alternate translation: "Teacher, we know that sin causes a person to be blind. Whose sin caused this man to be born blind? Did this man himself sin, or was it his parents who sinned?"

John 9:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:4

We

This "We" includes both Jesus and the disciples he is talking to.

day ... Night

Here "day" and "night" are metaphors. Jesus is comparing the time when people can do God's work to daytime, the time when people normally work, and nighttime to when they cannot do God's work.

John 9:5

in the world

Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "living among the people of this world"

the light of the world

Here "light" is a metaphor for the true revelation of God. Alternate translation: "the one who shows what is true, just as light allows people to see what is in the darkness"

John 9:6

made mud with the saliva

Jesus used his fingers to mix the dirt and saliva. Alternate translation: "and used his fingers to mix the dirt and saliva to make mud"

smeared the mud on his eyes

"smeared the mud on the man's eyes"

John 9:7

wash ... washed

You may need to make explicit that Jesus wanted him to wash the mud off of his eyes in the pool and that that is what the man did.

which is translated "Sent"

A brief stop occurs here in the story. Here John explains to his readers what "Siloam" means. Alternate translation: "which means 'Sent'"

John 9:8

Is not this the man that used to sit and beg?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express the surprise of the people. Alternate translation: "This man is the one who used to sit and beg!"

John 9:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:10

Connecting Statement:

The neighbors of the man who had been blind continue to speak to him.

Then how were your eyes opened?

"Then what caused you to be able to see?" or "How is it that you can see now?"

John 9:11

smeared it on my eyes

"used his fingers to cover my eyes with mud." See how you translated a similar phrase in John 9:6.

John 9:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:13

They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees

The people insisted that the man go with them to the Pharisees. They did not physically force him to go.

John 9:14

General Information:

This verse tells background information about when Jesus healed the man.

Sabbath day

"Jewish Day of Rest"

John 9:15

Then again the Pharisees asked him

"So the Pharisees also asked him"

John 9:16

he does not keep the Sabbath

This means Jesus does not obey the law about doing no work on the Jewish Day of Rest.

How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that Jesus's signs prove he is not a sinner. Alternate translation: "A sinner can not do such signs!"

signs

This is another word for miracles. "Signs" give evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

John 9:17

He is a prophet

"I think he is a prophet"

John 9:18

General Information:

Here John stops the main story. Here here provides background information about the Jews' disbelief.

Now the Jews still did not believe

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Now the Jewish leaders still did not believe"

John 9:19

They asked the parents

"They" refers to the Jewish leaders.

John 9:20

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
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John 9:21
he is an adult
"he is a man" or "he is no longer a child"
John 9:22
General Information:
In this verse there is a stop from the main story. Here John provides background information about the man's parents being afraid of the Jews.
they were afraid of the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "they were afraid of what the Jewish leaders might do to them"
afraid
This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to oneself or others.
would confess him to be the Christ
"would say that Jesus is the Christ"
he would be thrown out of the synagogue
Here "be thrown out of the synagogue" is a metaphor for no longer being allowed to go into the synagogue and no longer belonging to the group of people who attend services at the synagogue. Alternate translation: "he would not be allowed to go into the synagogue" or "he would no longer belong to the synagogue"
John 9:23
He is an adult
"he is a man" or "he is no longer a child." See how you translated this in John 9:21.
John 9:24
they called the man
Here, "they" refers to the Jews. (John 9:18)
Give glory to God
This is an idiom that people used when taking an oath. Alternate translation: "In the presence of God, tell the truth" or "Speak the truth before God"
this man
This refers to Jesus.
John 9:25
that man
This refers to the man who had been blind.
John 9:26
Connecting Statement:
The Jews continue to speak to the man who had been blind.
John 9:27
Why do you want to hear it again?
This remark appears in the form of a question to express the man's amazement that the Jewish leaders have asked him to tell them again what happened. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you want to hear again what happened to me!"
You do not want to become his disciples too, do you?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add irony to the man's statement. He knows that the Jewish leaders do not want to follow Jesus. Here he ridicules them. Alternate translation: "It sounds like you also want to become his disciples!"
John 9:28
You are his disciple
"You are following Jesus!"
but we are disciples of Moses
The pronoun "we" is exclusive. The Jewish leaders are speaking only of themselves. Alternate translation: "but we are following Moses"
John 9:29
We know that God has spoken to Moses
"We are sure that God has spoken to Moses"
we do not know where this one is from
Here the Jewish leaders are referring to Jesus. They imply that he has no authority to call disciples. Alternate translation: "we do not know where he comes from or where he gets his authority"
John 9:30
that you do not know where he is from
The man is surprised that the Jewish leaders question Jesus's authority when they know he has the power to heal. Alternate translation: "that you do not know where he gets his authority"
John 9:31
does not listen to sinners ... he listens to him
"does not answer the prayers of sinners ... God answers his prayers"
John 9:32
Connecting Statement:
The man who had been blind continues speaking to the Jews.
Since the world began
"Since the beginning of time" or "As far back as anyone can remember"
it has never been heard that anyone opened
This is a passive statement. You can translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "no one has ever heard of anyone who healed a man who was blind from birth"
John 9:33
If this man were not from God, he could do nothing
This sentence uses a double negative pattern. Alternate translation: "Only a man from God could do something like that"
John 9:34
You were completely born in sins, and you are teaching us?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. It also implies that the man was born blind because of the sins of his parents. Alternate translation: "You were born as a result of your parents' sins. You are not qualified to teach us!"
they threw him out
"they threw him out of the synagogue"
John 9:35
General Information:
Jesus finds the man whom he healed (John 9:1-7) and begins to speak to him and the crowd.
believe in the Son of Man
This means to "believe in Jesus," to believe that he is the Son of God, to trust him as Savior, and live in a way that honors him.
the Son of Man
Here the reader needs to understand that Jesus was

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speaking as if "the Son of Man" were another person. The man who had been born blind did not realize that Jesus was speaking of himself when he spoke of "the Son of Man." You should translate so that the man does not learn that Jesus is the Son of Man until verse 37.

John 9:36

General Information:

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John 9:37

General Information:

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John 9:38

General Information:

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John 9:39

came into this world

The "world" is a metonym for "the people who live in the world." Alternate translation: "came to live among the people of this world"

so that those who do not see may see

Here "seeing" is a metaphor for being able to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "so that those who do not see spiritually may see spiritually"

so that those who see

When Jesus speaks here of those that see, he is speaking of those who think that they understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "so that those who think that they see spiritually"

may become blind

Here "blind" is a metaphor for not being able to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "may never see spiritually"

John 9:40

and asked him, "Are we also blind?"

Here "blind" is a metaphor for not understanding spiritual things. The Pharisees do not believe that they are spiritually blind, but they realize that Jesus might saying that they are spiritually blind, so they use this question to challenge him. Alternate translation: "and said to him, 'Are you saying that we are blind?'" or "and said to him, 'You seem to be saying that we, too, are blind.'"

John 9:41

If you were blind, you would have no sin

Blindness is a metaphor for not understanding spiritual things, and having sin is a metonym for being guilty of sin. Alternate translation: "If you truly were spiritually blind, you would not be guilty of your sin"

but now you say, 'We see,' so your sin remains

Here "seeing" is a metaphor for understanding spiritual things, and "sin remaining" is a metonym for continuing to be guilty of one's sin. Alternate translation: "but since you think that you understand spiritual truth, you remain guilty of your sin"

Chapter 10

John 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Blasphemy

When a person claims that he is God or that God has told him to speak when God has not told him to speak, this is called blasphemy. The law of Moses commanded the Israelites to kill blasphemers by stoning them to death. When Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," the Jews thought he was blaspheming, so they took up stones to kill him. (See: blasphemy and lawofmoses)

Important metaphors in this chapter

Sheep

Jesus spoke of people as sheep because sheep do not see well, they do not think well, they often walk away from those who care for them, and they cannot defend themselves when other animals attack them. God's people also rebel against him and do not know when they are doing wrong.

Sheep pen

A sheep pen was a space with a stone wall around it in which shepherds would keep their sheep. Once they were inside the sheep pen, the sheep could not run away, and animals and thieves could not easily get inside to kill or steal them.

Laying down and taking up life

Jesus speaks of his life as if it were a physical object that he could lay down on the ground, a metaphor for dying, or pick up again, a metaphor for becoming alive again.

Links:

John 10:1 Notes

John 10:1

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak in parables.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to the Pharisees. This is the same part of the story which began in John 9:35.

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

sheep pen

This is a fenced area where a shepherd keeps his sheep.

a thief and a robber

This is the use of two words with similar meanings to add emphasis.

John 10:2

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
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John 10:3
The gatekeeper opens for him
"The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd"
The gatekeeper
This is a hired man who watches the gate of the sheep pen at night while the shepherd is away.
The sheep hear his voice
"The sheep hear the shepherd's voice"
John 10:4
he goes ahead of them
"he walks in front of them"
for they know his voice
"because they recognize his voice"
John 10:5
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 10:6
they did not understand
Possible meanings: 1) "the disciples did not understand" or 2) "the crowd did not understand."
this parable
This is an illustration from the work of shepherds, using metaphors. The "shepherd" is a metaphor for Jesus. The "sheep" represent those who follow Jesus, and the "strangers" are the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees, who try to deceive the people.
John 10:7
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to explain the meaning of the parables he had spoken.
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
I am the gate of the sheep
Here "gate" is a metaphor that means Jesus provides access into the sheepfold where God's people dwell in his presence. Alternate translation: "I am like the gate that the sheep use to enter into the sheepfold"
John 10:8
Everyone who came before me
This refers to other teachers who have taught the people, including the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "All of the teachers who came without my authority"
a thief and a robber
These words are metaphors. Jesus calls those teachers "a thief and a robber" because their teachings were false, and they were trying to lead God's people while not understanding the truth. As a result, they deceived the people.
John 10:9
I am the gate
Here "gate" is a metaphor. By referring to himself as "the gate," Jesus is showing that he offers a true way to enter the kingdom of God. Alternate translation: "I myself am like that gate"
pasture
The word "pasture" means a grassy area where sheep eat.
John 10:10
does not come except to steal and kill and destroy
In some languages it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "comes only to steal, kill, and destroy"
steal and kill and destroy
Here the implied metaphor is "sheep," which represents God's people. Alternate translation: "steal and kill and destroy the sheep"
so that they will have life
The word "they" refers to the sheep. "Life" refers to eternal life. Alternate translation: "so that they will really live, lacking nothing"
John 10:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues his parable about the good shepherd.
I am the good shepherd
Here "good shepherd" is a metaphor that represents Jesus. Alternate translation: "I am like a good shepherd"
lays down his life
To lay down something means to give up control of it. To lay down one's life is a mild way to refer to dying. Alternate translation: "dies"
John 10:12
The hired servant
The "hired servant" is a metaphor that represents the Jewish leaders and teachers. Alternate translation: "The one who is like a hired servant"
abandons the sheep
Here the word "sheep" is a metaphor that represents God's people. Like a hired servant who abandons the sheep, Jesus says that the Jewish leaders and teachers do not care for God's people.
John 10:13
does not care for the sheep
Here the word "sheep" is a metaphor that represents God's people. Jesus says that the Jewish leaders and teachers are like a hired servant who abandons the sheep, and they do not care for God's people.
John 10:14
I am the good shepherd
Here the "good shepherd" is a metaphor for Jesus. Alternate translation: "I am like a good shepherd"
John 10:15
The Father knows me, and I know the Father
God the Father and God the Son know each other unlike anyone else knows them. "Father" is an important title for God.
I lay down my life for the sheep
This is a mild way for Jesus to say that he will die to protect his sheep. Alternate translation: "I die for the sheep"
John 10:16
I have other sheep
Here "other sheep" is a metaphor for followers of Jesus who are not Jews.
one flock and one shepherd
Here "flock" and "shepherd" are metaphors. All of Jesus's followers, Jews and non-Jews, will be like one flock of sheep. He will be like a shepherd who cares for all of them.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

John 10:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.
This is why the Father loves me: I lay down my life
God's eternal plan was for God the Son to give his life to pay for the sins of humanity. Jesus's death on the cross reveals the intense love of the Son for the Father and of the Father for the Son.
Father
This is an important title for God.
loves
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
I lay down my life so that I may take it again
This is a mild way for Jesus to say he will die and then will become alive again. Alternate translation: "I allow myself to die in order that I may bring myself back to life"
John 10:18
I lay it down of myself
The reflexive pronoun "myself" is used here to emphasize that Jesus lays down his own life. No one takes it from him. Alternate translation: "I myself lay it down"
I have received this command from my Father
"This is what my Father has commanded me to do." The word "Father" is an important title for God.
John 10:19
Connecting Statement:
These verses tell how the Jews responded to what Jesus had said.
John 10:20
Why do you listen to him?
This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize the point that the people should not listen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Do not listen to him!"
John 10:21
Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Certainly a demon cannot cause a blind man to see!" or "Certainly a demon cannot give sight to blind people!"
John 10:22
General Information:
During the Festival of Dedication, some Jews begin to question Jesus. Verses 22 and 23 give background information about the setting of the story.
It was winter
Winter is the coldest time of the year. You may use your language's term for the coldest season if your reader understands that in Israel this was in December, not in June.
Festival of the Dedication
This is an eight-day winter holiday Jews use to remember a miracle where God made a small amount of oil remain lit in a lampstand for eight days. They lit the lampstand to dedicate the Jewish temple to God. To dedicate something is to promise to use it for a special purpose.
John 10:23
Jesus was walking in the temple
The area where Jesus was walking was actually a courtyard that was outside the temple building. Alternate translation: "Jesus was walking in the temple courtyard"
porch
This is a structure attached to the entrance of a building; it has a roof and it may or may not have walls.
John 10:24
Then the Jews surrounded him
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then the Jewish leaders surrounded him"
hold us doubting
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "keep us wondering" or "keep us from knowing for sure"
John 10:25
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to respond to the Jews.
in the name of my Father
Here "name" is a metonym for the power of God. Here "Father" is an important title for God. Jesus performed miracles through his Father's power and authority. Alternate translation: "through my Father's power" or "with my Father's power"
these testify concerning me
His miracles offer proof about him like a person who testifies would offer proof in a court of law. Alternate translation: "these offer proof concerning me"
John 10:26
not my sheep
The word "sheep" is a metaphor for the followers of Jesus. Alternate translation: "not my followers" or "not my disciples"
John 10:27
My sheep hear my voice
The word "sheep" is a metaphor for the followers of Jesus. The metaphor of Jesus as the "shepherd" is also implied. Alternate translation: "Just as sheep obey the voice of their true shepherd, my followers heed my voice"
John 10:28
no one will snatch them out of my hand
Here the word "hand" is a metonym that represents the protective care of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no one will steal them away from me" or "they will remain secure forever in my care"
John 10:29
My Father, who has given them to me
The word "Father" is an important title for God.
snatch them out of the hand of the Father
The word "hand" is a metonym that represents God's possession and protective care. Alternate translation: "steal them from my Father"
John 10:30
I and the Father are one
Here "are one" means they are completely united and alike. It does not mean they are the same person. Alternate translation: "I and the Father are completely united" or "I and the Father are exactly alike"
Father

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The word "Father" is an important title for God.
John 10:31
Then the Jews took up stones again
The word "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then the Jewish leaders started picking up stones again"
John 10:32
Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father
Jesus performed the miracles by the power of God. The word "Father" is an important title for God.
For which of those works are you stoning me?
This question uses irony. Jesus knows the Jewish leaders do not want to stone him because he has done good works.
John 10:33
The Jews answered him
The word "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish opponents replied" or "The Jewish leaders answered him"
making yourself God
"claiming to be God"
John 10:34
Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'?
Jesus uses a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders should know that this is written in scripture. Alternate translation: "You should already know that it is written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods."'"
You are gods
Here Jesus quotes a scripture where God calls his followers "gods," perhaps because he has chosen them to represent him on earth.
John 10:35
the word of God came
Jesus speaks of God's message as though it were a person who moved toward those who heard it. Alternate translation: "God spoke his message"
the scripture cannot be broken
Possible meanings are 1) "no one can change the scripture" or 2) "the scripture will always be true."
John 10:36
do you say to him whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?
Jesus used this question to rebuke his opponents for saying that he was blaspheming when he called himself "the Son of God." Alternate translation: "you should not say to the very one whom the Father set apart to send into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' when I say that I am the Son of God!"
You are blaspheming
"You are insulting God." Jesus's opponents understood that when said that he is the Son of God, he was implying that he is equal with God.
Father ... Son of God
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
John 10:37
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes responding to the Jews.
Father
This is an important title for God.
believe me
Here the word "believe" means to accept or trust what Jesus said is true.
John 10:38
believe in the works
Here "believe in" is to acknowledge that the works Jesus does are from the Father.
the Father is in me and that I am in the Father
These are idioms that express the close personal relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "my Father and I are completely joined together as one"
John 10:39
went away out of their hand
The word "hand" is a metonym that represents the custody or possession of the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "got away from them again"
John 10:40
beyond the Jordan
Jesus had been on the west side of the Jordan River. Alternate translation: "to the east side of the Jordan River"
he stayed there
Jesus remained on the east side of Jordan for a short period of time. Alternate translation: "Jesus stayed there for several days"
John 10:41
John indeed did no signs, but all the things that John has said about this man are true
"It is true that John did no signs, but he certainly did speak the truth about this man, who does signs."
signs
These are miracles that prove that something is true or that give someone credibility.
John 10:42
believed in
Here "believed in" means accepted or trusted what Jesus said was true.

Chapter 11

John 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness
The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)
Passover

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After Jesus made Lazarus become alive again, the Jewish leaders were trying hard to kill him, so he started traveling from place to place in secret. Now the Pharisees knew that he would probably come to Jerusalem for the Passover because God had commanded all Jewish men to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, so they planned to catch him and kill him then. (See: passover)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"One man dies for the people"

The law of Moses commanded the priests to kill animals so that God would forgive the people's sins. The high priest Caiaphas said, "It is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perishes" (John 11:50). He said this because he loved his "place" and "nation" (John 11:48) more than he loved the God who had made Lazarus become alive again. He wanted Jesus to die so that the Romans would not destroy the temple and Jerusalem, but God wanted Jesus to die so that he could forgive all of his people's sins.

Condition that is contrary to fact

When Martha said, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died," she was speaking of a situation that could have happened but did not happen. Jesus had not come sooner, and her brother died.

Links:

John 11:1 Notes

John 11:1

General Information:

These verses introduce the story of Lazarus and give background information about him and his sister Mary.

John 11:2

It was Mary who anointed the Lord ... her hair

As John introduces Mary, the sister of Martha, he also shares information concerning what would later happen in the story.

John 11:3

sent for Jesus

"asked Jesus to come"

love

Here "love" refers to brotherly love, a natural, human love between friends or relatives.

John 11:4

This sickness is not to death

Jesus implies that he knows what will happen related to Lazarus and his sickness. Alternate translation: "Death will not be the final result of this sickness"

death

This refers to physical death.

but instead it is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified by it

Jesus implies that he knows what the outcome will be. Alternate translation: "but the purpose is that the people might see how great God is because of what his power will allow me to do"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 11:5

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus

This is background information.

John 11:6

General Information:

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John 11:7

General Information:

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John 11:8

Rabbi, right now the Jews are trying to stone you, and you are going back there again?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the disciples do not want Jesus to go to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Teacher, you surely do not want to go back there! The Jews were trying to stone you the last time you were there!"

the Jews

This is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

John 11:9

Are there not twelve hours of light in a day?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You know that the day has twelve hours of light!"

If someone walks in the daytime, he will not stumble, because he sees by the light of this world

People who walk in the light of the day can see well and do not stumble. "Light" is a metaphor for "truth." Jesus is implying that people who live according to truth will be able to successfully do the things that God wants them to do.

John 11:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

if he walks at night

Here "night" is a metaphor that refers to one's walking without God's light.

the light is not in him

Possible meanings are 1) "he cannot see" or "he does not have God's light."

John 11:11

Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep

"Has fallen asleep" is an idiom that means "has begun to sleep" or "is sleeping." Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, but the disciples did not understand this. So it is important to keep the idea of sleeping in the translation.

but I am going so that I may wake him out of sleep

"Wake him out of sleep" is an idiom that means "cause someoen who is sleeping to wake up." Jesus meant that he was going to bring Lazurus back to life. But his disciples did not understand this. So it is important to keep the idea of

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waking him up in the translation. Alternate translation: "but I am going there to wake him up"
John 11:12
if he has fallen asleep
The disciples misunderstand Jesus to mean that Lazarus is resting and will recover.
John 11:13
General Information:
In this verse there is a stop in the story. Here John comments on the disciples' misunderstanding about what Jesus meant when he said Lazarus was asleep.
John 11:14
Then Jesus said to them plainly
"So Jesus told them in words that they could understand"
John 11:15
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.
for your sakes
"for your benefit"
that I was not there so that you may believe
"that I was not there. Because of this you will learn to trust me more"
John 11:16
who was called Didymus
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom they called Didymus"
Didymus
This is a male name that means "twin."
John 11:17
General Information:
Jesus is now in Bethany. These verses give background information about the setting and about what has happened before Jesus arrived.
he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he learned that people had put Lazarus in a tomb four days before"
John 11:18
fifteen stadia away
"about three kilometers away." A "stadium" is 185 meters.
John 11:19
about their brother
Lazarus was their younger brother. Alternate translation: "about their younger brother"
John 11:20
General Information:
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John 11:21
my brother would not have died
Lazarus was the younger brother. Alternate translation: "my younger brother would still be alive"
John 11:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 11:23
Your brother will rise again
Lazarus was the younger brother. Alternate translation: "Your younger brother will become alive again"
John 11:24
he will rise again
"he will become alive again"
John 11:25
I am the resurrection and the life
The abstract nouns "resurrection" and "life" can be stated as verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "I am the one who raises those who die and causes them to live again"
he who believes in me, even if he dies, will live
"even a person who dies will live forever, if he believes in me"
John 11:26
whoever lives and believes in me will never die
"those who live and trust in me will never be separated eternally from God" or "those who live and trust in me will be spiritually alive with God forever"
will never die
Here "die" refers to spiritual death.
John 11:27
She said to him
"Martha said to Jesus"
Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God ... coming into the world
Martha believes that Jesus is Lord, the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God.
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
John 11:28
she went away and called her sister Mary
Mary is the younger sister of Martha. Alternate translation: "she went away and called her younger sister Mary"
Teacher
This is a title referring to Jesus.
is calling for you
"is asking that you come"
John 11:29
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 11:30
Now Jesus had not yet come into the village
Here John provides a brief break in the story to give background information regarding the location of Jesus.
John 11:31
General Information:
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John 11:32
fell down at his feet
Mary lay down or knelt at the feet of Jesus to show respect.
my brother would not have died
Lazarus was Mary's younger brother. See how you translated this in [John 11:21]
John 11:33
he was deeply moved in his spirit and was troubled
John combines these phrases that have similar meanings to express the intense emotional distress and possible anger that Jesus experienced. Alternate translation: "he was greatly upset"
John 11:34
Where have you laid him
This is a milder way of asking, "Where have you buried

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

him?"
John 11:35
Jesus wept
"Jesus began to cry" or "Jesus started crying"
John 11:36
loved
This refers to brotherly love or human love for a friend or family member.
John 11:37
Could not this man, who opened the eyes of a blind man, also have made this man not die?
This remark appears in the form of a question to express the Jews' surprise that Jesus did not heal Lazarus. Alternate translation: "He could heal a man who was blind, so he should have been able to heal this man so he would not have died!" or "Since he did not keep this man from dying, maybe he did not really heal the man who was born blind, as they say he did!"
opened the eyes
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "healed the eyes"
John 11:38
Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it
John pauses the story briefly to describe the tomb where the people had buried Lazarus.
John 11:39
Martha, the sister of Lazarus
Martha and Mary were older sisters of Lazarus. Alternate translation: "Martha, the older sister of Lazarus"
by this time the body will be decaying
"by this time there will be a bad smell" or "the body is already stinking"
John 11:40
Did I not say to you that, if you believed, you would see the glory of God?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to the point that God is about to do something wonderful. Alternate translation: "I told you that if you trusted me, you would see what God can do!"
John 11:41
Jesus lifted up his eyes
This is an idiom that means to look up. Alternate translation: "Jesus looked up toward heaven"
Father, I thank you that you listened to me
Jesus prays directly to the Father so that others around him will hear his prayer. Alternate translation: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me" or "Father, I thank you that you have heard my prayer"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 11:42
that you have sent me
Jesus had authority to teach the people because God the Father had sent him to do that. Also where the Father sent Jesus can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "that I am here because you have sent me to them"
John 11:43
After he had said this
"After Jesus had prayed"
he cried out with a loud voice
"he shouted"
John 11:44
his feet and hands were bound with cloths, and his face was bound about with a cloth
A burial custom of this time was to wrap the dead body with long strips of linen cloth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had wrapped strips of cloth around his hands and feet. They had also tied a cloth around his face"
Jesus said to them
The word "them" refers to the people who were there and saw the miracle.
John 11:45
General Information:
These verses tell us what happened after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
John 11:46
General Information:
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John 11:47
General Information:
Because so many people have told them that Lazarus is alive again, the chief priests and Pharisees gather the Jewish council for a meeting.
Then the chief priests
"Then the leaders among the priests"
Then
The author uses this word to tell the reader that the events that begin in this verse are a result of the events of John 11:45-46.
What will we do?
It is implied here that the council members are talking about Jesus. Alternate translation: "What are we going to do about Jesus?"
John 11:48
all will believe in him
The Jewish leaders were afraid that the people would try to make Jesus their king. Alternate translation: "everyone will trust in him and rebel against Rome"
the Romans will come
This is a synecdoche for the Roman army. Alternate translation: "the Roman army will come"
take away both our place and our nation
"destroy both our temple and our nation"
John 11:49
a certain man among them
This is a way to introduce a new character to the story. If you have a way to do this in your language, you can use it here.
You know nothing
This is an exaggeration that Caiaphas uses to insult his hearers. Alternate translation: "You do not understand what is happening" or "You speak as though you know nothing"
John 11:50
than that the whole nation perishes
Caiaphas implies that the Roman army would kill all of the people of the Jewish nation if Jesus is allowed to live and cause a rebellion. The word "nation" here is a synecdoche

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

that represents all of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "than that the Romans kill all the people of our nation"

John 11:51

General Information:

In verses 51 and 52 John explains that Caiaphus was prophesying even though he did not realize it at the time. This is background information.

die for the nation

The word "nation" is a synecdoche and refers to the people of the nation of Israel.

John 11:52

and not only for the nation

The words "that he should die" are understood from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "and that he should die not only for the nation"

would be gathered together into one

This is an ellipsis. The word "people" is implied by the context. Alternate translation: "would be gathered into one people"

children of God

This refers to people who belong to God through faith in Jesus and are spiritually God's children.

John 11:53

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:54

General Information:

Jesus leaves Bethany and goes to Ephraim.

walk openly among the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders and "walk openly" is a metaphor for "live where everyone could see him." Alternate translation: "live where all the Jews could see him" or "walk openly among the Jewish leaders who opposed him"

the country

the rural area outside cities where fewer people live

There he stayed with the disciples

Jesus and his disciples stayed in Ephraim for a while. Alternate translation: "There he stayed with his disciples for a short period of time"

John 11:55

General Information:

Here the story shifts to telling about what many of the Jews are doing now that Passover is near.

went up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than the surrounding areas.

John 11:56

General Information:

The content of verse 57 occurs before that of verse 56. If this order might confuse your readers, you can combine these verses and put the text of verse 57 before the text of verse 56.

They were looking for Jesus

The word "they" refers to the Jewish people who had traveled to Jerusalem.

What do you think? That he will not come to the festival?

The speakers were sure that if Jesus came to the festival the Jewish leaders would arrest him. The meaning of these rhetorical questions is not clear. Possible meanings are 1) the speakers were not sure that he would come. Alternate translation: "Do you think that he will come to the festival?" or "I do not know what to think. He might come to the festival, or he might not." 2) The speakers were sure that Jesus would not come. Alternate translation: "We can be sure that he will not come to the festival."

John 11:57

Now the chief priests

This is background information that explains why the Jewish worshipers were wondering if Jesus would come to the festival or not. If your language has a way to mark background information, use it here.

Chapter 12

John 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:38 and 40, which is from the Old Testament.

Verse 16 is a commentary on these events. It is possible to put this entire verse in parentheses in order to set it apart from the narrative of the story.

Special concepts in this chapter

Mary anointed Jesus's feet

The Jews would put oil on a person's head to make that person feel welcome and comfortable. They would also put oil on a person's body after the person had died but before they buried the body. But they would never think to put oil on a person's feet, because they thought that feet were dirty.

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on a donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey had a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew

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21:1-7 and Mark 11:1-7 and Luke 19:29-36 and John 12:14-15)

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. In this chapter John says that the glory of Jesus is his resurrection (John 12:16).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The metaphors of light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: and righteous)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in 12:25: "He who loves his life will lose it; but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." But in 12:26 Jesus explains what it means to keep one's life for eternal life. (John 12:25-26).

Links:

John 12:1 Notes

John 12:1

General Information:

Jesus is at dinner in Bethany when Mary anoints his feet with oil.

Six days before the Passover

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

had raised from the dead

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "had made alive again"

John 12:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:3

a litra

You may convert this to a the measure system used in your area. The word "litra" was used for measures of about 300 milliliters of liquids or about 300 grams of solids. Because the perfume was a liquid, the word here probably refers to the liquid measure as guessed by those who saw the size of the container.

perfume

This is a good-smelling liquid made by using the oils of pleasant smelling plants and flowers.

nard

This is a perfume made from a pink, bell-shaped flower in the mountains of Nepal, China, and India.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume

This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "The scent of her perfume filled the house"

John 12:4

the one who would betray him

"the one who later enabled Jesus's enemies to seize him"

John 12:5

Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?

This is a rhetorical question. You can translate it as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "This perfume could have been sold for three hundred denarii and the money could have been given to the poor!"

three hundred denarii

You can translate this as a numeral. Alternate translation: "300 denarii"

denarii

A denarius was the amount of silver that a common laborer could earn in one day of work.

John 12:6

Now he said this ... would steal from what was put in it

John explains why Judas asked the question about the poor. If your language has a way of indicating background information, you can use it here.

he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief

"he said this because he was a thief. He did not care about the poor"

John 12:7

Allow her to keep what she has for the day of my burial

Jesus implies that the woman's actions can be understood as anticipating his death and burial. Alternate translation: "Allow her to show how much she appreciates me! In this way she has prepared my body for burial"

John 12:8

You will always have the poor with you

Jesus implies that there will always be opportunities to help the poor people. Alternate translation: "There will always be poor people among you, and you can help them whenever you want"

But you will not always have me

In this way, Jesus implies that he will die. Alternate translation: "But I will not always be here with you"

John 12:9

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here John tells about a new group of people that has come to Bethany from Jerusalem.

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

John 12:10

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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John 12:11
because of him
The fact that Lazarus was alive again caused many Jews to believe in Jesus.
believed in Jesus
This implies that many of the Jewish people were trusting in Jesus as the Son of God. Alternate translation: "were putting their trust in Jesus"
John 12:12
General Information:
Jesus enters Jerusalem and the people honor him as a king.
On the next day
The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.
a great crowd
"a great crowd of people"
John 12:13
Hosanna
This means "May God save us now!"
Blessed
This expresses a desire for God to cause good things to happen to a person.
comes in the name of the Lord
Here the word "name" is a metonym for the person's authority and power. Alternate translation: "comes as the representative of the Lord" or "comes in the power of the Lord"
John 12:14
Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it
Here John gives background information that Jesus secures a donkey. He implies that Jesus will ride the donkey into Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "he found a young donkey and sat on it, riding into the city"
as it was written
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as the prophets wrote in the Scripture"
John 12:15
daughter of Zion
"Daughter of Zion" here is a metonym that refers to the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "you people of Jerusalem"
John 12:16
General Information:
John, the writer, interrupts here to give the reader some background information about what the disciples later understood.
His disciples did not understand these things
Here the words "these things" refer to the words that the prophet had written about Jesus.
when Jesus was glorified
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "when God glorified Jesus"
they had done these things to him
The words "these things" refer to what the people did when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (praising him and waving the palm branches).
John 12:17
Now
This word is used here to mark a break in the main narrative. Here John explains that many of the people came to meet Jesus because they heard others say that he had raised Lazarus from the dead.
John 12:18
they heard that he had done this sign
"they heard others say that he had done this sign"
this sign
A "sign" is an event or occurrence that proves something is true. In this case, the "sign" of raising Lazarus proves that Jesus is the Messiah.
John 12:19
Look, you can do nothing good
The Pharisees imply here that it might be impossible to stop Jesus. Alternate translation: "It seems like we can do nothing to stop him"
see, the world has gone after him
The Pharisees use this exaggeration to express their shock that so many people have come out to meet Jesus. Alternate translation: "It looks like everyone is becoming his disciple"
the world
Here "the world" is a metonym that represents
John 12:20
Now certain Greeks
The phrase "now certain" marks the introduction of new characters to the story.
Greeks ... to worship at the festival
John implies that these "Greeks" were going to worship God during the Passover. Alternate translation: "Greeks ... to worship God at the Passover festival"
John 12:21
Bethsaida
This was a town in the province of Galilee.
John 12:22
they told Jesus
Philip and Andrew tell Jesus about the Greeks' request to see him. You can translate this by adding the implied words. Alternate translation: "they told Jesus what the Greeks had said"
John 12:23
General Information:
Jesus begins to respond to Philip and Andrew.
The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified
Jesus implies that it is now the right time for God to honor the Son of Man through his upcoming suffering, death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "God will soon honor me when I die and rise again"
John 12:24
Truly, truly, I say to you
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated "Truly, truly" in John 1:51.
unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies ... it will bear much fruit
Here "a grain of wheat" or "seed" is a metaphor for Jesus's death, burial and resurrection. Just as a seed is planted and grows again into a plant that will bear much fruit, so will many people trust in Jesus after he is killed, buried, and raised back to life.

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John 12:25

He who loves his life will lose it

Here "loves his life" means to consider one's own physical life to be more valuable than the lives of others. Alternate translation: "Whoever values his own life more than the lives of others will not receive eternal life"

he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life

Here the one who "hates his life" refers to one who loves his own life less than he loves the lives of others. Alternate translation: "whoever considers the lives of others as more important than his own life will live with God forever"

John 12:26

where I am, there will my servant also be

Jesus implies that those who serve him will be with him in heaven. Alternate translation: "when I am in heaven, my servant will also be there with me"

the Father will honor him

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

John 12:27

what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?

This remark appears in the form of a rhetorical question. Although Jesus desires to avoid crucifixion, he chooses to be obedient to God and to be killed. Alternate translation: "I will not pray, 'Father, save me from this hour!'"

Father

This is an important title for God.

this hour

Here "this hour" is a metonym that represents when Jesus would suffer and die on the cross.

John 12:28

glorify your name

Here the word "name" is a metonym that refers to God. Alternate translation: "make your glory known" or "reveal your glory"

a voice came from heaven

This represents God speaking. Sometimes people avoid referring directly to God because they respect him. Alternate translation: "God spoke from the heavens"

John 12:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:30

General Information:

Jesus explains why the voice spoke from heaven.

John 12:31

Now is the judgment of this world

Here "this world" is a metonym that refers to all the people in the world. Alternate translation: "Now is the time for God to judge all of the people"

Now will the ruler of this world be thrown out

Here "ruler" refers to Satan. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now is the time when I will destroy the power of Satan, who rules this world"

John 12:32

When I am lifted up from the earth

Here Jesus refers to his crucifixion. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "When people raise me high on a cross"

will draw everyone to myself

Through his crucifixion, Jesus will provide a way for everyone to trust in him.

John 12:33

General Information:

Here John tells us background information about what Jesus said about being "lifted up."

He said this to indicate what kind of death he would die

John interprets Jesus's words to mean that people will crucify him. Alternate translation: "He said this to let the people know how he would die"

John 12:34

The Son of Man must be lifted up

The phrase "lifted up" means crucified. You may translate this in a way that includes the implied words "on a cross." Alternate translation: "The Son of Man must be lifted up on a cross"

Who is this Son of Man?

Possible meanings are 1) "What is the identity of this Son of Man? or 2) "What kind of Son of Man are you talking about?"

John 12:35

The light will still be with you for a short amount of time. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overtake you. He who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going

Here "light" is a metaphor for Jesus's teachings which reveal the truth of God. To "walk in darkness" is a metaphor that means to live without God's truth. Alternate translation: "My words are like a light to you, to help you understand how to live as God wants you to. I will not be with you much longer. You need to follow my instructions while I am still with you. If you reject my words, it will be like walking in darkness and you cannot see where you are going"

John 12:36

While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may be sons of light

The "light" is a metaphor for the teachings of Jesus which reveal the truth of God. "sons of light" is a metaphor for those who accept the message of Jesus and live according to God's truth. Alternate translation: "While I am with you, believe what I teach so that God's truth will be in you"

John 12:37

General Information:

This is a stop in the main story. Here John begins to explain about the fulfillment of prophesies that had been spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

John 12:38

so that the word of Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in order to fulfill the message of Isaiah the prophet"

Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

This appears in the form of two rhetorical questions to express the prophet's dismay that the people do not believe his message.They may be stated as a single rhetorical question, Alternate translation: "Lord, hardly anyone has believed our message, even though they have seen that you are powerfully able to save them!"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the arm of the Lord
This is a metonym that refers to the Lord's ability to rescue with power.
John 12:39
General Information:
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John 12:40
he has hardened their heart ... understand with their heart
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "hardened their heart" is a metaphor for making someone become stubborn. Also, to "understand with their heart" means to "truly understand." Alternate translation: "he has made them stubborn ... truly understand"
and turn
Here "turn" is a metaphor for "repent." Alternate translation: "and they would repent"
John 12:41
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 12:42
so that they would not be banned from the synagogue
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so people would not stop them from going to the synagogue"
John 12:43
They loved the glory that comes from people more than the glory that comes from God
The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give others who are glorious. Alternate translation: "They wanted people to praise them more than they wanted God to praise them"
John 12:44
General Information:
Here John returns to the main story. This is another time when Jesus begins to speak to the crowd.
Jesus cried out and said
Here John implies that a crowd of people had gathered to hear Jesus speak. Alternate translation: "Jesus shouted out to the crowd that had gathered"
John 12:45
the one who sees me sees him who sent me
Here the word "him" refers to God. Alternate translation: "the one who sees me sees God, who sent me"
John 12:46
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.
I have come as a light into the world
Here the "light" is a metaphor for the revelation that comes from God. Also, "world" is a metonym for "people." See how you translated a similar phrase in [John 8:12]
may not remain in the darkness
Here "darkness" is a metaphor for living in ignorance of God's truth. Alternate translation: "may not continue to be spiritually blind"
the world
Here "the world" is a metonym that represents all of the people in the world.
John 12:47
If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world
Here "to judge the world" implies condemnation. Jesus did not come to condemn people. Alternate translation: "If anyone hears my teaching and rejects it, I do not condemn him. I have not come to condemn people. Instead, I have come to save those who trust in me"
John 12:48
on the last day
"at the time when God judges people's sins"
John 12:49
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 12:50
I know that his command is eternal life
"I know that the words that he commanded me to speak are the words that give life forever"

Chapter 13

John 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The events of this chapter are commonly referred to as the last supper or the Lord's supper. This Passover feast in many ways parallels Jesus's sacrifice as the lamb of God. (See: passover)

Special concepts in this chapter

The washing of feet
People in the ancient Near East thought that feet were very dirty. Only servants would wash people's feet. The disciples did not want Jesus to wash their feet because they considered him their master and themselves his servants, but he wanted to show them that they needed to serve each other.
I AM
John records Jesus as saying these words four times in this book, once in this chapter. They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew word for "I AM," by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses. For these reasons, many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: yahweh).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"
Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

John 13:1

General Information:

It is not yet Passover and Jesus is together with his disciples for supper. These verses explain the setting of the story and give background information about Jesus and Judas.

Father

This is an important title for God.

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

John 13:2

Connecting Statement:

John begins to give background information for a part of the story that begins in verse 4.

Now

This word shows that the author has stopped describing the action and is about to give background information before continuing the story. You should translate using the way your language introduces background information.

the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot son of Simon to betray Jesus

The phrase "put it into the heart" is an idiom that means to cause someone to think about something. Alternate translation: "the devil had already caused Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to think about betraying Jesus"

John 13:3

Connecting Statement:

John continues to tell us background information about what Jesus knew. The action in the story begins in verse 4.

Father

This is an important title for God.

had given everything over into his hands

Here "his hands" is a metonym for power and authority. Alternate translation: "had given him complete power and authority over everything"

he had come from God and was going back to God

Jesus had always been with the Father, and would return there after his work on earth was finished.

John 13:4

Connecting Statement:

John has finished giving the background to this part of the story John 13:2-3 and tells what Jesus did next.

got up from dinner and took off his outer clothing

Because the region was very dusty, it was customary for the host of a dinner to provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Jesus took off his outer clothing so he would look like a servant.

John 13:5

began to wash the feet of the disciples

Because the region was very dusty, it was customary for the host of a dinner to provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Jesus did the work of the servant by washing the disciples' feet.

John 13:6

Lord, are you going to wash my feet?

Peter's question shows that he is not willing for Jesus to wash his feet. Alternate translation: "Lord, it is not right for you to wash the feet of me, a sinner!"

John 13:7

General Information:

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John 13:8

If I do not wash you, you have no share with me

Here Jesus begins to speak about "washing" to mean making someone spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "washing" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.

If I do not wash you

It can be stated explicitly that Jesus is talking about washing feet. Alternate translation: "If I do not wash your feet" (

you have no share with me

The word "share" means a part of an inheritance. Here it is a metaphor meaning that Peter would not have fellowship or anything in common with Jesus. Alternate translation: "you will not be my disciple" or "you will not belong to me"

John 13:9

General Information:

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John 13:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to Simon Peter.

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, but he is completely clean; you are clean, but not everyone

Here Jesus speaks about "bathed" and "wash" and "clean" to mean making someone spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "washing" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, but he is completely clean

The word "but" shows the contrast between a person needing to be cleaned and a person already being being clean. In some languages "but" would not be used. Alternate translation: "He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, because he is completely clean" or "He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet; he is completely clean"

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet

This double negative emphasizes that to wash the feet is the only thing that he who is bathed needs. Alternate translation: "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet" or "The only thing a person who has bathed needs is to wash his feet"

has no need

It is implied that this need concerns washing the whole body. Alternate translation: "has no need to be fully bathed" or "does not need me to wash his whole body"

John 13:11

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Not all of you are clean
Here "clean" means spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "clean" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.
John 13:12
Do you understand what I have done for you?
This remark appears in the form of a question so Jesus can emphasize the importance of what he is teaching his disciples. Alternate translation: "You need to understand what I have done for you!"
John 13:13
You call me 'teacher' and 'Lord,'
Here Jesus implies that his disciples have great respect for him. Alternate translation: "You show me great respect when you call me 'teacher' and 'Lord.'"
John 13:14
General Information:
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John 13:15
you should also do just as I did for you
Jesus implies that his disciples should be willing to follow his example and serve one another. Alternate translation: "you should also humbly serve each other"
John 13:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to speak to his disciples.
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
greater
"more important"
John 13:17
you are blessed
Here "bless" means to cause good, beneficial things to happen to a person. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"
John 13:18
this is so that the scripture will be fulfilled
With this sentence, Jesus introduces something he will tell them in verse 21 that fulfills what the scripture says. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "this is in order to fulfill the scripture"
the scripture
"this scripture"
He who eats my bread lifted up his heel against me
Jesus quoted the scripture that will be fulfilled. Here the phrase "eats my bread" is an idiom for someone who pretends to be a friend. The phrase "lifted up his heel" is also an idiom, which means someone who has become an enemy. If you have idioms in your language that have these meanings, you can use them here. Alternate translation: "The one who has pretended to be my friend has turned out to be an enemy"
John 13:19
I tell you this now before it happens
"I am telling you now what is going to happen before it happens"
I AM
Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "I am the one I claim to be."
John 13:20
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
John 13:21
troubled
concerned, upset
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
John 13:22
The disciples looked at each other, wondering of whom he was speaking.
"The disciples looked at each other and wondered: 'Who will betray Jesus?'"
John 13:23
One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved
This refers to John.
lying down at the table
During the time of Christ, Jews would often dine together in the Greek style, in which they lay on their sides on low couches.
Jesus' side
Lying with one's head against the side of another diner in the Greek style was considered to be the place of greatest friendship with him.
loved
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
John 13:24
General Information:
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John 13:25
General Information:
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John 13:26
Iscariot
This indicates that Judas was from the village of Kerioth.
John 13:27
Then after the bread
The words "Judas took" are understood from the context. Alternate translation: "Then after Judas took the bread"
Satan entered into him
This is an idiom that means Satan took complete control of Judas. Alternate translation: "Satan took control of him" or "Satan started to command him"
so Jesus said to him
Here Jesus is speaking to Judas.
What you are doing, do it quickly
"Do quickly what you are planning to do"
John 13:28
General Information:
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John 13:29
that he should give something to the poor
You can translate this as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "'Go and give some money to the poor'"
John 13:30

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

he went out immediately. It was night
John seems to draw attention here to the fact that Judas will do his evil or "dark" deed in the darkness of the night. Alternate translation: "he went out immediately into the dark night"
John 13:31
Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now people are about to see how the Son of Man will receive honor and how God will receive honor through what the Son of Man is doing"
John 13:32
God will also glorify the Son in himself, and he will glorify him at once
The word "him" refers to the Son of Man. The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that refers to God. Alternate translation: "God himself will immediately give honor to the Son of Man"
John 13:33
Little children
Jesus uses the term "Little children" to communicate that he loves the disciples as though they were his children.
as I said to the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "as I said to the Jewish leaders"
John 13:34
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.
love
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
John 13:35
everyone
You may need to make explicit that this exaggeration refers only to those people who see how the disciples love each other.
John 13:36
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 13:37
lay down my life
"give up my life" or "die"
John 13:38
Will you lay down your life for me?
This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "You say that you will die for me, but the truth is that you will not!"
the rooster will not crow before you have denied me three times
"you will say that you do not know me three times before the rooster crows"

Chapter 14

John 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"My Father's house"
Jesus used these words to speak of heaven, where God lives, not of the temple. (See: heaven)
The Holy Spirit
Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (John 14:16) who is always with God's people to help them and to speak to God for them. He is also the Spirit of truth (John 14:17) who tells God's people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: holyspirit)

Links:

John 14:1 Notes

John 14:1
Connecting Statement:
The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.
Do not let your heart be troubled
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "Stop being so anxious and worried"
John 14:2
In my Father's house are many rooms
"There are many places to live in my Father's house"
In my Father's house
This refers to heaven, where God lives.
Father
This is an important title for God.
many rooms
The word "room" can refer to a single room, or to a larger dwelling.
I am going to prepare a place for you
Jesus will prepare a place in heaven for every person who trusts in him. The "you" is plural and refers to all his disciples.
John 14:3
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 14:4
the way
Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) "the way to God" or 2) "the one who takes people to God."
John 14:5
how can we know the way?
"how can we know how to get there?"
John 14:6
the truth

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Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) "the true person" or 2) "the one who speaks true words about God."

the life

This is a metaphor that means Jesus can give life to people. Alternate translation: "the one who can make people alive"

no one comes to the Father except through me

This double negative emphasizes that through Jesus is the only way that anyone can come to the Father. Alternate translation: "everyone comes to the Father only through me" or "the only way anyone comes to the Father is through me"

comes to the Father

You may need to make explicit that "comes" includes the idea of living with the Father forever. Alternate translation: "No one can come to the Father and live with him unless he comes through me"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 14:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 14:8

Lord, show us the Father

The "Father" is an important title for God.

John 14:9

I have been with you for such a long time and you still do not know me, Philip?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's words. Alternate translation: "Philip, I have been with you disciples already for a very long time. You should know me by now!"

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father

To see Jesus, who is God the Son, is to see God the Father. The "Father" is an important title for God.

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize Jesus's words to Philip. Alternate translation: "So you really should not be saying, 'Show us the Father!'"

John 14:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus asks Philip a question and then he continues to speak to all of his disciples.

Do you not believe ... in me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize Jesus's words to Philip. Alternate translation: "You really should believe ... in me."

Father

This is an important title for God.

The words that I say to you I do not speak from my own authority

"What I am telling you is not from me" or "The words I tell you are not from me"

The words that I say to you

Here "you" is plural. Jesus is now speaking to all of his disciples.

John 14:11

I am in the Father, and the Father is in me

This is an idiom that means God the Father and Jesus have a unique relationship. Alternate translation: "I am one with the Father, and the Father is one with me" or "my Father and I are just as though we were one"

John 14:12

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

believes in me

This means to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Father

This is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

John 14:13

Whatever you ask in my name

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Whatever you ask, using my authority"

so that the Father will be glorified in the Son

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so I can show everyone how great my Father is"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

John 14:14

If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "If you ask me anything as one of my followers, I will do it" or "Whatever you ask of me, I will do it because you belong to me"

John 14:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 14:16

another Comforter

This refers to the Holy Spirit.

John 14:17

Spirit of truth

This refers to the Holy Spirit who teaches people what is true about God.

The world cannot receive him because it does not

Here the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "The unbelieving people in this world will never welcome him because they do not" or "Those who oppose God will not accept him because they do not"

John 14:18

leave you as orphans

Here Jesus implies that he will not leave his disciples with no one to care for them. Alternate translation: "leave you with no one to care for you"

John 14:19

the world

Here the "world" is a metonym that represents the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "the unbelievers"

John 14:20

you will know that I am in my Father

God the Father and Jesus live as one person. Alternate translation: "you will know that my Father and I are just like one person"

my Father

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This is an important title for God.
you are in me, and that I am in you
"you and I are just like one person"
John 14:21
loves
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
he who loves me will be loved by my Father
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "my Father will love anyone who loves me"
my Father
This is an important title for God.
John 14:22
Judas (not Iscariot)
This refers to another disciple whose name was Judas, not to the disciple who was from the village of Kerioth who betrayed Jesus.
why is it that you will show yourself to us
Here the word "show" refers to revealing how wonderful Jesus is. Alternate translation: "why will you reveal yourself only to us" or "why will you only let us see how wonderful you are"
not to the world
Here "world" is a metonym that represents the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "not to those who do not belong to God"
John 14:23
Connecting Statement:
Jesus responds to Judas (not Iscariot).
If anyone loves me, he will keep my word
"The one who loves me will do what I have told him to do"
loves
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
My Father
This is an important title for God.
we will come to him and we will make our home with him
The Father and the Son will share life with those who obey what Jesus commands. Alternate translation: "we will come to live with him, and will have a personal relationship with him"
John 14:24
The word that you hear is not from me but from the Father who sent me
"The things I have told you are not things that I have decided to say on my own"
The word
"The message"
that you hear
Here when Jesus says "you" he is speaking to all of his disciples.
John 14:25
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 14:26
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 14:27
world
The "world" is a metonym that represents those people who do not love God.
Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "So stop being anxious, and do not be afraid"
John 14:28
loved
This kind of love comes from God and desires the good of others, even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
I am going to the Father
Here Jesus implies that he will return to his Father. Alternate translation: "I am going back to the Father"
the Father is greater than I
Here Jesus implies that the Father has greater authority than the Son while the Son is on the earth. Alternate translation: "the Father has greater authority than I have here"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 14:29
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 14:30
the ruler of this world is
Here "ruler" refers to Satan. See how you translated this in John 12:31. Alternate translation: "Satan, who rules this world, is"
the ruler ... is coming
Here Jesus implies that Satan is coming to attack him. Alternate translation: "Satan is coming to attack me"
John 14:31
in order that the world will know
Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "in order that the ones who do not belong to God may know"
the Father
This is an important title for God.

Chapter 15

John 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Special concepts in this chapter

Vine

Jesus used the vine as a metaphor for himself. This is because the vine of the grape plant is what takes water and

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minerals from the ground to the leaves and grapes. Without the vine, the grapes and leaves die. He wanted his followers to know that unless they loved and obeyed him, they would be unable to do anything that pleased God.

Links:

John 15:1 Notes

John 15:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.

I am the true vine

Here the "true vine" is a metaphor. Jesus compares himself to a vine or a vine stem. He is the source of life that causes people to live in a way that pleases God. Alternate translation: "I am like a vine that produces good fruit"

my Father is the gardener

The "gardener" is a metaphor. A "gardener" is a person who takes care of the vine to ensure it is as fruitful as possible. Alternate translation: "my Father is like a gardener"

my Father

This is an important title for God.

John 15:2

He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit

Here "every branch" represents people, and "bear fruit" represents living in a way that pleases God.

takes away

"cuts off and takes away"

prunes every branch

"trims every branch"

John 15:3

You are already clean because of the message that I have spoken to you

The implied metaphor here is the "clean branches" that have already been "pruned." Alternate translation: "It is as if you have already been pruned and are clean branches because you have obeyed what I have taught you"

you

The word "you" throughout this passage is plural and refers to the disciples of Jesus.

John 15:4

Remain in me, and I in you

"If you remain joined to me, I will remain joined to you" or "Remain joined to me, and I will remain joined to you"

unless you remain in me

By remaining in Christ, those who belong to him depend on him for everything. Alternate translation: "unless you stay joined to me and depend upon me for everything"

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches

The "vine" is a metaphor that represents Jesus. The "branches" is a metaphor that represent those who trust in Jesus and belong to him. Alternate translation: "I am like a vine, and you are like branches that are attached to the vine"

He who remains in me and I in him

"He who stays joined to me and I stay joined to him"

he bears much fruit

The implied metaphor here is the fruitful branch that represents the believer who pleases God. Just as a branch that is attached to the vine will bear much fruit, those who stay joined to Jesus will do many things that please God. Alternate translation: "you will bear much fruit"

John 15:6

he is thrown away like a branch and dries up

Here the implied metaphor is the unfruitful branch that represents those who do not stay joined to Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the vinedresser throws him away like a branch and it dries up"

they are burned up

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the fire burns them"

John 15:7

ask whatever you wish

Jesus implies that believers must ask God to answer their prayers. Alternate translation: "ask God whatever you wish"

it will be done for you

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he will do it for you"

John 15:8

My Father is glorified in this, that

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "It causes people to honor my Father when"

My Father

This is an important title for God.

in this, that you bear much fruit

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for living to please God. Alternate translation: "when you live in a way that pleases him"

prove that you are my disciples

"show you are my disciples" or "demonstrate you are my disciples"

John 15:9

As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you

Jesus shares the love that God the Father has for him with those who trust in him. Here "Father" is an important title for God.

Remain in my love

"Continue to accept my love"

John 15:10

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, as I have kept the commandments of my Father and remain in his love

When Jesus's followers obey him, they show their love for him. Alternate translation: "When you do the things I have told you to do, you are living in my love, just as I obey my Father and live in his love"

my Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

John 15:11

I have spoken these things to you so that my joy will be in you

"I have told you these things so that you will have the same kind of joy that I have"

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so that your joy will be made full
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that you will be completely joyful" or "so that your joy may have nothing missing"
John 15:12
General Information:
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John 15:13
life
This refers to physical life.
John 15:14
General Information:
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John 15:15
everything that I heard from my Father I have made known to you
"I have told you everything my Father told me"
my Father
Here "Father" is an important title for God.
John 15:16
You did not choose me
Jesus implies that his followers did not decide on their own to become his disciples. Alternate translation: "You did not decide to become my disciples"
go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain
Here "fruit" is a metaphor that represents a life that is pleasing to God. Alternate translation: "live lives that please God so that the results of what you do last forever"
whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you
Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because you belong to me, whatever you ask of the Father, he will give it to you"
the Father
This is an important title for God.
John 15:17
General Information:
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John 15:18
the world
the people who do not belong to God and are opposed to him
John 15:19
the world
the people who do not belong to God and are opposed to him
love
This refers to human, brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.
John 15:20
Remember the word that I said to you
Here "word" is a metonym for the message of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Remember the message that I spoke to you"
John 15:21
because of my name
Here "my name" is a metonym that represents Jesus. People will make his followers suffer because they belong to him.
Alternate translation: "because you belong to me"
John 15:22
If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin
Jesus implies here that he has shared God's message with those who do not trust him. Alternate translation: "Because I have come and told them God's message, they have no excuse when God judges them for their sins"
they would not have sin
"they would not be guilty of sin"
John 15:23
He who hates me also hates my Father
To hate God the Son is to hate God the Father.
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 15:24
If I had not done the works ... they would have no sin, but
You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "Because I have done the works ... they have sin, and"
they would have no sin
"they would not be guilty of sin." See how you translated "they would not have sin" in John 15:22.
they have seen and hated both me and my Father
To hate God the Son is to hate God the Father.
John 15:25
to fulfill the word that is written in their law
You can translate this in an active form. "Word" here is a metonym for the entire message of God. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the prophecy in their law"
law
This refers generally to the entire Old Testament, which contained all of God's instructions for his people.
John 15:26
will send ... from the Father ... the Spirit of truth ... he will testify about me
God the Father would soon send God the Spirit to show the world that Jesus is God the Son.
Father
This is an important title for God.
the Spirit of truth
This is a title for the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Spirit who tells the truth about God and me"
John 15:27
You also must testify
Here "testify" means to tell others about Jesus. Alternate translation: "You also must tell everyone what you know about me"
You also must
Some English versions of the Bible translate "must" as "will." Alternate translation: "You also will"
the beginning
Here the "beginning" is a metonym that means the first days of Jesus's ministry. Alternate translation: "from the very first days when I began teaching the people and doing miracles"

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Chapter 16

John 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (John 16:7) who is always with God's people to help them and to speak to God for them. He is also the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) who tells God's people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: holyspirit)

"The hour is coming"

Jesus used these words to begin prophecies about times that could be shorter or longer than sixty minutes. "The hour" in which people would persecute his followers (John 16:2) was days, weeks, and years long, but "the hour" in which his disciples would scatter and leave him alone (John 16:32) was less than sixty minutes long. (See: prophet)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

Jesus said that just as a woman is in pain as she gives birth to a baby and his followers would be sad when he died. But the woman is glad after the baby is born, and his followers would be happy when he became alive again.

Links:

John 16:1 Notes

John 16:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.

you will not fall away

The phrase "fall away" means "stop trusting" or "stop believing." You may need to specify the the trusting or believing is "in me" or the reason for which the hearers might "fall away." Alternate translation: "you will not stop trusting" or "you will not stop believing in me because of the difficulties you must face"

John 16:2

the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think that he is offering a service to God

"it will someday happen that people who kill you will think they are doing something good for God."

John 16:3

They will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me

They will kill some believers because they do not know God the Father or Jesus.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:4

when their hour comes

Here "hour" is a metonym that refers to the time when people will persecute Jesus's followers. Alternate translation: "when they cause you to suffer"

in the beginning

This is a metonym that refers to the first days of Jesus's ministry. Alternate translation: "when you first started following me"

John 16:5

General Information:

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John 16:6

sorrow has filled your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "you are now very sad"

John 16:7

if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "the Comforter will come to you only if I go away"

Comforter

This is a title for the Holy Spirit, who will be with the disciples after Jesus goes away. See how you translated this in John 14:26.

John 16:8

the Comforter will prove the world to be wrong about sin

When the Holy Spirit came, he began to show people that they were sinners.

Comforter

This refers to the Holy Spirit. See how you translated this in John 14:16.

world

This is a metonym that refers to the people in the world.

John 16:9

about sin, because they do not believe in me

"they are guilty of sin because they do not trust in me"

John 16:10

about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you will no longer see me

"when I return to God, and they see me no more, they will know that I did the right things"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:11

about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged

"God will hold them accountable and will punish them for their sins, just as he will punish Satan, the one who rules this world"

because the ruler of this world has

Here "ruler" refers to Satan. See how you translated this in John 12:31. Alternate translation: "because Satan, who rules

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this world, has"
John 16:12
things to say to you
"messages for you" or "words for you"
you cannot bear them
The word "bear" or carry here is a metaphor. Possible meanings are 1) being able to understand the words. Alternate translation: "you cannot understand them" Or 2) being able to obey the words. Alternate translation: "you cannot obey them"
John 16:13
the Spirit of truth
This is the Holy Spirit, who will tell the people the truth about God.
he will guide you into all the truth
The "truth" refers to spiritual truth. Alternate translation: "he will teach you all the spiritual truth you need to know"
he will say whatever he hears
Jesus implies that God the Father will speak to the Spirit. Alternate translation: "he will say whatever God tells him to say"
John 16:14
he will take from what is mine and he will tell it to you
Here "things of mine" refers to Jesus's teaching and mighty works. Alternate translation: "he will reveal to you that what I have said and done are indeed true"
John 16:15
Father
This is an important title for God.
the Spirit will take from what is mine and he will tell it to you
The Holy Spirit will tell people that the words and works of Jesus are true. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit will tell everyone that my words and works are true"
John 16:16
In a short amount of time
"Soon" or "Before much time passes"
after another short amount of time
"again, before much time passes"
John 16:17
General Information:
There is a break in Jesus's speaking as his disciples ask each other about what Jesus meant.
A short amount of time you will no longer see me
The disciples did not understand that this refers to Jesus's death on the cross.
after another short amount of time you will see me
Possible meanings are 1) This could refer to Jesus's resurrection or 2) This could refer to Jesus's coming at the end of time.
the Father
This is an important title for God.
John 16:18
General Information:
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John 16:19
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.
Is this what you are asking each other, what I meant by saying, ... see me'?
Jesus uses this question so his disciples will focus on what he has just told them, so he can explain further. Alternate translation: "You are asking each other what I meant when I said, ... see me.'"
John 16:20
Truly, truly, I say to you
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
but the world will be glad
Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "but the people who oppose God will be glad"
but your sorrow will be turned into joy
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but your sadness will become joy" or "but afterwards instead of being sad you will be very happy"
John 16:21
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 16:22
your heart will be glad
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "you will be very happy" or "you will be very joyful"
John 16:23
Truly, truly, I say to you
Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you
Here the word "name" is a metonym that refers to the person and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you because you belong to me"
Father
This is an important title for God.
in my name
Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the person and authority of Jesus. The Father will honor the requests of the believers because of their relationship with Jesus. Alternate translation: "because you are my followers" or "on my authority"
John 16:24
your joy will be fulfilled
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "you will become very joyful"
John 16:25
in figures of speech
"in language that is not clear"
the hour is coming
"it will soon happen"
tell you plainly about the Father
"tell you about the Father in a way that you will clearly understand"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 16:26
you will ask in my name

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Here "name" is a metonym for the person and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "you will ask because you belong to me"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:27

the Father himself loves you because you have loved me

When a person loves Jesus, the Son, they also love the Father, because the Father and the Son are one.

John 16:28

I came from the Father ... I am leaving the world and I am going to the Father

After his death and resurrection, Jesus would return to God the Father.

I came from the Father ... going to the Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

world

The "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who live in the world.

John 16:29

Connecting Statement:

The disciples respond to Jesus.

John 16:30

General Information:

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John 16:31

Do you believe now?

This remarks appears in the form of a question to show that Jesus is puzzled that his disciples are only now ready to trust him. Alternate translation: "So, now you finally place your trust in me!

John 16:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

you will be scattered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "others will scatter you"

the Father is with me

This is an important title for God.

John 16:33

so that you will have peace in me

Here "peace" refers to inner peace. Alternate translation: "so that you may have inner peace because of your relationship with me"

I have conquered the world

Here "the world" refers to the troubles and persecution that believers will endure from those who oppose God. Alternate translation: "I have conquered the troubles of this world"

Chapter 17

John 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter forms one long prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. In this chapter Jesus asks God to show his followers his true glory (John 17:1).

Jesus is eternal

Jesus existed before God created the world (John 17:5). John wrote about this in John 1:1.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Prayer

Jesus is God's one and only Son (John 3:16), so he could pray differently from the way other people pray. He used many words that sounded like commands. Your translation should make Jesus sound like a son speaking with love and respect to his father and telling him what the father needs to do so that the father will be happy.

Links:

John 17:1 Notes

John 17:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues. Jesus had been speaking to his disciples, but now he begins to pray to God.

he lifted up his eyes to the heavens

This is an idiom that means to look upward. Alternate translation: "he looked up to the sky"

heavens

This refers to the sky.

Father ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you

Jesus asks God the Father to honor him so that he can give honor to God.

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

the hour has come

Here the word "hour" is a metonym that refers to the time for Jesus to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "it is time for me to suffer and die"

John 17:2

all flesh

This refers to all people.

John 17:3

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This is eternal life ... know you, the only true God, and ... Jesus Christ
Eternal life is to know the only true God, God the Father, and also God the Son.
John 17:4
the work that you have given me to do
Here "work" is a metonym that refers to Jesus's entire earthly ministry.
John 17:5
Father, glorify me along with yourself with the glory that I had with you before the world was made
Jesus had glory with God the Father "before the world was made" because Jesus is God the Son. Alternate translation: "Father, give me honor by bringing me into your presence as as I was before we made the world"
Father
This is an important title for God.
John 17:6
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to pray for his disciples.
I revealed your name
Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the person of God. Alternate translation: "I taught who you really are and what you are like"
from the world
Here "world" is a metonym that refers to the people of the world that oppose God. This means that God has separated the believers spiritually from the people who do not believe in him.
kept your word
This is an idiom that means to obey. Alternate translation: "obeyed your teaching"
John 17:7
General Information:
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John 17:8
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 17:9
I do not pray for the world
Here the word "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "I am not praying for those who do not belong to you"
John 17:10
General Information:
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John 17:11
in the world
This is a metonym that refers to being on earth and being among the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "among the people who do not belong to you"
Holy Father, keep them ... that they will be one ... as we are one
Jesus asks the Father to keep those who trust in him so they can have a close relationship with God.
Father
This is an important title for God.
keep them in your name that you have given me
Here the word "name" is a metonym for God's power and authority. Alternate translation: "keep them safe by your power and authority, which you have given me"
John 17:12
I kept them safe in your name
Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the power and protection of God. Alternate translation: "I kept them safe with your protection"
not one of them was destroyed, except for the son of destruction
This double negative emphasizes that the son of destruction was the only one who was destroyed. Alternate translation: "the only one among them who was destroyed was the son of destruction"
the son of destruction
This refers to Judas, who betrayed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the one whom you long ago decided you would destroy"
so that the scriptures would be fulfilled
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the prophecy about him in the scriptures"
John 17:13
the world
These words are a metonym for the people who live in the world.
so that they will have my joy fulfilled in themselves
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might give them great joy"
John 17:14
I have given them your word
"I have spoken your message to them"
the world ... because they are not of the world ... I am not of the world
Here "the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "the people who oppose you ... because they do not belong to those who do not believe ... I do not belong to them"
John 17:15
the world
In this passage, "the world" is a metonym for the people who oppose God.
keep them safe from the evil one
This refers to Satan. Alternate translation: "protect them from Satan, the evil one"
John 17:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 17:17
Set them apart by the truth
The purpose for setting them apart can be stated clearly. The phrase "by the truth" here represents by teaching the truth. Alternate translation: "Make them your own people by teaching them the truth"
Your word is truth
"Your message is true" or "What you say is true"
John 17:18
into the world
Here into "the world" is a metonym that means to the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "to the people of the world"
John 17:19
so that they themselves may also be set apart in truth
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

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translation: "so that they may also truly set themselves apart to you"
John 17:20
those who will believe in me through their word
"those who will believe in me because these teach about me"
John 17:21
they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us
Those who trust in Jesus become united with the Father and the Son when they believe.
Father
This is an important title for God.
the world
Here the "the world" is a metonym that refers to the people who do not yet know God. Alternate translation: "the people who do not know God"
John 17:22
The glory that you gave me, I have given to them
"I have honored my followers just as you have honored me"
so that they will be one, just as we are one
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that you can unite them just as you have united us"
John 17:23
that they may be brought to complete unity
"that they may be completely united"
that the world will know
Here "the world" is a metonym that refers to the people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "that all the people will know"
loved
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
John 17:24
Father
This is an important title for God.
where I am
Here "where I am" refers to heaven. Alternate translation: "with me in heaven"
to see my glory
"to see my greatness"
before the foundation of the world
Here Jesus refers to the time before creation. Alternate translation: "before the world was created" or "before you created the world"
John 17:25
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes his prayer.
Righteous Father
Here "Father" is an important title for God.
the world did not know you
The "world" is a metonym for the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "those who do not belong to you do not know what you are like"
John 17:26
I made your name known to them, and I will make it known
The word "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "I revealed to them what you are like, and I will continue to do that"
love ... loved
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Chapter 18

John 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 14 says, "Now Caiaphas was the one who had given the advice to the Jews that it would be better that one man die for the people." The author says this to help the reader understand why it was to Caiaphas that they took Jesus. You might want to put these words in parentheses.

Special concepts in this chapter

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death"
The Roman government did not allow the Jews to kill criminals, so the Jews needed to ask Pilate, the governor, to kill him (John 18:31).
Jesus's kingdom
No one knows for sure what Jesus meant when he told Pilate that his kingdom was not "of this world" (John 18:36). Some people think that Jesus means that his kingdom is only spiritual and that he has no visible kingdom on this earth, Other people think that Jesus meant that he would not build and rule his kingdom by force, the way other kings build theirs. It is possible to translate the words "is not of this world" as "is not from this place" or "comes from another place."
King of the Jews
Pilate asked Jesus if he were the King of the Jews

Links:

John 18:1 Notes

John 18:1
General Information:
Verses 1-2 give background information for the events that follow. Verse 1 tells where they took place, and verse 2 gives background information about Judas.
After Jesus spoke these words

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The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

the Kidron Brook

This was a low place in Jerusalem separating the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. It has a small stream in it only after heavy rains. Many modern English translations read, "the Kidron Valley"

where there was a garden

This was a grove of olive trees. Alternate translation: "where there was a grove of olive trees"

John 18:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:3

General Information:

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John 18:4

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak with the soldiers, officers, and Pharisees.

Then Jesus, who knew all the things that were happening to him

"Then Jesus, who knew everything that was about to happen to him"

John 18:5

Jesus of Nazareth

"Jesus, the man from Nazareth"

I am

The word "he" is implied in the text. Alternate translation: "I am he"

who betrayed him

"who handed him over"

John 18:6

I am

Here the word "he" is not present in the original text, but it is implied. Alternate translation: "I am he"

fell to the ground

The men fell to the ground because of Jesus's power. Alternate translation: "fell down because of Jesus's power"

John 18:7

Jesus of Nazareth

"Jesus, the man from Nazareth"

John 18:8

I am

Here the word "he" is not present in the original text, but it is implied. Alternate translation: "I am he"

John 18:9

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop in the main story. Here John gives background information about Jesus fulfilling Scripture.

This was in order to fulfill the word that he said

Here "the word" refers to the words Jesus had prayed. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This happened in order to fulfill the words that he had said when he was praying to his Father"

John 18:10

Malchus

a male servant of the high priest

John 18:11

sheath

the cover for a knife or sword that keeps the knife or sword from cutting the owner

Should I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "I must surely drink the cup that the Father has given to me!"

the cup

Here "cup" is a metaphor that refers to the suffering that Jesus must endure.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 18:12

the Jews

Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

seized Jesus and tied him up

The soldiers tied Jesus's hands to prevent him from escaping. Alternate translation: "captured Jesus and tied him up to prevent him from escaping"

John 18:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:14

General Information:

Verse 14 tells us background information about Caiaphas.

John 18:15

Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered with Jesus

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now the high priest knew that disciple so he was able to enter with Jesus"

John 18:16

So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "So the other disciple, whom the high priest knew"

the doorkeeper

The doorkeeper was a woman.

and he brought Peter in

The word "he" refers to the other disciple.

John 18:17

Are you not also one of the disciples of this man?

This appears in the form of a question to enable the servant to express her remark somewhat cautiously. Alternate translation: "You are also one of the arrested man's disciples! Are you not?"

John 18:18

Now the servants and the officers were standing there, and they had made a charcoal fire, for it was cold, and they were warming themselves

These were the high priest's servants and the temple guards. Alternate translation: "It was cold, so the high priest's servants and temple guards made a charcoal fire and were standing and warming themselves around it"

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here John adds information about the people who were warming themselves around the fire.

John 18:19

General Information:

Here the story is about Jesus again.

The high priest

This was Caiphas (John 18:13).

about his disciples and his teaching

Here "his teaching" refers to what Jesus had been teaching the people. Alternate translation: "about his disciples and what he had been teaching the people"

John 18:20

I have spoken openly to the world

You may need to make explicit that the word "world" is a metonym for those people who had heard Jesus teach. Here the exaggeration "the world" emphasizes that Jesus has spoken openly.

where all the Jews come together

Here "all the Jews" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that Jesus spoke where anyone who wanted to hear him could hear him.

John 18:21

Why did you ask me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate translation: "You should not be asking me these questions!"

John 18:22

Is that how you answer the high priest?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "That is not how you should answer the high priest!"

John 18:23

wrongly ... wrong

These words refer to moral wrong, like blasphemy, not to mere mistakes about facts.

testify about the wrong

"tell me what I said that was wrong"

if rightly, why do you hit me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate translation: "if I said only what was right, you should not be hitting me!"

John 18:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:25

General Information:

Here the story is about Peter again.

Now

This word is used to mark a stop in the story. Here John tells more information about Peter.

Are you not also one of his disciples?

The speaker uses a questions to somewhat cautiously make a comment. Alternate translation: "You are also one of the arrested man's disciples, are you not?"

John 18:26

Did I not see you in the garden with him?

This appears in the form of a question to enable the servant to express his remark somewhat cautiously. Alternate translation: "I saw you in the garden with him, did I not?"

John 18:27

Then Peter denied it again

Peter again denied knowing and being with Jesus. Alternate translation: "Peter denied him again"

immediately the rooster crowed

Here the writer assumes that the reader will remember that Jesus had said Peter would deny him before the rooster crowed. Alternate translation: "immediately the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had said would happen"

John 18:28

General Information:

Here the story is about Jesus again. The soldiers and Jesus's accusers bring him to Caiaphas. This verse gives background information about why they did not enter the Praetorium.

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas

Here it is implied that they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house. Alternate translation: "Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house"

they did not enter the government headquarters so that they would not be defiled

Pilate was not a Jew, so if the Jewish leaders entered his headquarters, they would be defiled. This would have prevented them from celebrating the Passover. "they themselves remained outside Pilate's headquarters because Pilate was a Gentile. They did not want to become defiled"

John 18:29

General Information:

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John 18:30

If this man was not an evildoer, we would not have given him over to you

You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "This man is an evildoer, and we had to given him over to you"

given him over

This phrase here means to hand over to an enemy.

John 18:31

The Jews said to him

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus and arrested him. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said to him"

It is not lawful for us to put any man to death

According to Roman law, the Jews could not put a man to death. Alternate translation: "According to Roman law, we cannot put a person to death"

John 18:32

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop in the main story. Here John tells how what was said in verse 31 fulfills Scripture about Jesus.

so that the word of Jesus would be fulfilled which he had spoken

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in order to fulfill what Jesus had said earlier"

to indicate by what kind of death he would die

"regarding how he would die"

John 18:33

General Information:

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John 18:34

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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John 18:35
I am not a Jew, am I?
This remark appears in the form of a question so Pilate can emphasize his complete lack of interest in the cultural affairs of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "Well I am certainly not a Jew, and I have no interest in these matters!"
Your own people
"Your fellow Jews"
John 18:36
My kingdom is not of this world
Here "world" is a metonym for the people who oppose Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "My kingdom is not part of this world" or 2) "I do not need this world's permission to rule as their king" or "It is not from this world that I have authority to be king."
so that I would not be given over to the Jews
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and would prevent the Jewish leaders from arresting me"
the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.
John 18:37
Are you a king then?
“So, you are a king?" Pilate asked this question to confirm that Jesus is calling himself a king, since Jesus said in the previous verse that he has a kingdom. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “So, you are a king.”
testify to the truth
Here "the truth" refers to the truth about God. Alternate translation: "tell people the truth about God"
who belongs to the truth
This is an idiom that refers to anyone who loves the truth about God.
my voice
Here "voice" is a synecdoche that refers to words Jesus says. Alternate translation: "the things I say" or "me"
John 18:38
What is truth?
This remark appears in the form of a question to reflect Pilate's belief that no one really knows what truth is. Alternate translation: "No one can know what is true!"
the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.
John 18:39
General Information:
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John 18:40
Not this man, but Barabbas
This is an ellipsis. You can add the implied words. Alternate translation: "No! Do not release this man! Release Barabbas instead"
Now Barabbas was a revolutionary
Here John provides background information about Barabbas.
revolutionary
person who wants to take over the government

Chapter 19

John 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 19:24, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Purple garment"
Purple is a color like red or blue. The people were mocking Jesus, so they put him in a purple garment. This was because kings wore purple garments. They spoke and acted like they were giving honor to a king, but everyone knew that they were doing it because they hated Jesus.
"You are not Caesar's friend"
Pilate knew that Jesus was not a criminal, so he did not want to have his soldiers kill him. But the Jews told him that Jesus was claiming to be a king, and anyone who did that was breaking Caesar's laws (John 19:12).
The tomb
The tomb in which Jesus was buried (John 19:41) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they placed the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they rolled a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm
The soldiers were insulting Jesus when they said, "Hail, King of the Jews." Pilate was insulting the Jews when he asked, "Should I crucify your king?" He was probably also insulting both Jesus and the Jews when he wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Gabbatha, Golgotha
These are two Hebrew words. After translating the meanings of these words ("The Pavement" and "The Place of a Skull"),

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the author transliterates their sounds by writing them with Greek letters.

Links:

John 19:1 Notes

John 19:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues. Jesus is standing before Pilate as he is being accused by the Jews.

Then Pilate took Jesus and whipped him

Pilate himself did not whip Jesus. Here "Pilate" is a metonym for the soldiers whom Pilate ordered to whip Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus out of the room and whipped him"

John 19:2

General Information:

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John 19:3

Hail, King of the Jews

The greeting "Hail" with a raised hand was only used to greet Caesar. As the soldiers use the crown of thorns and the purple robe to mock Jesus, it is ironic that they do not recognize that he is indeed a king.

John 19:4

I find no guilt in him

Pilate states this twice to say he does not believe Jesus is guilty of any crime. He does not want to punish him. Alternate translation: "I see no reason to punish him"

John 19:5

crown of thorns ... purple garment

The crown and the purple robe are things only kings wear. The soldiers dressed Jesus in this manner to mock him. See John 19:2.

John 19:6

General Information:

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John 19:7

The Jews answered him

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders answered Pilate"

he has to die because he claimed to be the Son of God

Jesus was condemned to death by crucifixion because he claimed he was "the Son of God."

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 19:8

General Information:

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John 19:9

General Information:

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John 19:10

Are you not speaking to me?

This remark appears in the form of a question. Here Pilate expresses his surprise that Jesus does not take the opportunity to defend himself. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe you are refusing to speak to me!" or "Answer me!"

Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and authority to crucify you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You should know that I have authority to release you or to order my soldiers to crucify you!"

John 19:11

You do not have any authority over me except for what has been given to you from above

This double negative emphasizes that what has been given from above is the only thing that allows Pilate to have power. Alternate translation: "The authority you have over me is only what has been given to you from above"

what has been given to you from above

The words "from above" are a euphemism for "by God. This can be stated in active form and the one who has given can be specified. Alternate translation: "what God has given you"

from above

This is a respectful way of referring to something coming from God.

gave me over

"handed me over"

John 19:12

At this answer

Here "this answer" refers to Jesus's answer. Alternate translation: "When Pilate heard Jesus's answer"

Pilate tried to release him

The form of "tried" in the original indicates that Pilate tried "hard" or "repeatedly" to release Jesus. Alternate translation: "he tried hard to release Jesus" or "he tried again and again to release Jesus"

but the Jews cried out

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders that opposed Jesus. In the original, the form of "cried out" indicates that they cried out or shouted repeatedly. Alternate translation: "but the Jewish leaders kept shouting"

you are not a friend of Caesar

"you are opposing Caesar" or "you are opposing the emperor"

makes himself a king

"claims that he is a king"

John 19:13

he brought Jesus out

Here "he" refers to Pilate and is a metonym for the soldiers whom he ordered to bring Jesus out. Alternate translation: "Pilate ordered the soldiers to bring Jesus out"

sat down

Important people like Pilate sat down when they performed an official duty, while people who were not so important stood up.

in the judgment seat

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This is the special chair that an important person like Pilate sat in when he was making an official judgment. If your language has a special way to describe this action, you can use it here.

in a place called "The Pavement," but

This is a special stone platform where only the important people were allowed to go. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in a place the people called The Pavement, but"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 19:14

Connecting Statement:

Some time has passed and it is now the sixth hour, as Pilate orders his soldiers to crucify Jesus.

Now

This word marks a stop in the story. Here John provides information about the upcoming Passover and the time of day.

the sixth hour

"noontime"

Pilate said to the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Pilate said to the Jewish leaders"

John 19:15

Should I crucify your King?

Here "I" is a synecdoche that refers to Pilate's soldiers who will actually perform the crucifixion. Alternate translation: "Do you really want me to tell my soldiers to nail your king to a cross?"

John 19:16

Then Pilate gave Jesus over to them to be crucified

Though it was Roman soldiers who actually crucified Jesus, word "them" here refers to "the Jews" [John 19:14]

John 19:17

to the place called "The Place of a Skull,"

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to the place that the people called 'The Place of a Skull,'"

which in the Aramaic language is called "Golgotha."

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "which in the Aramaic language they call 'Golgotha.'"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 19:18

with him two other men

This is an ellipsis. You can translate this, adding the implied words. Alternate translation: "they also nailed two other criminals to their crosses"

John 19:19

Pilate also wrote a sign and put it on the cross

Here "Pilate" is a synecdoche for the person who wrote on the sign. Here "on the cross" refers to Jesus's cross.

Alternate translation: "Pilate also commanded someone to write on a sign and to attach it to Jesus's cross"

There it was written: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The sign said,'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'"

John 19:20

the place where Jesus was crucified

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the place where the soldiers crucified Jesus"

The sign was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The one who prepared the sign wrote the words in 3 languages: Aramaic, Latin, and Greek"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

Latin

This was the language of the Roman government.

John 19:21

Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate

The chief priests had to go back to Pilate's headquarters to protest to him about the words on the sign. Alternate translation: "The chief priests went back to Pilate and said"

John 19:22

What I have written I have written

Pilate implies that he will not change the words on the sign. Alternate translation: "I have written what I wanted to write, and I will not change it"

John 19:23

also the tunic

"and they also took his tunic." The soldiers kept the tunic separate and did not divide it. Alternate translation: "they kept his tunic separate"

John 19:24

General Information:

At the end of this verse there is a break stop in the main story. John tells the reader how this event fulfills Scripture.

let us cast lots for it to decide whose it will be

The soldiers will gamble and the winner will receive the shirt. Alternate translation: "let us gamble for the tunic and the winner will get to keep it"

This happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled which said

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled the scripture that said" or "This happened to make the scripture come true which said"

cast lots

This was how the soldiers divided Jesus's clothing among themselves. Alternate translation: "gamble"

John 19:25

General Information:

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John 19:26

the disciple whom he loved

This is John, the writer of this Gospel.

Woman, see, your son

Here the word "son" is a metaphor. Jesus wants his disciple, John, to be like a son to his mother. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"Woman, here is the man who will act like a son to you"
John 19:27
See, your mother
Here the word "mother" is a metaphor. Jesus wants his mother to be like a mother to his disciple, John. Alternate translation: "Think of this woman as if she were your own mother"
From that hour
"From that very moment"
John 19:28
knowing that everything was now accomplished
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "knowing that he had completed everything" or "he knew that he had done everything that God had sent him to do"
John 19:29
A container full of sour wine was placed there
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had placed there a full container of sour wine"
sour wine
"bitter wine"
they put
Here "they" refers to the Roman guards.
a sponge
a small object that can soak up and hold much liquid
on a hyssop staff
"on a branch of a plant called hyssop"
John 19:30
He bowed his head and gave up his spirit
John implies here that Jesus gave his spirit back to God. Alternate translation: "He bowed his head and gave God his spirit" or "He bowed his head and died"
John 19:31
the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
day of preparation
This is the time before the Passover when people prepared food for the Passover.
to break their legs and to remove them
Breaking the victims' legs caused them to die almost immediately so that the soldiers could take the dead bodies off the crosses. You may need to add this information. Alternate translation: "to break their legs so they would die and to have the soldiers remove them"
John 19:32
who had been crucified with Jesus
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom they had crucified near Jesus"
John 19:33
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 19:34
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 19:35
The one who saw this
This sentence gives background information to the story. John is telling readers that he was there and that we can trust what he has written.
has testified, and his testimony is true
To "testify" means to tell about something that one has seen. Alternate translation: "has told the truth about what he has seen"
so that you would also believe
Here "believe" means to put one's trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "so that you will also put your trust in Jesus"
John 19:36
General Information:
In this verse and the next there is a stop in the main story. John tells us about how these events fulfill what was said in Scripture.
in order to fulfill scripture
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the words that someone wrote in the scripture"
Not one of his bones will be broken
This is a quotation from Psalm 34. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "No one will break any of his bones"
John 19:37
They will look at him whom they pierced
This is a quotation from Zechariah 12.
John 19:38
Joseph of Arimathea
Arimathea was a small town. Alternate translation: "Joseph from the town of Arimathea"
for fear of the Jews
Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "for fear of the Jewish leaders"
if he could take away the body of Jesus
John implies that Joseph of Arimathea wanted to bury the body of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for permission to take the body of Jesus down from the cross for burial"
John 19:39
Nicodemus
Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees who believed in Jesus. See how you translated this name in John 3:1.
myrrh and aloes
These are plant substances that smell nice and that people used to prepare a body for burial.
about one hundred litras
You may convert this to a the measure system used in your area. The word "litra" was used for measures of about 300 grams of solids or about 300 milliliters of liquids. Because myrrh and aloes were more like solids than liquids, the measurement here is probably of weight, about 30 kilograms, rather than of volume, about 30 liters.
John 19:40
General Information:
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John 19:41
Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ... had yet been buried
Here John marks a pause in the story. Here he provides background information about the location of the tomb

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

where they would bury Jesus.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now in the place where they crucified Jesus, there was a garden"

in which no person had yet been buried

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in which people had buried no one"

John 19:42

Because it was the day of preparation for the Jews

According to Jewish law, no one could work after sundown on Friday. It was the beginning of the Sabbath and Passover. Alternate translation: "Because the Passover was about to begin that evening"

Chapter 20

John 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried (John 20:1) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

"Receive the Holy Spirit"

If your language uses the same word for "breath" and "spirit," be sure that the reader understands that Jesus was performing a symbolic action by breathing, and that what the disciples received was the Holy Spirit, not Jesus's breath. (See: and holyspirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Rabboni

John used Greek letters to describe the sound of the word, and then he explained that it means "Teacher." You should do the same, using the letters of your language.

Jesus's resurrection body

No one is sure what Jesus's body looked like after he became alive again. His disciples knew it was Jesus because they could see his face and touch the places where the soldiers had put the nails through his hands and feet, But he could also walk through solid walls and doors. It is best not to try to say more than what the ULB says.

Two angels in white

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: Matthew 28:1-2 and Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 and John 20:12)

Links:

John 20:1 Notes

John 20:1

General Information:

This is the third day after Jesus was buried.

first day of the week

"Sunday"

she saw the stone rolled away

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "she saw that someone had rolled away the stone"

John 20:2

disciple whom Jesus loved

This phrase appears to be the way that John refers to himself throughout his book. Here the word "love" refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.

They took away

The author uses the word "they" here to show that Mary Magdalene did not know who took the Lord away. She was probably thinking of the Jews or Romans, but it would be best to translate using your language's way of leaving the actor or actors unknown.

the Lord ... laid him

These words are metonyms for Jesus's dead body. Alternate translation: "the Lord's dead body ... laid it"

John 20:3

the other disciple

John apparently shows his humility by referring to himself here as "the other disciple," rather than including his name.

John 20:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 20:5

linen cloths

These were the burial cloths that people had used to wrap the body of Jesus.

John 20:6

linen cloths

These were the burial cloths that people had used to wrap the body of Jesus. See how you translated this in John 20:5.

John 20:7

cloth that had been on his head

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Here "his head" refers to "Jesus's head." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "cloth that someone had used to cover Jesus's face"

but was folded up in a place by itself

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but someone had folded it and put it aside, separate from the linen cloths"

John 20:8

the other disciple

John apparently expresses his humility by referring to himself as "the other disciple," rather than including his name in this book.

he saw and believed

Until he saw that the tomb was empty, he did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, but when he saw that the tomb was empty, he did believe. Alternate translation: "he saw these things and now believed that Jesus had risen from the dead"

John 20:9

they still did not know the scripture

These words refer to the disciples. Possible meanings are 1) they did not know that that scripture exists or 2) they did not understand that that scripture said that Jesus would come alive again.

rise

become alive again

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

John 20:10

went back home again

The disciples continued to stay in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "went back to where they were staying in Jerusalem"

John 20:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 20:12

She saw two angels in white

The angels were wearing white clothing. Alternate translation: "She saw two angels dressed in white clothing"

John 20:13

They said to her

"They asked her"

Because they took away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him

The words "my Lord" here are a metonym for the Lord's body. Alternate translation: "Because they took away the body of my Lord, and I do not know where they have put it"

John 20:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 20:15

Jesus said to her

"Jesus asked her"

if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away

Here the word "him" is a metonym that refers to Jesus's dead body. Alternate translation: "if you have taken his dead body away, tell me where you have put it, and I will take it away"

John 20:16

Rabboni

The word "Rabboni" means "teacher" in Aramaic.

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 20:17

brothers

Jesus used the word "brothers" to refer to his disciples.

I will go up to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God

Jesus rose from the dead and then predicted he would go up into heaven, back to his Father, who is God. Alternate translation: "I am about to return to heaven to be with my Father and your Father, to the one who is my God and your God"

my Father and your Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God, and between believers and God.

John 20:18

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples

Mary Magdalene went to where the disciples were staying and told them what she had seen and heard. Alternate translation: "Mary Magdalene went to where the disciples were and told them"

John 20:19

General Information:

It is now evening and Jesus appears to the disciples.

that day, the first day of the week

This refers to Sunday.

the doors being locked where the disciples were

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the disciples had locked the doors where they were"

for fear of the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who might arrest the disciples. Alternate translation: "because they were afraid that the Jewish leaders might arrest them"

Peace to you

This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace" .

John 20:20

he showed them his hands and his side

Jesus showed the disciples his wounds. Alternate translation: "he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side"

John 20:21

Peace to you

This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace."

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 20:22

General Information:

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John 20:23

they are forgiven

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You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive them"
whoever's sins you keep back
"If you do not forgive another's sins"
they are kept back
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will not forgive them"
John 20:24
Didymus
This is a male name that means "twin." See how this name is translated in [John 11:15]
John 20:25
disciples later said to him
The word "him" refers to Thomas.
Unless I see ... his side, I will not believe
You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I will believe only if I see ... his side"
in his hands ... into his side
The word "his" refers to Jesus.
John 20:26
his disciples
The word "his" refers to Jesus.
while the doors were closed
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "when they had locked the doors"
Peace to you
This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace" .
John 20:27
Do not be unbelieving, but believe
Jesus uses the double negative "Do not be unbelieving" to emphasize the words that follow, "but believe." If your language does not allow double negatives or the reader would not understand that Jesus is emphasizing the words that follow, you can leave these words untranslated. Alternate translation: "This is what is most important for you to do: you must believe"
believe
Here "believe" means to trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "put your trust in me"
John 20:28
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
John 20:29
you have believed
Thomas believes that Jesus is alive because he has seen him. Alternate translation: "you have believed that I am alive"
Blessed are those
This means "God gives great happiness to those."
who have not seen
This means those who have not seen Jesus. Alternate translation: "who have not seen me alive"
John 20:30
General Information:
As the story is nearing the end, the author comments about the many things Jesus did.
signs
The word "signs" refers to miracles that show that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.
signs that have not been written in this book
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "signs that the author did not write about in this book"
John 20:31
but these have been written
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but the author wrote about these signs"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
life in his name
Here "life" is a metonym that means Jesus gives life. Alternate translation: "you may have life because of Jesus"
life
This refers to spiritual life.

Chapter 21

John 21 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The metaphor of sheep

Before Jesus died, he spoke of himself taking care of his people as if he were a good shepherd taking care of sheep

Links:

John 21:1 Notes

John 21:1
General Information:
Jesus shows himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Verses 2 and 3 tell us what happens in the story before Jesus appears.
After these things
"Some time later"
John 21:2
with Thomas called Didymus
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "with Thomas whom we called Didymus"
Didymus
This is a male name that means "twin." See how this name is translated in [John 11:15]
John 21:3
General Information:
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John 21:4
General Information:
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John 21:5
Young men

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This is a term of endearment that means "My dear friends."
John 21:6
you will find some
Here "some" refers to fish. Alternate translation: "you will catch some fish in your net"
draw it in
"pull the net in"
John 21:7
loved
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.
he tied up his outer garment
"he secured his outer garment around him" or "he put on his tunic"
for he was undressed
This is background information. Peter had taken off some of his clothes to make it easier to work, but now that he was about to greet the Lord, he wanted to wear more clothing. Alternate translation: "for he had taken off some of his clothes"
threw himself into the sea
Peter jumped into the water and swam to shore. Alternate translation: "jumped into the sea and swam to shore"
threw himself
This is a idiom that means Peter jumped into the water very quickly.
John 21:8
for they were not far from the land, about two hundred cubits off
This is background information.
two hundred cubits
"90 meters." A cubit was a little less than half a meter.
John 21:9
General Information:
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John 21:10
General Information:
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John 21:11
Simon Peter then went up
Here "went up" means Simon Peter had to go back to the boat. Alternate translation: "So Simon Peter went back to the boat"
drew the net to land
"pulled the net to the shore"
the net was not torn
You can translate this as an active form. Alternate translation: "the net did not break"
full of large fish, 153
"full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three." There were 153 large fish.
John 21:12
breakfast
the morning meal
John 21:13
General Information:
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John 21:14
the third time
You can translate this ordinal term as "time number 3."
John 21:15
General Information:
Jesus begins to have a conversation with Simon Peter.
do you love me
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
you know that I love you
When Peter answers, he uses the word for "love" that refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.
Feed my lambs
Here "lambs" is a metaphor for those persons who love Jesus and follow him. Alternate translation: "Feed the people I care for"
John 21:16
do you love me
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
Shepherd my sheep
"Take care of my sheep." Here "sheep" is a metaphor for those who love and follow Jesus. Alternate translation: "Care for the people I care for"
John 21:17
He said to him a third time
The pronoun "he" refers to Jesus. Here "a third time" means "time number 3." Alternate translation: "Jesus said to him a third time"
do you love me
This time when Jesus asks this question he uses the word for "love" that refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.
Feed my sheep
Here "sheep" is a metaphor that represents those who belong to Jesus and follow him. Alternate translation: "Care for the people I care for"
John 21:18
Truly, truly
See how you translated this in John 1:51.
you used to gird yourself ... someone else will gird you
Here girding is a metonym for dressing and being ready for action. Alternate translation: "you used to dress yourself ... someone else will dress you"
John 21:19
Now
John uses this word to show he is giving background information before he continues the story.
to indicate with what kind of death Peter would glorify God
Here John implies that Peter would die on a cross. Alternate translation: "to indicate that Peter would die on a cross to honor God"
Follow me
Here the word "follow" means "to be a disciple." Alternate translation: "Keep on being my disciple"
John 21:20
the disciple whom Jesus loved
John refers to himself in this way throughout the book,

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rather than mentioning his name.

loved

This is the kind of love that comes from God and always desires the good of others, even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

at the dinner

This is a reference to the Last Supper (John 13).

John 21:21

Peter saw him

Here "him" refers to "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Lord, what will this man do?

Peter wants to know what will happen to John. Alternate translation: "Lord, what will happen to this man?"

John 21:22

Jesus said to him

"Jesus said to Peter"

If I want him to stay

Here "him" refers to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" in John 21:20.

I come

This refers to Jesus's second coming, his return to earth from heaven.

what is that to you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express a mild rebuke. Alternate translation: "that is not your concern." or "you should not be concerned about that."

John 21:23

among the brothers

Here "the brothers" refers to all the followers of Jesus.

John 21:24

General Information:

This is the end of the Gospel of John. Here the author, the Apostle John, gives a closing comment about himself and what he has written in this book.

the disciple

"the disciple John"

who testifies about these things

Here "testifies" means that he personally sees something. Alternate translation: "who has seen all these things"

we know

Here "we" refers to those who trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "we who trust in Jesus know"

John 21:25

If each one were written down

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "If someone wrote down all of them"

even the world itself could not contain the books

John exaggerates to emphasize that Jesus did many more miracles than what people could write about in many books.

the books that would be written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the books that people could write about what he did"

Introduction to Acts

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Acts

The beginning of the church and its mission (1:1–2:41) The early church in Jerusalem (2:42–6:7) Increasing opposition and the martyrdom of Steven (6:8–7:60) The persecution of the church and Philip's ministry (8:1–40) Paul becomes an apostle (9:1–31) The ministry of Peter and the first Gentile converts (9:32–12:24) The ministry of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles (12:25–14:28) The debate about the Jewish law and the council of church leaders at Jerusalem (15:1-35) The ministry of Paul and Silas to the Gentiles (15:36–16:5) The expansion of the church into the middle Mediterranean area and Asia Minor (16:6–19:20) Paul travels to Jerusalem and becomes a prisoner in Rome (19:21–28:31)

What is the Book of Acts about?

The Book of Acts tells the story of the early church as more and more people became believers. It shows the power of the the Holy Spirit helping the early Christians. The events in this book began when Jesus went back to heaven and ended about thirty years later.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Acts of the Apostles." Or translators may choose a title that may be clearer, for example, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles."

Who wrote the Book of Acts?

This book does not give the name of the author. However, it is addressed to Theophilus, the same person to whom the Gospel of Luke is addressed. Also, in parts of the book, the author uses the word "we." This indicates that the author traveled with Paul. Most scholars think that Luke was this person traveling with Paul. Therefore, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought Luke is the author of the Book of Acts as well as the Gospel of Luke.

Luke was a medical doctor. His way of writing shows that he was an educated man. He was probably a Gentile. He saw many of the events described in the Book of Acts.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the Church?

The Church is the group of people who believe in Christ. The Church includes both Jewish and Gentile believers. The events in this book show God helping the Church. He empowered believers to live righteous lives through his Holy Spirit.

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Part 3: Important Translation Issues

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

These are the most significant textual issues in Acts:

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible, but they are not in the best ancient copies of the Bible. Some modern versions put the verses in square brackets ([]). The ULB puts them in footnotes.

"Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized.' The Ethiopian answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:37). "But it seemed good to Silas to remain there." (Acts 15:34) "And we wanted to judge him according to our law. But Lysias, the officer, came and forcibly took him out of our hands, sending him to you." (Acts 24:6b-8a) "When he had said these things, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves." (Acts 28:29)

In the following verses, it is uncertain what the original text said. Translators will need to choose which reading to translate. The ULB has the first readings but includes the second readings in footnotes.

"They returned from Jerusalem" (Acts 12:25). Some translations read, "They returned to Jerusalem (or to there)." "he put up with them" (Acts 13:18). Some translations read, "he cared for them." "This is what the Lord says, who has done these things that have been known from ancient times." (Acts 15:17-18). Some older translations read, "This is what the Lord says, to whom are known all his deeds from ancient times."

Chapter 1

Acts 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter records an event, commonly known as the "Ascension," when Jesus returned to heaven after he became alive again. He will not come back until he returns at his "second coming." (See: heaven and resurrection)

The UDB has set the words "Dear Theophilus" apart from the other words. This is because English speakers often start letters this way. You might want to start this book the way people start letters in your culture.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the two quotes from Psalms in 1:20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptize

The word "baptize" has two meanings in this chapter. It refers to the water baptism of John and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). (See: baptize)

"He spoke about the kingdom of God"

Some scholars believe that when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God," he explained to the disciples why the kingdom of God did not come before he died. Others believe that the kingdom of God did begin while Jesus was alive and that here Jesus was explaining that it was beginning in a new form.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Akeldama

This is a phrase in Hebrew or Aramaic. Luke used Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told what it means. You should probably spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain the meaning.

Links:

Acts 1:1 Notes Acts intro

Acts 1:1

The former account I wrote

The "former account" is the Gospel of Luke.

Theophilus

Luke wrote this book to a man named Theophilus. Some translations follow their own culture's way of addressing a

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letter and write "Dear Theophilus" at the beginning of the sentence. Theophilus means "friend of God"

Acts 1:2

until the day that he was taken up

This refers to Jesus's ascension into heaven. Alternate translation: "until the day on which God took him up to heaven" or "until the day that he ascended into heaven"

he had given commands through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit had led Jesus to instruct his apostles on certain things.

Acts 1:3

After his suffering

This refers to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

he presented himself alive to them

Jesus appeared to his apostles and to many other disciples.

Acts 1:4

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Jesus. Except where otherwise noted, the word "you" in the book of Acts is plural.

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to his followers after he had risen from the dead.

When he was meeting together with them

"When Jesus was meeting together with his apostles"

the promise of the Father, about which he said

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised to send, about whom Jesus said"

Acts 1:5

John indeed baptized with water ... baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus contrasts how John baptized people in water with how God would baptize believers in the Holy Spirit.

John indeed baptized with water

"John indeed baptized people with water"

you will be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you"

Acts 1:6

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel

"will you now make Israel a great kingdom again"

Acts 1:7

the times or the seasons

Possible meanings are 1) the words "times" and "seasons" refer to different kinds of time. Alternate translation: "the general period of time or the specific date" or 2) the two words are basically synonymous. Alternate translation: "the exact time"

Acts 1:8

you will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses

The apostles will receive power that will enable them to be witnesses for Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will empower you ... to be my witnesses"

to the ends of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) "all over the world" or 2) "to the places on earth that are farthest away"

Acts 1:9

as they were looking up

"as they watched." The apostles "were looking" at Jesus because Jesus rose into the sky. Alternate translation: "as they were looking up at the sky"

he was raised up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he rose up into the sky" or "God raised him up into the sky"

a cloud hid him from their eyes

"a cloud blocked their view so that they could no longer see him"

Acts 1:10

looking intensely to heaven

"staring at the sky" or "gazing at the sky"

Acts 1:11

of Galilee

"from Galilee"

will return in the same manner

Jesus ascended into the sky, through the clouds, and the clouds hid him Acts 1:9. He will return from the sky, through (or on) the clouds, and people will be able to see him.

Acts 1:12

Then they returned

"The apostles returned"

a Sabbath day's journey

This refers to the distance which, according to Rabbinical tradition, a person was allowed to walk on a Sabbath day. Alternate translation: "about one kilometer away"

Acts 1:13

When they arrived

"When they reached their destination." Verse 12 says they were returning to Jerusalem.

the upper chamber

"the room on the upper level of the house"

Acts 1:14

They all were devoted ... to prayer

They all spent much time ... praying

with one purpose

The phrase "with one purpose" translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 1:15

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the time that Peter and the other believers were staying together in the upper room.

In those days

These words mark the beginning of a new part of the story. They refer to the period of time after Jesus ascended. On many days after Jesus ascended, the disciples met in the upper chamber. Alternate translation: "During that time"

120 names

"one hundred and twenty names"

names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people whose names they were. Alternate translation: "people"

in the midst of the brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers and includes both men and women.

Acts 1:16

it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that we read about in scripture had to take place"

by the mouth of David

The word "mouth" refers to the words that David wrote. Alternate translation: "through the words of David"

Acts 1:17

General Information:

Although Peter is addressing the entire group of people, here the word "us" refers only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

In verse 17 Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

Acts 1:18

General Information:

The author begins to tell the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Now this man

The words "this man" refers to Judas Iscariot.

the earnings he received for his wickedness

"the money that he earned from the evil thing that he did." The words "his wickedness" refer to Judas Iscariot's betraying Jesus to the people who killed him.

there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out

This suggests that Judas fell from a high place, rather than just falling down. The fall was severe enough to cause his body to burst open. Other passages of scripture mention that he hanged himself.

Acts 1:19

General Information:

The author finishes telling the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Field of Blood

When the people living in Jerusalem heard of the way in which Judas died, they renamed the field.

Acts 1:20

General Information:

Based on the situation with Judas that Peter just recounted, he recalls two Psalms of David that relate to the incident. The quote ends at the end of this verse.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

For it is written in the Book of Psalms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For David wrote in the Book of Psalms"

Let his field be made desolate, and do not let even one person live there

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words.

Let his field be made desolate

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "field" refers to the field where Judas died or 2) that the word "field" refers to Judas's dwelling place and is a metaphor for his family line.

be made desolate

"become empty"

Acts 1:21

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the apostles and does not include the audience to whom Peter is speaking.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

It is necessary, therefore

Based on the scriptures that he quoted and on what Judas had done, Peter tells the group what they must do.

the Lord Jesus went in and out among us

Going in and out among a group of people is a metaphor for openly being part of that group. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus lived among us"

Acts 1:22

beginning from the baptism of John ... become a witness with us of his resurrection

The qualification for the new apostle that began with the words "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us" in verse 21 ends here. The subject of the verb "become" is thus "one of the men." Here is a reduced form of the sentence: "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us ... beginning from the baptism of John ... must become a witness with us."

beginning from the baptism of John

The noun "baptism" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings: 1) "beginning from when John baptized Jesus" or 2) "beginning from when John baptized people"

to the day that he was taken up from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the day when Jesus left us and rose up to heaven" or "until the day that God took him up from us"

become a witness with us of his resurrection

"must begin to testify with us about his resurrection"

Acts 1:23

They put forward two men

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers who were present. Alternate translation: "They proposed two men who fulfilled the requirements that Peter listed"

Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus

This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Joseph, whom people also called Barsabbas and Justus"

Acts 1:24

They prayed and said

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers, but it was probably one of the apostles who spoke these words. Alternate translation: "The believers prayed together and one of the apostles said"

You, Lord, know the hearts of all people

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: "You, Lord, know the thoughts and motives of everyone"

Acts 1:25

to take the place in this ministry and apostleship

Here the word "apostleship" defines what kind of "ministry" this is. Alternate translation: "to take Judas's place in this apostolic ministry" or "to take Judas's place in serving as an apostle"

from which Judas turned away

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Here the expression "turned away" means that Judas stopped performing this ministry. Alternate translation: "which Judas stopped fulfilling"

to go to his own place

This phrase refers to Judas's death and likely to his judgment after death. Alternate translation: "to go where he belongs"

Acts 1:26

They cast lots for them

The apostles cast lots to decide between Joseph and Matthias.

the lot fell to Matthias

The lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas.

he was numbered with the eleven apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers considered him to be an apostle with the other eleven"

Chapter 2

Acts 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:17-21, 25-28, and 34-35.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 2:31.

The events described in this chapter are commonly called "Pentecost." Many people believe that the church began to exist when the Holy Spirit came to live inside believers at Pentecost.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

The word "tongues" has two meanings in this chapter. Luke describes what came down from heaven (Acts 2:3](../../act/02/03.md)) as tongues that looked like fire. This is different from "a tongue of flame," which is a fire that looks like a tongue. Luke also uses the word "tongues" to describe the languages that the people spoke after the Holy Spirit filled them ([Acts 2:4).

Last days

No one knows for sure when the "last days" (Acts 2:17) began. Your translation should not say more than the ULB does about this. (See: lastday)

Baptize

The word "baptize" in this chapter refers to Christian baptism (Acts 2:38-41). Though the event described in Acts 2:1-11 is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in Acts 1:5, the word "baptize" here does not refer to that event. (See: baptize)

The prophecy of Joel

Many of the things that Joel said would happen did happen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), but some things Joel spoke of have not happened yet (Acts 2:19-20). (See: prophet)

Wonders and signs

These words refer to things that only God could do, things that showed that Jesus was who the disciples said he was.

Links:

Acts 2:1 Notes

Acts 2:1

General Information:

This is a new event; it is now the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover. Here the word "they" refers to the apostles and the other 120 believers that Luke mentions in Acts 1:15.

Acts 2:2

Suddenly

This word explains that no one expected to hear the sound or to have it fill the house.

a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven

Possible meanings are 1) "heaven" refers to the place where God lives. Alternate translation: "a sound came from heaven" or 2) "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sound came from the sky"

the whole house

This may have been a house or a larger building.

Acts 2:3

There appeared to them tongues like fire

These might have been something that looked like tongues or like fire, not actual tongues or fire. Possible meanings are 1) tongues that looked like they were made of fire or 2) small flames of fire that looked like tongues. When fire burns in a small space, such as on a lamp, the flame can be shaped like a tongue.

that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them

This means that the "tongues like fire" spread out so that there was one on each person.

Acts 2:4

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit filled all of those who were there and they"

speak in other tongues

They were speaking in languages that they did not already know.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

as the Spirit gave them the ability
The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak; they were dependent on the Spirit to speak in different languages.
Acts 2:5
General Information:
Here the word "them" refers to the believers; the word "his" refers to each person in the multitude. Verse 5 gives background information about the large number of Jews who were living in Jerusalem, many of whom were present during this event.
godly men
Here "godly men" refers to people who were devout in their worship of God and tried to obey all of the Jewish laws.
every nation under heaven
"every nation in the world." The word "every" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the people came from many different nations. Alternate translation: "many different nations"
Acts 2:6
When this sound was heard
This refers to the sound that was similar to a strong wind. Alternate translation: "When they heard this sound"
the multitude
"the large crowd of people"
Acts 2:7
They were amazed and marveled
These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the intensity of amazement. Alternate translation: "They were greatly amazed"
Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?
The people ask this question to express their amazement. The question could be changed to an exclamation. Alternate translation: "All of these Galileans could not possibly know our languages!"
Acts 2:8
Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born?
Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses how amazed they were or 2) this is a real question for which the people wanted an answer.
in our own language in which we were born
"in our own languages that we have learned from birth"
Acts 2:9
Parthians ... Medes ... Elamites
These are names of people groups.
Mesopotamia ... Judea ... Cappadocia ... Pontus ... Asia
These are names of large areas of land.
Acts 2:10
Phrygia ... Pamphylia ... Egypt ... Libya ... Cyrene
These are names of large areas of land.
Acts 2:11
Cretans ... Arabians
These are names of people groups.
proselytes
converts to the Jewish religion
Acts 2:12
amazed and perplexed
These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that the people could not understand what was happening. Alternate translation: "surprised and confused"
Acts 2:13
They are full of new wine
Some people accuse the believers of having drunk too much wine. Alternate translation: "They are drunk"
new wine
This refers to wine that is in the process of fermentation.
Acts 2:14
Connecting Statement:
Peter begins his speech to the Jews who were there on the Day of Pentecost.
stood with the eleven
All the apostles stood up in support of Peter's statement.
raised his voice
This is an idiom for "spoke loudly."
declared to them
Made a formal, important speech to them. See how you translated "make declarations" in Acts 2:4.
let this be known to you
This means that Peter is about to explain the meaning of what the people had witnessed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "know this" or "let me explain this to you"
pay attention to my words
Peter was referring to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to what I am saying"
Acts 2:15
it is only the third hour of the day
"It is only nine o'clock in the morning." Peter expected his audience to know that people do not get drunk that early in the day.
Acts 2:16
General Information:
Here Peter tells them a passage about which the prophet Joel wrote in the Old Testament that relates to what is happening with the languages in which the believers spoke. This is written in the form of poetry as well as being a quotation.
this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what God told the prophet Joel to write" or "this is that which the prophet Joel spoke"
Acts 2:17
It will be
"This is what will happen" or "This is what I will do"
I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh
Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit abundantly to all flesh"
all flesh
This is a hyperbolic metonym that refers to all people by speaking of them as all living creatures, who have flesh. Alternate translation: "all people"
Acts 2:18
Connecting Statement:
Peter continues to quote the prophet Joel.
my servants and my female servants
"both my male and my female servants." These words emphasize that God will pour out his Spirit on all of his

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

servants, both men and women.

I will pour out my Spirit

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:17]

Acts 2:19

vapor of smoke

"thick smoke" or "clouds of smoke"

Acts 2:20

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting the prophet Joel.

The sun will be turned to darkness

This means that the sun will appear to be dark instead of light. Alternate translation: "The sun will become dark"

the moon to blood

This means that the moon will appear to be red like blood. Alternate translation: "the moon will be turned to blood" or "the moon will appear to be red"

the great and remarkable day

The words "great" and "remarkable" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of greatness. Alternate translation: "the very great day"

remarkable

great and beautiful

Acts 2:21

everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will save everyone who calls on him"

Acts 2:22

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

hear these words

"listen to what I am about to say"

accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs

This means that God proved that he had appointed Jesus for his mission, and proved who he was by his many miracles.

Acts 2:23

by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge

The nouns "plan" and "foreknowledge" can be translated as verbs. This means that God planned out and knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because God planned out and knew beforehand everything that would happen"

This man was handed over

Possible meanings: 1) "you handed Jesus over into the hands of his enemies" or 2) "Judas betrayed Jesus to you."

you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross

Although "lawless men" actually crucified Jesus, Peter accuses the crowd of having killed him because they demanded his death.

by the hand of lawless men

Here "hand" refers to the actions of the lawless men. Alternate translation: "through the actions of lawless men" or "by what lawless men did"

lawless men

Possible meanings are 1) the unbelieving Jews who accused Jesus of crimes or 2) the Roman soldiers who performed the execution of Jesus.

Acts 2:24

But God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "But God caused him to live again"

freeing him from the agonies of death

He speaks of the agonies of dying as if God were freeing Christ from ropes that were binding Jesus. Alternate translation: "ending the pains of death"

for him to be held by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for death to hold him"

for him to be held by it

Peter speaks of Christ remaining dead as if death were a person who held him captive. Alternate translation: "for him to remain dead"

Acts 2:25

General Information:

Here Peter quotes a passage that David wrote in a Psalm which relates to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "I" and "my" refer to Jesus and the words "Lord" and "he" refer to God.

For David says about him, 'I saw

The context makes it plain that this is an elliptical way of saying that David was speaking as if David were the Messiah. Alternate translation: "For David spoke these words as if he were the Christ: 'I saw"

before my face

"in front of me." Alternate translation: "in my presence" or "with me"

beside my right hand

To be at someone's "right hand" often means to be in a position to help and sustain. Alternate translation: "right beside me" or "with me to help me"

I should not be moved

Here the word "moved" means to be troubled. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will not be able to cause me trouble" or "nothing will trouble me"

Acts 2:26

my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced

People consider the "heart" the center of emotions and the "tongue" voices those emotions. Alternate translation: "I was glad and rejoiced"

my flesh will live in hope

Possible meanings of the phrase "my flesh" are 1) it indicates that the writer is a mortal who will die. Alternate translation: "even though I am only mortal, I will live in hope" or 2) it is a synecdoche for the writer's entire person. Alternate translation: "I will live in hope"

will live in hope

Here the word "hope" refers to a person's confidence that what he desires will happen. Since the speaker hoped that God would rescue him, "in hope" could be translated as "in confidence in God." The phrase "live in hope" can also be translated with the phrases "confidently expect," "confidently wait," or "trust." Alternate translation: "will live with confidence in God" or "will confidently wait for God to rescue me"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Acts 2:27

General Information:

Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "my," "Holy One," and "me" refer to Jesus and the words "you" and "your" refer to God.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting David.

neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay

The Messiah, Jesus, refers to himself with the words "your Holy One." Alternate translation: "neither will you allow me, your Holy One, to see decay"

to see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. Alternate translation: "to decay"

Acts 2:28

the ways of life

"the ways that lead to life"

full of gladness with your face

Here the word "face" refers to the presence of God. Alternate translation: "very glad when I see you" or "very glad when I am in your presence"

gladness

joy, happiness

Acts 2:29

General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to David.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech to the Jews that surround him and the other believers in Jerusalem, which he began in Acts 1:16.

Brothers, it

"My fellow Jews, it"

it is proper for me to speak

Or "it is possible." He is able to speak because it is proper for him to do so.

he both died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died and people buried him"

Acts 2:30

he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne

"God would set one of David's fruit upon David's throne." Alternate translation: "God would appoint one of David's fruit to be king in David's place"

one of the fruit of his loins

This is a metaphor for a child or other descendant. Alternate translation: "one of his children" or "one of his descendants"

Acts 2:31

he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Neither did God abandon him to Hades nor did his flesh see decay" or "God did not abandon him to Hades, and his flesh did not see decay"

did his flesh see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:27]

Acts 2:32

This Jesus—God raised him up

Peter talks again about Jesus. Alternate Translation: "It is this Jesus whom God raised up" or "God raised up this Jesus"

God raised him up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

Acts 2:33

having been exalted to the right hand of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has exalted Jesus up to his right hand"

having been exalted to the right hand of God

"Right hand of God" here is an idiom that means that Christ will rule as God, with God's authority. Alternate translation: "Christ is in the position of God"

he has poured out what

Here the words "poured out" mean that Jesus, who is God, made these events to happen. It is implicit that he did this by giving the Holy Spirit to the believers. Alternate translation: "he has caused to happen these things that"

has poured out

"has given generously and abundantly." See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 2:17. Alternate translation: "given abundantly"

Acts 2:34

General Information:

Peter again quotes one of David's Psalms. David is not speaking of himself in this Psalm. "The Lord" and "my" refer to God; "my Lord" and "your" refer to Jesus the Messiah.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

Acts 2:35

until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet

This means that God will completely defeat the Messiah's enemies and make them subject to him. Alternate translation: "until I make you victorious over all of your enemies"

Acts 2:36

all the house of Israel

This refers to the entire nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "every Israelite"

Acts 2:37

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people in the crowd to whom Peter spoke.

Connecting Statement:

The Jews respond to Peter's speech and Peter answers them.

when they heard this

"when the people heard what Peter had said"

they were pierced in their hearts, and said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

pierced in their hearts
This means that the people felt guilty and became very sad. Alternate translation: "deeply troubled"
Acts 2:38
be baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow us to baptize you"
in the name of Jesus Christ
"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of" Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus Christ"
Acts 2:39
all who are far off
This means either 1) "all people who live far away" or 2) "all people who are far from God."
Acts 2:40
he testified and exhorted them
"he seriously told them." Here the word "testified" and "begged" share similar meanings and emphasize that Peter urged them strongly to respond to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "he strongly urged them"
exhorted
or "pleaded with"
Be saved from this perverse generation
The implication is that God will punish "this perverse generation." Alternate translation: "Be saved from the punishment that these wicked people will suffer"
Be saved
Possible meanings are 1) Peter was urging people to let God save them. Alternate translation: "Let God save you," or 2) Peter was simply urging them in a general way to avoid being punished. Alternate translation: "Save yourselves" or "Flee" or "Escape"
Acts 2:41
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story that happened on the Day of Pentecost.
they received his word
Here the word "received" means that they accepted what Peter said to be true. Alternate translation: "they believed what Peter said"
were baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people baptized them"
there were added in that day about three thousand souls
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about three thousand souls joined the believers on that day"
about three thousand souls
Here the word "souls" refers to people. Alternate translation: "about 3,000 people"
Acts 2:42
Connecting Statement:
This section explains how the believers continued to live after the Day of Pentecost.
the breaking of bread
Bread was part of their meals. These words could refer to 1) any meals they might eat together. Alternate translation: "eating meals together" or 2) meals they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "eating the Lord's Supper together"
Acts 2:43
Fear came upon every soul
Here the word "Fear" refers to deep respect and awe for God. The word "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "Each person felt a deep respect and awe for God"
many wonders and signs were done through the apostles
Possible meanings are 1) "the apostles performed many wonders and signs" or 2) "God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles"
wonders and signs
"miraculous deeds and supernatural events." See how you translated this in Acts 2:22.
Acts 2:44
All who believed were together
Possible meanings are 1) "All of them believed the same thing" or 2) "All who believed were together in the same place."
had all things in common
"shared their belongings with one another"
Acts 2:45
property and possessions
"land and things they owned"
distributed them to all
Here the word "them" refers to the profit that they made from selling their property and possessions. Alternate translation: "distributed the proceeds to all"
according to the needs anyone had
They distributed the proceeds that they earned from selling their property and possessions to any believer who had a need.
Acts 2:46
they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple
You may need to supply the words that have been omitted in this ellipse. What they devoted themselves to doing is stated in verse 42. Alternate translation: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching with one purpose in the temple"
with one purpose
This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.
They also broke bread in homes
Bread was part of their meals. Alternate translation: "They also ate meals together in their homes"
Acts 2:47
praising God and having favor with all the people
"praising God. All the people approved of them"
those who were being saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the Lord saved"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 3

Acts 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The covenant God made with Abraham

This chapter explains that Jesus came to the Jews because God was fulfilling part of the covenant he had made with Abraham. Peter thought that the Jews were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus, but he wanted them to understand that Jesus, by living and dying, had fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and that if they repented, God would forgive them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You delivered up"

The Romans were the ones who killed Jesus, but they killed him because the Jews captured him, brought him to the Romans, and told the Romans to kill him. For this reason Peter thought that they were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus. But he tells them that they are also the first ones to whom God has sent Jesus's followers to invite them to repent (Acts 3:26). (See: repent)

Links:

Acts 3:1 Notes

Acts 3:1

Connecting Statement:

One day Peter and John go to the temple.

into the temple

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "to the temple courtyard" or "into the temple area"

Acts 3:2

a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying a man who was lame from from his mother's womb"

from his mother's womb

"ever since he was born"

the temple gate called Beautiful

This was one of the gates in the high, strong wall that surrounded the temple. People sometimes gathered near the gate.

lame

unable to walk

Acts 3:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:4

Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said

Both Peter and John looked at the man, but only Peter spoke.

fastening his eyes upon him

Possible meanings are 1) "looking directly at him" or 2) "looking intently at him"

Acts 3:5

The lame man looked at them

Here the word "looked" means to pay attention to something. Alternate translation: "The lame man paid close attention to them"

Acts 3:6

Silver and gold I do not have

"I do not own any silver or gold"

Silver and gold

These words refer to money.

what I do have

It is understood that Peter has the ability to heal the man.

In the name of Jesus Christ

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "With the authority of Jesus Christ"

Acts 3:7

Peter raised him up

"Peter caused him to stand"

Acts 3:8

he entered ... into the temple

He did not go inside the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "he entered ... the temple area" or "he entered ... into the temple courtyard"

Acts 3:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:10

noticed that it was the man

"realized that it was the man" or "recognized him as the man"

the Beautiful Gate

This was the name of one of the entrances to the temple area. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 3:2.

they were filled with wonder and amazement

Here the words "wonder" and "amazement" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of the people's amazement. Alternate translation: "they were extremely amazed"

Acts 3:11

General Information:

The phrase "in the porch that is called Solomon's" makes it clear that they were not inside the temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Peter and John but not to the crowd to whom Peter is talking.

Connecting Statement:

After healing the man who could not walk, Peter talks to

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the people.
the porch that is called Solomon's
"Solomon's Porch." This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. It was in the temple courtyard.
greatly marveling
"extremely surprised"
Acts 3:12
When Peter saw this
Here the word "this" refers to the amazement of the people.
You Israelite men
"Fellow Israelites." Peter was addressing the crowd.
why do you marvel?
Peter asks this question to emphasize that they should not be surprised by what had happened. Alternate translation: "you should not be surprised."
Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness?
Peter asks this question to emphasize that the people should not think that he and John had healed the man by their own abilities. This could be written as two statements. Alternate translation: "Do not fix your eyes on us. We did not make him walk by our own power or godliness."
fix your eyes on us
This means that they looked intently at them without stopping. Alternate translation: "stare at us" or "look at us"
Acts 3:13
Connecting Statement:
Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.
rejected before the face of Pilate
Here the phrase "before the face of" means "in the presence of." Alternate translation: "rejected in Pilate's presence"
when he had decided to release him
"when Pilate had decided to release Jesus"
Acts 3:14
for a murderer to be given to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to release a murderer to you"
Acts 3:15
General Information:
Here the word "we" includes just Peter and John.
the Founder of life
This refers to Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who gives people eternal life" or 2) "the ruler of life" or 3) "the one who leads people to life"
Acts 3:16
On the basis of faith in his name
Possible meanings are 1) this is the reason the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "Because of faith in his name" or 2) this is how the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "By faith in his name"
On the basis of faith in his name
The word "his" refers to the Founder of life, Jesus. The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) the lame man had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because he believed in Jesus name" or 2) Peter and John, and perhaps the lame man, had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because we believed in Jesus's name"
his name
The phrase "his name" is a metonym either for Jesus or for Jesus's power.
made this man ... strong
"made this man ... well"
The faith that is through Jesus
Possible meanings are 1) this is the faith that Jesus enables people to have. Alternate translation: "The faith that comes from Jesus" or 2) this is faith in Jesus.
Acts 3:17
Now
Here Peter shifts the audience's attention from the lame man and continues to talk to them directly.
you acted in ignorance
Possible meanings are 1) that the people did not know that Jesus was the Messiah or 2) that the people did not understand the significance of what they were doing.
Acts 3:18
God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets
When the prophets spoke, it was as though God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "God foretold by telling all of the prophets what to speak"
God foretold
"God spoke about ahead of time" or "God told about before they happened"
the mouth of all the prophets
Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of all the prophets"
Acts 3:19
and turn
"and turn to the Lord." Here "turn" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and start obeying the Lord"
so that your sins may be blotted out
Here "blotted out" is a metaphor for forgiving. Sins are spoken of as if they are written in a book and God erases them from the book when he forgives them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God will forgive you for sinning against him"
Acts 3:20
times of refreshing
Possible meanings are 1) "times when God will strengthen your spirits" or 2) "times when God will revive you"
from the presence of the Lord
Here the words "presence of the Lord" is a metonym for the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "from the Lord"
that he may send the Christ
"that he may again send the Christ." This refers to Christ's coming again.
who has been appointed for you
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom he has appointed for you"
Acts 3:21
Connecting Statement:
Peter continues the speech that he began in Acts 3:12 to the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jews who stood in the temple area.

He is the One heaven must receive

"He is the One heaven must welcome." Peter speaks of heaven as if it were a person who welcomes Jesus into his home.

heaven must receive until

This means that it is necessary for Jesus to remain in heaven because that is what God has planned.

until the time of the restoration of all things

Possible meanings are 1) "until the time when God will restore all things" or 2) "until the time when God will fulfill everything that he foretold."

about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets

When the prophets spoke long ago, it was as if God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "about which things God spoke long ago by telling his holy prophets to speak about them"

the mouth of his holy prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of his holy prophets"

Acts 3:22

General Information:

Peter begins to quote something Moses told the Israelites before the Messiah came.

will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers

"will cause one of your brothers to become a true prophet, and everyone will know about him"

your brothers

"your nation"

Acts 3:23

that prophet will be completely destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that prophet, God will completely destroy"

Acts 3:24

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

Yes, and all the prophets

"In fact, all the prophets." Here the word "Yes" adds emphasis to what follows.

from Samuel and those who came after him

"beginning with Samuel and continuing with the prophets who lived after he did"

these days

"these times" or "the things that are happening now"

Acts 3:25

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant

Here the word "sons" refers to heirs who will receive what the prophets and the covenant promised. Alternate translation: "You are the heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant"

In your seed

"Because of your offspring"

all the families of the earth will be blessed

Here the word "families" refers to people groups or nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the people groups in the world"

Acts 3:26

After God raised up his servant

"After God caused Jesus to become his servant and made him famous"

his servant

This refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

turning every one of you from your wickedness

Here "turning ... from" is a metaphor for causing someone stop doing something. Alternate translation: "causing every one of you to stop doing wicked things" or "causing every one of you to repent from your wickedness"

Chapter 4

Acts 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:25-26.

Special concepts in this chapter

Unity

The first Christians wanted very much to be united. They wanted to believe the same things and share everything they owned and help those who needed help.

"Signs and wonders"

This phrase refers to things that only God can do. The Christians wanted God to do what only he can do so that people would believe that what they said about Jesus was true.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Cornerstone

The cornerstone was the first piece of stone that people put down when they were building a building. This is a metaphor for the most important part of something, the part on which everything depends. To say that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church is to say that nothing in the church is more important than Jesus and that everything about the church depends on Jesus. (See: and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). With these words Peter was saying that no other person who has ever been on the earth or will ever be on earth can save people.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Links:

Acts 4:1 Notes

Acts 4:1
Connecting Statement:
The religious leaders arrest Peter and John after Peter's having healed the man who was born lame.
came upon them
"approached them" or "came to them"
Acts 4:2
They were deeply troubled
"They were very angry." The Sadducees, in particular, would have been angry about what Peter and John were saying because they did not believe in resurrection.
proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead
Peter and John were saying that God would raise people from the dead in the same way as he had raised Jesus from among the dead. Translate this in a way that allows "the resurrection" to refer to both Jesus's resurrection and the general resurrection of other people.
from the dead
From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
Acts 4:3
They laid hands on them
"The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John"
since it was now evening
It was common practice not to question people at night.
Acts 4:4
the number of the men who believed
This refers only to men and does not include how many women or children believed.
was about five thousand
"grew to about five thousand"
Acts 4:5
General Information:
Here the word "their" refers to the Jewish people as a whole.
Connecting Statement:
The rulers question Peter and John, who answer without fear.
It came about ... that
This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
their rulers, elders, and scribes
This is a reference to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling court, which consisted of these three groups of people.
Acts 4:6
John, and Alexander
These two men were members of the high priest's family. This is not the same John as the apostle.
Acts 4:7
By what power
"Who gave you power"
in what name
Here the word "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by whose authority"
Acts 4:8
Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said
This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:4]
Acts 4:9
we are on trial today
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are questioning us today"
by what means this man was healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what means we have made this man well"
Acts 4:10
let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May all of you and all of the people of Israel know this"
to you all and to all the people of Israel
"to you who are questioning us and to all the other people of Israel"
in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth
Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"
whom God raised from the dead
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again"
Acts 4:11
Connecting Statement:
Peter completes his speech to the Jewish religious rulers that he began in Acts 4:8.
Jesus Christ is the stone ... which has been made the cornerstone
Peter is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God will made him the most important in his kingdom, as a cornerstone in a building is important.
you builders rejected
"you builders thought was worth nothing"
Acts 4:12
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Peter as well as those to whom he is speaking.
There is no salvation in any other person
The noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "He is the only person who is able to save"
no other name under heaven given among men
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no other name under heaven that God has given among men"
no other name ... given among men by which
The phrase "name ... given among men" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no other person under heaven, who is given among men, by whom"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

under heaven

This is a way of referring to everywhere in the world. Alternate translation: "in the world"

by which we must be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which can save us" or "who can save us"

Acts 4:13

General Information:

Here the second instance of "they" refers to Peter and John. All other occurrences of the word "they" in this section refer to the Jewish leaders.

the boldness of Peter and John

Here the abstract noun "boldness" refers to the way in which Peter and John responded to the Jewish leaders, and can be translated with an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "how boldly Peter and John had spoken" or "how bold Peter and John were"

boldness

bravery, courage, lack of fear. A person with boldness is not afraid.

realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men

The Jewish leaders "realized" this because of the way Peter and John spoke.

and realized

"and understood"

ordinary, uneducated men

The words "ordinary" and "uneducated" share similar meanings. They emphasize that Peter and John had received no formal training in Jewish law.

Acts 4:14

the man who was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man whom Peter and John had healed"

nothing to say against this

"nothing to say against Peter and John's healing of the man." Here the word "this" refers to what Peter and John had done.

Acts 4:15

the apostles

This refers to Peter and John.

Acts 4:16

What should we do with these men?

The Jewish leaders ask this question out of frustration because they could not think of what to do with Peter and John. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that we can do with these men!"

For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God has done a remarkable sign through them, and everyone who lives in Jerusalem has seen it" or "For everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have done a remarkable sign"

sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This is a generalization. It may also be an exaggeration to show that the leaders think that this is a very big problem. Alternate translation: "many of the people who live in Jerusalem" or "people who live throughout Jerusalem"

Acts 4:17

in order that it spreads no further

Here the word "it" refers to any miracles or teaching Peter and John might continue to do. Alternate translation: "in order that news of this miracle spreads no further" or "in order that no more people hear about this miracle"

not to speak anymore to anyone in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "not to speak anymore to anyone about this person, Jesus"

Acts 4:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 4:19

Whether it is proper in the sight of God

Here the phrase "in the sight of God" refers to God's opinion. Alternate translation: "Whether God thinks it is right"

Acts 4:20

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and John but not to those whom they are addressing.

Acts 4:21

After further warning

The Jewish leaders again threatened to punish Peter and John.

They were unable to find any excuse to punish them

Although the Jewish leaders threatened Peter and John, they could not find a reason to punish them without causing the people to riot.

for what had been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for what Peter and John had done"

Acts 4:22

General Information:

This verse gives background information about the age of the lame man who was healed.

The man who had experienced this sign of healing

"The man whom Peter and John had miraculously healed"

this sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

Acts 4:23

came to their own people

The phrase "their own people" refers to the rest of the believers. Alternate translation: "went to the other believers"

Acts 4:24

General Information:

Speaking together, the people quote a Psalm of David from the Old Testament. Here the word "they" refers to the rest of the believers, but not to Peter and John.

they raised their voices with one purpose to God

To raise the voice is an idiom for speaking. "they began speaking with one purpose to God"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 4:25

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

This means that the Holy Spirit caused David to speak or write down what God said.

through the mouth of your servant, our father David

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that David spoke or wrote down. Alternate translation: "by the words of your servant, our father David"

our father David

Here the word "father" refers to an ancestor.

Why did the Gentile nations rage, and the peoples imagine useless things?

This is a rhetorical question that emphasizes the futility of opposing God. Alternate translation: "The Gentile nations should not have raged, and the peoples should not have imagined useless things."

the peoples imagine useless things

These "useless things" consist of plans to oppose God. Alternate translation: "the peoples imagine useless things against God"

peoples

people groups

Acts 4:26

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete their quotation from King David in the Psalms that they began in Acts 4:25.

The kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord

These two lines mean basically the same thing. The two lines emphasize the combined effort of the earth's rulers to oppose God.

set themselves together ... gathered together

These two phrases mean that they joined their armies together to fight a battle. Alternate translation: "set their armies together ... gathered their troops together"

against the Lord, and against his Christ

Here the word "Lord" refers to God. In the Psalms, the word "Christ" refers to the Messiah or God's anointed one.

Acts 4:27

Connecting Statement:

The believers continue praying.

in this city

"this city" refers to Jerusalem.

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully"

Acts 4:28

to do all that your hand and your plan had decided

Here the word "hand" is used to mean God's power. Additionally, the phrase "your hand and your desire decided" shows God's power and plan. Alternate translation: "to do all that you in your power had decided and planned they would do"

Acts 4:29

look upon their warnings

Here the words "look upon" are a request for God to take notice of the way in which the Jewish leaders threatened the believers. Alternate translation: "notice how they threaten to punish us"

speak your word with all boldness

The word "word" here is a metonym for God's message. The abstract noun "boldness" can be translated as an adverb. Alternate translation: "speak your message boldly" or "be bold when we speak your message"

Acts 4:30

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete the prayer that they began in Acts 4:24.

Stretch out your hand to heal and to give

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. This is a request for God to show how powerful he is. Alternate translation: "Show your power by healing people and by giving"

through the name of your holy servant Jesus

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "through the power of your holy servant Jesus"

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully." See how you translated this in Acts 4:27.

Acts 4:31

the place ... was shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place ... shook"

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Acts 2:4. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had filled them all" or "God had filled them all with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 4:32

were of one heart and soul

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and the word "soul" refers to the emotions. Together they refer to the total person. Alternate translation: "thought the same way and wanted the same things"

they had everything in common

"they shared their belongings with one another." See how you translated this in Acts 2:44.

Acts 4:33

great grace was upon them all

Possible meanings are: 1) that God was greatly blessing the believers or 2) that the people in Jerusalem held the believers in very high esteem.

Acts 4:34

all who owned title to lands or houses

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who owned title to lands or houses" or "People who owned title to lands or houses"

owned title to lands or houses

"owned land or houses"

the money from the things that were sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the money that they received from the things that they sold"

Acts 4:35

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented the money to the apostles.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Alternate translation: "presented it to the apostles" or "gave it to the apostles"

it was distributed to each one according to their need

The noun "need" can be translated with a verb. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they distributed the money to each believer who needed it"

Acts 4:36

General Information:

Luke introduces Barnabas into the story.

Son of Encouragement

The apostles used this name to show that Joseph was a person who encouraged others. "Son of" is an idiom used to describe a person's behavior or character. Alternate translation: "Encourager" or "one who encourages"

Acts 4:37

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Chapter 5

Acts 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"

No one knows for sure if Ananias and Sapphira were truly Christians when they decided to lie about the land that they sold (Acts 5:1-10), because Luke does not say. However, Peter knew that they lied to the believers, and he knew that they had listened to and obeyed Satan.

When they lied to the believers, they also lied to the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit lives inside believers.

Links:

Acts 5:1 Notes

Acts 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Continuing the story of how the new Christians shared their belongings with other believers, Luke tells about two believers, Ananias and Sapphria.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story to tell a new part of the story.

Acts 5:2

his wife also knew it

"his wife also knew that he kept back part of the sale money"

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Acts 5:3

General Information:

If your language does not use rhetorical questions, you may reword these as statements.

why has Satan filled your heart to lie ... land?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "you should not have let Satan fill your heart to lie ... land."

Satan filled your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the will and emotions. The phrase "Satan filled your heart" is a metaphor. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "Satan completely controlled you" or 2) "Satan convinced you"

to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price

This implies that Ananias had told the apostles that he was giving the entire amount that he had received from selling his land.

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own ... authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "While it remained unsold, it was your own ... authority."

While it remained unsold

"Before you sold it"

after it was sold, was it not under your authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "after it was sold, you had control over the money that you received."

after it was sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you sold it"

Why did you put it in your heart to do this?

Peter used this question to rebuke Ananias. Here the word "heart" refers to the will and emotions. Alternate translation: "You should not have thought of doing this thing." or "It is Satan who has put this activity in your heart."

Acts 5:5

fell down and breathed his last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed his final breath" and is a polite way of saying that he died. Ananias fell down because he died; he did not die because he fell down. Alternate translation: "died and fell to the ground"

Acts 5:6

The young men arose

This means that they began to act. This does not necessarily mean that they had been sitting or that Peter and Ananias had been at the front of the room or a meeting hall. If your language has a phrase that speaks of people responding to something by beginning to act, you may use it.

Acts 5:7

his wife came in

"Ananias' wife came in" or "Sapphira came in"

what had happened

"that her husband had died"

Acts 5:8

for so much

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"for this much money." This refers to the amount of money that Ananias had given to the apostles.

Acts 5:9

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to both Ananias and Sapphira.

How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

Peter asks this question to rebuke Sapphira. Alternate translation: "You should not have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord!"

you have agreed together

"the two of you have agreed together"

to test the Spirit of the Lord

Here the word "test" means to challenge or to prove. They were trying to see if they could get away with lying to God without receiving punishment.

Look, the feet of the men

The word "Look" is an idiom for "Pay attention!" Peter is probably telling Sapphira to pay attention to the sound of the men's footsteps, which indicate that they are about to enter the building, not to look at their feet. Here the phrase "the feet" can be either a synecdoche for the men whose feet they are or a metonym for the sound that they make. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The men" or "Listen! The footsteps of the men"

they will carry

"the men will carry"

Acts 5:10

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Ananias and Sapphira.

fell down at his feet

This means that when she died, she fell on the floor in front of Peter. This expression should not be confused with falling down at a person's feet as a sign of humility.

breathed her last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed her final breath" and is a polite way of saying "she died." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 5:5]

Acts 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:12

General Information:

It is not clear whether here the word "They" refers to the believers or only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues to tell what happens in the early days of the church.

Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles

"Many signs and wonders took place among the people through the hands of the apostles." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people"

signs and wonders

"supernatural events and miraculous deeds." See how you translated these terms in Acts 2:22

through the hands of the apostles

Here the word "hands" refers to the apostles. Alternate translation: "through the apostles"

all together

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose. The people were more than just in the same place at the same time.

Solomon's Porch

This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. See how you translated "the porch that is called Solomon's" in Acts 3:11.

Acts 5:13

General Information:

The words "them" and "they" refer to the apostles.

none of the rest

Possible meanings are 1) the apostles were in Solomon's Porch, but the rest of the believers were afraid to join them there, or 2) all the believers were in Solomon's Porch, and the word "none" is a hyperbole that means that most of the people who were not believers were afraid to join them.

they were held in high esteem by the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people held the believers in high esteem"

Acts 5:14

more believers were being added to the Lord

This could be stated in active form. See how you translated "were added" in [Acts 2:41]

Acts 5:15

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people who lived in Jerusalem.

his shadow might fall on some of them

It is implied that God would heal them if Peter's shadow touched them.

Acts 5:16

those afflicted with unclean spirits

"those whom unclean spirits had afflicted"

they were all healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed them all" or "the apostles healed them all"

Acts 5:17

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders began to persecute the believers.

But

This begins a contrasting story. You may translate this in the way that your language introduces a contrasting narrative.

the high priest rose up

Here the phrase "rose up" means that the high priest decided to take action, not that he stood up from a seated position. Alternate translation: "the high priest took action"

they were filled with jealousy

The abstract noun "jealousy" can be translated as an adjective. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they became very jealous"

Acts 5:18

laid hands on

This means they had the believers arrested. See how you

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

translated this in [Acts 4:3]

Acts 5:19

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the apostles.

Acts 5:20

in the temple

This phrase here refers to the temple courtyard, not to the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

all the words of this life

The word "words" here is a metonym for the message that the apostles had already proclaimed. Possible meanings are 1) "all this message of eternal life" or 2) "the whole message of this new way of living"

Acts 5:21

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

into the temple

They went into the temple courtyard, not into the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "into the temple courtyard"

about daybreak

"as it began to be light." Although the angel led them out of the jail during the night, the sun was rising by the time the apostles reached the temple courtyard.

sent to the prison to have the apostles brought

This implies someone went to the jail. Alternate translation: "sent someone to the jail to bring the apostles"

Acts 5:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:23

we found no one inside

Possible meanings are 1) they found no one inside the apostles' cell Alternate translation: "we did not find them inside" or 2) the apostles had been the only prisoners and now there were no prisoners at all in the jail.

Acts 5:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

they were much perplexed

"they were very puzzled" or "they were very confused"

concerning them

"concerning the words they had just heard" or "concerning these things"

as to what would come of it

"and what would happen as a result" or "what would happen next"

Acts 5:25

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

standing in the temple

They did not go into the part of the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple courtyard"

Acts 5:26

Connecting Statement:

The captain and the officers bring the apostles before the Jewish religious council.

brought them back

"brought the apostles back"

they feared the people, that they might be stoned

This can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "they feared that the people might stone them"

Acts 5:27

they had brought them, they set them ... interrogated them

"the captain and officers had brought the apostles, the captain and the officers set the apostles ... interrogated the apostles"

interrogated

questioned to find out what was true

Acts 5:28

We ... us

The speakers were referring to themselves, but not to the apostles, so these words are exclusive.

you ... your

These words refer to the apostles and so are plural.

in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:17]

you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

Teaching many people in a city is spoken of as if they were filling the city with a teaching. Alternate translation: "you have taught many people in Jerusalem about him" or "you have taught about him throughout the Jerusalem"

desire to bring this man's blood upon us

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for death, and to bring someone's blood on people is a metaphor for saying that they are guilty of that person's death. Alternate translation: "desire to make us responsible for this man's death"

Acts 5:29

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the apostles, and not to the audience.

Peter and the apostles answered

Peter spoke on behalf of all of the apostles when he said the following words.

Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus

Here "raised up" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The God of our fathers caused Jesus to live again"

by hanging him on a tree

Here Peter uses the word "tree" to refer to the cross, which was made of wood. Alternate translation: "by hanging him on a cross"

Acts 5:31

God exalted him to his right hand

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "God exalted him to the place of honor beside him"

give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

The words "repentance" and "forgiveness" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent and have God forgive their sins"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Israel
The word "Israel" refers to the Jewish people.
Acts 5:32
those who obey him
"those who submit to God's authority"
Acts 5:33
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 5:34
Connecting Statement:
Gamaliel addresses the council members.
Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people
Luke introduces Gamaliel and provides background information about him.
who was honored by all the people
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom all the people honored"
to take the men outside
The words "the men" refers to the apostles.
Acts 5:35
pay close attention to
"think carefully about" or "be cautious about." Gamaliel was warning them not to do something that they would later regret.
Acts 5:36
Theudas rose up
Possible meanings are 1) "Theudas rebelled" or 2) "Theudas appeared."
claiming to be somebody
"claiming to be somebody important"
He was killed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People killed him"
all who had been obeying him were scattered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the people scattered who had been obeying him" or "all who had been obeying him went in different directions"
came to nothing
This means that they did not do what they had planned to do.
Acts 5:37
After this man
"After Theudas"
in the days of the census
"during the time of the census"
drew away some people after him
This means that he persuaded some people to rebel with him against the Roman government. Alternate translation: "caused many people to follow him" or "caused many people to join him in rebellion"
Acts 5:38
keep away from these men and let them alone
Gamaliel is telling the Jewish leaders not to punish the apostles any more and not to put them back in jail.
if this plan or work is of men
"if men have devised this plan or are doing this work"
it will be overthrown
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will overthrow it"
Acts 5:39
Connecting Statement:
Gamaliel finishes addressing the council members.
if it is of God
Here the word "it" refers to "this plan or work." Alternate translation: "if God has devised this plan or commanded these men to do this work"
So they were persuaded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Gamaliel persuaded them"
Acts 5:40
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the council members and all instances of "them" refer to the apostles.
they called the apostles in and beat them
The council members would have ordered the temple guards to do these things.
to speak in the name of Jesus
Here "name" refers to the authority of Jesus. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 4:18. Alternate translation: "to speak anymore in the authority of Jesus"
Acts 5:41
General Information:
All instances of "they" refer to the apostles.
they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name
The apostles rejoiced because God had honored them by letting the Jewish leaders dishonor them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"
for the Name
Here "the Name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for Jesus"
Acts 5:42
General Information:
The word "they" refers to the apostles.
Thereafter every day
"After that day, every day." This phrase marks what the apostles did every day through the following days.
in the temple and from house to house
They did not go into the temple building where only the priests went. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard and in different people's houses"

Chapter 6

Acts 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The distribution to the widows
The believers in Jerusalem gave help—probably money but possibly food—every day to women whose husbands had died. All of these widows had been raised as Jews, but some of them had lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew. Others had

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

lived in Gentile areas and spoke Greek. Those who gave out the money or food gave it to the Hebrew-speaking widows but not to the Greek-speaking widows. To please God, the church leaders appointed Greek-speaking men to make sure the Greek-speaking widows received their share of help. One of these Greek-speaking men was Stephen.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"His face was like the face of an angel"

No one knows for sure what it was about Stephen's face that was like the face of an angel, because Luke does not tell us. It is best for the translation to say only what the ULB says about this.

Links:

Acts 6:1 Notes

Acts 6:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story. Luke gives important background information to understand the story.

Now in these days

Consider how new parts of a story are introduced in your language.

was multiplying

"was greatly increasing"

Grecian Jews ... Hebrews

These were both groups of Jews who had become believers. The writer assumes that the reader understands that these people were all believers because at this point all believers had grown up as Jews.

Grecian Jews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts living somewhere in the Roman Empire outside of Israel and speaking Greek. Their language and culture were somewhat different from those who had grown up in Israel.

the Hebrews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts in Israel speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

widows

A widow is a woman who has not remarried since her husband died.

their widows were being overlooked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Hebrew believers were overlooking the Grecian widows"

being overlooked

"being ignored" or "being forgotten." There were so many who needed help that some were missed.

daily distribution of help

The disciples were able to help the widows because believers were giving money to the apostles Acts 4:34-35. Possible meanings are 1) the disciples used the money to buy food, which they would give to the widows, or 2) the disciples gave the money directly to the widows.

Acts 6:2

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

The twelve

This refers to the eleven apostles plus Matthias, who was selected in Acts 1:26.

the multitude of the disciples

"all of the disciples" or "all the believers"

give up the word of God

This is an exaggeration in order to emphasize the importance of their task of teaching the word of God. Alternate translation: "stop preaching and teaching the word of God"

serve tables

This is a phrase meaning to serve food to the people.

Acts 6:3

General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to the believers and so is plural.

men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) the men have three qualities—a good reputation, being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom or 2) the men have a reputation for two qualities—being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom .

men of good reputation

"men that people know are good" or "men whom people trust"

over this business

"to be responsible to do this task"

Acts 6:4

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

the ministry of the word

"the ministry of teaching and preaching the message"

Acts 6:5

Their speech pleased the whole multitude

"All the disciples liked their suggestion"

Stephen ... Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus

These are Greek names, so it seems that all of the men elected were from the Grecian Jewish group of believers.

proselyte

a Gentile who converted to the Jewish religion

Acts 6:6

placed their hands upon them

This represented giving a blessing and imparting responsibility and authority for the work to the seven.

Acts 6:7

General Information:

This verse gives an update on the church's growth.

the word of God continued to spread

The writer speaks of the growing number of people who believed the word as if the word of God itself were covering a larger area. Alternate translation: "the number of people who believed the word of God increased" or "the number of people who believed the message from God increased"

became obedient to the faith

"followed the teaching of the new belief"

the faith

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Possible meanings are 1) the gospel message of trust in Jesus or 2) the teaching of the church or 3) the Christian teaching.

Acts 6:8

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story.

Now Stephen

This introduces Stephen as the main character in this part of the story.

Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing

The words "grace" and "power" here refer to power from God. This could be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "God was giving Stephen power to do"

Acts 6:9

General Information:

The writer continues giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

there arose some people ... Asia. These people were debating with Stephen

The word "arose" is an idiom that represents beginning to act. These people did not begin to rise into the air, nor did they necessarily get up from a sitting position. Alternate translation: "some people ... Asia, began to debate against Stephen"

the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia

Possible meanings are 1) the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia were all members of the synagogue of the Freedmen; 2) the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians were members of the synagogue of the Freedmen, but those from Cilicia and Asia were not; or 3) there were three separate groups of people: those from the synagogue, those from Cyrene and Alexandria, and those from Cilicia and Asia.

synagogue of the Freedmen

"Freedmen" were probably ex-slaves from these different locations. It is unclear if the other people listed were part of the synagogue or just participated in the debate with Stephen.

the Cyrenians and Alexandrians

"people from Cyrene and Alexandria." Cyrene and Alexandria were cities in Northern Africa. They were south of the Mediterranean Sea.

some from Cilicia and Asia

Cilicia was a city and Asia was a Roman province, both north of the Mediterranean Sea.

debating with Stephen

"arguing with Stephen"

Acts 6:10

Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

not able to stand against

This phrase means they could not prove false what he said. Alternate translation: "could not argue against"

Spirit

this refers to the Holy Spirit

Acts 6:11

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers only to the men they persuaded to lie. The word "they" refers back to the people from the synagogue of the freemen

some men to say

They were given money to give false testimony. Alternate translation: "some men to lie and say"

blasphemous words against

"bad things about"

Acts 6:12

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They were responsible for the false witnesses and for inciting the council, the elders, the scribes, and the other people.

stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes

"caused the people, the elders, and the scribes to be very angry at Stephen"

seized him

"grabbed him and held him so he could not get away"

Acts 6:13

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9).

does not stop speaking

"continually speaks"

Acts 6:14

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer only to the speakers, not to the hearers, and so is exclusive.

handed down to us

The phrase "handed down" means "passed on." Alternate translation: "taught our ancestors"

Acts 6:15

fixed their eyes on him

This is an idiom that means they looked intently at him. Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight. Alternate translation: "looked intently at him" or "stared at him"

was like the face of an angel

This phrase compares his face to that of an angel but does not say specifically what they have in common.

Chapter 7

Acts 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

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the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 7:42-43 and 49-50.
It appears that 8:1 is part of the narrative of this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Stephen said"

Stephen told the history of Israel very briefly. He paid special attention to the times that the Israelites had rejected the people God had chosen to lead them. At the end of the story, he said that the Jewish leaders he was talking to had rejected Jesus just as the evil Israelites had always rejected the leaders God had appointed for them.

"Full of the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen so that he said only and all of what God wanted him to say.

Foreshadowing

When an author speaks of something that is not important at that time but will be important later in the story, this is called foreshadowing. Luke mentions Saul, also known as Paul, here, even though he is not an important person in this part of the story. This is because Paul is an important person in the rest of the Book of Acts.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Implied information

Stephen was talking to Jews who knew the law of Moses well, so he did not explain things that his hearers already knew. But you may need to explain some of these things so that your readers will be able to understand what Stephen was saying. For example, you may need to make explicit that when Joseph's brothers "sold him into Egypt"

Metonymy

Stephen spoke of Joseph ruling "over Egypt" and over all of Pharaoh's household. By this he meant that Joseph ruled over the people of Egypt and of the people and possessions in Pharaoh's household.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background knowledge

The Jewish leaders to whom Stephen spoke already knew much about the events he was telling them about. They knew what Moses had written in the Book of Genesis. If the Book of Genesis has not been translated into your language, it may be difficult for your readers to understand what Stephen said.

Links:

Acts 7:1 Notes

Acts 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story about Stephen, which began in Acts 6:8, continues. Stephen begins his response to the high priest and the council by talking about things that happened in Israel's history. Most of this history comes from Moses's writings.

Acts 7:2

General Information:

The word "our" includes both Steven, the Jewish council to whom he spoke, and the entire audience.

Brothers and fathers, listen to me

Stephen was being very respectful to the council in greeting them as extended family.

Acts 7:3

General Information:

The word "your" refers to Abraham and so is singular.

Acts 7:4

General Information:

In verse 4 the words "he," "his," and "him" refer to Abraham. In verse 5 the words "He" and "he" refer to God, but the word "him" refers to Abraham. Here the word "you" refers to the Jewish council and audience.

Acts 7:5

He gave none of it

"He did not give any of it"

enough to set a foot on

Possible meanings for this phrase are 1) enough ground to stand on or 2) enough ground to take a step. Alternate translation: "a very tiny piece of ground"

as a possession to him and to his descendants after him

"for Abraham to own and to give to his descendants"

Acts 7:6

God was speaking to him like this

It may be helpful to state that this occurred later than the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Later God told Abraham"

four hundred years

"400 years"

Acts 7:7

I will judge the nation

"nation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "I will judge the people of the nation"

the nation that they serve

"the nation that they will serve"

Acts 7:8

gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision

The Jews would have understood that this covenant required Abraham to circumcise the males of his family. Alternate translation: "made a covenant with Abraham to circumcise the males of his family"

so Abraham became the father of Isaac

The story transitions to Abraham's descendants.

Jacob the father

"Jacob became the father." Stephen shortened this.

Acts 7:9

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the patriarchs
"the founders of our tribes" or "our ancestors." A patriarch is a man who rules a family.
sold him into Egypt
The Jews knew their ancestors sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Alternate translation: "sold him as a slave in Egypt"
was with him
This is an idiom for helping someone. Alternate translation: "helped him"
Acts 7:10
over Egypt
This refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over all the people of Egypt"
all his household
This refers to all his possessions. Alternate translation: "everything he owned"
Acts 7:11
Now a famine and great tribulation came
"a famine came." The ground stopped producing food and this caused a terrible suffering.
our fathers
This refers Jacob and his sons, who were the ancestors of the Jewish people.
Acts 7:12
grain
Grain was the most common food at that time.
our fathers
Here this phrase refers to Joseph's older brothers, who were Jacob's sons.
Acts 7:13
On their second trip
"On their next trip"
made himself known
Joseph revealed to his brothers his identity as their brother.
Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh learned that they were Joseph's family"
Acts 7:14
sent his brothers back
"sent his brothers back to Canaan" or "sent his brothers back home"
Acts 7:15
he died
Make sure it does not sound as though he died as soon as he arrived in Egypt. Alternate translation: "eventually Jacob died"
he and our fathers
"Jacob and his sons, who became our ancestors"
Acts 7:16
They were carried over ... and laid
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jacob's descendants carried Jacob's body and his son's bodies over ... and buried them"
for a price in silver
"with money"
Acts 7:17
As the time of the promise ... the people grew and multiplied
In some languages it may be helpful to say that the people increased in number before saying that the time of the promise arrived.
time of the promise approached
It was close to the time that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham.
Acts 7:18
there arose another king
"another king began to rule"
over Egypt
"Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over the people of Egypt"
who did not know about Joseph
"Joseph" refers to the reputation of Joseph. Alternate translation: "who did not know that Joseph had helped Egypt"
Acts 7:19
General Information:
The word "our" includes Stephen and his audience.
Acts 7:20
At that time Moses was born
This introduces Moses into the story.
very beautiful before God
This phrase is an idiom that means Moses was very beautiful.
was nourished
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his parents nourished him" or "his parents cared for him"
Acts 7:21
When he was placed outside
Moses was "placed outside" because of Pharaoh's command. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When his parents placed him outside" or "When they abandoned him"
Pharaoh's daughter ... raised him as her own son
She did for him every good thing a mother would do for her own son. Use your language's normal word for what a mother does to make sure her son becomes a healthy adult.
adopted him
If your language has a word for an informal procedure, not a formal legal procedure, in which one family takes a child in and raises him, you may want to use that here. Pharaoh's daughter did do for Moses what any mother would do for her child, but this involved no formal legal procedure.
as her own son
"as if he were her own son"
Acts 7:22
Moses was educated
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Egyptians educated Moses"
all the wisdom of the Egyptians
This is an exaggeration to emphasize that he was trained in the best schools in Egypt.
mighty in his words and works
"effective in his speech and actions" or "influential in what he said and did"
Acts 7:23
it came into his heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for "mind." The phrase "it came into his heart" is an idiom that means to decide something. Alternate translation: "it came into his mind" or "he

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decided"

visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel

This refers to his people, and not just to his family. Alternate translation: "see how his own people, the children of Israel, were doing"

Acts 7:24

Seeing an Israelite being mistreated ... the Egyptian

This can be stated in active form by rearranging the order. Alternate translation: "Seeing an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, Moses defended and avenged the Israelite by striking the Egyptian who was oppressing him"

striking the Egyptian

Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that he died.

Acts 7:25

he thought

"he imagined"

by his hand, was giving them salvation

Here "hand" refers to the actions of Moses. Alternate translation: "was giving them salvation through what he, Moses, was doing"

was giving them salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated using the verb "save." Alternate translation: "was saving them" or "was rescuing them"

Acts 7:26

when they were fighting

Some translations make it clear that two men were fighting. Alternate translation: "when two men of Israel were fighting"

make peace between them

"make them stop fighting"

Men, you are brothers

Moses was addressing the Israelites who were fighting.

why are you wronging one another?

Moses asked this question to encourage them to stop fighting. Alternate translation: "you should not do wrong to each other!"

Acts 7:27

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the Israelites but does not include Moses.

Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

The man used this question to rebuke Moses. Alternate translation: "No one appointed you ruler or judge over us." or "You have no authority over us!"

Acts 7:28

Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

The man used this question to warn Moses that he and probably others knew Moses had killed the Egyptian.

Acts 7:29

General Information:

Stephen's audience already knew that Moses had married a Midianite woman when he fled Egypt.

after hearing this

The implied information is that Moses understood that the Israelites knew that he had killed an Egyptian the day before (Acts 7:28).

Acts 7:30

When forty years were past

"After 40 years passed." This was the amount of time Moses had been in Midian. Alternate translation: "Forty years after Moses fled from Egypt"

an angel appeared

Stephen's audience knew that God spoke through the angel.

Acts 7:31

he marveled at the sight

Moses was surprised that the bush was not burning up in the fire. This was previously known by Stephen's audience. Alternate translation: "because the bush was not burning up"

as he approached to look at it

This may mean Moses initially drew close to the bush to investigate.

Acts 7:32

I am the God of your fathers

"I am the God whom your ancestors worshiped"

Moses trembled and did not dare to look

This may mean Moses drew back in fear when he heard the voice.

Moses trembled

Moses shook from fear. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses trembled with fear"

Acts 7:33

Take off the sandals

God told Moses this so he would honor God.

for the place where you are standing is holy ground

The implied information is that where God is present, the immediate area around God is considered holy or is made holy by God.

Acts 7:34

certainly seen

"seen for sure." The word "certainly" adds emphasis to "seen."

the oppression of my people

The abstract noun "oppression" can be translated using the verb "oppress." Alternate translation: "the way the Egyptians are oppressing my people"

my people

The word "my" emphasizes that these people belonged to God. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"

I have come down to rescue them

"will personally cause their release"

now come

"get ready." God uses an order here.

Acts 7:35

General Information:

Verses 35-38 contain a series of connected phrases referring to Moses. Each phrase begins with statements such as "This Moses" or "This same Moses" or "This is the man" or "It is the same Moses." If possible, use similar statements to emphasize Moses. After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent 40 years wandering around the wilderness before God led them into the land he had promised them.

This Moses whom they rejected

This refers back to the events recorded in Acts 7:27-28.

deliverer

"rescuer"

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by the hand of the angel ... bush
The hand is a metonym for the action performed by the person. In this case, the angel had commanded Moses to return to Egypt. Stephen speaks as if the angel had a physical hand. You may need to make explicit what action the angel did. Alternate translation: "by the action of the angel" or "by having the angel ... bush command him to return to Egypt"
Acts 7:36
during forty years
Stephen's audience knew about the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "during the 40 years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness"
Acts 7:37
raise up a prophet
"cause a man to be a prophet"
from among your brothers
"from among your own people"
Acts 7:38
This is the man who was in the assembly
"This is the man Moses who was among the Israelites"
This is the man
The phrase "This is the man" throughout this passage refers to Moses.
who received living words to give to us
God was the one who gave those words. Alternate translation: "to whom God spoke living words to give to us"
living words
Possible meanings are 1) "a message that endures" or 2) "words that give life."
Acts 7:39
pushed him away from themselves
This metaphor emphasizes their rejection of Moses. Alternate translation: "they rejected him as their leader"
in their hearts they turned back
Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts. To do something in the heart means to desire do to something. Alternate translation: "they desired to turn back"
Acts 7:40
General Information:
The quotation in this verse is from the writings of Moses.
At that time
"When they decided to return to Egypt"
Acts 7:41
they made a calf
Stephen's audience knew the calf they made was a statue. Alternate translation: "they made a statue that looked like a calf"
a calf ... the idol ... the work of their hands
These phrases all refer to the same statue of the calf.
Acts 7:42
General Information:
Stephen's quotation here is from the prophet Amos.
God turned
"God turned away." This action expresses that God was not pleased with the people and no longer helped them. Alternate translation: "God stopped correcting them"
gave them up
"abandoned them"
the stars in the sky
Possible meanings for the original phrase are 1) the stars only or 2) the sun, moon, and stars.
the book of the prophets
This was apparently a collection of the writings of several of the Old Testament prophets into one scroll. It would also have included the writings of Amos.
Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices ... Israel?
God asked this question to show Israel they did not worship him with their sacrifices. Alternate translation: "You did not honor me when brought offerings and sacrifices ... Israel."
house of Israel
This refers to the whole nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "all you Israelites"
Acts 7:43
General Information:
The quotation from the prophet Amos continues here.
Connecting Statement:
Stephen continues his response to the high priest and the council which he began in Acts 7:2.
You accepted
It is implied that they took these idols with them as they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "you carried with you from place to place"
tabernacle of Molech
the tent that housed the false god Molech
the star of the god Rephan
the star that is identified with the false god Rephan
the images that you made
They made statues or images of the gods Molech and Rephan in order to worship them.
I will carry you away beyond Babylon
"I will remove you to places even farther than Babylon." This would be God's act of judgment.
Acts 7:44
the tabernacle of the testimony
The tent that housed the ark (a box) with the 10 commandments carved in stone inside it
Acts 7:45
our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them
The phrase "under Joshua" means that their ancestors did these things in obedience to Joshua's direction. Alternate translation: "our fathers, in accordance with Joshua's instructions, received the tabernacle and brought it with them"
God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers
This sentence tells why the ancestors were able to take possession of the land. Alternate translation: "God forced the nations to leave the land before the face of our fathers"
God ... drove them out before the face of our fathers
Here "the face of our fathers" refers to the presence of their ancestors. Possible meanings are 1) "As our ancestors watched, God ... drove them out" or 2) "When our ancestors came, God ... drove them out"
the nations
This refers to the people who lived in the land before Israel.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Alternate translation: "the people who previously lived here"

drove them out

"forced them to leave the land"

Acts 7:46

he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob

Here "house" is probably a metonym for the ark of the covenant. David wanted to build a place for the ark, which represented God's presence, so people could go there to worship God. Alternate translation: "he might build a place where people could worship the God of Jacob"

the house of Jacob

Many versions read, "the God of Jacob."

Acts 7:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 7:48

made with hands

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "made by people"

Acts 7:49

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Heaven is my throne ... the earth is the footstool for my feet

The prophet is comparing the greatness of God's presence to how impossible it is for man to build a place for God to rest on earth since the whole earth is nothing but a place for God to rest his feet.

What kind of house can you build for me?

God asks this question to show how useless man's efforts are to take care of God. Alternate translation: "You can not build a house adequate enough for me!"

what is the place for my rest?

God asks this question to show man that he cannot provide God any rest. Alternate translation: "There is no place of rest good enough for me!"

Acts 7:50

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Did my hand not make all these things?

God asks this question to show that man did not create anything. Alternate translation: "My hand made all these things!"

Acts 7:51

Connecting Statement:

With a sharp rebuke, Stephen finishes his response to the high priest and the council, which he began in Acts 7:2.

You stiff-necked people

Stephen shifts from identifying with the Jewish leaders to rebuking them.

uncircumcised in heart and ears

The Jews regarded uncircumcised people as disobedient to God. Stephen uses "hearts and ears" to represent to the Jewish leaders who acted the way Gentiles act when they do not obey or listen to God. Alternate translation: "you refuse to obey and hear"

Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Stephen asked this question to show them that they learned nothing from the errors of their forefathers. Alternate translation: "Your forefathers persecuted every prophet!"

Righteous One

This refers to the Christ, the Messiah.

you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also

"you have also betrayed and murdered him"

murderers of him

"murderers of the Righteous One" or "murderers of the Christ"

Acts 7:53

the law that angels had ordained

"the laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors"

Acts 7:54

Connecting Statement:

The council reacts to Stephen's words.

Now when the council members heard these things

This is the turning point; the sermon ends and the council members react.

they were furious in their hearts

This means that they were extremely angry.

ground their teeth at Stephen

This action expressed their strong anger at Stephen or hatred of Stephen. Alternate translation: "they became so angry that they ground their teeth together" or "moved their teeth back and forth as they looked at Stephen"

Acts 7:55

looked up intently into heaven

"stared up into heaven." It appears that only Stephen saw this vision and not anyone else in the crowd.

saw the glory of God

People normally experienced the glory of God as a bright light. Alternate translation: "saw a bright light from God"

and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

To stand at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor and authority beside God"

Acts 7:56

Son of Man

Stephen refers to Jesus by the title "Son of Man."

Acts 7:57

covered their ears

"put their hands on their ears." They did this to show that they did not want to hear any more of what Stephen said.

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 7:58

They forced him out of the city

"They seized Stephen and forcefully took him out of the city"

outer clothing

These are cloaks or robes they would wear outside to stay warm, similar in function to a jacket or coat.

at the feet

"in front of." They were placed there so Saul could watch

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

them.
a young man
Saul was probably around 30 years old at the time.
Acts 7:59
receive my spirit
"take my spirit." It may be helpful to add "please" to show that this was a request. Alternate translation: "please receive my spirit"
Acts 7:60
Connecting Statement:
This ends the story of Stephen.
He knelt down
This is an act of submission to God.
do not hold this sin against them
This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "forgive them for this sin"
fell asleep
Here to fall asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "died"

Chapter 8

Acts 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 8:32-33.
The first sentence of verse 1 ends the description of the events in chapter 7. Luke begins a new part of his history with the words "So there began."

Special concepts in this chapter

Receiving the Holy Spirit
In this chapter for the first time Luke speaks of people receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-19). The Holy Spirit had already enabled the believers to speak in tongues, to heal the sick, and to live as a community, and he had filled Stephen. But when the Jews started putting believers in prison, those believers who could leave Jerusalem did leave, and as they went, they told people about Jesus. When the people who heard about Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the church leaders knew that those people had truly become believers.
Proclaimed
This chapter more than any other in the Book of Acts speaks of the believers proclaiming the word, proclaiming the good news, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. The word "proclaim" translates a Greek word that means to tell good news about something.

Links:

Acts 8:1 Notes

Acts 8:1
General Information:
It may be helpful to your audience to move these parts of the story about Stephen together by using a verse bridge as the UDB does.
Connecting Statement:
The story shifts from Stephen to Saul in these verses.
So there began ... except the apostles
This part of verse 1 is background information about the persecution that began after Stephen's death. This explains why Saul was persecuting the believers in verse 3.
that day
This refers to the day that Stephen died (Acts 7:59-60).
the believers were all scattered
The word "all" is a generalization to express that a large number of the believers left Jerusalem because of the persecution.
except the apostles
This statement implies that the apostles remained in Jerusalem even though they also experienced this great persecution.
Acts 8:2
Devout men
"God-fearing men" or "Men who feared God"
made great lamentation over him
"greatly mourned his death"
Acts 8:3
house after house
"houses one by one"
drag off both men and women
"took away both men and women by force." Saul forcefully took Jewish believers out of their homes and put them into prison.
men and women
This refers to men and women who believed in Jesus.
Acts 8:4
who had been scattered
The cause for the scattering, the persecution, was stated previously. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had fled the great persecution"
the word
This is a metonym for "the message." You may need to make explicit that the message was about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"
Acts 8:5
Connecting Statement:
This begins the story of Philip, whom the people had chosen as a deacon.
went down to the city of Samaria
The phrase "went down" is used here because Samaria is

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lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

the city of Samaria

Possible meanings are 1) Luke expected the readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "the main city in Samaria" or 2) Luke did not expect his readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "a city in Samaria"

proclaimed to them the Christ

The title "Christ" refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Alternate translation: "told them about Jesus Christ" or "told them about Jesus the Messiah"

Acts 8:6

Crowds of people

"Many people in the city of Samaria." The location was specified in Acts 8:5.

were giving close attention

The reason people paid attention was because of all the healing Philip did.

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 8:7

who were possessed

"who had them" or "who were controlled by them"

Acts 8:8

So there was much joy in that city

The phrase "that city" refers to the people who were rejoicing. Alternate translation: "So the people of the city were rejoicing"

Acts 8:9

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse gives the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

But there was a certain man ... named Simon

This is a way of introducing a new person into the story. Your language may use different wording to introduce a new person into the story.

the city

"the city in Samaria" (Acts 8:5)

Acts 8:10

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse continues to give the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

All the Samaritans

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many of the Samaritans" or "The Samaritans in the city"

from the least to the greatest

These two phrases refer to everyone from one extreme to the other. Alternate translation: "no matter how important they were"

This man is that power of God which is called Great

People were saying that Simon was the divine power known as "The Great Power."

that power of God which is called Great

Possible meanings are 1) the powerful representative of God or 2) God or 3) the most powerful man or 4) an angel. Since the term is unclear, it may be best to simply translate it as "the Great power of God."

Acts 8:11

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse ends the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

Acts 8:12

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized them" or "Philip baptized the new believers"

Acts 8:13

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

Simon himself believed

The word "himself" is here used to emphasize that Simon believed. Alternate translation: "Simon was also one of those who believed"

he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized Simon"

Acts 8:14

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the news of what was happening in Samaria.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story of the Samaritans.

Samaria

This refers to the many people who had become believers throughout the district of Samaria.

had received

"had believed" or "had accepted"

Acts 8:15

When they had come down

"when Peter and John had come down"

come down

This phrase is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

they prayed for them

"Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers"

that they might receive the Holy Spirit

"that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit"

Acts 8:16

they had only been baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip had only baptized the Samaritan believers"

they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" represents authority, and being baptized into his name represents being baptized in order to be under his authority. Alternate translation: "they had only been baptized to become disciples of the Lord Jesus"

Acts 8:17

Peter and John placed their hands on them
The word "them" refers to the Samaritan people who believed Stephen's message of the gospel.
placed their hands on them
This symbolic action shows that Peter and John wanted God to give the Holy Spirit to the believers.
Acts 8:18
the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles gave the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people"
Acts 8:19
that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit
"that I can give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom I place my hands"
Acts 8:20
General Information:
Here the words him, your, you, and yours all refer to Simon.
May your silver perish along with you
"May you and your money be destroyed"
the gift of God
Here this refers to the ability of a person to give the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on someone.
Acts 8:21
You have no part or allotted portion in this matter
The words "part" and "allotted portion" mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You may not participate in this work"
your heart is not right
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: "you are not right in your heart" or "the motives of your mind are not right"
Acts 8:22
this wickedness
"these evil thoughts"
he might perhaps forgive
"he may be willing to forgive"
for the intention of your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "for what you intended to do" or "for what you were thinking of doing"
Acts 8:23
in the poison of bitterness
Here "in the poison of bitterness" is a metaphor for being very envious. It speaks of envy as if it tastes bitter and poisons the person who is envious. Alternate translation: "very envious"
in the bonds of unrighteousness
The phrase "bonds of unrighteousness" is spoken as if unrighteousness could make Simon a prisoner. It is metaphor that means Simon is not able to stop himself from sinning. Alternate translation: "because you continue sinning you are like a prisoner" or "sin has made you its prisoner"
Acts 8:24
General Information:
Here the word "you" refers to Peter and John.
so that nothing you have said may happen to me
This refers to Peter's rebuke about Simon's silver perishing along with him.
nothing you have said may happen to me
This can be stated another way. Alternate translation: "the things you have said may not happen to me"
Acts 8:25
Connecting Statement:
This is concludes the part of the story about Simon and the Samaritans.
testified
Peter and John told what they personally knew about Jesus to the Samaritans.
spoken the word of the Lord
Here "word" is a metonym for "message." Peter and John explained the message about Jesus to the Samaritans.
to many villages of the Samaritans
Here "villages" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "to the people in many Samaritan villages"
Acts 8:26
Connecting Statement:
This begins the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia.
Now
This marks a transition in the story.
Arise and go
These verbs work together to emphasize that he should get ready to start a long journey that will take some time. Alternate translation: "Get ready to travel"
goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza
The phrase "goes down" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Gaza.
This road is in a desert
Most scholars believe Luke added this comment to describe the area through which Philip would travel.
Acts 8:27
General Information:
This verse gives background information about the man from Ethiopia.
Behold
The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.
eunuch
The emphasis of "eunuch" here is about the Ethiopian's being a high government official, not so much his physical state of being castrated.
Candace
This was a title for the queens of Ethiopia. It is similar to the way the word Pharaoh was used for the kings of Egypt.
He had come to Jerusalem to worship
This implies that he was a Gentile who believed in God and had come to worship at the Jewish temple. Alternate translation: "He had come to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem"
Acts 8:28
chariot
Possibly "wagon" or "carriage" is more fitting in this context. Chariots are normally mentioned as a vehicle for war, not as a vehicle for long-distance travel. Also, people stood to ride in chariots.

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reading the prophet Isaiah
This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"
Acts 8:29
stay close to this chariot
Philip understood that this meant he was to stay close to the person riding in the chariot. Alternate translation: "accompany the man in this chariot"
Acts 8:30
reading Isaiah the prophet
This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"
Do you understand what you are reading?
The Ethiopian was intelligent and could read, but he lacked spiritual discernment. Alternate translation: "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?"
Acts 8:31
How can I, unless someone guides me?
This question was asked to state emphatically that he could not understand without help. Alternate translation: "I cannot understand unless someone guides me."
He invited Philip to ... sit with him
It is implied here that Philip agreed to travel down the road with him to explain the scriptures.
He invited
Possible meanings are that 1) he offered a sincere invitation or 2) he made a sincere request.
Acts 8:32
General Information:
This a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the word "he" refers to the Messiah.
like a lamb before his shearer is silent
A shearer is a person who cuts the wool off the sheep so that it may be used.
Acts 8:33
General Information:
This verse continues quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the words "his" and "him" refer to the Messiah.
In his humiliation justice was taken away from him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He was humiliated and they did not judge him fairly" or "He allowed himself to be humbled before his accusers and he suffered injustice"
Who can give a full account of his descendants?
This question was used to emphasize that he will not have descendants. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to speak about his descendants, for there will not be any."
his life was taken from the earth
This referred to his death. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "men killed him" or "men took his life from the earth"
Acts 8:34
I beg you
"Please tell me"
Acts 8:35
this scripture
This refers to Isaiah's writings in the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the writings of Isaiah"
Acts 8:36
they went on the road
"they continued to travel along the road"
What prevents me from being baptized?
The eunuch uses this question as a way of asking Philip for permission to be baptized. Alternate translation: "Please allow me to be baptized."
Acts 8:37
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 8:38
commanded the chariot to stop
"told the driver of the chariot to stop"
Acts 8:39
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia. The story of Philip ends at Caesarea.
the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away
The words "took Philip away" imply that the Spirit took forceful, physical action, perhaps a miracle that moved Philip in an instant. The angel probably did not just suggest or even command that Philip leave the eunuch and go elsewhere.
the eunuch saw him no more
"the eunuch did not see Philip again"
Acts 8:40
Philip appeared at Azotus
There was no indication of Philip's traveling between where he baptized the Ethiopian and Azotus. He just suddenly disappeared along the road to Gaza and reappeared at the town of Azotus.
that region
This refers to the area around the town of Azotus.
to all the cities
"to all the cities in that region"

Chapter 9

Acts 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

"Letters for the synagogues in Damascus"

The "letters" Paul asked for were probably legal papers that permitted him to put Christians in prison. The synagogue leaders in Damascus would have obeyed the letter because it was written by the high priest. If the Romans had seen the

letter, they also would have allowed Saul to persecute the Christians, because they permitted the Jews to do as they desired to people who broke their religious laws.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

What Saul saw when he met Jesus

It is clear that Saul saw a light and that it was because of this light that he "fell upon the ground." Some people think that Saul knew that it was the Lord speaking to him without seeing a human form, because the Bible often speaks of God as being light and living in light. Other people think that later in his life he was able to say, "I have seen the Lord Jesus" because it was a human form that he saw here.

Links:

Acts 9:1 Notes

Acts 9:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen.

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts back to Saul and his salvation.

still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples

The noun "murder" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "still speaking threats, even to murder the disciples"

Acts 9:2

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen. Here the word "him" refers to the high priest and "he" refers to Saul.

for the synagogues

This refers to the people in the synagogues. Alternate translation: "for the people in the synagogues" or "for the leaders in the synagogues"

if he found any

"when he found people" or "if he found people"

who belonged to the Way

"who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ"

the Way

This term appears to have been a title for Christianity at that time.

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem

"he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Paul's purpose can be made clear by adding "so that the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them"

Acts 9:3

Connecting Statement:

After the high priest gave Saul the letters, Saul left for Damascus.

As he was traveling

Saul left Jerusalem and now travels to Damascus.

it happened that

This is an expression that marks a change in the story to show something different is about to happen.

there shone all around him a light out of heaven

"a light from heaven shone all around him"

out of heaven

Possible meanings are 1) out of heaven, where God lives or 2) out of the sky. The first meaning is preferable. Use that meaning if your language has a separate word for it.

Acts 9:4

he fell upon the ground and heard

Possible meanings are that 1) "Saul threw himself to the ground and heard" or 2) "the light caused Saul to fall to the ground, and he heard" or 3) "Saul fell to the ground the way one who faints falls, and he heard"

why are you persecuting me?

This rhetorical question communicates a rebuke to Saul. Alternate translation: "You are persecuting me!" or "Stop persecuting me!"

Acts 9:5

General Information:

Every occurrence of the word "you" here is singular.

Who are you, Lord?

Saul was not acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord. He uses that title because he understood that he spoke to someone of supernatural power.

Acts 9:6

but rise, enter into the city

"get up and go into the city Damascus"

it will be told you

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "someone will tell you"

Acts 9:7

stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "stood speechless. They heard the voice, but they did not see anyone"

but seeing no one

"but they saw no one" or "but they did not see anyone." Apparently only Saul experienced the light.

Acts 9:8

when he opened his eyes

This implies that he had closed his eyes because the light was too bright.

he could see nothing

"he could not see anything." Saul was blind.

Acts 9:9

was without sight

"was blind" or "could not see anything"

he neither ate nor drank

It is not stated whether he chose not to eat or drink as a form of worship, or if he had no appetite because he was too distressed from his situation. It is preferable not to specify the reason.

Acts 9:10

General Information:

The story of Saul continues, and Luke introduces another man named Ananias. This is not the same Ananias who

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died earlier in Acts [Acts 5:3]
Now there was
This introduces Ananias as a new character.
He said
"Ananias said"
Acts 9:11
go to the street which is called Straight
"go to Straight Street"
house of Judas
This Judas was not the disciple who had betrayed Jesus. This Judas was owner of a house in Damascus where Saul was staying.
a man from Tarsus named Saul
"a man from the city of Tarsus named Saul" or "Saul of Tarsus"
Acts 9:12
laying his hands on him
This was a symbol of giving a spiritual blessing to Saul.
he might see again
"he might regain his ability to see"
Acts 9:13
your holy people in Jerusalem
Here "holy people" refers to Christians. Alternate translation: "the people in Jerusalem who believe in you"
Acts 9:14
authority ... to put in bonds everyone here
It is implied that the extent of the power and authority granted Saul was limited to the Jewish people at this point in time.
put in bonds
Putting someone in bonds is a metonym for arresting that person. Alternate translation: "arrest"
calls upon your name
Here "your name" refers to Jesus.
Acts 9:15
he is a chosen instrument of mine
"chosen instrument" refers to something that is set apart for service. Alternate translation: "I have chosen him to serve me"
to carry my name
This is an expression for identifying or speaking out for Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order that he might speak about me"
Acts 9:16
for the cause of my name
This is an expression meaning "for telling people about me."
Acts 9:17
General Information:
The word "you" here is singular and refers to Saul.
Connecting Statement:
Ananias goes to the house where Saul is staying. After Saul is healed, the story shifts from Ananias back to Saul.
So Ananias departed, and entered into the house
It may be helpful to state that Ananias went to the house before he entered into it. Alternate translation: "So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it"
Laying his hands on him
Ananias put his hands on Saul. This was a symbol of giving a blessing to Saul.
so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might see again and that the Holy Spirit might fill you"
Acts 9:18
something like scales fell
"something that appeared like fish scales fell"
he received his sight
"he was able to see again"
he arose and was baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he got up and Ananias baptized him"
Acts 9:19
General Information:
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Acts 9:20
General Information:
Here the first "he" refers to Saul. The second "he" refers to Jesus, the Son of God.
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
Acts 9:21
General Information:
Here "him" and "He" refer to Saul.
All who heard him
The word "All" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Those who heard him" or "Many who heard him"
Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name?
This is a rhetorical and negative question that emphasizes that Saul was indeed the man who had persecuted the believers. Alternate translation: "This is the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name Jesus!"
this name
Here "name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the name of Jesus"
Acts 9:22
causing distress among the Jews
They were distressed in the sense that they could not find a way to refute Saul's arguments that Jesus was the Christ.
Acts 9:23
General Information:
The word "him" in this section refers to Saul.
the Jews
This refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
Acts 9:24
But their plan became known to Saul
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But someone told their plan to Saul" or "But Saul learned about their plan"
They watched the gates
This city had a wall surrounding it. People could normally only enter and exit the city through the gates.
Acts 9:25
his disciples

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

people who believed Saul's message about Jesus and were following his teaching

let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket

"used ropes to lower him in a large basket through an opening in the wall"

Acts 9:26

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Saul.

but they were all afraid of him

Here "they were all" is a generalization, but it is possible that it refers to every person. Alternate translation: "but they were afraid of him"

Acts 9:27

General Information:

Here "him" refers to Saul and "he" refers to Barnabas.

had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus

This is a way of saying he preached or taught the gospel message of Jesus Christ without fear. Alternate translation: "had openly preached the message about Jesus"

Acts 9:28

He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem

Here the word "He" refers to Saul, and the word "them" probably refers to the apostles and other disciples in Jerusalem. This is an idiom meaning that Paul was able to associate freely with the believers in Jerusalem.

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this simply refers to the Lord Jesus and tells who Paul spoke about. Alternate translation: "about the Lord Jesus" or 2) "name" is a metonym for authority. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the Lord Jesus" or "with the authority that the Lord Jesus gave him"

Acts 9:29

debated with the Grecian Jews

Saul tried to reason with the Jews who spoke Greek.

Acts 9:30

the brothers

Here the words "the brothers" refer to the believers in Jerusalem.

brought him down to Caesarea

The phrase "brought him down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

sent him away to Tarsus

Caesarea was a seaport. They brothers probably sent Saul to Tarsus by ship.

Acts 9:31

General Information:

Verse 31 is a statement that gives an update on the church's growth.

the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria

This is the first use of the singular "church" to refer to more than one local congregation. Here it refers to all the believers in all the groups throughout Israel.

had peace

"lived peacefully." This means the persecution that started with the murder of Stephen was finished.

was built up

The agent was either God or the Holy Spirit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God helped them grow" or "the Holy Spirit built them up"

walking in the fear of the Lord

"Walking" here is a metaphor for "living." Alternate translation: "living in obedience to the Lord" or "continuing to honor the Lord"

in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

"with the Holy Spirit strengthening and encouraging them"

Acts 9:32

Connecting Statement:

Here the story shifts from Saul to a new part of the story about Peter.

Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a new part of the story.

throughout the whole region

This is an generalization for Peter's visiting the believers in many places in the region of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

he came down

The phrase "came down" is used here because Lydda is lower in elevation than the other places where he was traveling.

Lydda

Lydda is a city located about 18 kilometers southeast of Joppa. This city is called Lod in the Old Testament and in modern Israel.

Acts 9:33

There he found a certain man

Peter was not intentionally searching for a paralyzed person, but happened upon him. Alternate translation: "There Peter met a man"

a certain man named Aeneas

This introduces Aeneas as a new character in the story.

who had been in his bed ... was paralyzed

This is background information about Aeneas.

paralyzed

This means he was unable to walk. He probably was unable to move any part of his body below his waist.

Acts 9:34

make your bed

"roll up your mat"

Acts 9:35

everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon

This is a generalization referring to many of the people there. Alternate translation: "those who lived in Lydda and in Sharon" or "many people who lived in Lydda and Sharon"

in Lydda and in Sharon

The city of Lydda was located in the Plain of Sharon.

saw the man

It may be helpful to state that they saw that he was healed. Alternate translation: "saw the man whom Peter had healed"

and they turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and they repented of their sins and started obeying the Lord"

Acts 9:36

General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Connecting Statement:
Luke continues the story with a new event about Peter.
Now there was
This introduces a new part in the story.
Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman
Tabitha is her name in the Aramaic language, and Dorcas is her name in the Greek language. Both names mean "gazelle." Alternate translation: "Tabitha, which in the Greek language was Dorcas. This woman"
was full of good works and merciful deeds
"doing many good things and performed merciful deeds"
Acts 9:37
General Information:
Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.
It came about in those days
This refers to the time when Peter was in Joppa. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "It came about while Peter was nearby"
washed her
This was washing to prepare for her burial.
they laid her in an upper room
This was a temporary display of the body during the funeral process.
Acts 9:38
they sent two men to him
"the disciples sent two men to Peter"
Acts 9:39
to the upper room
"to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying"
all the widows
It is possible that all the widows of the town were there since it was not a large town.
widows
women whose husbands had died and therefore needed help
while she had been with them
"while she was still alive with the disciples"
Acts 9:40
put them all out of the room
"told them all to leave the room." Peter had everyone leave so he could be alone to pray for Tabitha.
Acts 9:41
gave her his hand and raised her up
Peter took hold of her hand and helped her to sit up in the bed and then stand up on the floor.
God's holy people and the widows
The widows were possibly also believers but are mentioned specifically because Tabitha was so important to them.
Acts 9:42
Connecting Statement:
The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.
This matter became known throughout all Joppa
This refers to the miracle of Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People throughout all Joppa heard about this matter"
believed on the Lord
"believed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus"
Acts 9:43
Connecting Statement:
The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.
It happened that
"It came about that." This introduces the beginning of the next event in the story.
Simon, a tanner
"a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins"

Chapter 10

Acts 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Unclean

The Jews believed that they could become unclean in God's sight if they visited or ate food with a Gentile. This was because the Pharisees had made a law against it because they wanted to keep people from eating foods that the law of Moses said were unclean. The law of Moses did say that some foods were unclean, but it did not say that God's people could not visit or eat with Gentiles. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Baptism and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "fell on" those who were listening to Peter. This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could receive the word of God and receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers had. After that, the Gentiles were baptized.

Links:

Acts 10:1 Notes

Acts 10:1
General Information:
The writer begins to give background information about Cornelius.
Connecting Statement:
This is the beginning of the part of the story about Cornelius.
Now there was a certain man
This was a way of introducing a new person to this part of the historical account.
in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers
"from Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer in charge of 60 soldiers from the Italian Company of Soldiers, in the Roman army"
Acts 10:2

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
The writer finishes giving background information about Cornelius.
a devout man
a man who wanted to do what God expected of him
feared God
worshiped God with deep respect and awe
prayed to God constantly
The word "constantly" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "prayed to God often" or "he prayed to God regularly"
Acts 10:3
the ninth hour
"three o'clock in the afternoon." This was the normal afternoon prayer time for Jews.
he clearly saw
"Cornelius clearly saw"
Acts 10:4
Your prayers and your alms have gone up ... into God's presence
It is implied that his gifts and prayers had been accepted by God. Alternate translation: "God is pleased by your prayers and alms. They have gone up ... to him"
Acts 10:5
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 10:6
a tanner
a person who makes leather from animal skins
Acts 10:7
When the angel who spoke to him had left
"When Cornelius' vision of the angel had ended."
a devout soldier
a soldier who wanted to do what God expected of him. See how you translated "devout" in Acts 10:2.
Acts 10:8
told them all that had happened
Cornelius explained his vision to his two servants and to one of his soldiers.
sent them to Joppa
"sent two of his two servants and the one soldier to Joppa."
Acts 10:9
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to Cornelius' two servants and the soldier under Cornelius' command (Acts 10:7).
Connecting Statement:
The story shifts away from Cornelius to tell us what God is doing with to Peter.
about the sixth hour
"around noon"
up upon the housetop
The roofs of the houses were flat, and people often did many different activities on them.
Acts 10:10
while the people were cooking some food
"before the people finished cooking the food"
a trance came on him
This metaphor means that Peter went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. Alternate translation: "he went into a trance"
trance
Peter saw things in his mind, not with his physical eyes.
Acts 10:11
he saw the sky open
This was the beginning of Peter's vision. It can be a new sentence.
something like a large sheet ... four corners
The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth.
let down by its four corners
"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it"
Acts 10:12
things that crawled on the earth
snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals"
Acts 10:13
a voice spoke to him
The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God.
Acts 10:14
Not so
"I will not do that"
I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean
It is implied that some of the "four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky"
Acts 10:15
What God has made clean, you must not call defiled
This refers to the animals in the sheet.
What God has made clean
If God is the speaker, he is referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "What I, God, have made clean"
Acts 10:16
This happened three times
Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here.
Acts 10:17
Peter was very confused
This means that Peter was having difficulty understanding what the vision meant.
behold
The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows, in this case, the two men standing at the gate.
stood before the gate
"stood before the gate to the house." It is implied that this house had a wall with a gate one would use to enter the property.
after they had asked their way to the house
This happened before they arrived at the house. This could be stated earlier in the verse, as the UDB does.
Acts 10:18
They called out
Cornelius' men remained outside the gate while asking about Peter.

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Acts 10:19
thinking about the vision
"wondering about the meaning of the vision"
the Spirit
"the Holy Spirit"
Behold, three
"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: three"
three men are looking for you
Some ancient texts have a different number of men.
Acts 10:20
go down
"go down from the roof of the house"
Do not hesitate to go with them
It would be natural for Peter not to want to go with them, because they were strangers and they were Gentiles.
Acts 10:21
I am he whom you are seeking
"I am the man you are looking for"
Acts 10:22
General Information:
The word "They" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).
A centurion named Cornelius ... listen to a message from you
This can be divided into several sentences and stated in active form as the UDB does.
fears God
worships God with deep respect and awe
all the nation of the Jews
This number of people is exaggerated with the word "all" to emphasize how widely this was known among the Jews.
Acts 10:23
General Information:
The word "them" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).
So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him
The journey to Caesarea was too long for them to begin that afternoon.
stay with him
"be his guests"
some of the brothers from Joppa
This refers to believers who lived in Joppa.
Acts 10:24
On the following day
This was the next day after they left Joppa. The journey to Caesarea took longer than one day.
Cornelius was waiting for them
"Cornelius expected them"
Acts 10:25
when Peter entered
"when Peter entered the house"
fell down at his feet to worship him
"he knelt down and put his face close to Peter's feet." He did this to honor Peter.
fell down
He purposely did this to show that he was worshiping.
Acts 10:26
Stand up! I too am a man
Peter was rebuking Cornelius mildly for worshiping Peter. Alternate translation: "Do not worship me! I am only a man, as you are"
Acts 10:27
General Information:
The word "him" here refers to Cornelius, and "he" refers to Peter.
Connecting Statement:
Peter addresses the people who are gathered in Cornelius' house.
many people gathered together
"many Gentile people gathered together." It is implied that these people Cornelius had invited were Gentiles.
Acts 10:28
General Information:
Here the words "You" and "yourselves" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.
it is not lawful for a Jewish man
"it is forbidden for a Jewish man." This refers to the Jewish religious law.
a foreigner
people who are not Jews
Acts 10:29
General Information:
Here both instances of "you" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.
Acts 10:30
General Information:
In verses 31 and 32 Cornelius quotes what the angel had said to him when he appeared to him at the ninth hour. The words "you" and "your" are all singular. The word "we" here does not include Peter.
Connecting Statement:
Cornelius responds to Peter's question.
Four days ago
Cornelius is referring to the day before the third night before he is speaking to Peter. Biblical culture counts the current day, so the day before three nights ago is "four days ago." Current Western culture does not count the current day, so many Western translations read, "three days ago."
praying
Some ancient authorities say "fasting and praying" instead of simply "praying."
at the ninth hour
The normal afternoon time that the Jews pray to God.
Acts 10:31
your prayer has been heard by God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has heard your prayer"
reminded God about you
"brought you to God's attention." This does not imply that God had forgotten.
Acts 10:32
call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter
"tell Simon who is also called Peter to come to you"
Acts 10:33
at once
"right away"
You are kind to have come
This expression is a polite way of thanking Peter for

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coming. Alternate translation: "I certainly thank you for coming"
we are all here
This refers to Cornelius and his family but not to Peter, so this is exclusive.
present in the sight of God
"present with God"
that you have been instructed by the Lord to say
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Lord has told you to say"
Acts 10:34
Connecting Statement:
Peter begins speaking to everyone in the house of Cornelius.
opened his mouth
"began to speak"
Truly
This means that what he is about to say is especially important to know.
God is not partial
"God does not favor certain people"
Acts 10:35
anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him
"he accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right"
to him
to God
fears
worships with deep respect and awe
Acts 10:36
General Information:
All instances of "he" here refers to God.
Connecting Statement:
Peter continues to talk to Cornelius and his guests.
who is Lord of all
Here "all" means "all people."
Acts 10:37
throughout all Judea
The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "throughout Judea" or "in many places in Judea"
after the baptism that John announced
"after John preached to the people to repent and then baptized them"
Acts 10:38
the events ... and with power
This long sentence, which begins in verse 36, can be shortened into several sentences as in the UDB.
God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power
The Holy Spirit and God's power are spoken of as if they are something that can be poured out onto a person.
all who were oppressed by the devil
The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who were oppressed by the devil" or "many people who were oppressed by the devil"
God was with him
The idiom "was with him" means "was helping him."
Acts 10:39
General Information:
The word "We" refer to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.
in the country of the Jews
This refers mainly to Judea at that time.
hanging him on a tree
This is another expression that refers to crucifixion. Alternate translation: "nailing him to a wooden cross"
Acts 10:40
General Information:
Both instances of "him" refer to Jesus.
God raised him up
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"
the third day
"the third day after he died"
caused him to be seen
"permitted many people to see him after he was raised from the dead"
Acts 10:41
General Information:
The word "us" refers to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The words "him" and "he" here refers to Jesus.
from the dead
From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.
Acts 10:42
General Information:
Here the word "us" includes Peter and believers. It excludes his audience.
that this is the one who has been chosen by God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God chose this Jesus"
the living and the dead
This refers to people who are still living and people who have died. Alternate translation: "the people who are alive and the people who are dead"
Acts 10:43
Connecting Statement:
Peter finishes his speech to everyone in the house of Cornelius, which he began in Acts 10:34.
About him all the prophets testify
"All the prophets testify about Jesus"
everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins
This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus because of what Jesus has done"
through his name
Here "his name" refers to the actions of Jesus. His name means God who saves. Alternate translation: "through what Jesus has done for them"
Acts 10:44
the Holy Spirit fell
Here the word "fell" indicates that the event happened suddenly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit suddenly came"
all of those who were listening
Here "all" refers to all the Gentiles at the house who were listening to Peter.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Acts 10:45
the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also poured out the Holy Spirit"
the gift of the Holy Spirit
That is, the Holy Spirit himself was the gift.
poured out
The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that could be poured out upon people. It implies a generous amount. Alternate translation: "generously given"
the gift
"the free gift"
also on the Gentiles
Here "also" refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit had already been given to the Jewish believers.
Acts 10:46
Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God
These were known spoken languages that caused the Jews to acknowledge that the Gentiles were indeed praising God.
speaking in tongues
Here "tongues" is a metonym for languages. Alternate translation: "speaking in other languages"
Acts 10:47
Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received ... we?
Peter uses this question to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentile believers should be baptized. Alternate translation: "No one should keep water from these people! We should baptize them because they have received ... we!"
Acts 10:48
General Information:
The words "he" and "him" refer to Peter.
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about Cornelius.
he commanded them to be baptized
It is implied that the Jewish Christians were the ones who would baptize them. Alternate translation: "Peter commanded the Gentile believers to allow the Jewish Christians to baptize them" or "Peter commanded the Jewish Christians to baptize them"
be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ
Here "in the name of Jesus Christ" expresses that the reason for their baptism was that they believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "be baptized as believers in Jesus Christ"

Chapter 11

Acts 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Gentiles also had received the word of God"
Almost all of the first believers were Jewish. Luke writes in this chapter that many Gentiles started to believe in Jesus. They believed that the message about Jesus was true and so began to "receive the word of God." Some of the believers in Jerusalem did not believe that Gentiles could truly follow Jesus, so Peter went to them and told them what had happened to him and how he had seen the Gentiles receive the Word of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

Links:

Acts 11:1 Notes

Acts 11:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of a new event in the story.
Now
This marks a new part of the story.
the brothers
The phrase "brothers" here refers to the believers in Judea.
who were in Judea
"who were in the province of Judea"
had received the word of God
This expression refers to the fact that the Gentiles believed the gospel message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed the message of God about Jesus"
Acts 11:2
Connecting Statement:
Peter arrives in Jerusalem and begins talking to the Jews there.
had come up to Jerusalem
Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of coming up to Jerusalem and going down from it.
they who belonged to the circumcision group
This is a reference to some of the Jews who believed that every believer must be circumcised. Alternate translation: "some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted all followers of Christ to be circumcised"
Acts 11:3
uncircumcised men
The phrase "uncircumcised men" refers to Gentiles.
ate with them
It was against Jewish tradition for Jews to eat with Gentiles.
Acts 11:4
Connecting Statement:
Peter responds to the Jews by telling them about his vision and about what had happened at Cornelius' house.
Peter started to explain
Peter did not criticize the Jewish believers but reacted in a friendly, explanatory manner.
in detail
"exactly what happened"
Acts 11:5
in a trance I saw
Peter saw something that was only in his mind. It was not physical. His mind was not working in its usual way. See how you translated similar words in Acts 10:10.
like a large sheet

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The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth. See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it." See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

Acts 11:6

four-legged animals of earth

From Peter's response, it can be implied that the law of Moses commanded the Jews not to eat some of them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 10:12]

wild beasts

This probably refer to the animals people do not or cannot tame or control.

things that crawled

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals." See how you translated this in Acts 10:12.

Acts 11:7

I heard a voice

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God. See how you translated "a voice" in [Acts 10:13]

Acts 11:8

Not so

"I will not do that." See how you translated this in Acts 10:14.

nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth

Apparently the animals in the sheet were animals which the Jewish law in the Old Testament forbade the Jews to eat. This can be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "I have eaten only meat from holy and clean animals"

unclean

In the Old Testament Jewish law, a person became ritually "unclean" in various ways, such as eating certain forbidden animals.

Acts 11:9

What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

Acts 11:10

This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here. See how you translated "This happened three times" in Acts 10:16.

Acts 11:11

General Information:

Here "we" refers to Peter and the believers in Joppa. It does not include his current audience in Jerusalem.

Behold

This word alerts us to the new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

right away

"immediately" or "at that exact moment"

they had been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had sent them"

Acts 11:12

that I should make no distinction regarding them

"that I should not be concerned that they were Gentiles"

These six brothers went with me

"These six brothers went with me to Caesarea"

These six brothers

"These six Jewish believers"

into the man's house

This refers to the house of Cornelius.

Acts 11:13

Simon who is called Peter

"Simon who is also called Peter." See how you translated the same phrase in Acts 10:32.

Acts 11:14

all your household

This refers to all the people in the household. Alternate translation: "everyone who lives in your house"

Acts 11:15

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Peter, the other apostles, and all of the Jewish believers who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them

This implies that Peter had not finished speaking but had intended to say more.

the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning

Peter leaves out some things to keep the story short. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit came on the Gentile believers, just as he came on the Jewish believers at Pentecost"

in the beginning

Peter is referring to the day of Pentecost.

Acts 11:16

you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 11:17

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Cornelius and his Gentile guests and household. The word "us" refers to the speaker and his hearers and so is inclusive.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech (which he began in Acts 11:4) to the Jews about his vision and about what had happened at the house of Cornelius.

Then if God gave to them ... who was I, that I could oppose God?

Peter uses this question to emphasize that he was only obeying God. Alternate translation: "Since God gave to them ... I decided that I could not oppose God!"

the same gift

Peter refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:18

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the Jewish believers to whom Peter spoke.

they said nothing in response

"they did not argue with Peter"

God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also

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"God has given repentance that leads to life to the Gentiles also." Here "life" refers to eternal life. The abstract nouns "repentance" and "life" can be translated as the verbs "repent" and "live." Alternate translation: "God has also given the Gentiles the ability to repent and then live eternally" or "God has allowed the Gentiles also to repent and live eternally"

Acts 11:19

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about what happened to the believers who fled after the stoning of Stephen.

Now

This introduces the new part of the story.

those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

The Jews began persecuting Jesus's followers because Stephen had said and done things that the Jews did not like. Because of this persecution, many of Jesus's followers left Jerusalem and went to many different places.

spread

"went in many different directions"

who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Jews had been persecuting because of Stephen, and so had left Jerusalem, spread"

the persecution that arose over Stephen

the persecution that happened because of what Stephen had said and done

only to Jews

The believers thought God's message was for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles.

Acts 11:20

spoke also to Greeks

These Greek-speaking people were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "also spoke to Gentiles who spoke Greek"

Acts 11:21

The hand of the Lord was with them

God's hand signifies his powerful help. Alternate translation: "God was powerfully enabling those believers to preach effectively"

turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "they repented of their sins and began to obey the Lord"

Acts 11:22

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "they" refers to the believers of the church at Jerusalem.

ears of the church

Here "ears" refers to the believers' hearing about the event. Alternate translation: "the believers in the church"

Acts 11:23

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "them" refers to the believers he met on his way to Antioch.

saw the grace of God

"saw how God acted kindly toward the believers"

he encouraged them

"he kept on encouraging them"

to remain with the Lord

"to remain faithful to the Lord" or "to continue to trust in the Lord"

with purpose of heart

Here the "heart" refers to a person's will and desire. Alternate translation: "with all their will" or "with complete commitment"

Acts 11:24

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas.

full of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit controlled Barnabas as he obeyed the Holy Spirit.

many people were added to the Lord

Here "added" means they came to believe the same thing as the others. Alternate translation: "many more people also believed in the Lord"

Acts 11:25

out to Tarsus

"out to the city of Tarsus"

Acts 11:26

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas and "him" to Saul.

When he found him

It probably took some time and effort for Barnabas to locate Saul.

It came about

This begins a new event in the story.

they gathered together with the church

"Barnabas and Saul gathered together with the church"

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

This implies that it was other people who called the believers Christians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People in Antioch were the fist to call the disciples Christians"

Acts 11:27

General Information:

Here Luke tells background information about a prophecy in Antioch.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story-line.

came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem or going down from it.

Acts 11:28

Agabus by name

"whose name was Agabus"

indicated by the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit enabled him to prophesy"

a great famine would occur

"a great shortage of food would happen"

over all the world

This was a generalization referring to the part of the world that they were interested in. Alternate translation: "all over the inhabited world" or "throughout the Roman Empire"

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in the days of Claudius
Luke's audience would know that Claudius was the emperor of Rome at that time. Alternate translation: "when Claudius was the Roman emperor"
Acts 11:29
So
This word means marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they sent money because of Agabus' prophesy or the famine.
as each one was able
The richer people sent more; the poorer people sent less.
the brothers in Judea
"the believers in Judea"
Acts 11:30
General Information:
The words "They" and "they" refer to the believers in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:27).
by the hand of Barnabas and Saul
The hand is a synecdoche for the action of the whole person. Alternate translation: "by having Barnabas and Saul take it to them"

Chapter 12

Acts 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 tells what happened to King Herod while Barnabas was bringing Saul back from Tarsus and they were delivering money from Antioch Jerusalem (11:25-30). He killed many of the leaders of the church, and he put Peter in prison. After God helped Peter escape the prison, Herod killed the prison guards, and then God killed Herod. In the last verse of the chapter, Luke tells how Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Personification

The "word of God" is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could grow and become many.

Links:

Acts 12:1 Notes

Acts 12:1
General Information:
This is background information about Herod's killing James.
Connecting Statement:
This begins the new persecution, first of James's death and then of Peter's imprisonment and then release.
Now
This begins a new part of the story.
about that time
This refers to the time of the famine.
laid hands on
This means Herod had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]
some who belonged to the church
Only James and Peter are specified, which implies that these were leaders of the church in Jerusalem.
so that he might mistreat them
"in order to cause the believers to suffer"
Acts 12:2
He killed James ... with the sword
This tells the manner in which James was killed.
He killed James
Possible meanings are 1) Herod himself killed James or 2) Herod ordered someone to kill James. Alternate translation: "Herod gave the order and they killed James"
Acts 12:3
General Information:
Here the word "he" refers to Herod (Acts 12:1).
After he saw that this pleased the Jews
"When Herod realized that putting James to death pleased the Jewish leaders"
pleased the Jews
"made the Jewish leaders happy"
That was
"Herod did this" or "This happened"
the days of unleavened bread
This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. Alternate translation: "the festival when the Jewish people ate bread without yeast"
Acts 12:4
four squads of soldiers
"four groups of soldiers." Each squad had four soldiers that guarded Peter, one group at a time. The groups divided the 24 hour day into four shifts. Each time two soldiers would have been at his side and the other two soldiers by the entrance.
he was intending to bring him to the people
"Herod planned to judge Peter in the presence of the people" or "Herod planned to judge Peter before the Jewish people"
Acts 12:5
So Peter was kept in the prison
This implies that the soldiers continually guarded Peter in prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the soldiers guarded Peter in the prison"
prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the group of believers in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for him"
earnestly
continuously and with dedication
Acts 12:6
On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial

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That Herod planned to execute him can be clarified. Alternate translation: "The happened on the day before Herod was going to bring Peter out from prison to put him on trial and then to execute him"

bound with two chains

"tied with two chains" or "fastened with two chains." Each chain would have been attached to one of the two guards who stayed beside Peter.

were keeping watch over the prison

"were guarding the prison doors"

Acts 12:7

General Information:

The words "him" and "his" refer to Peter.

Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

by him

"next to him" or "beside him"

in the prison cell

"in the prison room"

He struck Peter

"The angel tapped Peter" or "The angel poked Peter." Peter was evidently sleeping deeply enough that this was required to wake him.

his chains fell off his hands

The angel caused the chains to fall from Peter without touching them.

Acts 12:8

Gird yourself and put on your sandals

Peter had probably loosened his belt and taken off his sandals so he could go to sleep. The angel was telling Peter to get ready to leave the cell.

Peter did so

"Peter did what the angel told him to do" or "Peter obeyed"

Acts 12:9

General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Peter. The words "they" and "They" refer to Peter and the angel.

He did not know

"He did not understand"

what was done by the angel was real

This could be changed to active form. Alternate translation: "the actions of the angel were real" or "what the angel did truly happened"

Acts 12:10

After they had passed by the first guard and the second

It is implied that the soldiers were not able to see Peter and the angel as they walked by. Alternate translation: "The first and second guards did not see them as they passed by, and then"

had passed by

"had walked by"

and the second

The word "guard" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and the second guard"

they came to the iron gate

"Peter and the angel arrived at the iron gate"

that led into the city

"that opened to the city" or "that went from the prison to the city"

it opened for them by itself

Here "by itself" means neither Peter nor the angel opened it. Alternate translation: "the gate swung open for them" or "the gate opened itself for them"

went down a street

"walked along a street"

left him right away

"left Peter suddenly" or "suddenly disappeared"

Acts 12:11

When Peter came to himself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "When Peter became fully awake and alert" or "When Peter became aware that what had happened was real"

delivered me out of the hand of Herod

Here "the hand of Herod" refers to "Herod's hold" or "Herod's plans." Alternate translation: "brought me from the harm Herod had planned for me"

delivered me

"rescued me"

everything the Jewish people were expecting

Here "the people of the Jews" probably referred mainly to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "all that the Jewish leaders thought would happen to me"

Acts 12:12

realized this

He became aware that God had rescued him.

John, also called Mark

John was also called Mark. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John, whom people also called Mark"

Acts 12:13

he knocked

"Peter knocked." Tapping on the door was a normal Jewish custom to let others know you wish to visit them. You may need to change this to fit your culture.

at the door of the gate

"at the outer door" or "at the door of the entrance from the street to the courtyard"

came to answer

"came to the gate to ask who was knocking"

Acts 12:14

General Information:

Here all instances of "she" refer to the servant girl Rhoda (Acts 12:13).

out of joy

"because she was so joyful" or "being overly excited"

failed to open the gate

"did not open the gate" or "forgot to open the gate"

came running into the room

You may prefer to say "went running into the room in the house"

she reported

"she told them" or "she said"

Acts 12:15

General Information:

Here the words "she" and "her" both refer to the servant girl Rhoda (Acts 10:13), and the words "they" and "They" refer to the people who were inside praying (Acts 10:12).

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

You are insane
The people not only did not believe her, but rebuked her by saying she was crazy. Alternate translation: "You are crazy"
she insisted that it was so
"she insisted that what she said was true"
They said
"They answered"
It is his angel
"What you have seen is Peter's angel." Some Jews believed in guardian angels and may have thought that Peter's angel had come to them.
Acts 12:16
General Information:
Here both instances of "they" refer to the people in the house. The word "him" refers to Peter.
But Peter continued knocking
The word "continued" means that Peter kept knocking the entire time those inside were talking.
Acts 12:17
General Information:
Here both instances of "them" refer to the people who were inside praying (Acts 12:12).
Report these things
"Tell these things"
the brothers
"the other believers"
Acts 12:18
Now
This word is used to mark a break in the story-line. Time has passed; it is now the next day.
when it became day
"in the morning"
there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter
This phrase is used to emphasize what really happened. This could be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "there was a great disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter"
there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter
The abstract noun "disturbance" can be expressed with the words "disturbed" or "upset." Alternate translation: "the soldiers were very disturbed about what had happened to Peter"
Acts 12:19
General Information:
The word "him" here refers to Peter, and both instances of "he" refers to Herod.
After Herod had searched for him and could not find him
"After Herod searched for Peter and could not find him"
After Herod had searched for him
Possible meanings are that 1) "Herod" here is a metonym for his soldiers, that is, when Herod heard Peter was missing, he sent other soldiers to search the prison, or 2) when Herod heard Peter was missing, he went himself to search the prison.
he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death
It was the normal punishment for the Roman government to kill the guards if their prisoner escaped.
Then Herod went down
The phrase "went down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Judea.
Acts 12:20
Connecting Statement:
Luke continues with another event in Herod's life.
Now
This word is used here to mark the next event in the story.
very angry
This phrase translates a word that speaks of a person being so angry that he is ready to kill other people.
They went to him with one purpose
Here the word "They" is a generalization. It is unlikely that all the people of Tyre and Sidon went to Herod. Alternate translation: "Men representing the people of Tyre and Sidon went with one purpose to talk with Herod"
with one purpose
This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.
after persuading Blastus
"after these men persuaded Blastus"
Blastus
a man's name
the king's assistant
This phrase refers to a person who assists the king in his personal life, not necessarily his work as ruler.
they asked for peace
"these men requested peace"
their country received its food from the king's country
They probably purchased this food. Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon bought all their food from the people that Herod ruled"
received its food
It is implied that Herod restricted this supply of food because he was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon.
Acts 12:21
On a set day
This was probably the day on which Herod agreed to meet with the representatives. Alternate translation: "On the day when Herod agreed to meet them"
royal clothing
expensive clothing that would demonstrate he was the king
sat on a throne
This was where Herod formally addressed people who came to see him.
Acts 12:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 12:23
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about Herod.
Immediately an angel
"Right away an angel" or "While the people were praising Herod, an angel"
struck him
"afflicted Herod" or "caused Herod to become very ill"
he did not give God the glory
Herod let those people worship him instead of telling them

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

to worship God.

he was eaten by worms and died

Here "worms" refers to worms inside the body, probably intestinal worms. This can be stated in active form.
Alternate translation: "worms ate Herod's insides and he died"

Acts 12:24

the word of God increased and multiplied

The word of God is spoken of as if it were a living plant able to grow and reproduce. Alternate translation: "the message of God spread to more places and more people believed in him"

the word of God

"the message God sent about Jesus"

Acts 12:25

Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the history from [11:30]

completed their mission

This refers back to when they brought money from the believers at Antioch in [Acts 11:29-30]

they returned from Jerusalem

They went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch"

Chapter 13

Acts 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 13:33-35 and 13:41.

This chapter is where the second half of the Book of Acts begins. Luke writes more about Paul than about Peter. Luke also writes about the believers preaching to the Gentiles rather than to the Jews.

Special concepts in this chapter

A light for the Gentiles

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. The Jews considered all Gentiles as walking in darkness, but Paul and Barnabas spoke of telling the Gentiles about Jesus as if they were going to bring them physical light. (See: and righteous)

Links:

Acts 13:1 Notes

Acts 13:1

General Information:

Verse 1 gives background information about the people in the church at Antioch.

Connecting Statement:

Luke begins to tell about the mission trips on which the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul.

Now in the church in Antioch

"At that time in the church at Antioch"

Simeon ... Niger ... Lucius ... Manaen

These are men's names.

foster brother of Herod the tetrarch

Manaen was probably Herod's playmate or close friend while they were growing up.

Acts 13:2

General Information:

The words "they" refers to the other three leaders (Acts 13:1), not including Barnabas and Saul, and it could include other believers.

Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

"Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me"

I have called them

The verb here means that God chose them to do this work.

Acts 13:3

General Information:

The words "they" and "their" refer to the other three leaders (Acts 13:1), not including Barnabas and Saul, and they could include other believers.

laid their hands on these men

"laid their hands on these men whom God had set apart for his service." This act showed that the leaders agreed that the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas and Saul to do this work.

sent them off

"sent those men off" or "sent those men off to do the work the Holy Spirit told them to do"

Acts 13:4

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Saul.

So

This word marks an event that happened because of a previous event. In this case, the previous event is Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the Holy Spirit.

went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Seleucia is lower in elevation than Antioch.

Seleucia

a city by the sea

Acts 13:5

General Information:

Here the words "They" and "their" refer to Barnabas and Saul.

city of Salamis

The city of Salamis was on Cyprus Island.

proclaimed the word of God

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message of God."

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Alternate translation: "proclaimed the message of God"
synagogues of the Jews
Possible meanings are that 1) there were multiple Jewish synagogues in the city of Salamis where Barnabas and Saul preached or 2) Barnabas and Saul started at the synagogue at Salamis and continued to preach in all the synagogues they found while they traveled around the Island of Cyprus.
They also had John for an assistant
"John went with them and was helping them"
John
John Mark
assistant
"helper"
Acts 13:6
General Information:
Here both instances of "they" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark.
the whole island
They crossed from one side of the island to the other and shared the gospel message in each town they passed through.
Paphos
a major city on Cyprus island where the proconsul lived
they found
Here "found" means they came upon him without looking for him. Alternate translation: "they met" or "they came upon"
a certain magician
"a particular person who practiced witchcraft" or "a person who practiced supernatural magic arts"
whose name was Bar-Jesus
"Bar-Jesus" means "Son of Jesus." There is no relation between this man and Jesus Christ. "Jesus" was a common name at that time.
Acts 13:7
General Information:
Here the word "he" refers to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul.
associated with
"was often with" or "was often in the company of"
proconsul
This was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "governor"
who was an intelligent man
This is background information about Sergius Paulus.
This man summoned
The phrase "this man" refers to Sergius Paulus.
he sought to hear the word of God
"he wanted to hear the word of God"
Acts 13:8
General Information:
Here the word "them" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark, and "he" refers to Elymas.
Elymas "the magician"
This was Bar Jesus, who was also called "the magician"
that is how his name is translated
"that was what he was called in Greek"
opposed them; he tried to turn
"resisted them by trying to turn" or "attempted to stop them by trying to turn"
tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith
Here "to turn ... away from" is a metaphor for convincing someone to not do something. Alternate translation: "attempted to persuade the governor not to believe the gospel message"
Acts 13:9
General Information:
The word "him" refers to the magician Elymas, who is also called Bar Jesus (Acts 13:6-8).
Connecting Statement:
While on the island of Paphos, Paul begins to talk to Elymas.
Saul, who is also called Paul
"Saul" was his Jewish name, and "Paul" was his Roman name. Since he was speaking to a Roman official, he used his Roman name. Alternate translation: "Saul, who now called himself Paul"
stared at him intensely
"looked at him intensely"
Acts 13:10
You son of the devil
Paul is saying the man is acting like the devil. Alternate translation: "You are like the devil" or "You act like the devil"
you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness
"you are always intent in causing others to believe what is not true using falsehood and are always doing what is wrong"
wickedness
The word in this context means laziness and lack of diligence in following God's law.
You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness
Paul is grouping Elymas with the devil. Just as the devil is an enemy of God and is against righteousness, so also was Elymas.
You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?
Paul uses this question to rebuke Elymas for opposing God. Alternate translation: "You are always saying that the truth about the Lord God is false!"
the straight paths of the Lord
Here "straight paths" refer to the ways that are true. Alternate translation: "the true ways of the Lord"
Acts 13:11
General Information:
The words "you," "he," and "him" refer to Elymas the magician.
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes speaking to Elymas.
the hand of the Lord is upon you
Here "hand' represents the power of God and "upon you" implies punishment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish you"
you will become blind
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make you blind"
You will not see the sun
Elymas will be so completely blind that he not even be able to see the sun. Alternate translation: "You will not even see the sun"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

for a while
"for a period of time" or "until the time appointed by God"
there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness
"the eyes of Elymas became blurry and then dark" or "Elymas started seeing unclearly and then he could not see anything"
he started going around
"Elymas wandered around" or "Elymas started feeling around and"
Acts 13:12
General Information:
Both instances of "he" refer to the proconsul.
the proconsul
A proconsul was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "the governor"
he believed
"he believed in Jesus"
he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching about the Lord amazed him"
Acts 13:13
General Information:
Verse 13 gives background information about this part of the story. "Paul and his friends" were Barnabas and John Mark
Connecting Statement:
This is a new part of the story about Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.
Now
This marks the beginning of a new part of the story.
set sail from Paphos
"traveled by sailboat from Paphos"
came to Perga in Pamphylia
"arrived in Perga, which is in Pamphylia"
But John left them
"But John Mark left Paul and Barnabas"
Acts 13:14
General Information:
Verse 14 continues to give background information about this part of the story. The word "they" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark
Antioch of Pisidia
"the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia." This is different from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left at the beginning of the chapter.
Acts 13:15
General Information:
The word "them" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark.
After the reading of the law and the prophets
The "law and the prophets" refer to parts of the Jewish scriptures which were read. Alternate translation: "After someone read from the books of the law and the writings of the prophets"
sent them a message, saying
"told someone to say to them" or "asked someone to say to them"
Brothers
The term "brothers" is here used by the people in the synagogue to refer to Paul and Barnabas as fellow Jews.
if you have any message of encouragement
"if you want to say anything to encourage us"
encouragement
or "exhortation"
say it
"please speak it" or "please tell it to us"
Acts 13:16
General Information:
The words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "you" is plural.
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins his speech to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. He begins by talking about things that happened in Israel's history.
motioned with his hand
This could refer to moving his hands as a signal that he was ready to speak. Alternate translation: "moved his hands to show that he was about to speak"
you who fear God
This refers to Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. "you who are not Israelites but who worship God"
God, listen
"God, listen to me" or "God, listen to what I am about to say"
Acts 13:17
General Information:
The word "our" includes the speaker and the hears and so is plural. The words "they" and "them" refer to "the people." The word "he" refers to God.
The God of this people Israel
"The God the people of Israel worship"
our fathers
"our ancestors"
exalted the people
"caused the people to become very numerous"
with an uplifted arm
This refers to God's mighty power. Alternate translation: "with great power"
out of it
"out from the land of Egypt"
Acts 13:18
he put up with them
"God tolerated the people of Israel." This means "he tolerated them." Some versions have have a different word that means "he took care of them." Alternate translation: "God endured their disobedience" or "God took care of them"
Acts 13:19
General Information:
Here both instances of "he" refer to God. The word "our" refers to Paul and his audience.
nations
Here the word "nations" refers to different people groups and not to lands with geographical boundaries.
Acts 13:20
General Information:
The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.
took place over 450 years
"took more than 450 years to accomplish"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

until Samuel the prophet
"until the time of the prophet Samuel"
Acts 13:21
king for forty years
"their king for forty years" or "king, and he reigned over them for forty years"
Acts 13:22
General Information:
The quotation here is from Old Testament.
removed him from the kingship
This expression means God caused Saul to stop being king. Alternate translation: "rejected Saul from being king"
he raised up David to be their king
"God chose David to be their king"
their king
"the king of Israel" or "the king over the Israelites"
It was about David that God testified, saying,
"God gave this testimony about David:"
I have found David ... to be
"I have observed that David ... is"
a man after my heart
This expression means "a man who wants what I want."
Acts 13:23
From this man's descendants
"From David's descendants." This is placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that the savior had to be one of David's descendants (Acts 13:22).
has brought to Israel
This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "gave to the people of Israel"
as he promised to do
"just as God promised he would do"
Acts 13:24
a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel
You can translate the word "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "that all the people of Israel who wanted to repent of their sin needed to have him baptize them"
Acts 13:25
Who do you think I am?
John asked this question to compel the people to think about who he was. Alternate translation: "Think about who I am."
I am not the one
John was referring to the Messiah, whom they were expecting to come. Alternate translation: "I am not the Messiah"
But listen
This emphasizes the importance of what he will say next.
one is coming after me
This also refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "The Messiah will soon come"
the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie
"I am not worthy even to untie his sandals." The Messiah is so much greater than John that he did not even feel worthy do the lowest job for him.
Acts 13:26
General Information:
Here the word "us" includes Paul and his entire audience in the synagogue.
Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God
Possible meanings are 1) this is a list with three items, and Paul is addressing three groups of people together, or 2) the phrases "children of the offspring of Abraham" and "those among you who fear God" refer to the two groups of people whom Paul addresses as "brothers."
those among you who fear God
These words refer specifically to Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogue and obeyed much of the law of Moses but had not been circumcised.
the message about this salvation has been sent
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sent the message about this salvation"
about this salvation
The word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "that God will save people"
Acts 13:27
General Information:
The word "they" and "their" refers to the Jews who lived in Jerusalem.
did not recognize him
"did not realize that this man Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them"
the voices of the prophets
Here the word "voices" is a metonym for the message that the voices spoke. Alternate translation: "the writings of the prophets" or "the messages of the prophets"
that are read
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone reads"
Acts 13:28
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish people and their religious leaders in Jerusalem. The word him" here refers to Jesus.
they found no reason for the death penalty
It is implied that they found no legal reason for Jesus to be put to death. Alternate translation: "they found no legal reason for Jesus to be killed" or "they found no legal reason to kill Jesus"
Acts 13:29
When they had completed all the things that were written about him
"When they did to Jesus all the things that the prophets said would happen to him"
they took him down from the tree
It may be helpful to explicitly say Jesus died before this happened. Alternate translation: "they killed Jesus and then took him down from the cross after he died"
from the tree
"from the cross." This was another way people at that time referred to the cross.
Acts 13:30
But God raised him
"But" indicates a strong contrast between what the people did and what God did.
raised him from the dead
"raised him from among those who were dead." To be with

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"the dead" means to be dead. To raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of making that person alive again.

Acts 13:31

He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him ... Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The disciples who traveled with Jesus ... Jeruaslem saw him for many days"

many days

We know from other writings that this period was 40 days. Translate "many days" with a term that would be appropriate for that length of time.

are now his witnesses to the people

"are now testifying to the people about Jesus" or "are now telling the people about Jesus"

Acts 13:32

So

This word marks an event that happened because of previous event. In this case, the previous event is God's raising Jesus from the dead.

our fathers

"our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These were the physical ancestors of the Jews, and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

Acts 13:33

God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

You may need to rearrange the parts of this sentence, which begins in verse 32. "God has fulfilled for us, their children, the promise that he made to our fathers, by raising up Jesus"

for us, their children

"for us, who are the children of our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These ancestors were the physical ancestors of the Jews and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

by raising up Jesus

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "by making Jesus alive again"

As it is written in the second Psalm

"This is what was written in the second Psalm"

the second Psalm

"Psalm 2"

Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.

Acts 13:34

General Information:

The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah.

As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

"God has spoken in this way that he raised him up from the dead never to return to decay" "God used these words to say that he raised him up from the dead, and so he would never die again"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

never to return to decay

"and he will never die again"

he has spoken in this way

God has said using these words

sure blessings

"certain blessings"

Acts 13:35

This is why he also says in another Psalm

Paul's audience would have understood that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "In another Psalm of David, he also says about the Messiah"

he also says

"David also says." David is the author of Psalm 16, from which this quotation is taken.

You will not allow your Holy One to see decay

The phrase "see decay" is a metonym for "decay." Alternate translation: "You will not allow the body of your Holy One to rot"

You will not allow

David is speaking to God here.

Acts 13:36

in his own generation

"during his lifetime"

served the purpose of God

"did what God wanted him to do" or "did what pleased God"

he fell asleep

This was a polite way to refer to death. Alternate translation: "he died"

was laid with his fathers

"was buried with his ancestors who had died"

his body experienced decay

The phrase "his body experienced decay" is a less direct way of saying "his body decayed" or "his body rotted."

Acts 13:37

he whom God raised up experienced

"Jesus, whom God raised up, experienced"

God raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused to live again"

experienced no decay

The phrase "experienced no decay" is a way to say "his body did not decay." Alternate translation: "did not rot"

Acts 13:38

let it be known to you

"know this" or "this is important for you to know"

brothers

Paul uses this term because they are his fellow Jews and followers of Judaism. They are not Christian believers at this point. Alternate translation: "my fellow Israelites and other friends"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we proclaim to you that your sins can be forgiven through Jesus"
forgiveness of sins
The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be translated with the verb "to forgive." Alternate translation: "that God can forgive your sins"
Acts 13:39
But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes
"But God makes righteous everyone who believes in this man"
by this man
Here "this man" refers to Jesus Christ.
Acts 13:40
be careful
It is implied that the thing they should be careful about is Paul's message. Alternate translation: "give close attention to the things I have said"
that the thing the prophets spoke about
"so that what the prophets spoke about"
Acts 13:41
General Information:
In his message to the people in the synagogue, Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk. Here the word "I" refers to God.
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes his speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, which he began in Acts 13:16.
you despisers
"you who feel contempt" or "you who ridicule"
be astonished
"be amazed" or "be shocked"
then perish
"then die"
am doing a work
"am doing something" or "am doing a great deed"
in your days
"during your lifetime"
days, a work that
"days. I am doing something that"
even if someone announces it to you
"even if someone tells you about it"
Acts 13:42
As Paul and Barnabas left
"When Paul and Barnabas were leaving"
begged them that they might
"begged them to"
these same words
Here "words" refers to the message that Paul had spoken. Alternate translation: "this same message"
Acts 13:43
When the synagogue meeting ended
Possible meanings are 1) this restates "As Paul and Barnabas left" in verse 42 or 2) Paul and Barnabas left the meeting before it ended and this occurs later.
proselytes
These were non-Jewish people who converted to Judaism.
who were speaking to them and persuading them
"and Paul and Barnabas were speaking to those people and persuading them"
to continue in the grace of God
It is implied that they believed Paul's message that Jesus was the Messiah. Alternate translation: "to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did"
Acts 13:44
almost the whole city was
The "city" represents the people in the city. This phrase is used to show the great response to the Lord's word. Alternate translation: "almost all the people of the city were"
to hear the word of the Lord
It is implied that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who spoke the word of the Lord. Alternate translation: "to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus"
Acts 13:45
General Information:
Here the word "him" refers to Paul.
the Jews
Here "Jews" represents Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
were filled with envy
Here envy is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. Alternate translation: "became very envious"
spoke against
"contradicted" or "opposed"
the things that were said by Paul
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Paul said"
Acts 13:46
General Information:
Both instances of the word "you" and the word "yourselves" refer to the Jews to whom Paul is speaking and so are plural. The word "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present.
It was necessary
This implies that God had commanded this be done. Alternate translation: "God commanded"
that the word of God should first be spoken to you
This can be stated in active form. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message from God." Alternate translation: "that we speak the message from God to you first" or "that we speak the word of God to you first"
Seeing you push it away from yourselves
Their rejection of the word of God is spoken of as if it were something they pushed away. Alternate translation: "Since you reject the word of God"
consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life
"have shown that you are not worthy of eternal life" or "act as though you are not worthy of eternal life"
we will turn to the Gentiles
"we will go to the Gentiles." Paul and Barnabas were implying that they would preach to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we will leave you and start preaching to the Gentiles"
Acts 13:47
General Information:
The word "us" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the

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crowd that was present, so it is exclusive.

commanded us ... 'I have appointed you as a light ... you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Both instances of "you" here are singular, but when Paul said, "... the Lord commanded us," Paul was applying those singular words to both himself and Barnabas. The words in the quotation were originally spoken by God through Isaiah the prophet to God's servant. By quoting Isaiah's prophecy, Paul was saying that he and Barnabas were doing what God commanded his servant to do. Paul was not saying that God had spoken directly to him.

as a light

Here the truth about Jesus that Paul was preaching is spoken of as if it were a light that allowed people to see.

bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth

The abstract word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." The phrase "uttermost parts" refers to everywhere. Alternate translation: "tell people everywhere in the world that I want to save them"

Acts 13:48

glorified the word of the Lord

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus that they had believed. Alternate translation: "glorified God for the message about the Lord Jesus" or "glorified the Lord for his word"

As many as were appointed to eternal life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As many as God appointed to eternal life" or "All the people whom God had chosen to receive eternal life"

Acts 13:49

The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those who believed spread the word of the Lord through the whole region" or "Those who believed went everywhere in the region and told others about the message of Jesus"

Acts 13:50

the Jews

This probably refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

incited ... women ... and ... men

This means that they spoke to the women and men and caused them to be angry and act violently. Alternate translation: "stirred up ... women ... and ... men"

the devout women of high standing

The word "devout" means that these women feared God. The phrase "of high standing" means that people respected these women.

the leading men

"the most important men"

They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas

The word "they" here probably refers to the devout women and the leading men. They listened to the Jews and then convinced the rest of the people in the city to persecute the apostles and throw them out.

threw them out of their region

"made Paul and Barnabas leave their land"

region

Here this word refers to the area that the people of the city considered their own, not to land within an official government border.

Acts 13:51

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas end their time in Antioch of Pisidia and go to Iconium.

shook off the dust from their feet against them

This was a symbolic act to indicate to the unbelieving people that God had rejected them and would punish them.

Acts 13:52

the disciples

This probably refers to the new believers in the Antioch of Pisidia that Paul and Silas just left.

Chapter 14

Acts 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The message of his grace"

The message of Jesus is the message that God will show grace to those who believe in Jesus. (See: grace and believe)

Zeus and Hermes

The Gentiles in the Roman Empire worshiped many different false gods who do not really exist. Paul and Barnabas told them to believe in the "living God." (See: falsegod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"We must enter into the kingdom of God through many sufferings."

Jesus told his followers before he died that everyone who followed him would suffer persecution. Paul is saying the same thing using different words.

Links:

Acts 14:1

Acts 14:1

General Information:

The story of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium continues.

It came about in Iconium that

Possible meanings here are 1) "It happened in Iconium that" or 2) "In Iconium, as usual,"

spoke in such a way

"spoke so powerfully." It may be helpful to state that they

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

spoke the message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "spoke the message about Jesus so powerfully"
Acts 14:2
the Jews who were disobedient
This refers to the portion of the Jews who did not believe the message about Jesus.
stirred up the minds of the Gentiles
Causing the Gentiles to become angry is spoken of as if calm waters were disturbed.
the minds of the Gentiles
Here the word "minds" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"
the brothers
Here "brothers" refers to Paul and Barnabas and the new believers.
Acts 14:3
General Information:
Here the words "he," "his," and "He" refer to the Lord.
So they stayed there
"Nevertheless they stayed there." Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium to help the many people who had believed in Acts 14:1. "So" could be omitted if it adds confusion to the text.
gave evidence about the message of his grace
"demonstrated that the message about his grace was true"
about the message of his grace
"about the message of the Lord's grace"
by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders"
by the hands of Paul and Barnabas
Here "hands" refers to the will and effort of these two men as guided by the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas"
Acts 14:4
the people of the city were divided
"the people of the city disagreed with each other"
sided with the Jews
"supported the Jews" or "agreed with the Jews." The first group mentioned did not agree with the message about grace.
with the apostles
The second group mentioned agreed with the message about grace. It may be helpful to restate the verb. Alternate translation: "sided with the apostles"
the apostles
Luke refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here "apostle" might be used in the general sense of "ones sent out."
Acts 14:5
made an attempt to mistreat them
Here the words "made an attempt" implies that they were not able to mistreat Paul and Barnabas before Paul and Barnabas left the city.
to mistreat them and to stone
"to beat Paul and Barnabas and to kill them by throwing stones at them"
Acts 14:6
Lycaonia
A district in Asia Minor
Lystra
A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and north of Derbe
Derbe
A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and Lystra
Acts 14:7
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.
where they continued to proclaim the gospel
"where Paul and Barnabas continued to proclaim the good news"
Acts 14:8
Connecting Statement:
Paul and Barnabas are now in Lystra.
a certain man sat
This introduces a new person in the story.
powerless in his feet
"unable to move his legs" or "unable to walk on his feet"
a cripple from his mother's womb
"having been born as a cripple"
cripple
person who cannot walk
Acts 14:9
General Information:
The words "him" and "he" refer to the crippled man.
Paul fixed his eyes on him
"Paul looked straight at him"
had faith to be made well
The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "believed that Jesus could heal him" or "believed that Jesus could make him well"
Acts 14:10
he said to him
"Paul said to the crippled man"
jumped up
"leaped in the air." This implies that his legs were completely healed.
Acts 14:11
what Paul had done
This refers to Paul's healing the crippled man.
they raised their voice
To raise the voice is to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "they spoke loudly"
in the dialect of Lycaonia
"in their own Lycaonian language." The people of Lystra spoke Lycaonian and also Greek.
The gods have become like men and come down to us
These people believed that the gods needed to change their appearance in order to look like men. A large number of people believed Paul and Barnabas were their pagan gods who had come down from heaven. Alternate translation: "The gods have come down from heaven to us in the form of men"
Acts 14:12
Zeus
The people of Iconium probably considered Zeus to be the king over all the other pagan gods.
Hermes
The people of Iconium probably considered Hermes to be

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the pagan god who brought messages to people from Zeus and the other gods.

Acts 14:13

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought

It may be helpful to include additional information about the priest. Alternate translation: "There was a temple just outside the city where the people worshiped Zeus. When the priest who served in the temple heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, he brought"

oxen and wreaths

The oxen were to be sacrificed. The wreaths were either to crown Paul and Barnabas, or put on the oxen for sacrifice.

to the gates

The gates of the cities were often used as a meeting place for the people of the city.

wanted to offer sacrifice

"wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes"

Acts 14:14

the apostles, Barnabas and Paul

Luke is here probably using "apostle" in the general sense of "one sent out."

they tore their clothing

This was a symbolic action to show that they were deeply distressed and upset that the crowd wanted to sacrifice to them.

Acts 14:15

Men, why are you doing these things?

Barnabas and Paul are rebuking the people for trying to sacrifice to them. Alternate translation: "Men, you must not do these things!"

doing these things

"worshiping us"

We also are human beings, with the same nature as you

By this statement, Barnabas and Paul are saying that they are not gods. Alternate translation: "We are just human beings like you. We are not gods"

with the same nature as you

"like you in every way"

telling you good news that you should turn

"telling you good news: you can turn" or "giving you good advice to turn." That is, the good news is that they can and should turn.

turn from these useless things to the living God

Here "turn from ... to" is a metaphor meaning to stop doing one thing and start doing something else. Alternate translation: "stop worshiping these false gods that cannot help you, and instead begin to worship the living God"

the living God

"the God who truly exists" or "the God who lives"

Acts 14:16

In the past ages

"In previous times" or "Until now"

to walk in their own ways

Walking in a way, or walking on a path, is a metaphor for living one's life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives the way they wanted to" or "to do whatever they wanted to do"

Acts 14:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas continue speaking to the crowd outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:8).

he did not leave himself without witness

This could also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God has certainly left a witness" or "God has indeed testified"

in that

"as shown by the fact that"

filling your hearts with food and gladness

Here "your hearts" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "giving you enough to eat and things about which to be happy"

Acts 14:18

Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them

Paul and Barnabas stopped the multitude from sacrificing to them, but it was difficult to do so.

barely kept

"had difficulty preventing"

Acts 14:19

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

persuaded the crowds

It my be helpful to explicitly state what they persuaded the crowd to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded the people not to believe Paul and Barnabas, and to turn against them"

the crowds

This may not be the same group as the "multitude" in the previous verse. Some time had passed, and this might be a different group that gathered together.

thinking that he was dead

"because they thought that he was already dead"

Acts 14:20

the disciples

These were new believers in the city of Lystra.

entered the city

"Paul re-entered Lystra with the believers"

he went to Derbe with Barnabas

"Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe"

Acts 14:21

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

that city

"Derbe" (Acts 14:20)

Acts 14:22

General Information:

Here the words "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas, and the word "We" includes Paul, Barnabas, and the disciples. The word "them" refers to the disciples.

They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples

Here "souls" refers to the disciples. This emphasizes their inner thoughts and beliefs. Alternate translation: "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to believe the message about Jesus" or "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to grow strong in their relationship with Jesus

encouraging them to continue in the faith

"encouraging the believers to keep trusting in Jesus"

saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

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Some version translate this as an indirect quote, "saying that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." The word "we" here includes Luke and the readers.

We must enter

Paul includes his hearers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

Acts 14:23

they had appointed for them

"Paul and Barnabas had appointed for the believers"

they entrusted them ... they had believed

Possible meanings are 1) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed ... the elders had believed" or 2) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed and the other disciples ... the elders and other disciples had believed"

Acts 14:24

General Information:

The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 14:25

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

had spoken the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message of God." Alternate translation: "had spoken the message of God"

went down to Attalia

The phrase "went down" is used here because Attalia is lower in elevation than Perga.

Acts 14:26

where they had been committed to the grace of God

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "where believers and leaders in Antioch had committed Paul and Barnabas to the grace of God" or "where the people of Antioch prayed that God would care for and protect Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 14:27

General Information:

Here the words "they," "them," and "They" refer to Paul and Barnabas. The word "he" refers to God.

gathered the church together

"called the local believers to meet together"

he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles

God's enabling the Gentiles to believe is spoken of as if he had opened a door that had prevented them from entering into faith. Alternate translation: "God had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe"

Acts 14:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 15

Acts 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 15:16-17.

The meeting that Luke describes in this chapter is commonly called the "Jerusalem Council." This was a time when many church leaders got together to decide if believers needed to obey the whole law of Moses.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

In this chapter Luke begins to use the word "brothers" to refer to fellow Christians instead of fellow Jews.

Obeying the law of Moses

Some believers wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because God had told Abraham and Moses that everyone who wanted to belong to him had to be circumcised and that this was "an everlasting covenant." But Paul and Barnabas had seen God give uncircumcised Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they did not want the Gentiles to be circumcised. Both groups went to Jerusalem to have the church leaders decide what they should do.

"Abstain from things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality"

It is possible that the church leaders decided on these laws so that Jews and Gentiles could not only live together but eat the same foods together.

Links:

Acts 15:1 Notes

Acts 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are still in Antioch when there is a dispute about the Gentiles and circumcision.

Some men

"Some men." You can make explicit that these men were Jews who believed in Christ.

came down from Judea

The phrase "came down" is used here because Judea is higher in elevation than Antioch.

taught the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for believers in Christ. It is implied that they were in Antioch. Alternate translation: "taught the believers at Antioch" or "were teaching the believers at Antioch"

Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Unless someone circumcises you according to the custom of Moses, God cannot save you" or "God will not save you from your sins unless you receive circumcision according to the law of Moses"

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Acts 15:2
This brought ... into a sharp dispute and debate with them
The abstract nouns "sharp dispute" and "debate" can be stated as verbs and where the men came from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "... had confronted and debated with the men from Judea"
go up to Jerusalem
Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.
this question
"this issue"
Acts 15:3
General Information:
Both instances of "They" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).
They therefore, being sent by the church
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore the community of believers sent them from Antioch to Jerusalem"
passed through ... announced
The words "passed through" and "announced" indicate they spent some time in different places sharing in detail what God was doing.
announced the conversion of the Gentiles
The abstract noun "conversion" means the Gentiles were rejecting their false gods and believing in God. Alternate translation: "announced to the community of believers in those places that Gentiles were believing in God"
They brought great joy to all the brothers
Their message causing the brothers to be joyful is spoken of as if "joy" were an object that they brought to the brothers. Alternate translation: "What they said caused their fellow believers to rejoice"
the brothers
Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers.
Acts 15:4
General Information:
All instances of "they" and "them" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).
they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles, the elders, and the rest of the community of believers welcomed them"
with them
"through them"
Acts 15:5
General Information:
Here the word "them" refers to non-Jewish believers who were not circumcised and did not keep the Old Testament laws of God.
Connecting Statement:
Paul and Barnabas are now in Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders there.
But certain men
Here Luke contrasts those who believe that salvation is only in Jesus to others who believe salvation is by Jesus but also believe that circumcision is required for salvation.
to keep the law of Moses
"to obey the law of Moses"
Acts 15:6
to consider this matter
The church leaders decided to discuss whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order for God to save them from their sins.
Acts 15:7
General Information:
The word "them" refers to apostles and elders
Connecting Statement:
Peter begins to speak to the apostles and elders who met to discuss whether Gentiles had to receive circumcision and keep the law (Acts 15:5-6).
Brothers
Peter is addressing all of the believers who are present.
by my mouth
Here "mouth" refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "from me" or "by me"
the Gentiles should hear
"the Gentiles would hear"
the word of the gospel
Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"
Acts 15:8
General Information:
The word "them" refers to the Gentiles, and both instances of "you" are plural.
who knows the heart
Here "heart" refers to the "minds" or "inner beings." Alternate translation: "who knows the people's minds" or "who knows what people think"
has testified to them
"has testified to the Gentiles"
giving them the Holy Spirit
"causing the Holy Spirit to come upon them"
Acts 15:9
General Information:
The word "he" refers to God, the word "us" refers to the speaker and the hearers, and the word "them" refers to the Gentiles.
made no distinction
God did not treat Jewish believers differently from Gentile believers.
having cleansed their hearts by faith
God's forgiving the Gentile believers' sins is spoken of as though he cleaned their hearts. Here "heart" stands for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "forgiving their sins because they believe in Jesus"
Acts 15:10
General Information:
Peter includes his audience by his use of "our" and "we."
Now
This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.
why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?
Peter uses a question with a word picture to tell the Jewish believers they should not require the non-Jewish believers to perform circumcision to be saved. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"Do not test God by putting a burden on the non-Jewish believers which we Jews were not able to bear!"

our fathers

This refers to their Jewish ancestors.

Acts 15:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes speaking to the apostles and elders.

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But we believe the Lord Jesus will save us by his grace, just as he saved the non-Jewish believers"

Acts 15:12

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

All the multitude

"Everyone" or "The whole group" (Acts 15:6)

God had worked

"God had done" or "God had caused"

Acts 15:13

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).

Connecting Statement:

James begins to speak to the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6).

Brothers, listen

"Fellow believers, listen." James was probably speaking only to men.

Acts 15:14

in order to take from them a people

"so that he might choose from among them a people"

for his name

"for God's name." Here "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "for himself"

Acts 15:15

Connecting Statement:

James quotes the prophet Amos from the Old Testament.

The words of the prophets agree

Here "words" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "What the prophets said agrees" or "The prophets agree"

agree with this

"confirm this truth"

as it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as they wrote" or "as the prophet Amos wrote long ago"

Acts 15:16

General Information:

Here "I" refers to God, who spoke through the words of his prophet.

I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down ... its ruins again

This speaks of God's again choosing one of David's descendants to rule over his people as though he were setting up a tent again after it fell down.

tabernacle

Here the word "tabernacle," a dwelling place, stands for David's family. The same word is used for the tent that Yahweh told Moses to construct.

Acts 15:17

the remnant of men may seek the Lord

This speaks about people wanting to obey God and learn more about him as if they were literally looking for him.

remnant of men

Here "men" includes males and females. Alternate translation: "remnant of people"

may seek the Lord

God is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "may seek me, the Lord"

including all the Gentiles called by my name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "including all the Gentiles who belong to me"

my name

Here "my name" stands for God.

Acts 15:18

that have been known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have known"

Acts 15:19

General Information:

Here "we" includes James, the apostles, and the elders.

we should not trouble those of the Gentiles

You can make explicit in what way James does not want to trouble the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we should not require the Gentiles to become circumcised and obey the laws of Moses"

who turn to God

A person who starts obeying God is spoken of as if the person is physically turning towards God.

Acts 15:20

they must keep away from the pollution of idols ... sexual immorality ... strangled ... blood

Sexual immorality, strangling animals, and consuming blood were often part of ceremonies to worship idols and false gods.

pollution of idols

This possibly refers to eating the meat of an animal that someone has sacrificed to an idol or to anything to do with idol worship.

from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood

God did not allow Jews to eat meat that still had the blood in it. Also, even earlier in Moses's writings in Genesis, God had forbidden the drinking of blood. Therefore, they could not eat an animal that someone strangled because the blood was not properly drained from the body of the animal.

Acts 15:21

Connecting Statement:

James finishes speaking to the apostles and elders. (See: Acts 15:2 and Acts 15:13)

Moses has been proclaimed in every city ... and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath

James is implying that Gentiles know how important these rules are because Jews preach them in every city where there is a synagogue. It also implies the Gentiles can go to the teachers from the synagogues to learn more about these rules.

Moses has been proclaimed ... he is preached

Here "Moses" represents the law of Moses, and so does "he."

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This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The law of Moses has been proclaimed ... the law is read" or "Jews have taught the law of Moses ... they read the law"

in every city

The word "every" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "in many cities"

Acts 15:22

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Judas and Silas.

Judas called Barsabbas

This is the name of a man. "Barsabbas" is a second name that people called him.

leaders of the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to the people there who believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "leaders of the believers" or "leaders of the church"

Acts 15:23

They wrote this with their hands

One or more of the apostles and elders wrote the letter and gave it to Judas and Silas so Judas and Silas could give it to the Gentile brothers.

From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!

This is the introduction of the letter. Your language may have a way of introducing the author of the letter and to whom it is written. Alternate translation: "This letter is from your brothers, the apostles and elders. We are writing to you Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings to you" or "To our Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings from the apostles and elders, your brothers"

your brothers ... the Gentile brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers. By using these words, the apostles and elders assure the Gentile believers that they accept them as fellow believers.

Cilicia

This is the name of a province on the coast in Asia Minor north of the Island of Cyprus.

Acts 15:24

General Information:

Here all instances of "we" and "us" refer to the writers but not the readers

that certain men

"that some men"

with no orders from us

"even though we gave no orders for them to go"

disturbed you with words that upset your souls

Here "souls" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "taught things that have troubled you"

Acts 15:25

General Information:

Here the words "us" and "our" refer to the writers but not the readers

who have come to one mind

"who are now agree completely"

one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

to choose men

The men they sent were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas (Acts 15:22).

Acts 15:26

men who have risked their lives

These words refer to Barnabas and Paul, not to Judas and Silas.

for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here "name" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "because they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "because they serve our Lord Jesus Christ"

Acts 15:27

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

who will report to you the same things in their own words

This phrase emphasizes that Judas and Silas will say the same things that the apostles and elders had written. Alternate translation: "who themselves will tell you the same things about which we have written"

Acts 15:28

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things

This speaks about laws that people need to obey as if they were objects that people carry on their shoulders.

Acts 15:29

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the letter from the Jerusalem church to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

from things sacrificed to idols

This means they are not allowed to eat the meat of an animal that someone sacrifices to an idol.

blood

This refers to drinking blood or eating meat from which the blood has not been drained.

things strangled

A strangled animal was killed but its blood was not drained.

Farewell

This announces the end of the letter. Alternate translation: "Goodbye"

Acts 15:30

Connecting Statement:

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas leave for Antioch.

So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch

The word "they" refers to Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas. Alternate translation: "So when the four men were dismissed, they came down to Antioch"

when they were dismissed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the apostles and elders dismissed the four men" or "when the believers in Jerusalem sent them"

came down to Antioch

The phrase "came down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

Acts 15:31

they rejoiced

"the believers in Antioch rejoiced"

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because of the encouragement
The abstract noun "encouragement" can be expressed with the verb "encourage." Alternate translation: "because what the apostles and elders wrote encouraged them"
Acts 15:32
also prophets
Prophets were teachers authorized by God to speak for him. Alternate translation: "because they were prophets" or "who were also prophets"
the brothers
"the fellow believers"
strengthened them
Judas and Silas' helping them to depend even more on Jesus is spoken of as if they were making them physically stronger.
Acts 15:33
Connecting Statement:
Judas and Silas return to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch.
After they had spent some time there
This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. The word "they" refers to Judas and Silas. Alternate translation: "After they stayed there for a while"
they were sent away in peace from the brothers
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brothers sent Judas and Silas back in peace"
the brothers
This refers to the believers in Antioch.
to those who had sent them
"to the believers in Jerusalem who sent Judas and Silas" (Acts 15:22)
Acts 15:34
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 15:35
the word of the Lord
Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"
Acts 15:36
Let us return now
"I suggest we now return"
visit the brothers
"care for the brothers" or "offer to help the believers"
the word of the Lord
Here "word" stands for the message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"
see how they are
"learn how they are doing." They want to learn about the current condition of the brothers and how they are holding on to God's truth.
Acts 15:37
to also take with them John, who was called Mark
"to take John, who was also called Mark"
Acts 15:38
Paul thought it was not good to take Mark
The words "not good" are used to say the opposite of good. Alternate translation: "Paul thought that taking Mark would be bad"
Pamphylia
This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.
did not go further with them in the work
"did not continue to work with them then" or "did not continue to serve with them"
Acts 15:39
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Paul.
Then there arose a sharp disagreement
The abstract noun "disagreement" can be stated as the verb "disagree." Alternate translation: "They strongly disagreed with each other"
Acts 15:40
after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord
To entrust to someone means to place the care and responsibility for someone or something to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after the believers in Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord" or "after the believers in Antioch prayed for the Lord to take care of Paul and show kindness to him"
Acts 15:41
he went
The previous sentence implies that Silas was with Paul. Alternate translation: "they went" or "Paul and Silas went" or "Paul took Silas and went"
went through Syria and Cilicia
These are provinces or areas in Asia Minor, near the island of Cyprus.
strengthening the churches
Encouraging the believers in the churches is spoken of as though Paul and Silas were making the believers physically stronger. The word "churches" refers to the groups of believers in Syria and Cilicia. Alternate translation: "encouraging the believers in the churches" or "helping the community of believers to depend even more in Jesus"

Chapter 16

Acts 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Timothy's circumcision
Paul circumcised Timothy because they were telling the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. Paul wanted the Jews to know that he respected the law of Moses even though the church leaders in Jerusalem had decided that Christians did not need to be circumcised.
The woman who had a spirit of divination
Most people want very much to know the future, but the law of Moses said that speaking with the spirits of dead people

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to learn about the future is a sin. This woman seems to have been able to tell the future very well. She was a slave, and her masters made much money from her work. Paul wanted her to stop sinning, so he told the spirit to leave her. Luke does not say that she began to follow Jesus or tell us anything more about her.

Links:

Acts 16:1 Notes

Acts 16:1

Connecting Statement:

This continues the missionary journeys of Paul with Silas. Timothy is introduced into the story and joins Paul and Silas. Verses 1 and 2 give background information about Timothy.

Paul also came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Derbe

This is the name of a city in Asia Minor. See how you translated it in Acts 14:6.

behold

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

who was a believer

The words "in Christ" are understood. Alternate translation: "who was a believer in Christ" or "who believed in Christ"

Acts 16:2

He was well spoken of by the brothers

This can be stated in active from. Alternate translation: "The brothers spoke well of him" or "Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers" or "The brothers said good things about him"

by the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "by the believers"

Acts 16:3

wanted him ... took him ... circumcised him ... his father

"wanted Timothy ... took Timothy ... circumcised Timothy ... Timothy's father"

with him ... he took

"with Paul ... Paul took"

circumcised him

It is possible that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, but it is more likely that he had someone else circumcise Timothy.

because of the Jews that were in those places

"because of the Jews living in the areas where Paul and Timothy would be traveling"

for they all knew that his father was a Greek

Since Greek men did not have their sons circumcised, the Jews would have known Timothy was not circumcised, and they would have rejected Paul and Timothy before hearing their message about Christ.

Acts 16:4

General Information:

The word "they" here refers to Paul, Silas (Acts 15:40), and Timothy (Acts 16:3).

the decrees to obey

"the decrees for the church members to obey" or "teh decrees for the believers to obey"

that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided on"

Acts 16:5

the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers became stronger in their faith, and there were more and more people becoming believers every day"

the churches were strengthened in the faith

This speaks of helping someone to believe more confidently as if it were making them physically stronger.

Acts 16:6

Phrygia

This is a region in Asia. See how you translated this name in Acts 2:10.

they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had forbidden them" or "the Holy Spirit did not permit them"

the word

Here "word" stands for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

Acts 16:7

When they came

Here "came" can be translated as "went" or "arrived."

Mysia ... Bithynia

These are two more regions in Asia.

the Spirit of Jesus

"the Holy Spirit"

Acts 16:8

they came down to the city of Troas

The phrase "came down" is used here because Troas is lower in elevation than Mysia.

they came down

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 16:9

A vision appeared to Paul

"Paul saw a vision from God" or "Paul had a vision from God"

begging him

Or "inviting him."

Come over into Macedonia

The phrase "Come over" is used because Macedonia is across the sea from Troas.

Acts 16:10

we sought to go to Macedonia ... God had called us

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul and his companions, including Luke, the author of Acts.

we sought to go to Macedonia

"we looked for a way to go to Macedonia" or "we prepared to go to Macedonia"

Acts 16:11

Samothrace ... Neapolis

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These are coastal cities near Phillipi in Macedonia.
we came to Neapolis
Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at."
Acts 16:12
a Roman colony
This is a city outside of Italy where many people who came from Rome lived. The people there had the same rights and freedoms as people who lived in cities in Italy. They could govern themselves and they did not have to pay taxes.
Acts 16:13
Connecting Statement:
Paul and his companions are now in Philippi on their missionary trip. The story of Lydia begins here. This short story happens during Paul's travels.
Acts 16:14
A certain woman named Lydia
Here "A certain woman" introduces a new person in the story. Alternate translation: "There was a woman named Lydia"
a seller of purple
Here "cloth" is understood. Alternate translation: "a merchant who sold purple cloth"
Thyatira
This is the name of a city.
worshiped God
A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him, but does not obey all of the Jewish laws.
The Lord opened her heart to pay attention
For the Lord to cause someone to pay attention and believe a message is spoken of as if he were opening a person's heart. Alternate translation: "The Lord caused her to listen well and to believe"
opened her heart
Here "heart" stands for a person's mind. Also, the author speaks about the "heart" or "mind" as if it were a box that a person could open so it is ready for someone to fill it.
what was said by Paul
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Paul said"
Acts 16:15
Connecting Statement:
The story of Lydia ends here.
When she and her house were baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When they baptized Lydia and members of her household"
her house
Here "house" represents the people who live in her house. Alternate translation: "the members of her household" or "her family and household servants"
Acts 16:16
General Information:
Background information is given here to explain that this young fortune teller brought much financial gain to her masters by guessing people's futures.
Connecting Statement:
This begins the first event in another short story during Paul's travels; it is about a young fortune teller.
It came about that
This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
a certain slave girl ... encountered
The phrase "a certain" introduces a new person to the story. Alternate translation: "there was a slave girl ... who encountered"
a spirit of divination
An evil spirit spoke to her often about the immediate future of people.
Acts 16:17
the way of salvation
How a person can be saved is spoken of here as if it were a way or path that a person walks on. Alternate translation: "how God can save you"
Acts 16:18
But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But she greatly annoyed Paul, so he turned around"
in the name of Jesus Christ
Here "name" stands for speaking with the authority or as the representative of Jesus Christ.
it came out at that same hour
"the spirit came out immediately"
Acts 16:19
her masters
"the owners of the slave girl"
their hope of profit was now gone
Here the word "hope" is the reason for which a person can expect that what he desires will happen. Now that the spirit was gone, the girl's masters could not expect to earn money from the spirit's telling people things. Alternate translation: "their opportunity to make money was now gone" or "they could no longer expect to make money"
their hope of profit was now gone
It can be stated clearly why they no longer expected to make money. Alternate translation: "she could no longer earn money for them by telling fortunes"
into the marketplace
"into the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services takes place.
before the authorities
"into the presence of the authorities" or "so that the authorities could judge them"
Acts 16:20
When they had brought them to the magistrates
"When they had brought them to the judges"
magistrates
rulers, judges
These men are causing trouble in our city
Here the word "our" refers to the people of the city and includes the magistrates who ruled it.
Acts 16:21
to accept or practice
"to believe or to obey" or "to accept or to do"
Acts 16:22
General Information:
Here the words "their" and "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

commanded them to be beaten with rods
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded the soldiers to beat them with rods"
Acts 16:23
they had ... upon them, they threw them ... guard them
"the magistrates had ... upon Paul and Silas, the magistrates threw Paul and Silas ... keep Paul and Silas"
had laid many blows upon them
"had hit them many times with rods"
commanded the jailer to guard them securely
"told the jailer to make sure they did not get out"
jailer
a person responsible for all the people held in the jail or prison
Acts 16:24
he got this command
"he heard this command"
fastened their feet in the stocks
"securely locked their feet in the stocks"
stocks
a piece of wood with holes for preventing a person's feet from moving
Acts 16:25
General Information:
The word "them" refers to Paul and Silas.
Connecting Statement:
This continues Paul and Silas' time in Philippi in prison and tells what happens to their jailer.
Acts 16:26
earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison"
the foundations of the prison
When the foundations shook, this caused the entire prison to shake.
all the doors were opened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the doors opened"
everyone's chains were unfastened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone's chains came loose"
Acts 16:27
The jailer was awakened from sleep
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The jailer woke up"
was about to kill himself
"was ready to kill himself." The jailer preferred to commit suicide rather than suffer the consequences of letting the prisoners escape.
Acts 16:28
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and all of the other prisoners but excludes the jailer.
Acts 16:29
called for lights
The reason why the jailer needed light can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "called for someone to bring light so he could see who was still in the prison"
for lights
The word "lights" stands for something that makes light. Alternate translation: "for torches" or "for lamps"
rushed in
"quickly entered the jail"
fell down before Paul and Silas
The jailer humbled himself by bowing down at the feet of Paul and Silas.
Acts 16:30
brought them out
"led them outside the jail"
what must I do to be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what must I do for God to save me from my sins"
Acts 16:31
you will be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you" or "God will save you from your sins"
your house
Here "house" stands for the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "all the members of your household" or "your family"
Acts 16:32
General Information:
The word "They" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the word "him" refers to the jailer.
They spoke the word of the Lord to him
Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "They told him the message about the Lord Jesus"
Acts 16:33
General Information:
The words "them" and "their" refer to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the words "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.
he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul and Silas immediately baptized the jailer and all the members of his household"
Acts 16:34
General Information:
All instances of "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.
Acts 16:35
General Information:
This is the last event in the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:12).
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells the last event in the story that started in Acts 16:16.
sent word to the guards
Here "word" stands for "message" or "command." Alternate translation: "sent a message to the guards" or "sent a command to the guards"
sent word
Here "sent" means the magistrates told someone to go tell the guards their message.
Let those men go
"Release those men" or "Allow those men to leave"
Acts 16:36
come out
"come outside of the jail"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Acts 16:37

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the magistrates. All instances of "we" and "us" refer only to Paul and Silas and so are exclusive.

said to them

Probably Paul is speaking to the jailer, but he intends for the jailer to tell the magistrates what he says. Alternate translation: "said to the jailer"

They have publicly beaten us

Here "They" refers to the magistrates who commanded their soldiers to beat them. Alternate translation: "The magistrates ordered their soldiers to beat us in public"

without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison

"men who are Roman citizens, and they had their soldiers put us in jail though they had not proven in court that we were guilty"

Do they now want to send us away secretly? No!

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he will not allow the magistrates to send them out the city in secret after they had mistreated Paul and Silas. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not let them send us out of the city in secret!"

Let them come themselves

Here "themselves" is used for emphasis.

Acts 16:38

when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid

To be a Roman meant to be a legal citizen of the Empire. Citizenship provided freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. The city leaders were afraid that more important Roman authorities might learn how the city leaders had mistreated Paul and Silas.

they heard ... they were afraid

"the magistrates heard ... the magistrates were afraid"

Acts 16:39

General Information:

All instances of "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:40

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Silas. The word "them" refers to the believers in Philippi.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Paul and Silas' time in Philippi.

came to the house

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

the house of Lydia

"the home of Lydia"

saw the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "saw the believers"

Chapter 17

Acts 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Misunderstandings about the Messiah

The Jews expected the Christ or Messiah to be a powerful king because the Old Testament says so many times. But it also says many times that the Messiah would suffer, and that was what Paul was telling the Jews. (See: christ)

The religion of Athens

Paul said that the Athenians were "religious," but they did not worship the true God. They worshiped many different false gods. In the past they had conquered other peoples and begun to worship the gods of the people they had conquered. (See: falsegod)

In this chapter Luke describes for the first time how Paul told the message of Christ to people who knew nothing of the Old Testament.

Links:

Acts 17:1 Notes

Acts 17:1

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40).

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Paul, Silas, and Timothy's missionary trip. They arrive in Thessalonica, apparently without Luke, since he says "they" and not "we."

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke, the author, starts to tell a new part of the story.

passed through

"traveled through"

cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia

These are coastal cities in Macedonia.

they came to the city

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at." Alternate translation: "they went to the city" or "they arrived at the city"

Acts 17:2

went to them ... reasoned with them

"went to the Jews ... reasoned with the Jews"

as his custom was

"as his habit was" or "as his common practice was." Paul usually went to the synagogue on the Sabbath when Jews would be present.

for three Sabbath days

"on each Sabbath day for three weeks"

reasoned with them from the scriptures

"gave them reasons to believe from the scriptures" or "debated with them about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with them." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the

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Messiah.
Acts 17:3
General Information:
Here the word "He" refers to Paul (Acts 17:2).
He was opening the scriptures
Possible meanings are 1) to explain the scriptures in a way that people can understand is spoken of as if Paul were opening something so people can see what is inside of it) or 2) Paul was literally opening a book or scroll and reading from it.
it was necessary
"it was part of God's plan"
to rise again
"to come back to life"
from the dead
From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
Acts 17:4
the Jews were persuaded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews believed" or "the Jews understood"
joined Paul
"became associated with Paul"
devout Greeks
This refers to Greeks who worshiped God but had not converted to Judaism through circumcision.
not a few of the leading women
This is an understatement to emphasize that many leading women joined them. Alternate translation: "many leading women"
Acts 17:5
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews and wicked men from the marketplace.
being moved with jealousy
The feeling of jealousy is spoken of as if jealousy were actually moving the person. Alternate translation: "feeling very jealous" or "feeling very angry"
with jealousy
It can be stated explicitly that these Jews were jealous because some of the Jews and Greeks believed Paul's message.
took certain wicked men
Here "took" does not mean the Jews took these people by force. It means the Jews persuaded these wicked men to help them.
certain wicked men
"some evil men." The word "men" here refers specifically to males.
from the marketplace
"from the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.
set the city in an uproar
Here "the city" stands for the people in the city. Alternate translation: "caused the people of the city to be in an uproar" or "caused the people of the city to riot"
Assaulting the house
"Violently attacking the house." This probably means the people were throwing rocks at the house and trying to break down the door of the house.
Jason
This is the name of a man.
they were seeking to bring Paul ... out
The word "seeking" here means that the people wanted to bring Paul out and were trying to bring him out.
out to the people
Possible meanings or "people" are 1) a governmental or legal group of citizens gathered to make a decision or 2) a mob.
Acts 17:6
certain other brothers
Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "some other believers"
before the officials
"into the presence of the officials"
These men who have
The Jewish leaders were speaking, and the phrase "These men" refers to Paul and Silas.
turned the world upside down
This phrase is another way of saying Paul and Silas were causing trouble everywhere they went. The Jewish leaders were exaggerating the influence Paul and Silas were having with their teaching. Alternate translation: "caused trouble everywhere in the world" or "caused trouble everywhere they have gone"
Acts 17:7
Jason has welcomed
This phrase signals that Jason was in agreement with the apostles' troubling message.
Acts 17:8
They troubled the crowd
"They caused the people in the city to be afraid"
Acts 17:9
the rest
The words "the rest" refers to other believers that the Jews brought before the officials.
they took security ... they let them go
"the officials took security ... they let Jason and the other believers go"
took security
Jason and the others gave the money to the officials to show that they would not cause any more trouble. This was not a fine or a punishment, so they might have expected the officials to give the money back later.
Acts 17:10
General Information:
Paul and Silas travel on to the town of Berea.
the brothers
The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "the believers"
Acts 17:11
Now
The word "now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the people in Berea and how they were willing to listen to Paul

and examine what he said.

more noble

These "well-born" people were willing to think more objectively about new ideas than other people. Alternate translation: "more open minded" or "more willing to listen"

received the word

Here "word" refers to a teaching. Alternate translation: "listened to the teaching"

with all readiness of mind

These Bereans were prepared to examine earnestly Paul's teachings about the scripture.

examining the scriptures daily

"carefully reading and evaluating the scriptures every day"

these things were so

"the things Paul said were true"

Acts 17:12

General Information:

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Acts 17:13

General Information:

Athens was south of Berea. Both were on the coast of Macedonia. Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece.

went there and stirred up

This speaks about their agitating people as though it were a person stirring a liquid and causing the things at the bottom of the liquid to rise to the surface. Alternate translation: "went there and agitated" or "went there and disturbed"

troubled the crowds

"worried the crowds" or "caused dread and fear among the people"

Acts 17:14

brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "believers"

to go to the sea

"to go to the coast." From here Paul would probably sail to another city.

Acts 17:15

who were leading Paul

"who were accompanying Paul" or "who were going along with Paul"

they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy

"he told them to instruct Silas and Timothy." This can also be stated as a direct quotation as in the UDB.

Acts 17:16

General Information:

This is another part of the story of Paul and Silas' travels. Paul is now in Athens where he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

Now

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

his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols

Here "spirit" stands for Paul himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he became upset because he saw that there were idols everywhere in the city" or "seeing the idols everywhere in the city upset him"

Acts 17:17

he reasoned

"he debated" or "he discussed." This means that his listeners also spoke and asked him questions. He was not the only speaker.

others who worshiped God

This refers to Gentiles who gave praise to God and followed him but did not obey all of the Jewish laws.

in the marketplace

"in the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

Acts 17:18

General Information:

Here the words "him," "He, "and "he" refer to Paul.

Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

Philosophers are people who think about the world and try to understand how people should live. The Epicureans and the Stoics were two groups of philosophers. They believed that a god or gods existed, but they did not trust in or obey any god. Alternate translation: "thinkers called Epicureans and Stoics"

encountered him

"happened upon him"

Some said

"Some of the philosophers said"

What is this babbler

The word "babbler" was used to refer to birds picking up seeds as food. It refers negatively to a person who only knows a little bit of information. The philosophers said Paul had bits of information which were not worth listening to. Alternate translation: "What is this uneducated person"

Others said

"Other philosophers said"

He seems to be one who calls people to follow

"He seems to be a proclaimer" or "He seems to be on a mission to add people to his philosophy"

strange gods

This is not in the sense of "odd," but in the sense of "foreign," that is, gods that Greeks and Romans do not worship or know about.

Acts 17:19

They took ... brought him

This does not mean they arrested Paul. The philosophers invited Paul to speak formally to their leaders.

to the Areopagus

The "Areopagus" was the place where the leaders met. Alternate translation: "to the leaders that met on the Areopagus"

the Areopagus, saying

Here the leaders on the Areopagus are speaking. This can stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "the Areopagus. The leaders said to Paul"

Areopagus

This is a prominent rock outcropping or hill in Athens upon which the supreme court of Athens may have met.

Acts 17:20

For you bring some strange things to our ears

Paul's teachings about Jesus and the resurrection are

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spoken of as an object that a person can bring to another person. Here "ears" refers to what they hear. Alternate translation: "For you are teaching some things that we have never heard before"

Acts 17:21

Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there

The word "all" is a generalization referring to many. Alternate translation: "Now many of the Athenians and the strangers living there"

all the Athenians

"Athenians" are people from Athens, a city near the coast below Macedonia

the strangers

"the foreigners"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

Here "time" is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "used their time doing nothing but either telling or listening" or "were always doing nothing but telling or listening"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

The phrase "spent their time in nothing" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "did not do much but tell or listen" or "spent much of their time telling or listening"

telling or listening about something new

"discussing new philosophical ideas" or "talking about what was new to them"

Acts 17:22

General Information:

Paul begins his speech to the philosophers on the Areopagus.

very religious in every way

Paul is referring to the Athenians' public display of honoring the gods through prayers, building altars, and offering sacrifices.

Acts 17:23

as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship

"as I walked among the objects of your worship and observed them" or "as I walked around in the city, I observed the objects of your worship"

To an Unknown God

Possible meanings are 1) "to a certain unknown god" or 2) "to a god not known." This was a specific writing or inscription on that altar.

Acts 17:24

the world

In the most general sense, the "world" refers to the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

since he is Lord

"because he is the Lord." Here "he" is referring to the unknown god mentioned in Acts 17:23 that Paul is explaining is the Lord God.

of heaven and earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean all beings and things in heaven and earth.

built with hands

Here "hands" stands for people. Alternate translation: "built by the hands of people" or "that people built"

Acts 17:25

Neither is he served by men's hands

Here "served" has the sense of a doctor treating a patient to make the patient well again. Alternate translation: "Neither do men's hands take care of him"

by men's hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "by humans"

since he himself

"because he himself." The word "himself" is added for emphasis.

Acts 17:26

General Information:

Here the word "he" refer to God, the creator, and both instances of "their" refer to every nation of people living on the surface of the earth.

one man

This means Adam, the first person God created. This can be stated to include Eve. It was through Adam and Eve that God made all other people. Alternate translation: "one couple"

having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "and he determined when and where they would live"

Acts 17:27

General Information:

All instances of "they" and "their" refer to the people who live on earth, all instances of "him" and "he" refer to God, and the word "us" includes the speaker, the hearers, and the people who live on earth.

so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him

Here "search for God" represents desiring to know him, and "feel their way toward him and find him" represents praying and having a relationship with him. Alternate translation: "so that they should want to know God and perhaps pray to him and become one of his people"

Yet he is not far from each one of us

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yet he is very near to every one of us"

Acts 17:28

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to God

For in him

"Because of him"

Acts 17:29

General Information:

Both instances of "we" include the speaker, the hearers, and other people.

are God's offspring

Because God created everyone, all people are spoken of as if they were God's literal children.

the qualities of deity are like

Here "deity" refers to God's nature or attributes. Alternate translation: "God is like"

images created by the art and imagination of man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which a man then uses his skill to make it into something that he has designed" or "images that people make by using their art and imagination"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Acts 17:30
General Information:
Here the word "he" refers to God.
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true"
God overlooked the times of ignorance
"God decided not to punish people during the time of ignorance"
times of ignorance
This refers to the time before God fully revealed himself through Jesus Christ and before people truly knew how to obey God.
all men
This means all people, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all people"
Acts 17:31
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes his speech to the philosophers in the Areopagus, which he began in Acts 17:22.
when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed
"when the man he has chosen will judge the world in righteousness"
he will judge the world
Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "he will judge all people"
in righteousness
"justly" or "fairly"
God has given proof of this man
"God has demonstrated his choice of this man"
from the dead
From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
Acts 17:32
General Information:
Here the word "We" refers to the men of Athens but not to Paul, so this is exclusive. Though some of them probably did want to hear Paul again, they may only have been being polite.
Connecting Statement:
This is the end of the part of the story about Paul in Athens.
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke changes from Paul's teachings to the reaction of the people of Athens.
the men of Athens
These are the people who were present at the Areopagus and were listening to Paul.
some mocked Paul
"some ridiculed Paul" or "some laughed at Paul." These did not believe it was possible for someone to die and then return to life.
Acts 17:33
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 17:34
Dionysius the Areopagite
Dionysius is a man's name. Areopagite implies that Dionysius was one of the judges at the council of Areopagus.
Damaris
This is the name of a woman.

Chapter 18

Acts 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The baptism of John

Some Jews who lived far away from Jerusalem and Judea had heard of John the Baptist and followed his teachings. They had not yet heard about Jesus. One of these Jews was Apollos. He followed John the Baptist, but he did not know that the Messiah had come. John had baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins, but this baptism was different from Christian baptism. (See: faithful and christ and repent)

Links:

Acts 18:1

Acts 18:1
Connecting Statement:
This is another part of the story of Paul's travels as he goes to Corinth.
After these things
"After these events took place in Athens"
Athens
Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 17:15.
Acts 18:2
General Information:
The writer begins to give background information about Aquila and Priscilla.
There he met
Possible meanings are that 1) Paul happened to find by chance or 2) Paul intentionally found.
a Jew named Aquila
Here the phrase "a certain" indicates this is introducing new person in the story.
a native of Pontus
Pontus was a province on the southern coast of the Black Sea.
had recently come
This is probably sometime in the past year.
Italy
This is the name of land. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

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Claudius had commanded
Claudius was the current Roman emperor. See how you translated this in Acts 11:28.
Acts 18:3
General Information:
The writer finishes giving background information about Aquila and Priscilla.
he worked at the same trade
"he did the same kind of work that they did"
Acts 18:4
So Paul reasoned
"So Paul debated" or "So Paul discussed." He gave reasons. This means that rather than just preaching, Paul talked and interacted with the people.
trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks
Possible meanings are 1) "and he caused both Jews and Greeks to believe" or 2) "and he kept trying to persuade the Jews and the Greeks."
Acts 18:5
General Information:
Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul.
Acts 18:6
shook out his garment
This is a symbolic action to indicate that Paul will no longer try to teach the Jews there about Jesus. He is leaving them to God's judgment.
May your blood be upon your own heads
Here "blood" stands for the guilt of their actions. Here "heads" refers to the whole person. Paul tells the Jews they are solely responsible for the judgment they will face for their stubbornness if they refuse to repent. Alternate translation: "You alone bear the responsibility for your punishment for sin"
I am clean
The word "clean" here is a metaphor for Paul being innocent of wrong against either the people or God. Alternate translation: "I am innocent" or "God will not punish me when he punishes you"
Acts 18:7
he left ... His house
"Paul left ... Titius' Justus's house"
Titius Justus
This is the name of a man.
worshiped God
A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him but does not necessarily obey all of the Jewish laws.
Acts 18:8
Crispus
This is the name of a man.
leader of the synagogue
a layperson who sponsored and administered the synagogue, not necessarily the teacher
all his household
Here "his household" refers to the people who lived together in his house. Alternate translation: "the people who lived with him in his house"
his household
Crispus's household
were baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "received baptism"
Acts 18:9
Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent
The Lord is giving one command in two different ways to emphasize that Paul should certainly continue preaching. Alternate translation: "You must not be afraid; instead, you should continue to speak and not become silent"
speak and do not be silent
The Lord gives the same command in two different ways to strongly command Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "you must certainly continue to speak"
do not be silent
It can be stated explicitly what the Lord wants Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "do not stop speaking about the gospel"
Acts 18:10
I have many people in this city
"there are many people in this city who have put their faith in me" or "many people in this city will put their faith in me"
Acts 18:11
Paul lived there ... teaching the word of God among them
This is a concluding statement for this part of the story. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for the entire scriptures. Alternate translation: "Paul lived there ... teaching the scriptures among them"
Acts 18:12
General Information:
Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. Corinth was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province.
Connecting Statement:
The unbelieving Jews bring Paul to the judgment seat before Gallio.
Gallio
This is the name of a man.
the Jews
This stands for the Jewish leaders that did not believe in Jesus.
rose up
This phrase means that the Jews began to act, not that they rose into the air or rose to stand from a sitting position. If your language has a different idiom for beginning to act, you may use it here.
with one mind
This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.
brought him before the judgment seat
The Jews took Paul by force to bring Paul before the court. Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sat when he made legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "took him so that the governor could judge him at the judgment seat"
Acts 18:13
General Information:
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generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Acts 18:14
Gallio said
Gallio was the Roman governor of the Province.
Acts 18:15
your own law
Here "law" can refer to either the law of Moses or the Jewish customs of Paul's time. Gallio is simply telling the Jews that they are to do what they think right and that he is not interested in being the judge.
I do not wish to be a judge of these matters
"I refuse to make a judgment about these matters"
Acts 18:16
Gallio made them leave the judgment seat
"Gallio dismissed the Jews from the judgment seat." Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sits to make legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "Gallio made them leave his presence in the court" or "Gallio made them leave the court"
Acts 18:17
General Information:
It is not clear what events this verse describes. The Jews had been accusing Paul, but it appears that they ended up beating Sosthenes and not Paul.
So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat
Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles beat Sosthenes in the court in front of the judgment seat because he was the Jewish leader or 2) Sosthenes was a believer in Christ, so even though he was "the ruler of the synagogue," the Jews beat him in front of the court.
they all seized
This may be an exaggeration to emphasize the strong feelings the people had. Alternate translation: "many people seized" or "many of them grabbed"
Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue
Sosthenes was "the ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth.
beat him
"repeatedly hit him" or "repeatedly punched him."
Acts 18:18
General Information:
Here both instances of "he" refer to Paul.
left the brothers
The word "brothers" refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "left the fellow believers"
sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila
Paul got on a ship that sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him.
Cenchreae
This was a town near Corinth in Greece. It was on the coast, and Paul probably got on the ship there.
he had his hair cut off
This is a symbolic action that indicates that he had done something he had vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he had someone cut off the hair on his head"
Acts 18:19
Connecting Statement:
This continues Paul's missionary journey as Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila leave Corinth. This seems to indicate that Silas and Timothy remain, since it says "he" here and not "they." The word "they" refers to Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.
reasoned with the Jews
"gave the Jews reasons to believe" or "debated with the Jews about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with the Jews." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. See how you translated "reasoned with" in [Acts 17:2]
Acts 18:20
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the Jews in Ephesus.
Acts 18:21
General Information:
Here the word "them" refers to the Jews in Ephesus. The word "you" is plural.
taking his leave of them
"saying good-bye to them"
Acts 18:22
General Information:
Phrygia is a province in Asia which is now modern day Turkey. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues his missionary journey.
landed at Caesarea
"arrived at Caesarea." The word "landed" is used to show that he arrived by ship.
he went up
He traveled to the city of Jerusalem. The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.
greeted the Jerusalem church
Here "church" refers to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "greeted the members of the church of Jerusalem"
then went down
The phrase "went down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.
Acts 18:23
Paul departed
"Paul went away" or "Paul left"
After having spent some time there
This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. Alternate translation: After staying there for a while"
Acts 18:24
General Information:
Apollos is introduced to the story. Verses 24 and 25 give background information about him.
Connecting Statement:
Luke tells what happens in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.
a certain Jew named Apollos
The phrase "a certain" indicates that Luke is introducing a new person in the story.
an Alexandrian by birth
"a man who was born in the city of Alexandria." This was a city in Egypt on the north coast of Africa.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

eloquent in speech
"a good speaker"
mighty in the scriptures
"he knew the scriptures thoroughly." He understood the Old Testament writings well.
Acts 18:25
Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Other believers had taught Apollos how the Lord Jesus wanted people to live"
Being fervent in spirit
Here "spirit" refers to the entire person of Apollos. Alternate translation: "Being very enthusiastic"
the baptism of John
"the baptism that John performed." John's baptism was with water, but Jesus's baptism is with the Holy Spirit.
Acts 18:26
the way of God
How God wants people to live is spoken of as if it were a road that a person travels.
more accurately
"correctly" or "more fully"
Acts 18:27
General Information:
Here the he words "he" and "him" refer to Apollos (Acts 18:24).
to pass over into Achaia
"to go to the region of Achaia." The phrase "pass over" is used here because Apollos had to cross the Aegean Sea to get to Achaia from Ephesus.
Achaia
Achaia was a Roman Province in the southern section of Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.
brothers
The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. You can make explicit that these are believers in Ephesus. Alternate translation: "fellow believers in Ephesus"
wrote to the disciples
"wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia"
those who believed by grace
"those who had believed in salvation by grace" or "those who by God's grace believed in Jesus"
Acts 18:28
Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate
"In public debate Apollos powerfully showed that the Jews were wrong"
showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ
"as he showed them by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ"

Chapter 19

Acts 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptism
John baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus's followers baptized people who wanted to follow Jesus.
Temple of Diana
The temple of Diana was an important place in the city of Ephesus. Many people came to Ephesus to see this temple, and they bought statues of the goddess Diana while they were there. The people who sold statues of Diana were afraid that if people did not believe Diana was a real goddess, they would stop giving the sellers money for statues.

Links:

Acts 19:1 Notes

Acts 19:1
General Information:
The "upper country" was an area of Asia which today is part of modern-day Turkey to the north of Ephesus. Paul must have traveled by land around the top of the Aegean Sea in order to come to Ephesus (also in Turkey today), which is directly east of Corinth by sea.
Connecting Statement:
Paul travels to Ephesus.
It came about that
This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
passed through
"traveled through"
Acts 19:2
receive the Holy Spirit
This means to have the Holy Spirit come upon them.
we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit
"we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit"
Acts 19:3
General Information:
The word "They" refers to the disciples (Acts 19:1). The word "you" is plural.
Into what then were you baptized?
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What kind of baptism did you receive?"
Into John's baptism
You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "We were baptized into John's baptism" or "We received the kind of baptism about which John taught"
Acts 19:4
the baptism of repentance
You can translate the abstract noun "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "the baptism that people requested when they wanted to repent"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the one who would come
Here "the one" refers to Jesus.
come after him
This means to come after John the Baptist in time and not following after him physically.
Acts 19:5
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues staying in Ephesus.
When the people
Here "people" refers to the disciples in Ephesus who were talking with Paul (Acts 19:1),
they were baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received baptism"
in the name of the Lord Jesus
Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority. Alternate translation: "as believers in the Lord Jesus"
Acts 19:6
General Information:
All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" (Acts 19:5)
laid his hands on them
"placed his hands on them." He probably placed his hands on their shoulders or heads. Alternate translation: "placed his hands on their heads as he prayed"
they spoke in tongues and prophesied
Unlike in Acts 2:3-4, there are no details of who understood their messages.
Acts 19:7
General Information:
All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" (Acts 19:5)
In all they were about twelve men
This tells how many men were baptized.
twelve men
"12 men"
Acts 19:8
Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months
"Paul regularly attended the synagogue meetings for three months and spoke there boldly"
reasoning and persuading them
Probable meanings are 1) the words "reasoning" and "persuading" are a hendiadys that means "arguing persuasively" or 2) the words describe two separate activities, "giving them reasons to believe" and "convincing them"
about the kingdom of God
Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "about God's rule as king" or "about how God would show himself as king"
Acts 19:9
some Jews were hardened and disobedient
People who were stubbornly refusing to believe are spoken of as though they were becoming hard and unable to move. Alternate translation: "some Jews were stubborn and did not believe" or "some Jews stubbornly refused to accept and obey the message"
to speak evil of the Way before the crowd
What Christ wants people to believe is spoken of as though it were a road that a person travels. The phrase, "the Way," seems to have been a title for Christianity at the time. Alternate translation: "to speak evil about Christianity to the crowd" or "to speak to the crowd evil things about those who follow Christ and who obey his teaching about God" (See: and Acts 9:2)
to speak evil of
"to speak bad things about"
in the lecture hall of Tyrannus
"in the large room where Tyrannus had taught people"
Tyrannus
This is the name of a man.
Acts 19:10
all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord
Here "all" is a generalization that means very many people throughout Asia heard the gospel.
the word of the Lord
Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"
Acts 19:11
God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul
Here "hands" stands for Paul's whole person. Alternate translation: "God was causing Paul to do extraordinary miracles" or "God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul"
Acts 19:12
General Information:
Here the words "them" and "their" refer to those who were sick.
even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they took to sick people even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul"
even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him
Possible meanings are 1) these were cloth items that Paul had touched or 2) these were cloth items that Paul had worn or used.
handkerchiefs
cloths worn around the head
aprons
clothing worn on the front of the body to protect the clothes of people
the sick
This refers to sick people. Alternate translation: "sick people" or "those who were sick"
their illnesses left them
"those who were sick became healthy"
Acts 19:13
General Information:
This is the beginning of another event that happened while Paul was in Ephesus. It is about Jewish exorcists.
exorcists
people who send evil spirits away from people or places
the name of the Lord Jesus
Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.
By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims
"Jesus" was a common name at the time, so these exorcists wanted people to know of whom they spoke.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

By the Jesus
This stands for the power and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus" or "by the power of Jesus"
Acts 19:14
Sceva
This is the name of a man.
Acts 19:15
Jesus I know, and Paul I know
"I know Jesus and Paul" or "I know Jesus, and I know Paul"
but who are you?
The spirit asked this question to emphasize that the exorcists had no authority over evil spirits. Alternate translation: "but I do not know you!" or "but you have no authority over me!"
Acts 19:16
The evil spirit in the man leaped
This means that the evil spirit caused the man whom it was controlling to leap on the exorcists.
exorcists
This refers to people who send evil spirits from people or places. See how you translated this in Acts 19:13.
they fled ... naked
The exorcists fled with their clothes ripped off them.
Acts 19:17
the name of the Lord Jesus was honored
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they honored the name of the Lord Jesus" or "they considered the name of the Lord Jesus to be great"
the name
This stands for the power and authority of Jesus.
Acts 19:18
Connecting Statement:
This ends the story about the Jewish exorcists.
Acts 19:19
brought their books
"collected their books." The word "books" refers to scrolls on which magical incantations and formulas were written.
in the sight of everyone
"in front of everyone"
the value of them
"the value of the books" or "the value of the scrolls"
fifty thousand
"50,000"
pieces of silver
A "piece of silver" was the approximate daily wage for a common laborer.
Acts 19:20
So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways
"So because of these powerful deeds, more and more people heard the message about the Lord Jesus"
Acts 19:21
Connecting Statement:
Paul talks about going Jerusalem but does not leave Ephesus yet.
Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.
these things were completed
"Paul completed the work that God had for him to do in Ephesus"
Paul decided in the Spirit
Possible meanings are 1) Paul decided with the help of the Holy Spirit or 2) Paul decided within his own spirit, which means he made up his mind.
Achaia
Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. It was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.
I must also see Rome
"I must also travel to Rome"
Acts 19:22
Erastus
This is the name of a man.
But he himself stayed in Asia for a while
It is made explicit in the next few verses that Paul remains in Ephesus.
he himself
This is repeated for emphasis.
Acts 19:23
Connecting Statement:
Luke tells about a riot that broke out while Paul was in Ephesus.
there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way
This is a summary opening statement.
there was no small disturbance
"the people became very upset" See how you translated this in Acts 12:18
the Way
This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated this title in Acts 9:1.
Acts 19:24
General Information:
The writer introduces Demetrius to the story and gives background information about him. Ephesus had a large temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, sometimes translated as "Diana." She was a false goddess of fertility.
A certain silversmith named Demetrius
The use of the words "a certain" introduces a new person in the story.
silversmith
a craftsman who works with silver metal to make statues and jewelry
named Demetrius
This is the name of a man. Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who was against Paul and the local church.
brought in much business for the craftsmen
"enabled those who made the idols to make much money"
shrines of Artemis
These were probably carved or molten images of the temple of Artemis or of the part of the temple in which the statue of Artemis stood.
Acts 19:25
the workmen of that occupation
An occupation is a profession or job. Alternate translation: "others who did that kind of work"
Acts 19:26

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Connecting Statement:
Demetrius continues to speak to the craftsmen.
You see and hear that
"You have come to know and understand that"
persuaded and turned away many people
Paul's stopping people from worshiping idols is spoken of as though Paul were turning the people in a different direction. Alternate translation: "persuaded many people and caused them to stop worshiping the local gods"
He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods
Here the word "hands" can refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "He is saying that the idols that people make are not real gods"
Acts 19:27
that our trade will be discredited
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that what Paul is saying will discredit our trade" or "that people will think that our trade is false"
our trade
This refers to their business of making and selling idols.
the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is worthless" or "people will think there is no benefit in going to the temple to worship the great goddess Artemis"
her greatness would be brought to nothing
"Her greatness" is a metonym for her reputation of being great. Being "brought to nothing" is a metaphor for becoming nothing or no longer existing. Alternate translation: "People would no longer recognize how great she is" or "She will lose her reputation of being great"
whom all Asia and the world worship
This was an exaggeration to show how popular the goddess Artemis was. Here the words "Asia" and "the world" refer to the people in the province of Asia and the known world. Alternate translation: "whom many people in Asia and in other parts of the world worship"
Acts 19:28
General Information:
Here "they" refers to the craftsmen who made the idols (Acts 19:24-25).
they were filled with anger
This speaks of the craftsmen as though they were containers. Here "anger" is spoken of as if it were the contents that fill a container. Alternate translation: "they became very angry"
cried out
"shouted aloud" or "shouted loudly"
Acts 19:29
The whole city was filled with confusion
Here "city" refers to the people. The city is spoken of as if it were a container. And, "confusion" is spoken of as if it were the contents that filled the container. Alternate translation: "Then people all over the city became upset and started shouting"
the people rushed with one mind
This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.
into the theater
The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people.
Paul's travel companions
The men who had been with Paul.
Gaius and Aristarchus
These are names of men. Gaius and Aristarchus came from Macedonia but were working with Paul in Ephesus at this time.
Acts 19:30
General Information:
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Acts 19:31
officials of the province of Asia
Ephesus was in the Roman Empire's province of Asia.
enter the theater
The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people. See how you translated "theater" in Acts 19:29.
Acts 19:32
General Information:
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Acts 19:33
Alexander
This is the name of a man.
motioned with his hand
You can make explicit that Alexander was showing the crowd that he wanted them to be quiet. Alternate translation: "gestured to the crowd to be quiet"
to give a defense
It is not clear whom or what Alexander wanted to defend. If your language requires this information, it might be best to use a general phrase like "to explain what was going on."
Acts 19:34
with one voice
The shouting together of the people at the same time is spoken of as though they were speaking with one voice. Alternate translation: "in unison" or "together"
Acts 19:35
Connecting Statement:
The clerk of Ephesus speaks to quiet the crowd.
the town clerk
This refers to the town "writer" or "secretary."
what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven?
The clerk asked this question to assure the crowd they were right and to comfort them. Alternate translation: "every man knows that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven."
who does not know
The town clerk uses "not" to emphasize that all of the people knew this.
temple keeper
The Ephesian people maintained and guarded the temple of

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Artemis.
the image which fell down from heaven
Within the temple of Artemis was an image of the goddess. It had been fashioned from a meteorite which fell from the sky. People thought that this rock had come directly from Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods (idols).
Acts 19:36
General Information:
The word "you" is plural.
Seeing then that these things are undeniable
"Since you know these things"
do nothing rash
"do not do anything before you have had time to think about it"
rash
without careful thought
Acts 19:37
General Information:
The word "you" is plural.
these men
The words "these men" refer to Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions (Acts 19:29).
Acts 19:38
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true." The town clerk had said in Acts 19:37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were not robbers or blasphemers.
have an accusation against anyone
The word "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "want to accuse someone"
proconsuls
the Roman governor's representatives who made legal decisions in court
Let them accuse one another
This does not mean Demetrius and those with him will accuse each other. It means this is a place where people in general can speak their accusation. Alternate translation: "There people can accuse one another"
Acts 19:39
Connecting Statement:
The town clerk finishes speaking to the crowd.
But if you are seeking anything more
"But if you want to ask about anything more" or "But if you have something to discuss about other matters"
it should be resolved in the regular assembly
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let us settle it in the regular assembly"
the regular assembly
This refers to a regular public gathering of citizens over which the county clerk presided.
Acts 19:40
For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in danger of the Roman authorities accusing us of starting this riot today"

Chapter 20

Acts 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter Luke describes Paul's last visits to believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Asia before he went to Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Race

Paul spoke of living for Jesus as if he were running in a race. By this he meant that he needed to keep working hard even when things were difficult and he wanted to quit. (See: and discipline)

"Compelled by the Spirit"

Paul thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem even if Paul did not want to go there. The same Holy Spirit told other people that when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, people would try to harm him.

Links:

Acts 20:1

Acts 20:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul leaves Ephesus and continues his travels.
After the uproar
"After the riot" or "Following the riot"
he said farewell
"he said goodbye"
Acts 20:2
had spoken many words of encouragement to them
"had greatly encouraged the believers" or "had said many things to encourage the believers"
Acts 20:3
After he had spent three months there
"After he had stayed there three months." This speaks about time as if it were something a person could spend.
a plot was formed against him by the Jews
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews formed a plot against him" or "the Jews formed a secret plan to harm him"
by the Jews
This means only some of the Jews. Alternate translation: "by some of the Jews"
as he was about to sail for Syria
"as he was ready to sail for Syria"
Acts 20:4
Accompanying him

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"Traveling with him." Here the word "him" refers to Paul (Acts 20:1).

Sopater ... Pyrrhus ... Secundus ... Tychicus ... Trophimus

These are names of men.

Berea ... Derbe

These are names of places.

Aristarchus ... Gaius

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Acts 19:29.

Acts 20:5

these men had gone before us

"these men had traveled ahead of us"

before us ... for us

Here "us" refers to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Troas

This is the name of a place.

Acts 20:6

General Information:

All instances of "we" refer to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. See how you translated this in Acts 12:3.

Acts 20:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader. (See: and Acts 20:4-6)

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about Paul's preaching in Troas and about what happened to Eutychus.

the next day

"when the sun came up again." If the writer was using the Jewish system of determining days, Paul was planning to travel after sunrise on "the first day of the week." If the writer was using the Greek system, Paul was planning to travel on the second day of the week.

to break bread

Bread was part of their meals. Possible meanings are 1) this refers simply to eating a meal together. Alternate translation: "to eat a meal" or 2) this refers to the meal they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "to eat the Lord's Supper"

he prolonged his message

"he continued to speak"

Acts 20:8

upper room

This may have been on the third floor of the house.

Acts 20:9

In the window

This was an opening in the wall with a ledge that was wide enough on which a person could sit.

Eutychus

This is the name of a man.

who fell into a deep sleep

This speaks about sleep as if it were a deep hole into which a person could fall. Alternate translation: "who slept soundly" or "who became more and more tired until finally he was sleeping soundly"

third story and was picked up dead

When they went down to check his condition, they saw he was dead. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "third story; and when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead"

third story

This means two floors above the ground floor. If your culture does not count the ground floor, you may state this as the "second story."

Acts 20:10

on him ... embraced him ... he is alive

Here "him" and "he" refers to the young man, Eutychus.

he said

Here "he" refers to Paul.

Acts 20:11

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul's preaching at Troas and about Eutychus.

broke bread

Bread was a common food during meals. Here "broke bread" probably means that they shared a meal with more kinds of food than just bread.

he left

"he went away"

Acts 20:12

the boy

This refers to Eutychus (Acts 20:9). Possible meanings are 1) he was a young man over 14 years old or 2) he was a boy between 9 and 14 years old or 3) the word "boy" implies that he was a servant or a slave.

Acts 20:13

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his other companions continue their travels; however, Paul goes separately for part of the trip.

We ourselves went

The word "ourselves" adds emphasis and separates Luke and his traveling companions from Paul, who did not travel by boat.

sailed away to Assos

Assos is a town located directly below present day Behram in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

he himself desired

Here "he himself" refers to Paul. "Himself" is used to emphasize that this is what Paul wanted.

to go by land

"to travel on land"

Acts 20:14

he met ... took him

Here "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

met us ... we took

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the writer and those

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traveling with him, but not to the reader.
went to Mitylene
Mitylene is a town located in present day Mitilini in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.
Acts 20:15
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.
opposite the island
"near the island" or "across from the island"
the island of Chios
Chios is an island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the Aegean Sea.
we touched at the island of Samos
"we arrived at the island of Samos"
island of Samos
Samos is an island south of Chios in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey.
the city of Miletus
Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River.
Acts 20:16
For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus
Paul sailed south past the port city of Ephesus, further south in order to land at Miletus.
so that he would not spend any time
This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend or use up. Alternate translation: "so that he would not have to remain for a time" or "so that he would not have a delay"
Acts 20:17
General Information:
Here the word "he" refers to Paul.
Connecting Statement:
Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus and begins to speak to them.
Miletus
Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River. See how you translated this in [Acts 20:15]
Acts 20:18
You yourselves
Here "yourselves" is used for emphasis.
I set foot in Asia
Here "foot" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "I entered Asia"
how I always spent my time with you
This speaks about time as if it were something that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "how I always conducted myself when I was with you"
Acts 20:19
lowliness of mind
This speaks about something humble as if it were low to the ground. The word "mind" stands for a person's inner attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "humbleness"
with tears
Here "tears" stands for feeling sad and crying. Alternate translation: "with crying as I served the Lord"
in trials that happened to me
"Trials" is an abstract noun. The meaning can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "while God was testing me"
of the Jews
This does not mean every Jew. This lets us know who plotted. Alternate translation: "of some of the Jews"
Acts 20:20
You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you
"You know how I was never silent, but I always declared to you"
from house to house
"I also taught when I was in your homes"
Acts 20:21
about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus
The abstract nouns "repentance" and "faith" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "that they need to repent before God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ"
our Lord Jesus
The word "our" refers to Paul and the elders to whom he is speaking.
Acts 20:22
General Information:
Here the word "I" refers to Paul.
compelled by the Spirit
They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the Spirit compels me to go there"
not knowing what will happen to me there
"and I do not know what will happen to me there"
Acts 20:23
chains and afflictions await me
Here "chains" refers to Paul's being arrested and put in prison. Alternate translation: "people will put me in prison and cause me to suffer"
Acts 20:24
if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus
This speaks about Paul's "race" and "ministry" as if they are objects that Jesus gives and Paul receives. Here "race" and "ministry" mean basically the same thing. Paul repeats this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "so that I may complete the work that the Lord Jesus has commanded me to do"
finish the race
Paul speaks about completing the work that Jesus has commanded him to do as if he were running a race.
to testify to the gospel of the grace of God
"to tell people the good news about God's grace." This is the ministry that Paul received from Jesus.
Acts 20:25
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to talk to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17).
Now look, I know
"Now, pay careful attention, because I know"
I know that you all
"I know that all of you"
among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom
Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "to whom I preached the message about God's reign as king" or "to whom I preached about how God will show himself as king"
will see my face no more

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The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "will not see me anymore on this earth"

Acts 20:26

I am innocent of the blood of any man

Here "blood" stands for a person's death, which, in this case, is not physical death but spiritual death when God declares a person guilty of sin. Paul had told them God's truth. Alternate translation: "I am not responsible for anyone whom God judges guilty of sin because they did not trust in Jesus"

any man

Here this means any person whether male or female. Alternate translation: "any person"

Acts 20:27

For I did not hold back from declaring to you

"For I did not keep silent and not tell you." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For I certainly declared to you"

Acts 20:28

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true," referring to all that Paul has said so far in his speech about his leaving them.

the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God

Believers are likened to a "flock" of sheep here. Church leaders are entrusted by God with the care of the community of believers just as a shepherd would care for his flock of sheep and protect them from wolves. Alternate translation: "the group of believers the Holy spirit has entrusted to you. Be sure to take care of the church of God"

the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood

The shedding of the blood of Christ here is likened to a payment to God for our sins. Alternate translation: "the people Christ saved from their sins by shedding his blood on the cross"

his own blood

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death.

Acts 20:29

vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock

This is a picture of people who teach false doctrine and who harm the community of believers as though they were wolves that eat the sheep of the flock. Alternate translation: "many enemies will come among you and try to harm the community of believers"

Acts 20:30

to draw away the disciples after them

A false teacher convincing believers to start believing his false teaching is spoken of as if he were leading sheep away from the flock to follow him. Alternate translation: "in order to convince people who are disciples of Christ to become his disciples instead"

Acts 20:31

be on guard. Remember

"be on guard and remember" or "be on guard as you remember"

be on guard

"be awake and alert" or "watch out." Christian leaders being alert about anyone that may harm the community of believers is spoken of as if they were guards in an army watching out for the enemy army.

Remember that

"Continue to remember that" or "Do not forget that"

for three years I never stopped warning ... night and day

Paul taught them over the space of three years, but not necessarily every day for three years.

I never stopped warning ... you

This does not mean that the only words he spoke were words of warning. Rather, Paul is using hyperbole to remind them that he had told them often that evil men would try to deceive them. Alternate translation: "I warned ... you as often as I could"

with tears

Here "tears" refers to Paul's crying because of the strong emotion of concern he felt while he was warning the people.

Acts 20:32

I commit you to God and to the word of his grace

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "I ask God to take care of you and to help you to keep believing the message I spoke to you about his grace"

which is able to build you up

A person's faith becoming stronger is spoken of as if the person were a wall and someone were building him higher and stronger. Alternate translation: "which is able to make become stronger and stronger in your faith"

to give you the inheritance

This speaks about the "word of his grace" as if the word itself would give the inheritance to believers. Alternate translation: "God will give you the inheritance"

the inheritance

The blessings that God gives believers are spoken of as if they were money or property that a child inherits from his father.

Acts 20:33

I coveted no man's silver

"I did not desire someone's silver" or "I did not want for myself anyone's silver"

man's silver, gold, or clothing

Clothing was considered a treasure; the more you had, the richer you were.

Acts 20:34

You yourselves

The word "yourselves" is used here to add emphasis.

these hands served my own needs

The word "hands" here represents the entire person. Alternate translation: "I worked to earn money and pay for my own expenses"

Acts 20:35

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus; he began to speak them in Acts 20:18.

you should help the weak by laboring

"you should work so as to have money to help people who cannot earn it for themselves"

the weak

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "weak persons" or "those who are

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weak"
weak
"sick"
the words of the Lord Jesus
Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said.
It is more blessed to give than to receive
This means a person receives the favor of God and experiences more joy when he gives to other people rather than always receiving from other people.
Acts 20:36
Connecting Statement:
Paul ends his time with the elders of the church of Ephesus by praying with them.
he knelt down and prayed
It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. It was a sign of humility before God.
Acts 20:37
embraced Paul
"hugged him closely" or "put their arms around him"
kissed him
Kissing someone on the cheek is an expression of brotherly or friendly love in the Middle East.
Acts 20:38
they would never see his face again
The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "they would not see him anymore on this earth"

Chapter 21

Acts 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Acts 21:1-19 describes Paul's journey to Jerusalem. After he arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there told him that the Jews wanted to harm him and what he should do so they would not harm him (verses 20-26). Even though Paul did what the believers told him to do, the Jews tried to kill him. The Romans rescued him and gave him a chance to speak to the Jews.

The last verse of the chapter ends with an incomplete sentence. Most translations leave the sentence incomplete, as the ULB does.

Special concepts in this chapter

"They are all determined to keep the law"

The Jews in Jerusalem were following the law of Moses. Even those who were following Jesus still kept the law. Both groups thought that Paul had been telling Jews in Greece not to keep the law. But it was only the Gentiles to whom Paul was saying that.

Nazarite vow

The vow that Paul and his three friends made was probably a Nazarite vow, because they shaved their heads (Acts 21:23).

Gentiles in the temple

The Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile man into a part of the temple into which God only allowed Jews to go. They thought that God wanted them to punish Paul by killing him. (See: holy)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens.

Links:

Acts 21:1 Notes

Acts 21:1
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.
Connecting Statement:
The writer Luke, Paul, and his companions continue their travels.
we took a straight course to the city of Cos
"we went straight to the city of Cos" or "we went directly to the city of Cos"
city of Cos
Cos is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region.
city of Rhodes
Rhodes is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region south of Cos and northeast of Crete.
city of Patara
Patara is a city on the southwest coast of modern day Turkey south of the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean Sea.
Acts 21:2
When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia
Here "a ship crossing over" stands for the crew that would sail the ship. Alternate translation: "When we found a ship with a crew sailing over to Phoenicia"
a ship crossing over
Here "crossing" does not mean it was presently crossing but that it would be crossing to Phoenicia soon. Alternate translation: "a ship that would be going across the water" or "a ship that would be going"
Acts 21:3
General Information:

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Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat

The left is the "port" side of a boat. Here this means they sailed south of Cyprus. Alternate translation: "Cyprus, sailing south of it"

where the ship was to unload its cargo

Here "ship" stands for the crew that was sailing the ship. Alternate translation: "the crew would unload the cargo from the ship"

Acts 21:4

Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem

"The Spirit caused them to urge Paul again and again not to go to Jerusalem." The Spirit may have revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Because the Spirit had told them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, they urged him again and again not to go there"

Acts 21:5

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the believers from Tyre.

When our days there were over

"When the seven days were over" or "When it was time to leave"

knelt down on the beach, prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. This was a sign of humility before God.

Acts 21:6

said farewell to each other

"said goodbye to one another"

Acts 21:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

we arrived at Ptolemais

Ptolemais was a city south of Tyre, Lebanon. Ptolemais is modern day Acre, Israel.

the brothers

"fellow believers"

Acts 21:8

Connecting Statement:

This begins Paul's time in Caesarea.

one of the seven

The "seven" refers to the men chosen to distribute food and aid to the widows in Acts 6:5.

evangelist

a person who tells people good news

Acts 21:9

this man

"Philip" from verse 8.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Philip and his daughters.

four virgin daughters who prophesied

"four virgin daughters who regularly received and passed along messages from God"

Acts 21:10

General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refers to Luke, Paul, and those with them, but not to the reader.

a certain prophet named Agabus

This introduces a new person in the story.

named Agabus

Agabus was a man from Judea.

Acts 21:11

Connecting Statement:

This tells about a prophecy made about Paul in Caesarea by the prophet Agabus.

took Paul's belt

"removed Paul's belt from Paul's waist"

Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. The inner quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit says that this will be how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."

the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" or "some of the Jews"

hand him over

"deliver him"

into the hands of the Gentiles

The word "hands" here represents control. Alternate translation: "into the legal custody of the Gentiles" or "to the Gentiles"

the Gentiles

This stands for the authorities among the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "the Gentile authorities"

Acts 21:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke and the other believers but does not include the reader.

Acts 21:13

What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?

Paul asks this question to show the believers they should stop trying to persuade him. Alternate translation: "Stop what you are doing. Your weeping is breaking my heart."

breaking my heart

This is a metaphor for making someone sad or discouraging them. Here "heart" stands for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "discouraging me" or "making me very sad"

not only to be tied up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not only for them to tie me up"

for the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the sake of the Lord Jesus" or "because I believe in the Lord Jesus"

Acts 21:14

Paul would not be persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul would not allow us to to persuade him" or "we were unable to persuade Paul"

persuaded

You may need to make explicit what they could not persuade Paul not to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded not to go up to Jerusalem"

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May the will of the Lord be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything happen as the Lord has planned it"
Acts 21:15
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.
Connecting Statement:
This ends Paul's time in Caesarea.
Acts 21:16
They brought with them a man
"Among them was a man"
Mnason, a man from Cyprus
Mnason was a man from the island of Cyprus.
an early disciple
This means Mnason was one of the first to believe in Jesus.
Acts 21:17
General Information:
Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.
Connecting Statement:
Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem.
the brothers welcomed us
Here "brothers" refers to the believers in Jerusalem, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers welcomed us"
Acts 21:18
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 21:19
General Information:
Here the words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "them" refers to the elders.
he reported one by one
"he gave a detailed account of all"
Acts 21:20
Connecting Statement:
The elders in Jerusalem begin their response to Paul.
they heard ... they glorified ... they said to him
Here the word "they" refers to James and the elders. The word "him" refers to Paul.
brother
Here "brother" means "fellow believer."
They are
The word "they" refers to Jewish believers who wanted all believing Jews to keep the Jewish laws and customs.
the law
this phrase here refers to the law of Moses
Acts 21:21
They have been told
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have told the Jewish believers"
to abandon Moses
Here "Moses" stands for the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "to stop obeying the laws that Moses gave us"
not to walk according to the traditional ways
A person who obeys the traditions and customs is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "not to obey the old customs" or "not to practice the old customs"
the traditional ways
"the usual Jewish customs"
Acts 21:22
we do
Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders
They will
The word "They" refers to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted to teach Jewish believers that they could still follow the laws of Moses (Acts 21:20-21).
you have come
The word "you" refers to Paul.
Acts 21:23
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders
four men who made a vow
"four men who made a promise to God." This was the kind of vow where a person would not drink alcohol or cut his hair until the end of a set period of time.
Acts 21:24
Connecting Statement:
James and the elders continue speaking to Paul.
Take these men and purify yourself with them
They had to make themselves ritually pure so they could worship in the temple.
pay their expenses for them
"pay for what they will need." The expenses would go toward buying a male and female lamb, a ram, and grain and drink offerings.
they may shave their heads
This was a sign that the person had completed what they promised God they would do.
the things they have been told about you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that people are saying about you"
Acts 21:25
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders.
Connecting Statement:
James and the elders in Jerusalem finish their request to Paul (Acts 21:18).
they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled
All of these are rules about what they can eat. They are forbidden to eat meat of animals sacrificed to an idol, meat with blood still in it, and meat from a strangled animal because it would still have blood in the meat. See how you translated similar phrases in [Acts 15:20]
they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they stay away from the meat of an animal that someone sacrificed to an idol"
from what is strangled
This can be stated in active form. You can also state explicitly the assumed information about strangled animals. Alternate translation: "from animals that a person has strangled" or "from animals that a person killed for food but did not drain its blood"
Acts 21:26

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

took the men
These are the 4 men who made a vow.
he purified himself along with them
Before entering the temple area the Jews were required to be ceremonially or ritually clean. This cleansing had to do with Jews having contact with Gentiles.
went into the temple
They did not go into the temple itself where only the high priest was allowed to enter. They entered the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"
the days of purification
This is a separate purification process from the purification process which they were required to fulfill in order to enter the temple area.
the offering would be presented
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they presented the animals for an offering"
Acts 21:27
Connecting Statement:
This begins the story of Paul's arrest.
the seven days
These are the seven days for purification.
in the temple
Paul was not in the temple itself. He was in the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"
stirred up the whole crowd
People who incited a crowd to become very angry at Paul are spoken of as if they stirred up the crowd's emotions. Alternate translation: "caused a large number of people to be very angry at Paul"
laid hands on him
Here "laid hands on" means to "seized" or to "grabbed." See how you translated "laid hands on" in [Acts 5:18]
Acts 21:28
the people, the law, and this place
"the people of Israel, the law of Moses, and the temple"
Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple
Only Jewish males were allowed in certain areas of the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple.
Acts 21:29
General Information:
Verse 29 gives background information about the Jews from Asia.
For they had previously ... into the temple
This is background information. Luke is explaining why the Jews from Asia thought Paul brought a Greek into the temple.
Trophimus
This was a Greek man that they accused Paul of having brought into the inner temple area that was only for Jews. See how you translated his name in Acts 20:4.
Acts 21:30
All the city was excited
The word "All" here is an exaggeration for emphasis. The word "city" represents the people in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Many people in the city became angry at Paul"
laid hold of Paul
"seized Paul" or "grabbed Paul"
the doors were immediately shut
They shut the doors so that there would not be rioting in the temple area. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews immediately shut the temple doors" or "the temple guards immediately shut the doors"
Acts 21:31
news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers
Here "news" refers to the messenger who went to speak the news. Alternate translation: "someone gave news to the chief captain of the cohort"
news came up to the chief captain
The phrase "came up to" is used because the chief captain was in a fortress connected to the temple that was higher in elevation than the temple courtyard.
the chief captain
This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers.
the company of soldiers
A company is a group of about 1,000 soldiers.
all Jerusalem was in an uproar
The word "Jerusalem" here represents the people of Jerusalem. The word "all" is an exaggeration to show a large crowd was upset. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem were in an uproar" or "the large crowd in Jerusalem was in an uproar" (See: and)
Acts 21:32
General Information:
The first word "he" refers to the chief captain of the guard mentioned in Acts 21:31.
ran down
From the fortress, there are stairs going down into the court.
Acts 21:33
laid hold of Paul
"took hold of Paul" or "arrested Paul"
commanded him to be bound
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded his soldiers to bind him"
with two chains
This means they bound Paul to two Roman soldiers, one on each side of him.
he asked who he was and what he had done.
This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked, 'Who is this man? What has he done?'"
he asked who he was
The chief captain is speaking to the crowd, not to Paul.
Acts 21:34
and others another
The words "were shouting" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and others were shouting another" or "and others in the crowd were shouting something else"
he ordered that Paul be brought
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"
into the fortress
This fortress was connected to the outer temple court.
Acts 21:35
When he came to the steps, he was carried

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Paul came to the steps of the fortress, the soldiers carried him"

Acts 21:36

Away with him

The crowd is using somewhat milder and less exact language to ask for Paul's death. Alternate translation: "Put him to death" or "Kill him"

Acts 21:37

As Paul was about to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the soldiers were ready to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

The captain said, "Do you know Greek?

The chief captain uses this questions to express surprise that Paul is not who he thought he was. Alternate translation: "So you know Greek." or "I didn't know you knew Greek."

know Greek

know how to speak and understand the Greek language

Acts 21:38

Are you not then the Egyptian ... wilderness?

The chief captain uses this question and the question "Do you speak Greek?"

Are you not then the Egyptian

Shortly before Paul's visit, an unnamed man from Egypt had launched a revolt against Rome in Jerusalem. Later he escaped into the wilderness and the commander wonders if Paul might be the same man.

started a rebellion

This word "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "caused people to rebel against the Roman government"

the four thousand men

"the 4,000 terrorists"

Assassins

This refers to a group of Jewish rebels who killed Romans and anyone who supported the Roman government.

Acts 21:39

Connecting Statement:

Paul is correcting the chief captain's wrong idea about who Paul is.

Tarsus in Cilicia

Cilicia was a Roman province across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, and Tarsus was a large, well-known city.

I am a citizen of no unimportant city

Paul uses the double negative in the phrase "no unimportant city" to emphasize that the chief captain should have known that Tarsus was an important city. Alternate translation: "I am a citizen of an important city"

I beg you

Or "I plead with you."

allow me

"please allow me" or please permit me"

Acts 21:40

the captain had given him permission

The word "permission" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the captain permitted Paul to speak" or "the captain allowed Paul to speak"

Paul stood on the steps

The word "steps" here refers to the steps on the stairway to the fortress.

motioned with the hand to the people

It can be stated explicitly why Paul motioned with the hand. Alternate translation: "motioned with his hand for the people to be quiet"

When there was a deep silence

"When the people were completely silent"

Chapter 22

Acts 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the second account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 26)

Special concepts in this chapter

"In the Hebrew language"

Most Jews at this time spoke Aramaic and Greek. Most of the people who spoke Hebrew were educated Jewish scholars. This is why the people paid attention when Paul started speaking in Hebrew.

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Links:

Acts 22:1 Notes

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Acts 22:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem.

Brothers and fathers

This is a polite way of addressing men who are Paul's age as well as the older men in the audience.

I will now make to you

"I will now explain to you" or "I will now present to you"

Acts 22:2

the Hebrew language

The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews.

Acts 22:3

but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I was a student of Gamaliel here in Jerusalem"

at the feet of Gamaliel

Here "feet" stands for the place where a student would sit while learning from a teacher. Alternate translation: "by Gamaliel"

Gamaliel

Gamaliel was one of the most prominent teachers of the Jewish law. See how you translated this name in Acts 5:34.

I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He instructed me how to carefully obey every law of our forefathers" or "The instruction I received followed the exact details of the law of our forefathers"

law of our fathers

"law of our ancestors." This refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses.

I am zealous for God

"I am completely dedicated to obeying God" or "I am passionate about my service to God"

just as all of you are today

"in the same way all of you are today." Paul compares himself with the crowd.

Acts 22:4

I persecuted this Way to the death

Here "this Way" represents the people who belonged to the group called "the Way." The word "death" can be translated with the verb "kill." Alternate translation: "I persecuted the people who belonged to this Way and I looked for ways to kill them"

this Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated "the Way" in Acts 9:2.

binding up and delivering to prison both men and women

"tying up both men and women and taking them to prison"

Acts 22:5

I received letters from them

"The high priests and elders gave me letters"

for the brothers in Damascus

Here "brothers" refers to "fellow Jews."

to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem

"to bind those of the Way with chains and bring them back to Jerusalem"

to be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they would receive punishment" or "so that the Jewish authorities could punish them"

Acts 22:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes his encounter with Jesus.

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Acts 22:7

heard a voice say to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone say to me"

Acts 22:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 22:9

they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "they did not understand what the one who spoke to me was saying"

Acts 22:10

There you will be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There someone will tell you" or "There you will learn"

Acts 22:11

I could not see because of that light's brightness

"I was left blind because of that light's brightness"

being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus

Here "hands" stands for those leading Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those with me guided me into Damascus"

Acts 22:12

Ananias

Though this is not the same Ananias who died earlier in [Acts 5:3]

devout man according to the law

Ananias was very serious about following God's law.

law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there

This can be stated in active form in a new sentence. Alternate translation: "law. All the Jews who lived there spoke well of him"

Acts 22:13

General Information:

The words "He" and "him" refer to Ananias.

Brother Saul

Here "Brother" is a polite way to address someone. Alternate translation: "My friend Saul"

receive your sight

The word "sight" can be translated with the verb "see." Alternate translation: "see again"

In that very hour

This was a customary way of saying something happened immediately. Alternate translation: "At that instant" or "Instantly" or "Immediately"

Acts 22:14

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Ananias (Acts 22:12).

his will

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"what God is planning and will cause to happen"

to hear the voice coming from his own mouth

Both "voice" and "mouth" refer to the one speaking. Alternate translation: "to hear him speak directly to you"

Acts 22:15

to all men

Here "men" means all people whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to all people"

Acts 22:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes telling what had happened to him in Damascus. He quotes what Ananias said to him. This is still part of his speech to the crowd in Jerusalem.

Now

Here "now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

why are you waiting?

This question was asked to exhort Paul to be baptized. Alternate translation: "do not wait!" or "do not delay!"

be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let me baptize you" or "receive baptism"

wash away your sins

As washing one's body removes dirt, calling on the name of Jesus for forgiveness cleanses one's inner being from sin. Alternate translation: "ask forgiveness for your sins"

calling on his name

Here "name" refers to the Lord. Alternate translation: "calling on the Lord" or "trusting in the Lord"

Acts 22:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell the crowd about his vision of Jesus.

a trance came on me

This metaphor means that Paul went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. See how you translated similar words in [Acts 10:10]

Acts 22:18

I saw him say to me

"I saw Jesus as he said to me"

they will not accept your testimony about me

"those who live in Jerusalem will not believe what you tell them about me"

Acts 22:19

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the non-believing Jews in Jerusalem.

they themselves know

The word "themselves" is used for emphasis.

in every synagogue

Paul went to synagogues to find Jews who believed in Jesus.

Acts 22:20

the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled

Here "blood" stands for Stephen's life. To spill blood means to kill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they killed Stephen, who testified about you"

Acts 22:21

Connecting Statement:

This ends what Paul was able to say to the crowd of Jewish people by the fortress.

Acts 22:22

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "he" refer to Paul.

until that statement

"until Paul said that"

Away with such a fellow from the earth

The phrase "from the earth" adds emphasis to "Away with such a fellow." Alternate translation: "Kill him"

Acts 22:23

As they were

"While they were." The phrase "As they were" is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time.

throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air

These actions show that the Jews there are outraged because they feel Paul has spoken against God.

Acts 22:24

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

commanded Paul to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging

The commander wants soldiers to torture Paul by whipping him to ensure he tells the truth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He ordered his soldiers to whip Paul to force him to tell the truth"

He ordered that he

The first "he" refers to chief captain. The second "he" refers to Paul.

that he himself

The word "himself" is used for emphasis.

Acts 22:25

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the soldiers.

the thongs

These were strips of leather or animal hide.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?

Paul uses this question to make the centurion check the validity of having his soldiers whip Paul. Alternate translation: "It is not lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman and who was not given his legal right to a trial!"

Acts 22:26

What are you about to do?

This question is used to urge the commander to reconsider his plan to whip Paul. Alternate translation: "You should not do this!"

Acts 22:27

General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

The chief captain came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 22:28

It was only with a large amount of money

"It was only after I paid a lot of money to the Roman

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

authorities." The captain makes this statement because he knows how hard it is to become a Roman citizen, and he suspects Paul is not telling truth.

I acquired citizenship

"I got citizenship." The word "citizenship" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "I became a citizen"

I was born a Roman citizen

If a man was a Roman citizen, then his children become Roman citizens automatically when they were born.

Acts 22:29

the men who were going to question

"the men who planned to question" or "the men who were preparing to question"

Acts 22:30

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to the chief captain.

So he untied his bonds

Possibly the "chief captain" stands for the chief captain's soldiers. Alternate translation: "So the chief captain ordered his soldiers to untie Paul's bonds"

he brought Paul down

There was a stairway going down from the fortress to the temple courts.

Chapter 23

Acts 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 23:5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection of the dead

The Pharisees believed that after people died, they would become alive again and God would either reward them or punish them. The Sadducees believed that once people died, they stayed dead and would never become alive again. (See: raise and reward)

"Called a curse"

Some Jews promised God that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul, and they asked God to punish them if they did not do what they had promised to do.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Whitewashed

This is a metaphor in scripture describing someone who appears to be good or clean or righteous when that person is evil or unclean or unrighteous.

Links:

Acts 23:1

Acts 23:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul stands before the chief priests and the council members (Acts 22:30).

Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day

"I know that even to this day I have done what God has wanted me to do"

Acts 23:2

Ananias

This is the name of a man. Although he has the same name, the Ananias here is neither the Ananias mentioned in [Acts 5:1]

Acts 23:3

whitewashed wall

This refers to a wall that was painted white to make it look clean. Paul told Ananias that just as a wall can be painted to look clean so Ananias appeared to look morally clean, but he was really full of evil intent. Alternate translation: "white-painted wall" or "wall painted white"

Are you sitting to judge ... against the law?

Paul uses a question to point out Ananias' hypocrisy. Some modern translations read this as a statement, "You are sitting to judge ... against the law." Alternate translation: "You are wrong to sit there to judge ... against the law."

order me to be struck

This can be stated in active form. You can use the same word for "strike" as you did in the phrase "God will strike you." Alternate translation: "command people to strike me"

Acts 23:4

Is this how you insult God's high priest?

The men use this question to scold Paul for what he has said in [Acts 23:3]

Acts 23:5

For it is written

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Paul is about to quote what Moses wrote in the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses wrote in the law"

Acts 23:6

Brothers

Here "Brothers" means "Fellow Jews"

a son of Pharisees

Here "son" means he is the literal son of a Pharisee and also the descendant of Pharisees. Alternate translation: "and my father and forefathers were Pharisees"

I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb phrase "become alive again." Alternate translation: "I confidently expect the resurrection of the dead" or "I trust that the dead will become alive again"

the dead

The phrase "the dead" can be expressed as "those who have died."

I am being judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me"

Acts 23:7

the crowd was divided

"the people in the crowd strongly disagreed with one another"

Acts 23:8

For the Sadducees ... but the Pharisees

This is background information about the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Acts 23:9

So a large uproar occurred

"So they began shouting loudly at one another." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is Paul's stating his belief in the resurrection.

What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?

The Pharisees use this question to suggest that Paul may have gotten his teaching from an angel or a spirit. They may be rebuking the Sadducees for not believing that spirits and angels exist and can speak to people. Alternate translation: "Maybe a spirit or an angel has spoken with him!"

Acts 23:10

When there arose a great argument

The words "a great argument" can be re-stated as "argue violently." Alternate translation: "When they began to argue violently"

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

Paul would be torn to pieces by them

This can be stated in active form. The phrase "be torn to pieces" might be an exaggeration of how the people might harm Paul. Alternate translation: "they might tear Paul to pieces" or "they would cause Paul great physical harm"

take him by force

"use physical force to take him away"

into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

Acts 23:11

The following night

This means the night after the day Paul went before the council. Alternate translation: "That night"

testify in Rome

The words "about me" are understood. Alternate translation: "testify about me in Rome"

Acts 23:12

Connecting Statement:

While Paul is in the prison at the fortress, the disbelieving religious Jews vow to kill him.

formed a conspiracy

"organized a group with a shared purpose." The purpose for organizing this group was to kill Paul.

put themselves under an oath

The noun "oath" is an abstract noun that refers to a promise that the men made to God to kill Paul. It can also be made explicit what would happen to the men if they did not do what they had promised to do. Alternate translation: "asked God to curse them if they did not do what they promised"

Acts 23:13

forty men

"40 men"

who formed this conspiracy

"who made this plan" or "who planned to kill Paul"

Acts 23:14

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the forty Jews in Acts 23:13.

We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul

"We have sworn to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. We asked God to curse us if we do not do what we promised to do"

Acts 23:15

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the chief priests and elders. Both "us" and "we" refer to the forty Jews who planned to kill Paul.

Now, therefore

"Because what we have just said is true" or "Because we have put ourselves under this curse"

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

bring him down to you

"bring Paul from the fortress to meet with you"

as if you would decide his case more precisely

"as though you want to learn more about what Paul has done"

Acts 23:16

Paul's sister's son

"the son of Paul's sister" or "Paul's nephew"

they were lying in wait

"they were ready to ambush Paul" or "they were waiting to kill Paul"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the fortress
This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.
Acts 23:17
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 23:18
Paul the prisoner called me to him
"Paul the prisoner asked me to come talk with him"
this young man
Since the chief captain calls him a young man, this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.
Acts 23:19
chief captain took him by the hand
Since the chief captain took the young man by the hand and calls him a young man (verse 18), this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.
Acts 23:20
The Jews have agreed
This does not mean all Jews, but all of the group that was there. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews have agreed"
to bring down Paul
"to bring Paul down from the fortress"
they were going to ask more precisely about his case
"they wanted to learn more about what Paul has done"
Acts 23:21
forty men
"40 men"
lying in wait for him
"ready to ambush Paul" or "ready to kill Paul"
They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him
"They have sworn to eat and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. And they asked God to curse them if they do not do what they promised to do"
for your approval
"for you to agree to do what they have asked you to do"
Acts 23:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 23:23
he called to him
"he called to himself." Both "he" and "him" refer to the chief captain.
two of the centurions
"2 of the centurions"
seventy horsemen
"70 horsemen"
two hundred spearmen
"200 soldiers that are armed with spears"
third hour of the night
This was about 9:00 p.m. at night.
Acts 23:24
Felix the governor
Felix, who resided at Caesarea, was the roman governor of the area.
Acts 23:25
General Information:
Here "he" refers to the chief captain.
Acts 23:26
General Information:
Claudius Lysias was the name of the chief captain. Governor Felix was the Roman governor over the whole region.
Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greetings
This is a formal introduction to the letter. The chief captain begins by referring to himself. You can translate it in the first person. The words "am writing" are understood. Alternate translation: "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing to you, the most excellent Governor Felix, and I greet you"
to the most excellent Governor Felix
"to Governor Felix, you who deserve the greatest honors"
Acts 23:27
This man was arrested by the Jews
Here "Jews" means "some of the Jews." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews arrested this man"
was about to be killed by them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were ready to kill him"
I came upon them with soldiers
"I with my soldiers arrived at the place where Paul and these Jews were"
Acts 23:28
General Information:
Here the word "I" refers to Claudius Lysias, the chief captain. The word "they" refers to the Jews who accused Paul. The word "him" refers to Paul.
Acts 23:29
that he was being accused about questions concerning
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they were accusing him of questions about"
but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment
The abstract nouns "accusation," "death," and "imprisonment" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "but nobody accused him of anything that should cause Roman authorities to kill him or to send him to prison"
Acts 23:30
Connecting Statement:
The chief captain ends his letter to Governor Felix.
Then it was reported to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone told me" or "Then I learned"
sent him to you
Here "you" refers to Governor Felix.
Acts 23:31
Connecting Statement:
This ends Paul's time under arrest in Jerusalem and begins his time of arrest in Caesarea with Governor Felix.
So the soldiers obeyed their orders
The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is the chief captain's commanding the soldiers to escort Paul.
They took Paul and brought him by night
Here "brought" can be translated as "took." Alternate

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

translation: "They got Paul and took him at night"
Antipatris
Antipatris was a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. It stood at a site located today in central Israel.
Acts 23:32
to go with him
Here "him" refers to Paul.
Acts 23:33
General Information:
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Acts 23:34
he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia
This can be stated with direct quotations. Alternate translation: "he asked Paul, 'What province are you from?' Paul said, 'I am from Cilicia.' When the governor learned this"
When he learned that he
"When the governor learned that Paul"
Acts 23:35
he said
"the governor said"
I will hear you fully
"I will listen to all you have to say"
he commanded him to be kept
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he commanded soldiers to keep him" or "commanded soldiers to restrain him"

Chapter 24

Acts 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul told the governor that he had not done what the Jews were accusing him of doing and that the governor should not punish him for what he did do.

Special concepts in this chapter

Respect

Both the Jewish leaders (Acts 24:2-4) and Paul (Acts 24:10) began their speeches with words that show respect to the governor.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Governmental leaders

The words "governor," "commander," and "centurion" may be difficult to translate into some languages.

Links:

Acts 24:1 Notes

Acts 24:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul is on trial in Caesarea. Tertullus presents Governor Felix with the charges against Paul.
After five days
"Five days after the Roman soldiers took Paul to Caesarea"
Ananias
This is the name of a man. He is not the same Ananias as in [Acts 5:1]
an orator
"a lawyer." Tertullus was an expert in Roman law who was there to accuse Paul in court.
Tertullus
This is the name of a man.
went there
"went to Caesarea where Paul was"
before the governor
"in the presence of the governor, who was judge in the court"
brought charges against Paul
"began to argue the case before the governor that Paul had broken the law."
Acts 24:2
Because of you
Here the word "you" refers to Felix, the governor.
we have great peace
Here "we" refers to the citizens under Felix. Alternate translation: "we, the people that you govern, have great peace"
and your foresight brings good reform to our nation
"and your planning has greatly improved our nation"
Acts 24:3
so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do
The word "thankfulness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation: "so we are very thankful and we welcome everything that you do" or "so we thank you very much and welcome everything that you do"
most excellent Felix
"Governor Felix, who deserves greatest honor." Felix was the roman governor over the whole region. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 23:25.
Acts 24:4
So that I detain you no more
Possible meanings are 1) "so that I will not take up too much of your time" or 2) "so that I will not tire you"
in your kindness to hear us briefly
"to be kind and listen to the short speech I am giving to state these men's case"
Acts 24:5
General Information:
The word "we" refers to Ananias, certain elders, and

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Tertullus.
this man to be a pest
Here "pest" is a metaphor for a person who causes trouble. Alternate translation: "this man to be a trouble maker"
all the Jews throughout the world
The word "all" here is probably an exaggeration used to strengthen their accusation against Paul.
He is a leader of the Nazarene sect
The phrase "Nazarene sect" is another name for the Christians. Alternate translation: "He also leads the entire group whom people call the followers of the Nazarene"
sect
This is a smaller group of people within a larger group group. Tertullus considers the Christians to be a small group within Judaism.
Acts 24:6
General Information:
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Acts 24:7
General Information:
Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Governor Felix.
Acts 24:8
Connecting Statement:
Tertullus finishes presenting the charges against Paul before Governor Felix.
to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him
"to learn whether or not these charges that we bring against him are true" or "to learn whether or not he is guilty of the things we accuse him of"
Acts 24:9
The Jews
This refers to the Jewish leaders who were there at Paul's trial.
Acts 24:10
Connecting Statement:
Paul responds to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.
the governor motioned
"the governor gestured"
a judge to this nation
Here "nation" refers to the people of the Jewish nation. Alternate translation: "a judge for the people of the Jewish nation"
explain myself
"explain my situation"
Acts 24:11
twelve days since
"12 days since"
Acts 24:12
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the Jews who were accusing Paul.
I did not stir up a crowd
"Stir up" here is a metaphor for agitating people into unrest, just as stirring a liquid agitates it. Alternate translation: "I did not cause a crowd to riot"
Acts 24:13
the accusations
"the blames for wrongdoings" or "the charges for crimes"
Acts 24:14
I confess this to you
"I acknowledge this to you"
that according to the Way
The phrase "the Way" was a title used for Christianity during Paul's time.
a sect
This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Christianity was originally considered to be a small group within Judaism. See how you translated "sect" in Acts 24:5.
the law
Paul is referring to the law of Moses.
Acts 24:15
I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection
Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Just as these men, I trust in God that there will be a resurrection"
these men
the Jews who are accusing Paul in court
that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked
The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated with the verb "resurrect." Alternate translation: "that God will resurrect all who have died, both the righteous and the unrighteous"
the righteous and the wicked
These nominal adjectives refer to righteous people and wicked people. Alternate translation: "righteous people and wicked people" or "those who have done what is right and those who have done what is evil"
Acts 24:16
I always strive
"I always work hard" or "I do my best"
to have a blameless conscience
Here "conscience" refers to a person's inner morality that chooses between right and wrong. Alternate translation: "to be blameless" or "to always do what is right"
before God
"in the presence of God"
Acts 24:17
Now
This word marks a shift in Paul's argument. Here he explains the situation in Jerusalem when some of the Jews arrested him.
after many years
"after many years away from Jerusalem"
I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices
Here "I came" can be translated as "I went." Alternate translation: "I went to help my people by bringing them money as a gift; I also went to present sacrifices"
Acts 24:18
in a purification ceremony in the temple
"in the temple after I had finished a ceremony to purify myself"
in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar

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This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "in the temple. I had not gathered a crowd nor was I trying to start a riot"

Acts 24:19

These men

"The Jews from Asia"

if they have anything

"if they have anything to say"

Acts 24:20

these same men

This refers to the members of the council who were present in Jerusalem at Paul's trial.

should say what wrong they found in me

"should say the wrong thing I did that they were able to prove"

Acts 24:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes responding to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

It is concerning the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated as "God brings back to life." Alternate translation: "It is because I believe that God will bring back to life those who have died"

I am on trial before you today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me today"

Acts 24:22

General Information:

Felix is the Roman governor of the area who resides at Caesarea. See how you translated this name in [Acts 23:24]

the Way

This is a title for Christianity. See how you translated this in Acts 9:2.

When Lysias the commander comes down

"when Lysias the commander comes down" or "at the time Lysias the commander comes down"

Lysias

This is the name of the chief captain. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:26.

comes down from Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than Caesarea so it was normal to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

I will decide your case

"I will make a decision concerning these accusations against you" or "I will judge whether you are guilty"

Acts 24:23

to have some freedom

"to have some freedom not otherwise granted to prisoners"

Acts 24:24

After some days

"After several days"

Drusilla his wife

Drusilla is a woman's name.

Acts 24:25

Felix became frightened

Felix may have felt conviction of his sins.

for now

"for the present time"

Acts 24:26

he hoped that Paul would give money to him

Here the word "hope" means think that what one desires might happen. Sometimes prisoners gave money to government officials so that the officials would free them from prison early, and Felix hoped that Paul would do that. Alternate translation: "he thought that Paul might give money to him"

so he often sent for him and spoke with him

"so Felix often sent for Paul and spoke with Paul"

Acts 24:27

Porcius Festus

This was the Roman Governor who replaced Felix.

wanted to gain favor with the Jews

Here "the Jews" refers to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted the Jewish leaders to like him"

he left Paul bound

"he left Paul in prison"

Chapter 25

Acts 25 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Favor

This word is used in two different ways in this chapter. When the Jewish leaders asked Festus for a favor, they were asking him to do something special for them on that day. They wanted him to do for them something that he would not usually do. When Festus "wanted to gain the favor of the Jews," he wanted them to like him and be willing to obey him in the months and years to come. (See: favor)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. Roman officials could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way they would treat a non-citizen.

Links:

Acts 25:1 Notes

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Acts 25:1

General Information:

Festus becomes the governor of Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 24:27.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to be a prisoner in Caesarea.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

Festus entered the province

Possible meanings are 1) Festus arrived in the area to begin his rule or 2) Festus simply arrived in the area.

he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

Acts 25:2

The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul

This speaks about accusations as if they were an object that a person could bring to someone else. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and the important Jews accused Paul to Festus"

Acts 25:3

to summon him to Jerusalem

Some versions translate this as "to have him summoned to Jerusalem." The word "him" refers to Paul. The Jews wanted Festus to have his soldiers take Paul to Jerusalem.

for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way

They were going to hide along the road and kill Paul as he was passing by, but Festus was not aware of this part of their plan.

Acts 25:4

Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "But Festus said, 'Paul is being held in custody in Caesarea, and I myself will soon return there.'"

Acts 25:5

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Festus and the Romans traveling with him, but not to his audience.

"Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us

The phrase "he said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Then he said, 'Therefore, those who are able to go to Caesarea should go there with us"

If there is something wrong with the man

"If Paul has done something wrong"

you should accuse him

"you should accuse him of violating laws" or "you should bring charges against him"

Acts 25:6

down to Caesarea

Jerusalem is higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

sat on the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus' ruling as judge over Paul's trial. Alternate translation: "sat upon the seat where he acted as judge" or "sat down as judge"

Paul to be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his soldiers bring Paul to him"

Acts 25:7

When he arrived

"When Paul came and stood before Festus"

they brought many serious charges

Charging a person with a crime is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could bring to court. Alternate translation: "they spoke against Paul many serious things"

Acts 25:8

against the temple

Paul says he did not break any rules about who could enter the Jerusalem temple. Alternate translation: "against the entry rules of the temple"

Acts 25:9

wanted to gain the favor of the Jews

Here "the Jews" means the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted to please the Jewish leaders"

to go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

and to be judged by me about these things there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where I will judge you with regard to these charges"

Acts 25:10

I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged

The "judgment seat" refers to Caesar's authority to judge Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ask to go before Caesar, so he can judge me"

Acts 25:11

Though if I have done wrong ... I do not refuse to die

Paul does not believe that he has done wrong, but he shows that he will submit to the law and will not refuse to be punished if he really has done wrong.

if I have done what is worthy of death

"if I have done some wrong that deserves the death penalty"

if their accusations are nothing

"if the charges against me are not true"

no one can hand me over to them

Possible meanings are 1) Festus does not have the legal authority to hand Paul over to these false accusers or 2) the governor should not give in to the request of the Jews.

I appeal to Caesar

"I ask to go before Caesar so he can judge me"

Acts 25:12

with the council

This is not the Sanhedrin that is referred to as "council" throughout Acts. This is a political council in the Roman government. Alternate translation: "with his own government advisors"

Acts 25:13

General Information:

King Agrippa and Bernice are new people in the story. Though he ruled over only a few territories, King Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was Agrippa's sister.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

to pay an official visit to Festus
"to visit Festus concerning official matters"
Acts 25:14
After they
"After King Agrippa and Bernice"
A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Felix left office, he left a man in prison here"
Felix
Felix was the Roman governor of the area and resided in Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:24.
Acts 25:15
brought charges against this man to me
This is a metaphor that means to accuse someone in court. Alternate translation: "spoke to me against this man"
they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him
The abstract nouns "sentence" and "condemnation" can be expressed as verbs. The phrase "a sentence of condemnation" implies that they were requesting that Paul be executed. Alternate translation: "they asked me to sentence him to death" or "they asked me to condemn him to death"
Acts 25:16
to hand over anyone
Here "hand over" represents sending someone to people who will punish or kill him. Alternate translation: "let someone punish anyone" or "to condemn anyone to death"
before the accused had faced his accusers
Here "faced his accusers" is an idiom that means to meet with the people who accuse him. Alternate translation: "before the person whom others have accused of a crime had met directly with those who accused him"
Acts 25:17
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true." Festus has just said that an accused man should be able to face his accusers and make his defense.
when they came together here
"when the Jewish leaders came to meet with me here"
I sat in the judgment seat
Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus ruling over Paul's trial as judge. Alternate translation: "I sat upon the seat to act as judge" or "I sat down as judge"
I ordered the man to be brought in
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before me"
Acts 25:18
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 25:19
their own religion
Here "religion" means the belief system people have toward life and the supernatural.
Acts 25:20
to stand trial there about these charges
To "stand trial" is an idiom meaning to speak to a judge so the judge can decide if a person is right or wrong. Alternate translation: "to go to trial about these charges" or "for a judge to decide if these charges against him are true or not"
Acts 25:21
Connecting Statement:
Festus finishes explaining Paul's case to King Agrippa.
But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when Paul insisted that he stay under Roman guard until the time when the emperor could decide his case"
I ordered him to be held in custody
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to keep him in custody" or "I told the soldiers to guard him"
Acts 25:22
"Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."
The phrase "Festus said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Festus said, 'I will arrange for you to listen to Paul tomorrow.'"
Acts 25:23
General Information:
Though he ruled over only a few territories, Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was his sister. See how you translated these names in Acts 25:13.
with much ceremony
"with a great ceremony to honor them"
the hall
This was a large room where people gathered for ceremonies, trials, and other events.
Paul was brought to them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the soldiers brought Paul to appear before them"
Acts 25:24
Connecting Statement:
Festus again gives information about Paul's case to King Agrippa.
all the multitude of Jews
The word "all" is an exaggeration used to emphasize that a great number of Jews wanted Paul to die. Alternate translation: "a great number of the Jews" or "many of the Jewish leaders"
they shouted to me
"they spoke very strongly to me"
he should no longer live
This statement is made in the negative to emphasize the positive equivalent. Alternate translation: "he should die immediately"
Acts 25:25
because he appealed to the emperor
"because he said that he wanted the emperor to judge him"
the emperor
The emperor was the ruler of the Roman empire. He ruled over many countries and provinces.
Acts 25:26
to write to my lord
Festus used the word "lord" to refer to the emperor. Alternate translation: "to write to the emperor"
I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa
Here the first "you" is plural and refers to all the men to whom Festus is speaking. The second "you" is singular and refers to King Agrippa. Alternate translation: "I have

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

brought Paul to all of you, but especially to you, King Agrippa"

so that I might have something more to write

"so that I will have something else to write" or "so that I will know what I should write"

Acts 25:27

it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state

The negative words "unreasonable" and "to not ... state" can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "it seems reasonable to me to send a prisoner and to also state"

the charges against him

Possible meanings are 1) the accusations that the Jewish leaders have brought against him or 2) the charges under Roman law that apply to Paul's case.

Chapter 26

Acts 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 22)

Paul told the King Agrippa why he had done what he had done and that the governor should not punish him for that.

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Links:

Acts 26:1 Notes

Acts 26:1

Connecting Statement:

Festus has brought Paul before King Agrippa.

Agrippa

Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine, though he ruled over only a few territories. See how you translated this name in Acts 25:13.

stretched out his hand

"held out his hand" or "gestured with his hand"

made his defense

The abstract noun "defense" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "began to defend himself against those who were accusing him"

Acts 26:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his defense to King Agrippa.

I consider myself happy

Paul was happy because he considered his appearance before Agrippa to be an opportunity to speak about the gospel.

to make my case

This phrase means to describe one's situation, so that those in court can discuss and make a decision about it. Alternate translation: "to defend myself"

against all the accusations of the Jews

The abstract noun "accusations" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "against all the Jews who are accusing me"

the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

Acts 26:3

questions

You can make explicit what kinds of questions this means. Alternate translation: "questions about religious matters"

Acts 26:4

all the Jews

This is a generalization. Possible meanings are 1) Jews in general who knew about Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jews" or 2) Pharisees who knew Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

in my own nation

Possible meanings are 1) among his own people, not necessarily in the geographical land of Israel or 2) in the land of Israel.

Acts 26:5

the strictest party of our religion

"a group within Judaism that lives by very strict rules"

Acts 26:6

Now

This word marks a shift from Paul discussing his past to talking about himself in the present.

I stand here to be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am here, where they are putting me on trial"

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait." Alternate translation: "because I trust in the promise made by God to our fathers

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Hope in a promise is the expectation that the promise will be fulfilled. Alternate translation "because of my hope that God will do what he promised our forefathers he would do" or "because I confidently wait for God to do what he promised our forefather he would do"

Acts 26:7

this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive

This speaks about a promise being fulfilled as if it were an

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object that is received. Alternate translation: "the promise that our twelve tribes confidently wait for God to fulfill"

our twelve tribes

The phrase "our twelve tribes" stands for the people in those tribes. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews in the twelve tribes"

worship God earnestly night and day

The extremes "night" and "day" are used together to mean consistently mean Alternate translation: "continually worship God earnestly"

king

Paul is addressing King Agrippa by his title, not by his name. Your language may require that you add another word or part of a word, as in older English "O King," or that you add the king's name, as in "King Agrippa," or that you use another expression such as "Your Majesty."

that the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "that the leaders of the Jews"

Acts 26:8

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people who were listening to Paul.

Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead?

Paul uses a question to challenge the Jews there. They believe that God can raise the dead, but they do not believe that God brought Jesus back to life. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not judge it to be unbelievable that God raises the dead" Or "You should not say that it is impossible to believe that God raises the dead."

raises the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "makes dead people come alive again"

Acts 26:9

Now indeed

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now beginning to describe how he formerly persecuted Jesus's people.

against the name of Jesus

The word "name" here stands for the teaching about the person. Alternate translation: "to stop people from teaching about Jesus"

Acts 26:10

when they were killed, I cast my vote against them

The phrase "were killed" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I voted in agreement with the other Jewish leaders to condemn believers to die"

Acts 26:11

I punished them many times

Possible meanings are 1) Paul punished some believers many times or 2) Paul punished many different believers.

Acts 26:12

Connecting Statement:

While talking to King Agrippa, Paul tells about when the Lord spoke with him.

While I was doing this

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now telling about when he saw Jesus and became his disciple.

While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. In this case, Paul went to Damascus during the time when he persecuted Christians.

with authority and orders

Paul had letters from the Jewish leaders granting him authority to persecute the Jewish believers.

Acts 26:13

General Information:

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Acts 26:14

I heard a voice speaking to me that said

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking to me who said"

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

This is a rhetorical question. The speaker is alerting Saul to what Saul is doing to him, and implying that Saul should not do that. Alternate translation: "Saul, Saul, you are persecuting me." or "Saul, Saul, stop persecuting me."

It is hard for you to kick a goad

For Paul to resist Jesus and to persecute believers is spoken of as if he were an ox kicking at the sharp stick that a person uses to prod

Acts 26:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

to open their eyes

Paul helping people to understand the truth is spoken of as if he were helping them to open their physical eyes. Alternate translation: "to make them able to understand the truth"

to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

Paul convincing people to stop obeying Satan and doing evil things and to start obeying God and doing good things is spoken of as if Paul were taking them out of a dark place where Satan controlled them and into a place where there was light and God controlled them. Alternate translation: "to help them stop doing what is evil, stop obeying Satan, and start trusting and obeying God"

they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be stated as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "God may forgive their sins

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and they may receive"

the inheritance that I give

The abstract noun "inheritance" may be stated as the verb "inherit." Alternate translation: "they may inherit that which I give"

the inheritance

The blessings that Jesus gives to those who believe in him are spoken of as if they were an inheritance that children receive from their father.

sanctified by faith in me

Jesus choosing some people to belong to him is spoken of as if he literally set them apart from other people.

by faith in me

"because they believe in me." Here Paul finishes quoting the Lord.

Acts 26:19

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Paul had just explained what the Lord had commanded him in his vision.

I did not disobey

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I obeyed"

the heavenly vision

This refers to what the person in the vision told Paul. Alternate translation: "what the person from heaven told me in the vision"

Acts 26:20

turn to God

To start trusting God is spoken of as if a person turns to start walking toward God. Alternate translation: "trust in God"

doing deeds worthy of repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be stated as the verb "repented." Alternate translation: "and start doing good deeds to show they truly have repented"

Acts 26:21

the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "some Jews"

Acts 26:22

to both small and great about nothing

Here "small" and "great" refer to people who are unimportant and important, respectively, and are used together to mean "all people." Alternate translation: "to all people, whether unimportant or important, about nothing"

about nothing more than what

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "about the exact thing that"

what the prophets

Paul is referring to the collective writings of the Old Testament prophets.

Acts 26:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes giving his defense to King Agrippa.

that Christ must suffer

You can make explicit that Christ must also die. Alternate translation: "that Christ must suffer and die"

from the dead

The phrase "the dead" refers to the spirits of people who have died. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

he would proclaim light

"he would proclaim the message about the light." To tell people about how God saves people is spoken of as if a person were speaking about the light. Alternate translation: "he would proclaim the message about how God saves people"

Acts 26:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul and King Agrippa continue to talk together.

you are insane

"you are speaking nonsense" or "you are crazy"

your great learning makes you insane

"you have learned so much that you are now crazy"

Acts 26:25

I am not insane ... but

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I am sane ... and" or "I am able to think well ... and"

most excellent Festus

"Festus, who deserves highest honors"

Acts 26:26

For the king ... to him ... from him

Paul is still speaking to King Agrippa, but he is referring to him in the third person. Alternate translation: "For you ... to you ... from you"

I am persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am sure"

that none of this is hidden from him

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "that he is aware of this" or "that you are aware of this"

has not been done in a corner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has not happened in a corner"

in a corner

This means doing something in secret as if a person went and did something in the corner of a room where no one can see him. Alternate translation: "in a dark place" or "in secret"

Acts 26:27

Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa?

Paul asks this question to remind Agrippa that Agrippa already believes what the prophets said about Jesus. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You already believe what the Jewish prophets said, King Agrippa."

Acts 26:28

In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?

Agrippa asks this question to show Paul that he cannot convince Agrippa so easily without more proof. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think you can convince me so easily to believe in Jesus!"

Acts 26:29

but without these prison chains

Here "prison chains" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "but, of course, I do not want you to be a

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

prisoner, as I am"
Acts 26:30
General Information:
Bernice was the sister of King Agrippa (Acts 25:13).
Connecting Statement:
This ends Paul's time before King Agrippa.
Then the king stood up, and the governor
"Then King Agrippa stood up, and Governor Festus"
Acts 26:31
the hall
This was a large room for ceremonies, trials, and other events.
This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds
The abstract noun "death" can be stated as the verb "die." Here "bonds" stands for being in prison. Alternate translation: "This man does not deserve to die or to be in prison"
Acts 26:32
This man could have been freed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This man could have gone free" or "I could have freed this man"

Chapter 27

Acts 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sailing
People who lived near the sea traveled by boat powered by the wind. During some months of the year, the wind would blow in the wrong direction or so hard that sailing was impossible.
Trust
Paul trusted God to bring him safely to land. He told the sailers and soldiers to trust that God would also keep them alive. (See: trust)
Paul breaks bread
Luke uses almost the same words here to describe Paul taking bread, thanking God, breaking it, and eating it that he used to describe the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples. However, your translation should not make your reader think that Paul was leading a religious celebration here.

Links:

Acts 27:1 Notes

Acts 27:1
General Information:
Adramyttium was a city possibly located on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The word "we" includes the author of Acts, Paul, and the others traveling with Paul, but not the reader.
Connecting Statement:
Paul, as a prisoner, begins his journey to Rome.
When it was decided
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the king and the governor decided"
sail for Italy
Italy is the name of the province Rome was in. See how you translated "Italy" in Acts 18:2.
they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers.
"they put a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment, in charge of Paul and some other prisoners"
they committed
Possible meanings are that 1) "they" refers to the governor and the king or 2) "they" refers to other Roman officials.
a centurion named Julius
Julius is a man's name.
the Augustan company of soldiers
Some versions translate the word Augustan as "Imperial" or "emperor's."
company of soldiers
This was a group of about 1,00 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.
Acts 27:2
We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia
If your language requires a person to act here, you can add human actors: "We boarded a ship that people had brought from Adramyttium; they were about to sail it along."
a ship from Adramyttium
Possible meanings are 1) a ship that had come from Adramyttium or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Adramyttium.
about to sail
"soon going to sail" or "would depart soon"
went to sea
"began our journey on the sea"
Aristarchus
Aristarchus came from Macedonia but had been working with Paul in Ephesus. See how you translated his name in Acts 19:29.
Acts 27:3
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.
Julius treated Paul kindly
"Julius treated Paul with a friendly concern." See how you translated "Julius" in Acts 27:1.
go to his friends to receive their care
The abstract noun "care" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "go to his friends so they could care for him" or "go to his friends so they could help him with whatever he

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

needed"
Acts 27:4
we went to sea and sailed
"we started sailing and went"
sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island
"the lee of Cyprus" is the side of that island that blocks the strong wind, so sailing vessels are not forced off their course.
Acts 27:5
Pamphylia
This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.
we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia
You can make explicit that they got off of the ship in Myra. Alternate translation: "came to Myra, a city of Lycia, where we got off the ship"
a city of Lycia
Lycia was a Roman province, located on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey.
Acts 27:6
found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy
It is implied that a crew would sail the ship to Italy. Alternate translation: "found a ship that a crew had sailed from Alexandria and was about to sail to Italy"
Alexandria
This is the name of a city.
Acts 27:7
When we had sailed slowly ... finally arrived with difficulty
You can make explicit that the reason they were sailing slowly and with difficulty was because the wind was blowing against them.
near Cnidus
This is an ancient settlement located in modern-day Turkey.
the wind no longer allowed us to go that way
"we could no longer go that way because of the strong wind"
we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete
"we sailed along the side of Crete where there was less wind"
opposite Salmone
This is a coastal city in Crete.
Acts 27:8
We sailed along the coast with difficulty
You can make explicit that even though the winds were not as strong as before, they were still strong enough to make sailing difficult.
Fair Havens
This was a port near Lasea, located on the south coast of Crete.
near the city of Lasea
This is a coastal city in Crete.
Acts 27:9
We had now taken much time
Because of the direction the wind was blowing, the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken more time than planned.
We had now taken
The writer includes himself, Paul, and those who were traveling with them, but not the reader.
the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail
This fast took place on the Day of Atonement, which was usually either in the last part of September or the first part of October according to Western calendars. After this time, there was a higher risk of seasonal storms.
Acts 27:10
I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss
"if we travel now, we will suffer much injury and loss"
with injury
If your language has a word for "injury" that results from wrongdoing, you may want to use it here.
we are about to take ... our lives
Paul includes himself and his hearers, so this is inclusive.
loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives
Here "loss" means destruction when referring to things and death when referring to people.
not only of the cargo and the ship
Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. Alternate translation: "not only the ship and the goods on the ship"
Acts 27:11
that were spoken by Paul
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Paul said"
Acts 27:12
harbor was not easy to spend the winter in
You can make explicit why it was not easy to stay in the harbor. Alternate translation: "harbor did not sufficiently protect docked ships during winter storms"
harbor
a place near land that is usually safe for ships
city of Phoenix
Phoenix was a port city on the south coast of Crete.
to spend the winter there
This speaks about the season of winter as if it were a commodity that someone can spend. Alternate translation: "to stay there for the cold season"
facing both southwest and northwest
Here "faces northwest and southwest" means the opening of the harbor was toward those directions. Alternate translation: "it opened to the northwest and southwest"
southwest and northwest
These directions are based on what one sees as one faces the setting sun. Northwest is a little to the right of the setting sun, and southwest is a little to the left of the setting sun.
Acts 27:13
weighed anchor
Here "weighed" means "pulled out of the water." An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea to keep the ship from drifting about.
Acts 27:14
Connecting Statement:
Paul and those traveling on the boat encounter a fierce storm.
after a short time

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"after a little while"

a wind of hurricane force

"a very strong, dangerous wind"

called the northeaster

"called 'a strong wind from the northeast.'" The word for "the northeaster" in the original language is "Euroclydon." You can transliterate this word for your language.

began to beat down from the island

"came in from the island of Crete, and it blew strongly against our ship"

Acts 27:15

When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind

"When the wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail against it"

we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we stopped trying to sail forward, and we let the wind push us whichever way it blew"

Acts 27:16

We sailed along the lee of a small island

"We sailed on the side of the island where the wind was not so strong"

a small island called Cauda

This island was located on the south coast of Crete.

lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. At this point the lifeboat was in the water being towed by the ship.

Acts 27:17

they had hoisted the lifeboat up

"they had lifted up the lifeboat" or "they had pulled the lifeboat aboard the ship"

they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship

The "hull" is the body of the ship. They tied ropes around it so that the ship would not come apart during the storm.

sandbars of Syrtis

Sandbars are very shallow areas in the sea where ships can get stuck in the sand. Syrtis is located on the coast of Libya, northern Africa.

they lowered the sea anchor

A sea anchor is something that is towed in the water behind a ship to slow the ship down and make it more stable. It may be a large cloth or a stiff board. Alternate translation: "they let the floating anchor down into the water"

were driven along

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "had to go in whatever direction the wind blew us"

Acts 27:18

We took such a violent battering by the storm

"The wind blew us so roughly back and forth that all of us were badly battered and bruised by the storm"

they began throwing the cargo overboard

The word "they" refers to the sailors. This is done to lighten the weight of the ship in an effort to prevent the ship from sinking.

cargo

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. See how you translated this in Acts 27:10. Alternate translation: "goods on the ship"

Acts 27:19

the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands

Here "equipment" refers to the sailors' equipment needed to sail the ship: tackle, hoists, beams of wood, block and tackle, ropes, lines, sails, and the like. This indicates how desperate the situation was.

Acts 27:20

When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days

They could not see the sun and stars because of the dark storm clouds. Sailors needed to see the sun and stars in order to know where they were and what direction they were headed.

the great storm still beat upon us

"the terrible storm still blew us roughly back and forth"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone abandoned hope that we would be saved"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

Here the word "hope" is a person's thought that what he desires might happen. Here the men on the boat had no reason to believe that they would be rescued, so they quit hoping. Alternate translation: "we quit thinking that we might be saved"

be saved

"be rescued." Since there is no mention of the people praying for God to save them, this might simply have the sense of "survive."

Acts 27:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the sailors on the ship.

When they had gone long without food

Here "they" refers to the sailors. It is implied that Luke, Paul, and those with them had not eaten either. Alternate translation: "When we had gone a long time without food"

among the sailors

"among the men"

so as to get this injury and loss

"and as a result suffer this harm and loss"

Acts 27:22

there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship

Paul is speaking to the sailors. It is implied that Paul also means that he and those with him will not die either. Alternate translation: "none of us will die: the storm will destroy only the ship"

Acts 27:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:24

You must stand before Caesar

The phrase "stand before Caesar" refers to Paul's going to court and letting Caesar judge him. Alternate translation: "You must stand before Caesar so he can judge you"

has given to you all those who are sailing with you

"has decided to allow all those who are sailing with you to live"

Acts 27:25

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

just as it was told to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the angel told me"
Acts 27:26
we must run aground upon some island
"we must steer our boat so that it wrecks on some island"
Acts 27:27
Connecting Statement:
The fierce storm continues.
When the fourteenth night had come
The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be translated as "fourteen" or "14." Alternate translation: "After 14 days since the storm started, that night"
as we were driven this way and that
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the wind blew us back and forth"
the Adriatic Sea
This is the sea between Italy and Greece.
Acts 27:28
They took soundings
"They measured the depth of the sea water." They measured the depth of water by dropping a line with a weight tied to the end of it into the water.
found twenty fathoms
"found 20 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 40 meters"
found fifteen fathoms
"found 15 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 30 meters"
Acts 27:29
anchors
An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea, keeping the ship from drifting about. See how you translated this in Acts 27:13.
from the stern
"from the back of the ship"
Acts 27:30
the lifeboat
This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. See how you translated this in Acts 27:16.
from the bow
"from the front of the ship"
Acts 27:31
General Information:
Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the centurion and the Roman soldiers.
Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved
Paul meant that if those men left the ship, then no one on the ship would be saved. This can be stated positively, and the passive phrase "be saved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can be saved only if these men stay in the ship" or "Only if these men stay in the ship will you survive"
Acts 27:32
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 27:33
When daylight was coming on
"When it was almost sunrise"
This day is the fourteenth day that
The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be stated as "fourteen." Alternate translation: "For 14 days"
Acts 27:34
not one of you will lose a single hair from his head
This was a customary way of saying no harm would come upon them. Alternate translation: "every one of you will survive this disaster unharmed"
Acts 27:35
broke the bread
"tore the bread" or "tore off a piece from the loaf of bread"
Acts 27:36
Then they were all encouraged
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This encouraged all of them"
Acts 27:37
We were 276 souls on the ship
"There were two hundred and seventy-six of us in the ship." This is background information.
souls
This is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "people"
Acts 27:38
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 27:39
bay
a large area of water partly surrounded by land
did not recognize the land
"saw land but could not recognize it as any place they knew"
Acts 27:40
cut loose the anchors and left them
"cut the ropes and left the anchors behind"
rudders
large oars or pieces of wood at the back of the ship used for steering
the foresail
"the sail at the front of the ship." The sail was a large piece of cloth that caught the wind to move the ship.
they headed to the beach
"they steered the ship toward the beach"
Acts 27:41
a sandbar
an underwater pile of sand that made the water suddenly shallow
The bow
the front end of the ship
the stern
"the back end of the ship"
Acts 27:42
The soldiers' plan was
"The soldiers were planning"
Acts 27:43

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

so he stopped their plan
"so he stopped them from doing what they planned to do"
jump overboard
"jump off the ship into the water"
Acts 27:44
some on planks
"some on wooden boards"

Chapter 28

Acts 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

No one knows for sure why Luke ends his history without telling what happened to Paul after he had been in Rome for two years.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Letters" and "brothers"

The Jewish leaders were surprised that Paul wanted to speak with them, because they had received no letters from the high priest in Jerusalem telling them that Paul was coming.

When the Jewish leaders spoke of "brothers," they were referring to fellow Jews, not to Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"He was a god"

The native people believed that Paul was a god, but they did not believe that he was the one true God. We do not know why Paul did not tell the native people that he was not a god.

Links:

Acts 28:1 Notes

Acts 28:1
General Information:
Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those who traveled with them, but not to the reader.
Connecting Statement:
After the shipwreck, people on the island of Malta helped Paul and everyone on the ship. They stay there for 3 months.
When we were brought safely through
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When we arrived safely"
we learned
Paul and Luke learned the name of the island. Alternate translation: "we learned from the people" or "we found out from the residents"
the island was called Malta
Malta is an island located south of the modern-day island of Sicily.
Acts 28:2
The native people
"The local people"
offered to us not just ordinary kindness
Being kind to someone is spoken of as if it were an object that someone offers. Alternate translation: "were not only very kind to us"
not just ordinary kindness
This phrase is used to emphasize the opposite of what is said. Alternate translation: "a great deal of kindness"
they lit a fire
"they put together twigs and branches and burned them"
welcomed us all
Possible meanings are 1) "welcomed all of the people from the ship" or 2) "welcomed Paul and all his companions."
Acts 28:3
a viper came out
"a poisonous snake came out of the bundle of sticks"
fastened onto his hand
"bit Paul's hand and did not let go"
Acts 28:4
This man certainly is a murderer
"For sure, this man is a murderer" or "This man is truly a murderer"
Justice
"Justice" was the name of a goddess that the people on the island worshiped. Alternate translation: "the goddess called Justice"
Acts 28:5
shook the animal into the fire
"shook his hand so that the snake fell from his hand into the fire"
suffered no harm
"Paul was not hurt at all"
Acts 28:6
waiting for him to swell up
They they that his body would swell because of the snake venom.
nothing was wrong with him
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everything about him was as it should be"
they changed their minds
To think differently about a situation is spoken of as if a person is changing his mind. Alternate translation: "they thought again"
said that he was a god.
Perhaps the people believed that someone who lived after a poisonous snake bite was divine or a god. This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "said, 'This man must be a god.'"
Acts 28:7
General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Here the words "us" and we" refer to Paul, Luke, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Now in a nearby place

"Now" is used to introduce a new person or event in the account.

chief man of the island

Possible meanings are 1) the main leader of the people or 2) someone who was the most important person on the island, perhaps because of his wealth.

Acts 28:8

It happened that the father of Publius ... fever and dysentery

This is background information about Publius' father that is important to understanding the story.

was lying afflicted

"was in bed, ill"

afflicted with a fever and dysentery

Dysentery is an infectious disease of the intestines.

placed his hands on him

"touched him with his hands"

Acts 28:9

were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed them too"

Acts 28:10

honored us with many honors

Probably they honored Paul and those with him by giving them gifts.

Acts 28:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul's journey to Rome continues.

that had spent the winter at the island

"that the crew left at the island for the cold season"

a ship of Alexandria

Possible meanings are this refers to 1) a ship that came from Alexandria, or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Alexandria.

the twin gods

On the bow of the ship, there was a carving of the two idols called "the twin gods." Their names were Castor and Pollux.

Acts 28:12

city of Syracuse

Syracuse is a city on the southeast coast of the modern-day island of Sicily, just southwest of Italy.

Acts 28:13

city of Rhegium

This is the port city located at the southwestern tip of Italy.

a south wind sprang up

"the wind began to blow from the south"

city of Puteoli

Puteoli is located in modern-day Naples on the west coast of Italy.

Acts 28:14

There we found

"There we met"

brothers

These were followers of Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they invited us"

In this way we came to Rome

Once Paul reached Puteoli, the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. Alternate translation: "And after we stayed seven days with them, we went to Rome"

Acts 28:15

General Information:

The Market of Appius was a popular market village about 60 kilometers south of the city of Rome on a road called the Appian Way. The Three Taverns was another village about 50 kilometers south of Rome.

after they heard about us

"after they heard we were coming"

he thanked God and took courage

Courage is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could take. Alternate translation: "this encouraged him, and he thanked God"

Acts 28:16

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

Paul arrives in Rome as a prisoner but with the freedom to stay in his own place. He calls the local Jews together to explain what has happened to him.

When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After we had arrived in Rome, the Roman authorities gave Paul permission to"

Acts 28:17

Then it came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

the leaders among the Jews

These are the Jewish civil or religious leaders present in Rome.

Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

against the people

"against our people" or "against the Jews"

I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews arrested me in Jerusalem and placed me in the custody of the Roman authorities"

into the hands of the Romans

Here "hands" stands for power or control.

Acts 28:18

there was no reason for the death penalty in my case

"there was no reason for them to execute me" or "I had done nothing to cause them to kill me"

Acts 28:19

the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

spoke against their desire

"complained about what the Roman authorities wanted to do"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

I was forced to appeal to Caesar
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I had to ask for Caesar to judge me"
although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation
The abstract noun "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Here "nation" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "but it was not because I wanted to accuse the people of my nation before Caesar"
Acts 28:20
the hope of Israel
Here the word "hope" is what a person desires to happen and is confident will happen. In this case it is what the people of Israel hope for. Alternate translation: "what Israel joyfully waits for" or "what the people of Israel confidently expect"
the hope of Israel
Paul did not state clearly what Israel hoped for. He may have been referring 1) to their hope that the Messiah would come or 2) to their hope that God would cause those who have died to live again.
Israel
Here "Israel" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "the Jews"
that I am now wearing this chain
Here "wearing this chain" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "that I am a prisoner"
Acts 28:21
General Information:
Here the word "We" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome.
Connecting Statement:
The Jewish leaders respond to Paul.
nor did any of the brothers
Here "brothers" stands for fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "nor did any of our fellow Jews"
Acts 28:22
General Information:
Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome.
you think about this sect
A sect is a smaller group within a larger group. Here it refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "you think about this group to which you belong"
because it is known by us
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because we know"
it is spoken against everywhere
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many Jews all over the Roman Empire are saying bad things about it"
Acts 28:23
General Information:
Here all instances of "they" and "them" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome. All instances of "him," "his," and "He" refer to Paul (Acts 28:17).
had appointed a day for him
"had chosen a time for him to speak to them"
testified about the kingdom of God
Here "kingdom of God" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "told them about God's rule as king" or "told them how God would show himself as king"
from the prophets
Here "the prophets" refers to what they wrote. Alternate translation: "from what the prophets wrote"
Acts 28:24
Some were convinced about the things which were said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul was able to convince some of them"
Acts 28:25
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17). The word "your" refers to the people to whom Paul had been speaking.
Connecting Statement:
As the Jewish leaders were ready to leave, Paul quoted the Old Testament scriptures that were appropriate for this time.
after Paul had spoken this one word
Here "word" stands for a message or statement. Alternate translation: "after Paul had said one more thing" or "after Paul had made this statement"
The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers.
This sentence contains quotations within quotations.
Acts 28:26
General Information:
Paul begins to quote the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote.
He said, 'Go to this people and say, "Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know.
This is the end of the sentence that begins with the words "The Holy Spirit spoke" in verse 25 and that contains quotations within quotations. You can translate one of the inner quotations as an indirect quotation, or you can translate two of the inner quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "The Spirit told Isaiah to go tell them that they will hear but will not understand and they will see but they will not know"
Hearing you will hear ... seeing, you will see
The words "hear" and "see" are repeated for emphasis. "You will listen carefully ... you will look intently"
but you will never understand ... but you will never know
Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Jewish people will not understand God's plan.
Acts 28:27
General Information:
Translate Paul's quotation of Isaiah as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation according to how you translated it in Acts 28:25-26.
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes quoting Isaiah the prophet.
For the heart of this people has become dull
People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if their heart is dull. Here "heart" is a metonym for the mind.
with their ears they hardly hear, and they have shut their eyes
People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if they are unable to hear and are shutting their eyes so that they will not see.
understand with their heart

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Here "heart" stands for the mind.

turn again

To start obeying God is spoken of as though the person were physically turning toward God.

I would heal them

This does not mean God would only heal them physically. He would also heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

Acts 28:28

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles

God's message about how he saves people is spoken of as if it were an object that is sent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is sending his messengers to the Gentiles to tell them about how he will save them"

they will listen

"some of them will listen." This response of the Gentiles is in contrast to the way the Jews of that time responded.

Acts 28:29

General Information:

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Acts 28:30

General Information:

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Acts 28:31

Connecting Statement:

Luke ends the story of Paul in the book of Acts.

He was proclaiming the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "He was preaching about God's rule as king" or "He was preaching about how God will show himself as king"

Introduction to Romans

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Romans

Introduction (1:1-15) Righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ (1:16-17) All mankind is condemned because of sin (1:18-3:20) Righteousness through Jesus Christ by faith in him (3:21-4:25) The fruits of the Spirit (5:1-11) Adam and Christ compared (5:12-21) Becoming like Christ in this life (6:1-8:39) God's plan for Israel (9:1-11:36) Practical advice for living as Christians (12:1-15:13) Conclusion and greetings (15:14-16:27)

Who wrote the Book of Romans?

The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul probably wrote this letter while he was staying in the city of Corinth during his third trip through the Roman Empire.

What is the Book of Romans about?

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Rome. Paul wanted to get them ready to receive him when he visited them. He said his purpose was to "bring about the obedience of faith" (16:26).

In this letter Paul most fully described the gospel of Jesus Christ. He explained that both Jews and non-Jews have sinned, and God will forgive them and declare them righteous only if they believe in Jesus (chapters 1-11). Then he gave them practical advice for how believers should live (chapters 12-16),

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Romans." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome," or "A Letter to the Christians in Rome."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What are the titles used to refer to Jesus?

In Romans, Paul described Jesus Christ by many titles and descriptions: Jesus Christ (1:1), the Seed of David (1:3), the Son of God (1:4), the Lord Jesus Christ (1:7), Christ Jesus (3:24), Propitiation (3:25), Jesus (3:26), Jesus our Lord (4:24), Lord of Hosts (9:29), a Stumbling Stone and Rock of Offence (9:33), the End of the Law (10:4), the Deliverer (11:26), Lord of the Dead and the Living (14:9), and the Root of Jesse (15:12).

How should theological terms in Romans be translated?

Paul used many theological terms that are not used in the four gospels. As early Christians learned more about the meaning of Jesus Christ and his message, they needed words and expressions for new ideas. Some examples of these words are "justification" (5:1), "works of the law" (3:20), "reconcile" (5:10), "propitiation" (3:25), "sanctification" (6:19), and "the old man" (6:6).

The "key terms" dictionary can help translators understand many of these terms.

Terms such as those given above are difficult to explain. It is often hard or impossible for translators to find equivalent terms in their own languages. It can help to know that word equivalents of these terms are not necessary. Instead, translators can develop short expressions to communicate these ideas. For example, the term "gospel" can be translated as "the good news about Jesus Christ."

Translators should also remember that some of these terms have more than one meaning. The meaning will depend on

how the author is using the word in that particular passage. For example, "righteousness" sometimes means that a person obeys God's law. At other times, "righteousness" means that Jesus Christ has perfectly obeyed God's law for us.

What did Paul mean by "a remnant" of Israel (11:5)?

The idea of a "remnant" is important both in the Old Testament and for Paul. Most of the Israelites were either killed or scattered among other people when the Assyrians and then the Babylonians conquered their land. Only a relatively few Jews survived. They were known as "the remnant."

In 11:1-9, Paul spoke of another remnant, the Jews whom God saved because they believed in Jesus. (See: remnant)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions “in Christ,” “in the Lord,” and others like them?

The phrase "in Christ" and similar phrases occur in 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1,2,39; 9:1; 12:5,17; 15:17; and 16:3,7,9,10. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” For example, in 3:24 ("the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"), Paul referred to our being redeemed "because" of Jesus Christ. In 8:9 ("you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit"), Paul spoke of believers submitting "to" the Holy Spirit. In 9:1 ("I tell the truth in Christ"), Paul meant that he is telling the truth that "is in agreement with" Jesus Christ. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

How are the ideas of "holy," "saints" or "holy ones," and "sanctify" represented in Romans in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless and faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones" or "holy people." (See: 1:7) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In cases where some other English versions have "saints" or "holy ones," the ULB uses "believers." (See: 8:27; 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "consecrated," or "reserved for." (See: 15:16)

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

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

For the following verses, modern version of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB includes the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote.

"he [God] works all things together for good" (8:28). Some older translations read, "All things work together for good." "But if it is by grace, it is no longer by works. Otherwise grace would no longer be grace" (11:6). Some older translations read: "But if it is by works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

The following verse is not in the best ancient copies of the Bible. Translators are advised not to include this verse. However, if in the translators' region there are older Bible versions that have this verse, the translators can include it. If it is translated, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it is probably not original to the Book of Romans.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (16:24).

Chapter 1

Romans 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse is a type of introduction. People in the ancient Mediterranean region often started their letters this way. Sometimes this is called a "salutation."

Special concepts in this chapter

The gospel

When Paul writes of "the gospel" in this chapter (verses 1, 2, 9, 15, 16, 17), he is referring to the message about God's salvation for people through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.

Harvest

This chapter uses the image of a harvest (1:13) to speak of the Roman Christians doing good works because they believe what Paul has told them about Jesus. (See: fruit and faith and righteous)

Universal Condemnation and the Wrath of God

This chapter explains that everyone is without excuse. We all know about the true God, Yahweh, from his creation all around us. Because of our sin and our sinful nature, every person justly deserves the wrath of God. This wrath was

satisfied by Jesus dying on a cross for those who believe in him. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"God gave them over"

Many scholars view the phrases "God gave them over" and "God gave them up" as theologically significant. In both cases, it means that God had stopped trying to teach the people the right way and had allowed them to do whatever they want, even though everything they wanted to do was evil.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult phrases and concepts

This chapter has many difficult ideas in it. The way Paul writes makes many of the phrases in this chapter difficult to translate. The translator may need to use the UDB to understand the meaning of the phrases and then translate them in a way that is easy for people to understand. Some of the difficult phrases include: "obedience of faith," "whom I serve in my spirit," "from faith to faith" and "exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of perishable man."

Links:

Romans 1:1 Notes Romans intro

Romans 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. You may also need to tell in this same verse who the people are to whom Paul wrote the letter

Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ. God called me to be an apostle and chose me to tell people about the gospel"

called

appointed or chosen by God to be his child, to be his servant and proclaimer of his message of salvation through Jesus

Romans 1:2

which he promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures

God promised his people that he would set up his kingdom. He told the prophets to write these promises in the Scriptures.

Romans 1:3

concerning his Son

This refers to "the gospel of God," the good news that God promised to send his Son into the world.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who was a descendant of David according to the flesh

Here the word "flesh" refers to the physical body. Alternate translation: "who is a descendant of David according to the physical nature" or "who was born into the family of David"

Romans 1:4

he was declared with power to be the Son of God

The word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God declared him with power to be the Son of God"

by the resurrection from the dead

"by raising him from among the people who are dead." This expression speaks of all dead people together in the underworld, and coming alive again is spoken of as resurrection from among them.

Spirit of holiness

This refers to the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks here about his obligation to preach.

we have received grace and apostleship

God has given Paul the gift of being an apostle. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God caused me to be an apostle. This is a special privilege"

for obedience of faith among all the nations, for the sake of his name

Paul uses the word "name" as a metonym to refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order to teach all nations to obey because of their faith in him"

Romans 1:6

General Information:

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Romans 1:7

To all in Rome who are beloved of God and called to be his holy people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I am writing this letter to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has chosen to become his people"

Grace to you and peace

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "May God give you grace and peace" or "May God bless you and give you inner peace"

God our Father

The word "Father" is an important title for God.

Romans 1:8

the whole world

the world Paul and his readers knew and could travel in, which was the Roman Empire

Romans 1:9

For God is my witness

Paul emphasizes that he earnestly prays for them and that God has seen him praying. The word "for" is often left untranslated.

in my spirit

A person's spirit is the part of him that can know God and believe in him.

the gospel of his Son

The good news (gospel) of the Bible is that the Son of God has given himself as the Savior of the world.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

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I make mention of you
"I talk to God about you"
Romans 1:10
I always request in my prayers that ... I may at last be successful ... in coming to you
"Every time I pray, I ask God that ... I may succeed ... in coming to visit you"
by any means
"in whatever way God allows"
at last
"eventually" or "finally"
now by the will of God
"now, because God desires it,"
Romans 1:11
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues his opening statements to the people in Rome by stating his desire to see them in person.
For I desire to see you
"Because I really want to see you"
some spiritual gift, in order to strengthen you
Paul wants to strengthen the Roman Christians spiritually. Alternate translation: "some gift that will help you to grow spiritually"
Romans 1:12
That is, I long to be mutually encouraged among you, through each other's faith, yours and mine
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I mean that I want us to encourage each other by sharing our experiences of faith in Jesus"
Romans 1:13
I do not want you to be uninformed
Paul is emphasizing that he wanted them to have this information. You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I want you to know"
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
I was hindered until now
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "something has always prevented me"
in order to have some fruit among you
The word "fruit" is a metaphor that represents people in Rome whom Paul wants to believe the gospel. Alternate translation: "that more people among you might trust in Jesus"
the rest of the Gentiles
the Gentiles in the other regions where he had gone
Romans 1:14
I am a debtor both to
Using the metaphor "debtor," Paul speaks of his duty to serve God as if he owed God a financial debt. Alternate translation: "I must take the gospel to"
Romans 1:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Romans 1:16
I am not ashamed of the gospel
You can translate this in a positive form. Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is not ashamed of believing the gospel because he knows it is true. Alternate translation: "I am confident in the gospel" 2) Paul is not ashamed of preaching the gospel because he knows that is true. Alternate translation: "I confidently preach the gospel"
it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes
Here "believes" means that one puts his trust in Christ. Alternate translation: "it is through the gospel that God powerfully saves those who put their trust in Christ"
for the Jew first and for the Greek
"for Jewish people and also for Greek people"
first
Here "first" means coming before all others in order of time.
Romans 1:17
For in it
Here "it" refers to the gospel. Paul explains why he completely trusts in the gospel.
God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith
Paul speaks about the gospel message as if it were an object that God could physically show to people. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has told us that it is by faith from beginning to end that people become righteous"
as it has been written
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"
The righteous will live by faith
Possible meanings are 1) the words "by faith" describe "righteous," and those who by faith are righteous will live, or 2) the words "by faith" describe "will live," and those who are righteous will live by faith.
The righteous
The word "righteous" can be written as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Righteous people" or "A person who is righteous"
Romans 1:18
Connecting Statement:
Paul reveals God's great anger against sinful man.
For the wrath of God is revealed
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For God shows how angry he is"
For
Paul uses the word "for" to show he is about to tell why people know that what he has said in Romans 1:17 is true.
the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people
The words "ungodliness" and "unrighteousness" are abstract nouns that can be expressed using the adjectives "ungodly," which describes the people, and "unrighteous," which describes their deeds. These nouns are metonyms for the people with whom God is angry. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals from heaven how angry he is with people because they are ungodly and do unrighteous deeds"
hold back the truth
Here "truth" refers to true information about God. Alternate translation: "hide the true information about God"
Romans 1:19

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that which is known about God is visible to them
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they can know about God because of what they can plainly see"
For God has enlightened them
Here "enlightened them" means God has shown them the truth about him. Alternate translation: "Because God has shown everyone what he is like"
Romans 1:20
world
This refers to the heavens and the earth, as well as everything in them.
his invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen
Paul speaks of people understanding God's invisible qualities as if people have seen those qualities. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people have clearly understood God's invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature"
divine nature
"all the qualities and characteristics of God" or "the things about God that make him God"
having been discerned
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "because people have discerned them" or "because people have understood them"
in the things that have been made
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "in the things that God has made"
they are without excuse
"people do not have an excuse" or "these people can never say that they did not know"
Romans 1:21
became foolish in their thoughts
"began to think foolish things"
their senseless hearts were darkened
Here "darkness" is a metaphor that represents the people's lack of understanding. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "they became unable to understand what God wanted them to know"
Romans 1:22
They claimed to be wise, but they became foolish
"While they were claiming that they were wise, they became foolish"
They ... they
the people in Romans 1:18
Romans 1:23
exchanged the glory of the imperishable God
"traded the truth that God is glorious and will never die"
exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of
"stopped loving the glory of the God who never dies and instead chose to worship idols that looked like"
perishable man
"human beings, who will die"
of birds, of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things
"or that looked like birds, four-footed beasts, or creeping things"
Romans 1:24
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true"
God delivered them over to
"God allowed them to indulge in"
them ... their ... themselves
These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.
the lusts of their hearts for uncleanness
Here "lusts of their hearts" is a synecdoche that represents the evil things they wanted to do. Alternate translation: "the morally impure things they desired greatly"
for their bodies to be dishonored among themselves
This is a euphemism that means they committed immoral sexual acts. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and they committed sexually immoral and degrading acts"
Romans 1:25
they
This word refers to the "people" of Romans 1:18.
who worshiped and served the creation
Here "creation" refers to what God created. Alternate translation: "They worshiped things that God created"
instead of
"rather than"
Romans 1:26
Because of this
"Because of idolatry and sexual sin"
God delivered them over to dishonorable lusts
"God allowed them to do all the dishonorable things they very much wanted to do"
dishonorable lusts
"shameful sexual desires"
lusts, for their women
"lusts. For example, their women"
exchanged natural relations for those that were unnatural
The idea of relations "that were unnatural" is a euphemism for immoral sexuality. Alternate translation: "started practicing sexuality in a way God did not design"
Romans 1:27
men also left their natural relations with women
Here "natural relations" is a euphemism for sexual relationships. Alternate translation: "many men stopped having natural sexual desire for women"
burned in their lust for one another
"experienced strong sexual desire for other men"
committed shameless acts with men and
"committed acts with men for which they should have been ashamed. But they were not ashamed, and they"
men and received in themselves the penalty they deserved for their error
"men, and God has punished them justly for the error they committed"
error
moral wrong, not a mistake about facts
Romans 1:28
And just as they did not approve of having God in their awareness
"They did not think it was necessary to know God"
And just as
Possible meanings are 1) God "gave them up to a corrupted

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mind ... proper" (see the words in this verse) because they not only "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and ... worshiped and served the creation" (Romans 1:25), but they also "did not approve ... awareness," or 2) God "gave them up ... proper" because "they did not approve ... awareness," in which case "And just as" should be translated "Because."

they ... their ... them

These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

he gave them up to a corrupted mind

Here "a corrupted mind" means a mind that thinks only about immoral things. Alternate translation: "God allowed their minds, which they had filled with worthless and immoral thoughts, to completely control them"

not proper

"disgraceful" or "sinful"

Romans 1:29

They have been filled with all

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "They have in them a strong desire for all" or "They strongly desire to do deeds of"

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and evil intentions

"Many are constantly envying other people ... Many constantly desire to murder people ... to cause arguments and quarrels among people ... to deceive others ... to speak hatefully about others"

Romans 1:30

slanderers

A slanderer says false things about another person in order to damage that person's reputation.

inventing ways of doing evil

"thinking of new ways to do evil things to others"

Romans 1:31

General Information:

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Romans 1:32

They understand the ordinance of God, that

"They know how God wants them to live and that"

that those who practice such things

Here "practice" refers to continually or habitually doing things that are evil. Alternate translation: "that those who keep on doing wicked things"

are deserving of death

"deserve to die"

these things

"these kinds of evil things"

who do them

Here the verb "do" refers to continuing to do things that are evil. Alternate translation: "who keep on doing evil things"

Chapter 2

Romans 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter shifts its audience from Roman Christians to those who "judge" other people and do not believe in Jesus. (See: judge and believe)

"Therefore you are without excuse"

This phrase looks back at Chapter 1. In some ways, it actually concludes what Chapter 1 teaches. This phrase explains why everyone in the world must worship the true God.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Doers of the Law"

Those who try to obey the law will not be justified by trying to obey it. Those who are justified by believing in Jesus show that their faith is real by obeying God's commands. (See: justice and lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See:, guilt and sin and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You who judge"

At times, this could be translated in a simpler way. But it is translated in this relatively awkward way because when Paul refers to "people who judge" he is also saying that everyone judges. It is possible to translate this as "those who judge (and everyone judges)."

Links:

Romans 2:1 Notes

Romans 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul has stated that all people are sinners and continues to remind his readers that all people are wicked.

Therefore you are without excuse

The word "therefore" marks a new section of the letter. It also makes a concluding statement based on what Paul has said in [Romans 1:1-32]

you are

Paul is writing here as if he were addressing a Jewish person who is arguing with him. Paul is doing this to teach his audience that God will punish everyone who continually sins, whether Jew or Gentile.

you

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Here the pronoun "you" is singular.

excuse, you person, you who judge, for in things for which you judge the other person, you condemn yourself

"excuse. You are just a human being, yet you judge others and say they deserve God's punishment. But you are only judging yourself because you do the same wicked deeds that they do"

you person

Another possible meaning is "whoever you are."

Romans 2:2

But we know

Here the pronoun "we" may include Christian believers and also Jews who are not Christians.

God's judgment is according to truth when it falls on those

Here Paul speaks of "God's judgment" as if it were alive and could "fall" on people. Alternate translation: "God will judge those people truly and fairly"

those who practice such things

"the people who do those wicked deeds"

Romans 2:3

But consider this

"So consider this" or "Therefore, consider this"

consider this

"think about what I am going to tell you"

you person

Use the phrase "you, whoever you are" or use "you," (with the comma), followed by a general word for a human being.

you who judge those who practice such things although you do the same things

"you who say someone deserves God's punishment while you do the same wicked deeds"

Will you escape from the judgment of God?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this question as a strong negative statement. Alternate translation: "You will certainly not escape God's judgment!"

Romans 2:4

Or do you think so little of the riches of his kindness, his delayed punishment, and his patience ... repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not act like it does not matter that God is good and that he patiently waits a long time before he punishes people so that his goodness will cause them to repent!"

think so little of the riches ... patience

"consider the riches ... patience unimportant" or "consider ... patience not good"

Do you not know that his kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You must know that God shows you he is good so that you might repent!"

Romans 2:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the people that all people are wicked.

But it is to the extent of your hardness and unrepentant heart

Paul uses a metaphor to compare a person who refuses to obey God to something hard, like a stone. He also uses the metonym "heart" to represent the person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "It is because you refuse to listen and repent"

hardness and unrepentant heart

This is a doublet that you can combine as "unrepentant heart."

you are storing up for yourself wrath

The phrase "storing up" implies a metaphor that usually refers to a person gathering his treasures and putting them in a safe place. Paul says, instead of treasures, that the person is gathering God's punishment. The longer they go without repenting, the more severe the punishment. Alternate translation: "you are making your punishment worse"

on the day of wrath ... the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment

Both of these phrases refer to the same day. Alternate translation: "when God will show everyone that he is angry and that he judges all people fairly"

Romans 2:6

pay back

"give a fair reward or punishment"

to every person according to his actions

"each person according to what that person has done"

Romans 2:7

who according to the perseverance of good deeds have

who, by persevering and doing good deeds, have

have sought

have tried to get

glory, honor, and incorruptibility

They want God to praise and honor them, and they want to never die.

incorruptibility

This refers to physical, not moral, decay.

Romans 2:8

self-seeking

"selfish" or "only concerned with what makes themselves happy"

disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second intensifies the first.

wrath and fierce anger will come

The words "wrath" and "fierce anger" mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's anger. Alternate translation: "God will show his terrible anger"

wrath

Here the word "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's severe punishment of wicked people.

Romans 2:9

Connecting Statement:

Though this section is speaking to the non-religious wicked person, Paul sums it up by stating both non-Jews and Jews are wicked before God.

tribulation and distress on

The words "tribulation" and "distress" mean basically the same thing here and emphasize how bad God's punishment will be. Alternate translation: "awful punishments to"

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on every human soul
Here, Paul uses the word "soul" as a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "upon every person"
has practiced evil
"has continually done evil things"
evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek
"evil. He will judge the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"
first
Possible meanings are 1) "first in order of time" or 2) "most certainly"
Romans 2:10
But glory, honor, and peace will come
"But God will praise, honor, and give peace"
practices good
"continually does what is good"
good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek
"good. God will reward the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"
first
You should translate this the same way you did in Romans 2:9.
Romans 2:11
For there is no partiality with God
You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "For God treats all people the same"
Romans 2:12
For as many as have sinned
"For all those who have sinned"
without the law will also perish without the law
Paul repeats "without the law" to emphasize that it does not matter if people do not know the law of Moses. If they sin, God will judge them. Alternate translation: "without knowing the law of Moses will certainly still die spiritually"
as many as have sinned
"all those who have sinned"
with respect to the law will be judged by the law
God will judge sinful people according to his law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and who do know the law of Moses, God will judge them according to that law"
Romans 2:13
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to let the reader know that perfect obedience to God's law is required even for those who never had God's law.
it is not the hearers of the law
Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "it is not those who only hear the law of Moses"
who are righteous before God
"whom God considers righteous"
but it is the doers of the law
"but it is those who obey the law of Moses"
who will be justified
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom God will accept"
Romans 2:14
For
This verse is the beginning of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.
a law to themselves ... do not have the law
This is an idiom that means that these people naturally obey God's laws. Alternate translation: "have God's laws already inside them ... actually do not have the law"
they do not have the law
Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses." Alternate translation: "they do not actually have the laws that God gave to Moses"
Romans 2:15
General Information:
This verse is the end of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.
By this they show
"By naturally obeying the law they show"
that the actions required by the law are written in their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for the person's thoughts or inner person. The phrase "written in their hearts" is a metaphor for knowing something in their mind. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that God has written on their hearts what the law requires them to do" or "that they know the actions that God wants them to do according to his law"
bears witness to them
Here "bears witness" refers to the knowledge they gain from the law that God has written in their hearts. Alternate translation: "tells them if they are disobeying or obeying God's law"
Romans 2:16
when God will judge
This finishes Paul's thought from Romans 2:13. You can put a period at the end of 2:15 and start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "This will happen when God judges"
Romans 2:17
Connecting Statement:
Here begins Paul's discussion that the law the Jews possess actually condemns them because they do not obey it.
if you say that you are a Jew
"since you call yourself a Jew" or "if you want people to think of you as a Jew"
rest upon the law
The phrase "rest upon the law" represents believing that they can become righteous by obeying the law. Alternate translation: "rely on the law of Moses"
Romans 2:18
know his will
"and know God's will"
because you have been instructed from the law
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because people have taught you what is right from the law" or "because you have learned from the law"
Romans 2:19
that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness

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Here "the blind" and "those who walk in darkness" represent people who do not understand the law. Alternate translation: "that because you teach the law, you yourself are like a guide to blind people, and you are like a light to people who are lost in the dark"

Romans 2:20

an instructor of the foolish

"you correct those who do wrong"

a teacher of little children

Here Paul compares those who do not know anything about the law to very small children. Alternate translation: "you teach those who do not know the law"

and that you have in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth

The knowledge of the truth that is in the law comes from God. Alternate translation: "and you are sure you understand the truth that God has given in the law"

Romans 2:21

You who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You teach others, but you do not teach yourself!" or "You teach others, but you do not do what you teach!"

You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to steal, but you steal!"

Romans 2:22

You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to commit adultery, but you commit adultery!"

You who hate idols, do you rob temples?

Paul is using a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You say you hate idols, but you rob temples!"

do you rob temples

Possible meanings are 1) "do you steal items from local pagan temples to sell and make a profit" or 2) "do you keep back from the Jerusalem temple all the money that is due to God"

Romans 2:23

You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by transgressing the law?

Paul uses a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "It is wicked that you claim to be proud of the law while at the same time you disobey it and bring shame to God!"

Romans 2:24

the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "many Gentiles blaspheme the name of God"

name of God

The word "name" is a metonym that refers to the entirety of God, not just his name.

Romans 2:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to show that God, by his law, condemns even the Jews who have God's law.

For circumcision is profitable to you

"I say all of this because it is good for you to be circumcised"

if you are a transgressor of the law

"if you do not obey the commandments found in the law"

your circumcision becomes uncircumcision

"it is as though you were no longer circumcised"

Romans 2:26

the uncircumcised person

"the person who is not circumcised"

keeps the requirements of the law

"obeys what God commands in the law"

will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision?

This is the first of two questions Paul asks here to emphasize that circumcision is not what makes one right before God. You can translate this question as a statement in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider him as circumcised."

Romans 2:27

And will not the one who is naturally uncircumcised condemn you ... the law?

This is the second of two questions that Paul asks here

Romans 2:28

outwardly

This refers to Jewish rituals, such as circumcision, which people can see.

merely outward in the flesh

This refers to the physical change to a man's body when someone circumcises him.

flesh

This is a synecdoche for the whole body. Alternate translation: "body"

Romans 2:29

he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart

These two phrases have similar meanings. The first phrase, "he is a Jew who is one inwardly," explains the second phrase, "circumcision is that of the heart."

inwardly

This refers to the values and motivations of the person whom God has transformed.

of the heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for the inner person.

in the Spirit, not in the letter

Here "letter" is a synecdoche that refers to written Scripture. Alternate translation: "through the work of the Holy Spirit, not because you know the Scriptures"

in the Spirit

This refers to the internal, spiritual part of a person that the Holy Spirit changes.

Chapter 3

Romans 3 General Notes

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Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 4 and 10-18 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Chapter 3 answers the question, "What advantage does being a Jew have over being a Gentile?" (See: lawofmoses and save)

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"

Because God is holy, anyone with him in heaven must be perfect. Any sin at all will condemn a person. (See: heaven and condemn)

The purpose of the law of Moses

Obeying the law cannot make a person right with God. Obeying God's law is a way a person shows they believe in God. People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul frequently uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt)

Links:

Romans 3:1 Notes

Romans 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul proclaims the advantage that Jews have because God gave them his law.

Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?

Paul presents ideas that people might have after they hear what he wrote in chapter 2. He does this in order to respond to them in verse 2. Alternate translation: "Some people might say, 'Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?'" or "Some people might say, 'If that is true, then the Jews do not have any advantage, and there is no benefit in being circumcised.'"

Romans 3:2

It is great in every way

Paul now responds to the concerns brought up in verse 1. Here "It" refers to being a member of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "But there is great advantage to being a Jew"

First of all

Possible meanings are 1) "First in order of time" or 2) "Most certainly" or 3) "Most importantly."

the Jews were entrusted with revelation from God

Here "revelation" refers to God's words and promises. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God gave his words that contain his promises to the Jews"

Romans 3:3

For what if some Jews were without faith? Will their unbelief nullify God's faithfulness?

Paul uses these questions to make people think. Alternate translation: "Some Jews have not been faithful to God. We should not conclude from this that God will not fulfill his promise."

Romans 3:4

May it never be

This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have an expression in your language that you could use here. "That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!"

Instead, let

"We should say this instead, let"

let God be found to be true

God will always be true and will keep his promises. Alternate translation: "God always does what he has promised"

even though every man is a liar

The words "every" and "liar" are exaggerations here to add emphasis that God alone is always true to his promises. Alternate translation: "even if every man were a liar"

As it has been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Scriptures themselves agree with what I am saying"

That you might be shown to be righteous in your words, and that you might prevail when you come into judgment

These two phrases have very similar meanings. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone must acknowledge that what you say is true, and you will always win your case when anyone accuses you"

Romans 3:5

But if our unrighteousness shows the righteousness of God, what can we say? Can we say that God is unrighteous to bring his wrath upon us?

Paul uses these questions to present what some people were arguing and to get his readers to think about whether or not this argument is true. Alternate translation: "Some people say that since our unrighteousness shows God's righteousness, then God is unrighteous when he punishes us."

to bring his wrath upon us

Here "wrath" is a metonym for punishment. Alternate translation: "to bring his punishment upon us" or "to punish us"

I am using a human argument

"I am saying here what some people say" or "This is what some people say"

Romans 3:6

May it never be

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"We must never say that God is unrighteous"
For then how would God judge the world?
Paul uses this question to show that the arguments against the gospel are not valid, since the Jews believe that God will judge all people. Alternate translation: "We all know that God will in fact judge the world!"
the world
The "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people who live in the world"
Romans 3:7
But if through my lie the truth of God increases his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner?
Here Paul imagines someone continuing to reject the Christian gospel. That adversary argues that his sin shows that God is righteous, so God should not declare that person guilty of sin on judgment day.
increases his glory
"causes people to praise God for his glory"
Romans 3:8
Why not say ... come"?
Here Paul raises a question of his own, to show how ridiculous the argument of his imaginary adversary is. Alternate translation: "I might as well be saying ... come!'"
as we are slandered as saying
"as some lie to others, claiming that this what we are saying"
evil ... good
These Greek words are plural: "evil deeds ... good things"
good may come
You may need to make explicit that the speakers expect to receive good things. Alternate translation: "good things may come to us" or "we may receive good things"
Their condemnation is just
God will be acting justly when he condemns these enemies of Paul for telling lies about what Paul has been teaching.
Romans 3:9
Connecting Statement:
Paul sums up that all are guilty of sin, none are righteous, and no one seeks God.
What then? Are we excusing ourselves?
Paul asks these questions to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "We Jews should not try to imagine we are going to escape God's judgment, just because we are Jewish!"
Not at all
These words are stronger than a simple "no," but not as strong as "absolutely not!"
Romans 3:10
This is as it is written
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This is as the prophets have written in the Scriptures"
Romans 3:11
there is no one who understands
There is no one who understands what is right. Alternate translation: "no one really understands what is right"
there is no one who seeks God
Here the phrase "seeks after God" means tries to have a relationship with God. Alternate translation: "no one sincerely tries to have a right relationship with God"
Romans 3:12
They have all turned away
This is an idiom that means the people do not even want to think about God. They want to avoid him. Alternate translation: "They have all turned away from God"
together they have become useless
Since no one does what is good, they are useless to God. Alternate translation: "Everyone has become useless to God"
Romans 3:13
Their ... Their
The word "their" refers to the "Jews and Greeks" of Romans 3:9.
Their throat is an open grave
The word "throat" is a metonym for everything that people say. Here "open grave" is a metaphor that refers to the stench of dead bodies, a metaphor for the evil words of the people.
Their tongues have deceived
The word "tongues" is a metonym for the false words that people speak. Alternate translation: "People speak lies"
The poison of snakes is under their lips
Here "poison of snakes" is a metaphor that is used to represent the great harm of the evil words that the people speak. The word "lips" refers to the words of the people. Alternate translation: "Their evil words injure people just like the poison of a venomous snake"
Romans 3:14
Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness
Here "mouths" is a metonym that represents the evil words of the people. The word "full" exaggerates how often people speak bitterly and curse. Alternate translation: "They often speak curses and cruel words"
Romans 3:15
Their feet are swift to pour out blood
Here "feet" is a synecdoche that represents the people themselves. The word "blood" is a metaphor that refers to killing people. Alternate translation: "They are in a hurry to harm and murder people"
Their feet
The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.
Romans 3:16
their paths
The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.
Destruction and suffering are in their paths
Here "destruction and suffering" are metonyms that represent the harm that these people cause others to suffer. Alternate translation: "They try to destroy others and cause them to suffer"
Romans 3:17
These people
These words refer to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.
a way of peace
"how to live at peace with others." A "way" is a road or path.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Romans 3:18

their

This word refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

There is no fear of God before their eyes

Here "fear" is a metonym that represents respect for God and willingness to honor him. Alternate translation: "They refuse to give God the respect he deserves"

Romans 3:19

whatever the law says, it speaks to

Paul speaks of the law here as if it were alive and had its own voice. Alternate translation: "everything that the law says people should do is for" or "all the commands that Moses wrote in the law are for"

the ones who are under the law

"those who must obey the law"

so that every mouth may be shut

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that means the words people speak. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that no people will be able to say anything valid to defend themselves"

the whole world held accountable to God

Here "world" is a synecdoche that represents all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "that God can declare everyone in the world guilty"

Romans 3:20

flesh

Here "flesh" refers to all human beings.

For through the law

Possible meanings are 1) "Therefore, through the law" or 2) "This is because through the law"

through the law comes the knowledge of sin

"when someone knows God's law, he realizes that he has sinned"

Romans 3:21

Connecting Statement:

The word "but" here shows Paul has completed his introduction and is now beginning to make his main point.

now

The word "now" refers to the time since Jesus came to the earth.

apart from the law the righteousness of God has been revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has made known a way to be right with him without obeying the law"

to which the Law and the Prophets bear witness

The words "the Law and the Prophets" refer to the parts of scripture that Moses and the prophets wrote. Paul describes them here as if they were people testifying in court. Alternate translation: "What Moses and the prophets wrote confirms this"

Romans 3:22

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ

Here "righteousness" means being right with God. Alternate translation: "being right with God through trusting Jesus Christ"

For there is no distinction

Paul implies that God accepts all people in the same way. Alternate translation: "There is no difference at all between the Jews and the Gentiles"

Romans 3:23

come short of the glory of God

Here the "glory of God" is a metonym that refers to the image of God and his nature. Alternate translation: "have failed to be like God"

Romans 3:24

they are freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Here "justified" refers to being made right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God makes them right with himself as a free gift, because Christ Jesus sets them free"

they are freely justified

This means that they are justified without having to earn or merit being justified. God freely justifies them. Alternate translation: "they are made right with God without earning it"

Romans 3:25

in his blood

This is a metonym for the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sins. Alternate translation: "in his death as a sacrifice for sins"

his disregard

Possible meanings are 1) his ignoring or 2) his forgiving.

Romans 3:26

This was to show his righteousness at this present time

"God did this to show at this present time that he is righteous"

so he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"By this he shows that he is both just and the the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus"

the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"the one who declares everyone righteous who has faith in Jesus"

Romans 3:27

Where then is boasting? It is excluded

Paul asks this question to show that there is no reason for people to boast about obeying the law. Alternate translation: "So there is no way that we can boast that God favors us because we obeyed those laws. Boasting is excluded"

It is excluded

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "God does not allow it"

Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith

You may need to fill in the words omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "Through what kind of law is boasting excluded? Is it excluded through a law of works? No, it is excluded through a law of faith" You can also translate using active forms. Alternate translation: "On what grounds does God exclude boasting? Does he exclude it through a law of works? No, he excludes it through a law of faith" or "Why does God exclude boasting? Is it because of something that we have done? No, it is because we have believed"

Through what kind of law? ... through a law of

"On what grounds? ... on the grounds of"

Through what kind of law? Of works?

Paul asks these questions to get his readers ready to receive

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the point he is making. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you what kind of law he excludes it through. It is not through a law of works."

Romans 3:28

a person is justified by faith

This can be translated in active form. Here the words "by faith" refers to either 1) the means by which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person through that person's faith" Or 2) the reason for which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person because he has faith" Faith is not the actor that justifies a person.

without works of the law

"even if he has done no works of the law"

Romans 3:29

Or is God the God of Jews only?

Paul asks this question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You who are Jews certainly should not think that you are the only ones whom God will accept!"

Is he not also the God of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also

Paul asks this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "He will also accept non-Jews, that is, Gentiles"

Romans 3:30

he will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith

Here "circumcision" is a metonym that refers to Jews and "uncircumcision" is a metonym that refers to non-Jews. Alternate translation: "God will make both Jews and non-Jews right with himself through their faith in Christ"

Romans 3:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul confirms the law though faith.

Do we then nullify the law through faith?

Paul asks a question that one of his readers might have. Alternate translation: "Someone might say that we can ignore the law because we have faith."

May it never be

This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar express in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "This is certainly not true" or "Certainly not"

we uphold the law

"we obey the law"

we

This pronoun refers to Paul, other believers, and the readers.

Chapter 4

Romans 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 7-8 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The purpose of the law of Moses

Paul builds upon material from chapter 3. He explains how Abraham, the father of Israel, was justified. Even Abraham could not be justified by what he did. Obeying the law of Moses does not make a person right with God. Obeying God's commands is a way a person shows they believe in God. People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and lawofmoses and faith)

Circumcision

Circumcision was important to the Israelites. It identified a male as a descendant of Abraham. It was also a sign of the covenant between Abraham and Yahweh. However, no person was justified only by being circumcised. (See: circumcise and covenant)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Links:

Romans 4:1 Notes

Romans 4:1

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found?

Paul uses the question to catch the attention of the reader and to start talking about something new. Alternate translation: "This is what Abraham our physical ancestor found."

Romans 4:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 4:3

For what does the scripture say?

Paul uses this question to call attention to what he is about to say, not to receive an answer. He speaks of the Scriptures as if they were alive and could talk. Alternate translation: "For this is what is in the scripture:"

it was counted to him as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

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translation: "God considered Abraham to be a righteous person because he believed"

Romans 4:4

his wage is not counted as a gift

"no one counts what his employer pays him as a gift from his employer"

but as what is owed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but as what his employer owes him"

Romans 4:5

in the one who justifies

"in God, who justifies"

his faith is counted as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considers that person's faith as righteousness" or "God considers that person righteous because of his faith"

Romans 4:6

David also pronounces blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness without works

"David also wrote about how God blesses the man whom God makes righteous without works"

Romans 4:7

whose lawless deeds are forgiven ... whose sins are covered

The same concept is stated in two different ways. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "who have broken the law, but the Lord has forgiven ... whose sins the Lord has covered"

Romans 4:8

General Information:

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Romans 4:9

Then is this blessing pronounced only on those of the circumcision, or also on those of the uncircumcision?

This remark appears in the form of a question to show that Paul is beginning a discussion about the relationship between blessing and circumcision. Alternate translation: "I want to show you how it is that God blesses not only those who are circumcised, but also those who are not circumcised"

those of the circumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "the Jews"

those of the uncircumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the people who are not Jews. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

For we say

Paul is going to show that because God counted Abraham as righteous by faith, we can infer that it is people who have faith that God counts righteous.

Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considered the faith of Abraham as righteousness"

Romans 4:10

How was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before!

Paul asks two questions to introduce the third sentence. If your language does not allow speakers to use questions to introduce what they are talking about, you may need to translate these all as statements. Alternate translation: "This is when righteousness was counted to him: it was not after he had been circumcised, but before!"

How was it counted to him?

Paul is asking in a general way about the circumstances in which God considered Abraham righteous. He is not asking what procedure God followed to consider Abraham righteous. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "How did God consider Abraham to be righteous?"

It was not after, but before

This can be stated with the words that have been omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "It happened before he was circumcised, not after he was circumcised"

Romans 4:11

a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised

Here "righteousness that he had by faith" means that God considered him to be righteous because he had faith. Alternate translation: "a visible sign that God considered him righteous because he had believed in God before he was circumcised"

so that righteousness would be counted to them

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would consider them righteous"

Romans 4:12

General Information:

Paul is saying that circumcision alone does not make a man a descendant of Abraham, that is, a true Jew. A true Jew is one who has been circumcised and who lives by faith the way Abraham did.

He is also the father of the circumcised

Here "the circumcision" refers to Jews.

who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had

Here "walk in the footsteps of the faith" is an idiom that means to follow someone's example. Alternate translation: "who follow our father Abraham's example in the faith that he had" or "who have faith as our father Abraham did"

Romans 4:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul confirms that even in the past believers were made right with God by faith and not by the law.

law but through the righteousness of faith

The words "the promise came" are understood from the first phrase. You can translate this by adding these implied words. Alternate translation: "law, but the promise came through faith, which God considers as righteousness"

Romans 4:14

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

if those who live by the law are to be the heirs

Here "live by the law" refers to obeying the law. Alternate translation: "if those who obey the law are the ones who will inherit the earth"

faith is made empty, and the promise does nothing

"faith has no value, and the promise is meaningless"

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Romans 4:15
there is no transgression
This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "transgression." Alternate translation: "no one has disobeyed the law" or "it is impossible to disobey the law"
Romans 4:16
For this reason
"So"
it is by faith
The word "it" refers to receiving what God had promised. Alternate translation: "it is by faith that we receive the promise" or "we receive the promise by faith"
in order that the promise may rest on grace
Here "the promise may rest on grace" represents God giving what he promised because of his grace. Alternate translation: "so that what he promised might be a free gift" or "so that his promise would be because of his grace"
those who are under the law
This refers to the Jewish people, who were obligated to obey the law of Moses.
those who share the faith of Abraham
This refers to those who have faith as Abraham did before he was circumcised. Alternate translation: "those who believe as Abraham did"
father of us all
Here the word "us" refers to Paul and includes all Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Christ. Abraham is the physical ancestor of the Jewish people, but he is also the spiritual father of those who have faith.
Romans 4:17
as it is written
Where it is written can be made explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"
I have appointed you
Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Abraham.
Abraham was in the presence of him whom he trusted, that is, God, who gives life to the dead
Here "of him whom he trusted" refers to God. Alternate translation: "Abraham was in the presence of God whom he trusted, who gives life to those who have died"
calls the things that do not exist into existence
"creates everything from nothing"
Romans 4:18
In hope he believed against hope
This idiom means that Abraham hoped and believed even though what he hoped for seemed to be impossible. That is, Abraham trusted God to give him many descendants, even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have children. Alternate translation: "Even though it seemed that there was no reason to hope, Abraham hoped and believed" or "Even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have descendants, Abraham believed God and confidently expected"
according to what he had been told
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as God said to Abraham"
So will your descendants be
The full promise God gave to Abraham can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "You will have more descendants than you can count"
Romans 4:19
General Information:
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Romans 4:20
did not hesitate in unbelief. Instead, he
You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "kept on acting in faith. He"
he was strengthened in faith
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he became stronger in his faith"
Romans 4:21
He was fully convinced
"Abraham was completely sure"
he was also able to accomplish
"God was able to do"
Romans 4:22
Therefore this was also "counted to him as righteousness."
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore God counted Abraham's belief as righteousness" or "Therefore God considered Abraham righteous because Abraham believed him"
also "counted to him as righteousness."
"also, as the scripture says, 'counted to him as righteousness.'"
Romans 4:23
for his sake alone
"for Abraham only"
it was counted to him
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God counted righteousness to him" or "God considered him righteous"
Romans 4:24
for us
The word "us" refers to Paul and includes all believers in Christ.
They were written also for us
You can translate this without the passive form "written." Alternate translation: "Those words were also for us"
it will be counted to us who believe in him
The word "it" refers to righteousness. You can translate this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God will count righteousness to us who believe in him" or "God will consider us righteous if we believe in him"
him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead
"Raised ... from the dead" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." Alternate translation: "him who caused Jesus our Lord to live again"
Romans 4:25
who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom God gave over to enemies for our trespasses and whom God brought back to life so he could make us right with him"

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Chapter 5

Romans 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many scholars view verses 12-17 as some of the most important, but difficult, verses in Scripture to understand. Some of their richness and meaning has likely been lost while being translated from how the original Greek was constructed.

Special concepts in this chapter

Results of justification

How Paul explains the results of our being justified is an important part of this chapter. These results include having peace with God, having access to God, being confident about our future, being able to rejoice when suffering, being eternally saved, and being reconciled with God. (See: justice)

"All sinned"

Scholars are divided over what Paul meant in verse 12: "And death spread to all people, because all sinned." Some believe that all of mankind was present in the "seed of Adam." So, as Adam is the father of all mankind, all of mankind was present when Adam sinned. Others believe that Adam served as a representative head for mankind. So when he sinned, all of mankind "fell" as a result. Whether people today played an active or passive role in Adam's original sin is one way these views differ. Other passages will help one decide.

The second Adam

Adam was the first man and the first "son" of God. He was created by God. He brought sin and death into the world by eating the forbidden fruit. Paul describes Jesus as the "second Adam" in this chapter and the true son of God. He brings life and overcame sin and death by dying on the cross. (See: sonofgod and death)

Links:

Romans 5:1 Notes

Romans 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell many different things that happen when God makes believers right with him.

Since we are justified

"Because we are justified"

we ... our

All occurrences of "we" and "our" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

through our Lord Jesus Christ

"because of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Lord

Here "Lord" means that Jesus is God.

Romans 5:2

Through him we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand

Here "by faith" refers to our trust in Jesus, which allows us to stand before God. Alternate translation: "Because we trust in Jesus, God allows us to come into his presence"

we boast in the hope of the glory of God

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "we rejoice because we confidently expect to share in the glory of God"

Romans 5:3

Not only this

The word "this" refers to the ideas described in Romans 5:1-2.

we ... our ... We

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

tribulation brings about perseverance

"suffering helps us learn to endure"

Romans 5:4

Perseverance produces character

Perseverance is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Here it is a metonym for the person who endures. You may need to make explicit what it is that a person endures. Alternate translation: "We develop character when we endure hardship"

character

the desire and ability to do what is right

character produces hope

"having characer helps us to hope." Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen, and it refers to the confident expectation that God will fulfill all his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "wait confidently" or "trust". Alternate translation: "character helps us to wait confidently" or "character helps us to trust God"

Romans 5:5

our ... us

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

hope does not make ashamed

Paul uses personification here as he speaks of "hope" as if it were alive. "Hope" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "we are very confident that we will receive the things that we wait for"

make ashamed

"make us ashamed"

because the love of God has been poured into our hearts

Here "hearts" represents a person's thoughts, feelings, or inner person. The phrase "the love of God has been poured into our hearts" is a metaphor for God showing love to his people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate

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translation: "because he has loved us greatly" or "because God has shown us how much he loves us"
Romans 5:6
we
The word "we" here refers to all believers and so should be inclusive.
Romans 5:7
For one will hardly die for a righteous person
"It is hard to find someone who is willing to die, even for a righteous person"
though perhaps someone would dare to die for a good person
"but you might find someone who is willing to die for such a good person"
Romans 5:8
proves
You can translate this verb in past tense using "demonstrated" or "showed."
us ... we
All occurrences of "us" and "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.
Romans 5:9
Much more, then, now that we are justified by his blood, we will be saved
Paul is saying that because we are justified by Christ's blood, we can be much more certain that Christ will save us. Alternate translation: "Now that we are justified by his blood, we will more certainly be saved"
now that we are justified by his blood
Here "justified" means that God puts us in a right relationship with himself. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us right with himself because of Christ's death"
blood
This is a metonym for the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.
saved
God forgives us and rescues us from being punished in hell for our sin.
the wrath of God
Here "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's punishment of those who have sinned against him. Alternate translation: "God's punishment"
Romans 5:10
we were
All occurrences of "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.
his Son ... his life
"God's Son ... the life of God's Son"
we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son
The death of the Son of the God has provided eternal forgiveness and made all who believe in Jesus friends with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed us to have a peaceful relationship with him because his Son died for us"
Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
after having been reconciled
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us his friends again"
Romans 5:11
General Information:
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Romans 5:12
Connecting Statement:
Paul explains why death happened even before God gave the law to Moses.
through one man sin entered ... death entered through sin
Paul describes sin as a dangerous thing that came into the world through the actions of "one man," Adam. This sin then became an opening through which death, pictured here as another dangerous thing, also came into the world.
Romans 5:13
For until the law, sin was in the world
This means that the people sinned before God gave the law. Alternate translation: "People in the world sinned before God gave his law to Moses"
but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law
This means that God did not charge the people with sinning before he gave the law. Alternate translation: "but God recorded no sin against the law before he gave the law"
Romans 5:14
Nevertheless, death
"Even though what I have just said is true, death" or "There was no written law from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, but death" (Romans 5:13).
death reigned from Adam until Moses
Paul is speaking of death as if it were a king who ruled. Alternate translation: "people continued to die from the time of Adam until the time of Moses as a consequence of their sin"
Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam's disobedience, who is
"Moses. Even people whose sins were different from Adam's continued to die, Adam being"
who is a pattern of him who was to come
Adam was a pattern of Christ, who appeared much later. He had much in common with him.
Romans 5:15
how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound for the many
Here "grace" refers to God's free gift that he made available to everyone through Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "even more through the man Jesus Christ, who died for us all, did God kindly offer us this gift of everlasting life, although we do not deserve it"
Romans 5:16
For the gift is not like the outcome of that one man's sin
Here "the gift" refers to God's freely erasing the record of our sins. Alternate translation: "The gift is not like the result of Adam's sin"
The judgment followed one trespass and brought condemnation
The abstract nouns "judgment," "trespass," and "condemnation," can be expressed with verbs. Alternate translation: "After one man trespassed, God judged all people and condemned them to be punished" or "God declared that all people deserved to have him punish them because one man committed one sin"
but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification

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The abstract nouns "gift," "trespass," and "justification" can be expressed as verbs. It is implied that God's gift of justification is greater than his judgement. Alternate translation: "but after people trespassed many times, God gave the gift and justified them" or "but the gift is greater because he gave it after many people had committed many sins, and by giving the gift he justified them"

Romans 5:17

trespass of the one

This refers to the sin of Adam.

death ruled

Here Paul speaks of "death" as a king who ruled. The "rule" of death causes everyone to die. Alternate translation: "everyone died"

Romans 5:18

as one trespass led to condemnation for all people

The abstract nouns "trespass" and "condemnation" can be expressed with the verbs "sin" and "condemn." Alternate translation: "as one trespass caused all people to be condemned" or "as all people are condemned because one person sinned against God"

one trespass

This refers to Adam's sin.

condemnation for all people

Here "condemnation" refers to God's punishment. Alternate translation: "all people deserve God's punishment for sin"

through the one act of righteousness came justification and life for all people

The abstract nouns "justification" and "life" can be expressed with the verbs "justify" and "live." Alternate translation: "one act of righteousness allows all people to be justified and live" or "all people can be justified and live because one person did that one righteous act"

the one act of righteousness

This refers to Jesus's obedience to God in dying for our sins.

Romans 5:19

one man's disobedience

the disobedience of Adam

the many were made sinners

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "many people sinned"

the obedience of the one

the obedience of Jesus

of the one will the many be made righteous

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "of the one, God will make many people right with him"

Romans 5:20

the law came in

Here Paul speaks of the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "God gave his law to Moses"

sin abounded

"sin increased"

grace abounded even more

Here "grace" refers to God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "God continued to act even more kindly toward them, in a way that they did not deserve"

Romans 5:21

sin reigned in death ... grace might reign through righteousness for everlasting life

Here Paul speaks of sin as if it were a king who ruled over people and made them unable to obey God and ultimately killing them, and he speaks of grace as if it were a king who might rule over people and enable them to be right with God. Alternate translation: "as people obeyed their desire to sin and therefore had to die ... God might show grace to people and allow them to be right with him, resulting in everlasting life"

our Lord

Paul includes himself, his readers, and all believers.

Chapter 6

Romans 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins this chapter by answering how someone might object to what he taught in Chapter 5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Against the Law

In this chapter, Paul refutes the teaching that Christians can live however they want after they are saved. Scholars call this "antinomianism" or being "against the law." To motivate godly living, Paul recalls the great price Jesus paid for a Christian to be saved. (See: save and godly)

Servants of sin

Before they believe in Jesus, people are servants of sin, that is, they are unable to resist their desire to sin. God frees Christians from serving sin. They are able to choose to serve Christ in their lives. Paul explains that when Christians choose to sin, they willingly choose to sin. (See: faith and sin)

Fruit

This chapter uses the imagery of fruit. The image of fruit usually refers to a person's faith producing good works in their life. (See: fruit and righteous)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Death

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Paul uses "death" to refer to many different things in this chapter: physical death, spiritual death, sin reigning in the heart of man, and the end of something. He contrasts sin and death with the new life provided by Christ and the new way Christians are supposed to live after they are saved. (See: death)

Links:

Romans 6:1 Notes

Romans 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Under grace, Paul tells those who believe in Jesus to live a new life as though dead to sin and alive to God.

What then will we say? Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?

Paul asks these rhetorical questions to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "So, what should we say about all of this? We certainly should not keep on sinning so that God will give us more and more grace!

we say

The pronoun "we" refers to Paul, his readers, and other people.

Romans 6:2

We who died to sin, how can we still live in it?

Here "We who died to sin" refers to those who follow Jesus, who are now like dead people who cannot be affected by sin. Paul uses this rhetorical question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "We are now like dead people on whom sin has no effect! So we certainly should not keep on sinning!"

Romans 6:3

Do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Paul uses this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Remember, when someone baptized us to show that we have a relationship with Christ, this also shows that we died with Christ on the cross!

Romans 6:4

We were buried, then, with him through baptism into death

Here Paul speaks of a believer's baptism in water as if it were a death and burial. Alternate translation: "When someone baptized us, it is just like that person buried us with Christ in the tomb"

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life

To raise from the dead is an idiom for causing a person to live again. This compares a believer's new spiritual life to Jesus coming back to life physically. The believer's new spiritual life enables that person to obey God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the Father brought Jesus back to life after he died, we might have new spiritual life and obey God"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Romans 6:5

become united with him in the likeness of his death ... be united with his resurrection

Paul compares our union with Christ to death. Those who are joined with Christ in death will share in his resurrection. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "died with him ... come back to life with him"

Romans 6:6

our old man was crucified with him

The "old man" is a metaphor that refers to the person before he believes in Jesus. Paul describes our old sinful person as dying on the cross with Jesus when we believe in Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "our sinful person died on the cross with Jesus"

old man

This means the person who once was, but who does not exist now.

the body of sin

This is a metonym that refers to the whole sinful person. Alternate translation: "our sinful nature"

might be destroyed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "might die"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "sin should no longer enslave us" or "we should no longer be slaves to sin"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

Slavery to sin is a metaphor meaning having such a strong desire to sin that one is unable to stop himself from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "we should no longer be controlled by sin"

Romans 6:7

He who has died is declared righteous with respect to sin

Here "righteous" refers to being right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "When God declares a person right with him, that person is no longer controlled by sin"

Romans 6:8

we have died with Christ

Here "died" refers to the fact that believers are no longer controlled by sin.

Romans 6:9

We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "We know since God brought Christ back to life after he died"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them is to become alive again.

death no longer rules over him

Here "death" is described as if it were a king or ruler that has power over people. Alternate translation: "He cannot ever die again"

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Romans 6:10

he died once for all

Possible meanings are 1) he died once, and he will not die again, nor will anyone else need to die, or 2) it is true now and will be true for all time that he died.

Romans 6:11

In the same way, you also must consider

"For this reason consider"

consider yourselves to be

"think of yourselves as" or "see yourselves as"

dead to sin

Just as one cannot force a corpse to do anything, sin has no power to force believers to dishonor God. Alternate translation: "as if you were dead to the power of sin"

dead to sin, but alive to God

"dead to the power of sin, but living to honor God"

alive to God in Christ Jesus

"living to honor God through the power Christ Jesus gives you"

Romans 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that grace rules over us, not the law; we are not sin's slaves, but God's slaves.

do not let sin rule in your mortal body

Paul speaks of people sinning as if sin were their master or king that controlled them. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control you"

your mortal body

This phrase refers to the physical part of a person, which will die. Alternate translation: "you"

so that you obey its lusts

Obeying the mortal body's lusts would be the result of letting sin rule in the body. That is why Paul commands people not to let sin rule in their mortal body—so they they do not obey its lusts. Paul speaks of people doing the evil things they desire as if the body had evil desires and commanded people to do what it desires.

Romans 6:13

Do not present the members of your bodies to sin, to be tools used for unrighteousness

The picture is of the sinner offering his "members," the parts of his body to his master or king. One's "members" are a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "Do not offer yourselves to sin so that you do what is not right"

But present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life

Here the words "brought ... to life" refer to the believer's new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "But offer yourselves to God because he has given you new spiritual life" or "But offer yourselves to God as those who had died and are now alive"

present the members of your bodies to God as tools to be used for righteousness

Here "members" is a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "let God use you for what is pleasing to him"

Romans 6:14

Do not allow sin to rule over you

Paul speaks of "sin" here as if it were a king who rules over people. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control what you do" or "Do not allow yourselves to do the sinful things you want to do"

For you are not under law

To be "under law" means to be subject to its limitations and weaknesses. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "For you are no longer bound to the law of Moses, which could not give you the power to stop sinning"

but under grace

To be "under grace" means that God's free gift provides the power to keep from sinning. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "but you are bound to God's grace, which does give you the power to stop sinning"

Romans 6:15

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be

Paul is using a question to emphasize that living under grace is not a reason to sin. Alternate translation: "However, just because we are bound to grace instead of the law of Moses certainly does not mean we are allowed to sin"

May it never be

"We would never want that to happen!" or "May God help me not to do that!" This expression shows an extremely strong desire that this does not take place. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated it in Romans 3:31.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that if you present yourselves as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey?

Paul uses a question to scold anyone who may think God's grace is a reason to keep sinning. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that if you present yourselves as slaves to anyone, you are slaves to whomever you obey!"

which leads to death ... which leads to righteousness

"which results in death ... which results in righteousness"

Romans 6:17

But thanks be to God!

"But I thank God!"

For you were slaves of sin

Being "slaves of sin" is a metaphor meaning they have such a strong desire to sin that they are unable to keep from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "you were like slaves of sin" or "you were unable to keep from sinning"

but you have obeyed from the heart

Here the word "heart" refers to having sincere or honest motives for doing something. Alternate translation: "but you truly obeyed"

the pattern of teaching that you were given

Here "pattern" refers to the way of living that leads to righteousness. The believers change their old way of living to match this new way of living that Christian leaders teach to them. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching that Christian leaders gave you"

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Romans 6:18

You have been made free from sin

Here "free from sin" is a metaphor for them no longer having a strong desire to sin and therefore being able to stop themselves from sinning. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has freed you from sin" or "Your strong desire to sin has been taken away" or "You have been made free from sin's control over you" (See: and)

you have been made slaves of righteousness

Slavery of righteousness is a metaphor meaning having a strong desire to do what is right. It is as if righteousness controls the person. Alternate translation: "you have been made like slaves of righteousness" or "you are now controlled by righteousness"

you have been made slaves of righteousness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has made you slaves of righteousness" or "Christ has changed you so that now you are controlled by righteousness"

Romans 6:19

I speak like a man

Paul may have expected his readers to wonder why he was speaking of slavery and freedom. Here he is saying that he is using these ideas from their everyday experience to help them understand that people are controlled either by sin or by righteousness. Alternate translation: "I am speaking about this in human terms" or "I am using examples from everyday life"

because of the weakness of your flesh

Often Paul uses the word "flesh" as the opposite of "spirit." Alternate translation: "because you do not fully understand spiritual things"

presented the members of your bodies as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness

Here, the word "members" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "offered yourselves as slaves to everything that is evil and not pleasing to God"

present the members of your bodies as slaves to righteousness for sanctification

Here the word "members" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "offer yourselves as slaves to what is right before God so that he might set you apart and give you the power to serve him"

Romans 6:20

you were free from righteousness

Here "free from righteousness" is a metaphor for not having to do what is righteous. The people were living as though they thought that they did not have to do what was right. Alternate translation: "it was as though you were free from righteousness" or "you behaved as though you did not have to do what was right" or

Romans 6:21

At that time, what fruit then did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed?

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Paul is using a question to emphasize that sinning results in nothing good. Alternate translation: "Nothing good came from those things that now cause you shame." or "You gained nothing by doing those things that now cause you shame."

Romans 6:22

But now that you have been made free from sin and are enslaved to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now that you have become free from sin and have become God's slaves" or "But now that God has freed you from sin and made you his slaves"

But now that you have been made free from sin

Being "free from sin" is a metaphor for being able not to sin. Alternate translation: "But now that God has made you able not to sin"

and are enslaved to God

Being "enslaved" to God is a metaphor for being able to serve and obey God. Alternate translation: "and God has made you able to serve him"

you have your fruit for sanctification

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "benefit." Alternate translation: "the benefit is your sanctification" or "the benefit is that you live in a holy way"

The result is eternal life

"The result of all of this is that you will live forever with God"

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin are death

The word "wages" refers to a payment given to someone for their work. "For if you serve sin, you will receive spiritual death as payment" or "For if you continue sinning, God will punish you with spiritual death"

but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

"but God gives eternal life to those who belong to Christ Jesus our Lord"

Chapter 7

Romans 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"Or do you not know"

Paul uses this phrase to discuss a new topic and connects what follows with the previous teaching.

Special concepts in this chapter

"We have been released from the law"

Paul explains that the law of Moses is no longer in effect. While this is true, the timeless principles behind the law reflect the character of God. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Marriage

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Scripture commonly uses marriage as a metaphor. Here Paul uses it to describe how the church relates to the law of Moses and now to Christ.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Links:

Romans 7:1 Notes

Romans 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the law controls those who want to live under the law.

Or do you not know, brothers ... that the law rules over a person for whatever time he lives?

Paul asks this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "So you certainly know brothers ... that people have to obey laws only while they are alive"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

Romans 7:2

Connecting Statement:

This verse begins a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" (Romans 7:1).

the married woman is bound by law to the husband

Here "bound by law to the husband" is a metaphor for a woman being united to her husband according to the law of marriage. Alternate translation: "according to the law, the married woman is united to the husband"

the married woman

This refers to any woman who is married.

Romans 7:3

Connecting Statement:

This verse ends a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" (Romans 7:1).

she will be called an adulteress

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider her an adulteress" or "people will call her an adulteress"

she is free from the law

Here being free from the law means not having to obey the law. In this case, the woman does not have to obey the law that says that a married woman cannot marry another man. Alternate translation: "she does not have to obey that law"

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brothers

This relates back to Romans 7:1.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

you were also made dead to the law through the body of Christ

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "you also died to the law when through Christ you died on the cross"

to him who was raised from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "to him who was caused to live again" or "to him whom God raised from the dead" or "to him whom God caused to live again"

we might produce fruit for God

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for actions that please God. Alternate translation: "we might be able to do things pleasing to God"

Romans 7:5

to bear fruit for death

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for a "result of one's actions" or "outcome of one's actions." Alternate translation: "which resulted in spiritual death" or "the outcome of which was our own spiritual death"

Romans 7:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that God does not make us holy by the law.

we have been released from the law

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has released us from the law"

we

This pronoun refers to Paul and the believers.

to that by which we were bound

This refers to the law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to the law, which bound us"

the letter

This refers to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "the law of Moses"

Romans 7:7

What will we say then?

Paul is introducing a new topic.

May it never be

"Of course that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

I would never have known sin, if it were not through the law

Paul is speaking of sin as if it were a person who can act.

sin

"my desire to sin"

Romans 7:8

But sin took the opportunity ... produced every kind of coveting

Paul continues comparing sin to a person who can act.

coveting

This word includes both the desire to have what belongs to other people and wrong sexual desire.

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apart from the law, sin was dead
"if there were no law, there would be no breaking of the law, so there would be no sin"
Romans 7:9
sin regained life
This can mean 1) "I realized that I was sinning" or 2) "I strongly desired to sin"
Romans 7:10
The commandment that was to bring life turned out to be death for me
Paul speaks of God's condemnation as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "God gave me the commandment so I would live, but it killed me instead"
Romans 7:11
For sin took the opportunity through the commandment and deceived me. Through the commandment it killed me
As in [Romans 7:7-8]
sin
"my desire to sin"
took the opportunity through the commandment
Paul is comparing sin to a person who can act. See how you translated this in [Romans 7:8]
it killed me
Paul speaks of God's condemnation on sinners as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "it separated me from God"
Romans 7:12
the law is holy
Possible meanings are that it is holy because 1) it comes from God or 2) it reveals God's true nature.
Romans 7:13
Connecting Statement:
Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between sin in his inner man and his mind with the law of God—between sin and good.
So
Paul is introducing a new topic.
did what is good become death to me?
Paul uses this question to add emphasis.
what is good
This refers to God's law.
become death to me
"cause me to die"
May it never be
This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "Of course that is not true"
sin ... brought about death in me
Paul speaks of sin as though it were a person who could act.
brought about death in me
Paul speaks of being separated from God as if he were literally dead. Alternate translation: "separated me from God"
through the commandment
"because I disobeyed the commandment"
Romans 7:14
General Information:
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Romans 7:15
Connecting Statement:
Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between his flesh and the law of God—between sin and good.
For what I do, I do not really understand
"I am not sure why I do some of the things that I do"
For what I do
"Because what I do"
what I want to do, I do not do
The words "I do not do" are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does not do what he wants to do as often as he would like or that he does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "I do not always do what I want to do"
what I hate, I do
The words "I do," which implies that he always does what he hates to do, are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "the things that I know are not good are the things that I sometimes do"
Romans 7:16
But if I do
"However, if I do"
I agree with the law that the law is good
To agree with the law here is to agree with God about the law. Alternate translation: "I agree with God that the law is good"
Romans 7:17
the sin that lives in me
Paul describes sin as a living being that has the power to influence him.
Romans 7:18
my flesh
Here "flesh" is a metonym for the sinful nature. Alternate translation: "my sinful nature"
Romans 7:19
the good
"the good deeds" or "the good actions"
the evil
"the evil deeds" or "the evil actions"
Romans 7:20
rather sin that lives in me
Paul speaks of "sin" as if it were alive and living inside him.
Romans 7:21
this law: When I want to do good, evil is present with me
The words "this law" refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.
evil is present with me
Paul speaks of evil here as if it were alive and living with him.
Romans 7:22
with my inner person
Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "with my heart" or "with my soul"
Romans 7:23
a different law in the members of my body ... fights against that new

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law in my mind
Paul has a desire to obey God, but at times he also has a desire to do things that God hates. He writes of the two desires he has as if they were two men fighting each other.
a different law
These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.
in the members of my body
The phrase "the members of my body" is another way of saying "my flesh"
that new law in my mind
These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form (Romans 7:22).
the law of sin that is in the members of my body
This "law of sin" is the same as the "different law," the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.
Romans 7:24
Who will deliver me from this body of death?
Paul uses this question to express great emotion. If your language has a way of showing great emotion through an exclamation or a question, use it here. Alternate translation: "I want someone to set me free from the control of what my body desires!"
deliver me
"rescue me"
this body of death
This is a metaphor that means a body that will experience physical death.
Romans 7:25
But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord
This is the answer to the question in 7:24.
So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind. However, with the flesh I serve the law of sin
The law of God and the law of sin are spoken of as if they were masters whom Paul serves as a slave. With the mind or intellect Paul chooses to please and obey God, and with the flesh or physical nature he chooses to disobey God and to sin. Alternate translation: "My mind chooses to please God by obeying the law of Moses, but my flesh chooses to disobey God and sin"
the law of God
These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form.
the law of sin
These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

Chapter 8

Romans 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse of this chapter is a transitional sentence. Paul concludes his teaching of Chapter 7 and leads into the words of Chapter 8.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verse 36. Paul quotes these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Indwelling of the Spirit
The Holy Spirit is said to live inside a person or inside their heart. If the Spirit is present, this signifies that a person is saved. (See: save)
"These are sons of God"
Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way. God also adopts Christians to be his children. (See: sonofgod and adoption)
Predestination
Twice in verses 29-30 Paul uses the word "predestined." Some take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen his own people to be eternally saved. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter, especially with regards to elements of causation. (See: predestine and save)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor
Paul poetically presents his teaching in verses 38 and 39 in the form of an extended metaphor. He explains that nothing can separate a person from the love of God in Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

No condemnation
This phrase must be translated carefully to avoid doctrinal confusion. People are still guilty of their sin. God disapproves of sinful acts, even those that believers in Jesus commit. God still punishes the sins of believers, but Jesus has paid the punishment for their sin. This is what Paul expresses here. The word "condemn" has several possible meanings. Here Paul emphasizes that people who believe in Jesus are no longer punished eternally for their sin by being "condemned to hell." (See: guilt and faith and condemn)
Flesh

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This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Links:

Romans 8:1 Notes

Romans 8:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the answer to the struggle he has with sin and good.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Here "condemnation" refers to the punishment of people. Alternate translation: "God will not condemn and punish those who are joined to Christ Jesus"

There is therefore now

"For that reason, there is now" or "Because what I have just told you is true, there is now"

Romans 8:2

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

This refers to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "God's Spirit in Christ Jesus"

has set you free from the law of sin and death

Being free from the law of sin and death is a metaphor for not being controlled by the law of sin and death. Alternate translation: "has caused the law of sin and death to no longer control you"

the law of sin and death

Possible meanings are that this refers to 1) the written law, which provokes people to sin, which in turn causes them to die. Alternate translation: "the law which causes sin and death" or 2) the "different law" (see Romans 7:23) that people sin and die.

Romans 8:3

For what the law was unable to do because it was weak through the flesh, God did

Here the law is described as a person who could not break the power of sin. Alternate translation: "For the law did not have the power to stop us from sinning, because the power of sin within us was too strong. But God did stop us from sinning"

through the flesh

"because of people's sinful nature"

He ... sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ... an offering for sin ... he condemned sin

The Son of God forever satisfied God's holy anger against our sin by giving his own body and human life as the eternal sacrifice for sin.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

in the likeness of sinful flesh

"who looked like a sinful human being"

to be an offering for sin

"so that he could die as a sacrifice for our sins"

he condemned sin in the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to our human nature or lives. Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin in our human nature" or 2) "flesh" refers to Christ's body, and "in the flesh" refers to Christ's death. Alternate translation: "in Christ's flesh God condemned sin" or "by Christ's death God condemned sin."

he condemned sin

In this verse, "condemned" is a metonym for "destroyed." Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin" or "he broke the power of the sin"

Romans 8:4

the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "we might fulfill what the law requires"

we who walk not according to the flesh

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. The flesh is an idiom for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "we who do not obey our sinful desires"

but according to the Spirit

"but who obey the Holy Spirit"

Romans 8:5

General Information:

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Romans 8:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to contrast the flesh with the Spirit we now have.

the mind set on the flesh ... the mind set on the Spirit

Here Paul speaks of both the "flesh" and the "spirit" as if they were living persons. Alternate translation: "the way sinful people think ... the way people who listen to the Holy Spirit think"

death

Here this means the separation of a person from God.

Romans 8:7

General Information:

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Romans 8:8

Those who are in the flesh

This refers to people who do what their sinful nature tells them to do.

Romans 8:9

in the flesh

"acting according to your sinful natures." See how "the flesh" was translated in Romans 8:5.

in the Spirit

"acting according to the Holy Spirit"

Spirit ... God's Spirit ... Spirit of Christ

These all refer to the Holy Spirit.

if indeed

This phrase does not mean Paul doubts that some of them have God's Spirit. Paul wants them to realize that they all have God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "since" or "because"

Romans 8:10

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If Christ is in you
How Christ lives in a person could be made explicit. Alternate translation: "If Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit"
the body is dead with respect to sin
Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually dead to the power of sin or 2) the physical body will still die because of sin.
the spirit is alive with respect to righteousness
Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually alive because God has given him power to do what is right or 2) God will bring the person back to life after he dies because God is righteous and gives believers eternal life.
Romans 8:11
If the Spirit ... lives in you
Paul assumes that the Holy Spirit lives in his readers. Alternate translation: "Since the Spirit ... lives in you"
of him who raised ... from the dead lives
"of God, who raised ... from the dead, lives"
raised Jesus
Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused Jesus to live again"
mortal bodies through his Spirit
"physical bodies through his Spirit" or "bodies, which will die someday, through his Spirit"
Romans 8:12
So then
"Because what I have just told you is true"
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
we are debtors, but not to
Paul is speaking of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. Alternate translation: "we need to obey, but not"
but not to the flesh to live according to the flesh
Again Paul speaks of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. You can include the implied word "debtors." Alternate translation: "but we are not debtors to the flesh, and we do not have to obey our sinful desires"
Romans 8:13
For if you live according to the flesh
"Because if you live only to please your sinful desires"
you are about to die
"you will certainly be separated from God"
but if by the Spirit you put to death the body's actions
Paul speaks of the "old man," crucified with Christ, as the person who is responsible for his sinful desires. Alternate translation: "but if by the power of the Holy Spirit you stop obeying your sinful desires"
Romans 8:14
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For all the people whom the Spirit of God leads"
sons of God
Here this means all believers in Jesus and is often translated as "children of God."
Romans 8:15
by which we cry
"who causes us to cry out"
Abba, Father
"Abba" is "Father" in the Aramaic language.
Romans 8:16
General Information:
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Romans 8:17
heirs of God
Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "and we also will one day receive what God has promised us"
we are joint heirs with Christ
Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member. God will give to us what he gives to Christ. Alternate translation: "we will also receive what God has promised us and Christ together"
that we may also be glorified with him
God will honor Christian believers when he honors Christ. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that God may glorify us along with him"
Romans 8:18
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
For
This emphasizes "I consider." It does not mean "because."
I consider that ... are not worthy to be compared with
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I cannot compare ... with"
will be revealed
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal" or "God will make known"
Romans 8:19
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
the eager expectation of the creation waits for
Paul describes everything that God created as a person who eagerly waits for something.
for the revealing of the sons of God
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for the time when God will reveal his children"
sons of God
Here this means all believers in Jesus. You can also translate this as "children of God."
Romans 8:20
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
For the creation was subjected to futility
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For God caused what he had created to be unable to achieve what he intended"

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not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it
Here Paul describes "creation" as a person who can desire. Alternate translation: "not because this is what the created things wanted, but because it is what God wanted"
in hope
Here the word "hope" is confident expectation that what one desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait." God could be absolutely sure that what he intended would happen. Alternate translation: "confidently expecting" or "confidently waiting"
Romans 8:21
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
the creation itself will be delivered
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save creation"
from slavery to decay
Here being in slavery to decay is a metaphor for being certain to decay. Alternate translation: "from being like a slave to decay"
that it will be brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God
"Freedom" here is in contrast with slavery to decay. It is a metaphor meaning that the creation will not decay. Alternate translation: "that it will become gloriously free from decay like the children of God"
Romans 8:22
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together even now
The creation is compared to a woman groaning while giving birth to a baby. Alternate translation: "For we know that everything that God created wants to be free and groans for it the way a woman giving birth groans for her baby to be born"
Romans 8:23
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our body
The abstract nouns "adoption" and "redemption" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "as we wait eagerly for God to adopt us and redeem our bodies"
Romans 8:24
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
For in this hope we were saved
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "For God saved us so that we might have this hope" 2) "For God saved us because we have this hope"
in this hope we were saved
Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "it was so that we might confidently wait for this that we were saved" or "we were saved that we might trust God to do this"
this hope
The phrase "this hope" refers to the hope of our adoption, the redemption of our bodies (8:23).
Now hope that is seen is not hope
"Hope that is seen" is hope that has already been fulfilled. Alternate translation: "If we already have what we hope for, that is not hope" or "If we have what we want, we would not say that we hope for it"
For who hopes for what he can see?
Paul uses a question to help his audience understand what "hope" is. Alternate translation: "No one hopes for what he already has." or "No one waits for what has already happened."
Romans 8:25
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes reminding the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.
if we hope for what we do not see
Here the word "hope" means confidently expect that what one desires will happen. The person who hopes in this way believes that what he desires will happen. Alternate translation: "If we confidently expect to receive what we do not see" or "if we trust God for what we do not see"
what we do not see
Not seeing what we hope for represents not yet having it or experiencing it. Alternate translation: "what we do not yet have" or "what has not yet happened"
we wait for it with patience
"we wait for it patiently"
Romans 8:26
Connecting Statement:
Though Paul has been emphasizing that there is a struggle in believers between the flesh and the Spirit, he affirms that the Spirit is aiding us.
inexpressible groans
"groanings that we cannot express in words"
Romans 8:27
He who searches out the hearts knows
Here "He" refers to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's thoughts and emotions. The phrase "searches out the hearts" is a metaphor for examining thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "God, who knows what all our thoughts and feelings are, knows"
Romans 8:28
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the believers that nothing can separate them from God's love.
for those who are called
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for those whom God chose"

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Romans 8:29

those whom he foreknew

"those whom he knew before he even created them"

he also predestined to be conformed

"he also planned in advance that they would be conformed"

to be conformed to the image of his Son

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that he would change them to be like his Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

that he might be the firstborn

"so that his Son would be the firstborn"

among many brothers

Here "brothers" refers to all believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "among many brothers and sisters who belong to the family of God"

Romans 8:30

Those whom he predestined

"Those whom God made plans for in advance"

these he also justified

Here "justified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he also put right with himself"

these he also glorified

The word "glorified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he will also glorify"

Romans 8:31

What, therefore, can we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Paul uses questions to emphasize the main point of what he said previously. Alternate translation: "This is what we should know from all of this: since God is helping us, no one can defeat us."

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son

God the Father sent the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to the cross as the holy, infinite sacrifice necessary to satisfy God's infinite, holy nature against the sin of humanity. Here "Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

but delivered him up

"but put him under the control of his enemies"

how will he not also with him freely give us all things?

Paul is using a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "he will certainly and freely give us all things!"

freely give us all things

"kindly give us all things"

Romans 8:33

Who will bring any accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies

Paul uses a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "No one can accuse us before God because he is the one who makes us right with him"

Romans 8:34

Who is the one who condemns?

Paul uses a question for emphasis. He does not expect an answer. Alternate translation: "No one will condemn us!"

who is at the right hand of God

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "who is at the place of honor beside God"

Romans 8:35

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Paul uses this question to teach that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "No one will ever separate us from the love of Christ!" or "Nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ!"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The words "shall separate us from the love of Christ" are understood from the previous question. Alternate translation: "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword separate us from the love of Christ?"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that even these things cannot separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "Even tribulation, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The abstract nouns can be expressed with verb phrases. Here "sword" is a metonym that represents being killed violently. Alternate translation: "Even if people cause us trouble, hurt us, take away our clothes and food, or kill us, they cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress

These words both mean the same thing.

Romans 8:36

For your benefit

Here "your" is singular and refers to God. Alternate translation: "For you"

we are killed all day long

Here "we" refers to the writer and to other people, but not his audience, who was God. The phrase "all day long" is an exaggeration to emphasize how much danger they are in. Paul uses this part of Scripture to show that all who belong to God should expect difficult times. This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "our enemies continually seek to kill us"

We were considered as sheep for the slaughter

Here Paul compares to livestock those whom people kill because they are loyal to God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Our lives have no more value to them than the sheep they kill"

Romans 8:37

we are more than conquerors

"we have complete victory"

through the one who loved us

You can make explicit the kind of love that Jesus showed. Alternate translation: "because of Jesus, who loved us so much he was willing to die for us"

Romans 8:38

I have been convinced

"I am convinced" or "I am confident"

governments

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Possible meanings are 1) demons or 2) human kings and rulers.

nor powers

Possible meanings are 1) spiritual beings with power or 2) human beings with power.

Romans 8:39

General Information:

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Chapter 9

Romans 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul changes what he is teaching about. In Chapters 9-11, he focuses on the nation of Israel.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 25-29 and 33 of this chapter. Paul quotes all of these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Flesh

Paul uses the word "flesh" in this chapter only to refer to Israelites, people physically descending from Abraham through Jacob, whom God named Israel. (See: flesh)

In other chapters, Paul uses the word "brother" to mean fellow Christians. However, in this chapter, he uses "my brothers" to mean his kinsmen the Israelites.

Paul refers to those who believe in Jesus as "children of God" and "children of the promise."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Stone of stumbling

Paul explains that while some Gentiles accepted Jesus as their savior by believing in him, most Jews were trying to earn their salvation and so rejected Jesus. Paul, quoting the Old Testament, describes Jesus as a stone that the Jews stumble over when walking. This "stone of stumbling" causes them to "fall."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel"

Paul uses the word "Israel" in this verse with two different meanings. The first "Israel" means the physical descendants of Abraham through Jacob. The second "Israel" means those who are God's people through faith. The UDB reflects this.

Links:

Romans 9:1 Notes

Romans 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells of his personal desire that the people of the nation of Israel will be saved. Then he emphasizes the different ways in which God has prepared them to believe.

I tell the truth in Christ. I do not lie

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize that he is telling the truth.

my conscience bears witness with me in the Holy Spirit

"the Holy Spirit controls my conscience and confirms what I say"

Romans 9:2

that for me there is great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart

Here "unceasing pain in my heart" is an idiom that Paul uses to share his emotional distress. Alternate translation: "that I grieve very greatly and deeply"

great sorrow and unceasing pain

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how great his emotions are.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself would be cursed and set apart from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I personally would be willing to let God curse me and keep me apart from Christ forever if that would help my fellow Israelites, my own people group, to believe in Christ"

Romans 9:4

They are Israelites

"They, like me, are Israelites. God chose them to be Jacob's descendants"

They have adoption, the glory

Here Paul uses the metaphor of "adoption" to indicate that the Israelites are like God's children. Alternate translation: "They have God as their father, and they have the glory"

Romans 9:5

General Information:

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Romans 9:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes that those who are born in the family of Israel can really only be a true part of Israel through faith.

But it is not as though the word of God has failed

The word "word" is a metonym for the promise that God used the words to make. Alternate translation: "But we should not think that God has failed to keep his promises" or "We should know that God has kept his promises"

For it is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel

God did not make his promises to all the physical descendants of Israel (or Jacob), but to his spiritual descendants, that is, those who trust in Jesus.

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Romans 9:7
Neither are all Abraham's descendants truly his children
"Nor are they all children of God just because they are Abraham's descendants"
Romans 9:8
the children of the flesh are not
Here "children of the flesh" is a metonym that refers to the physical descendants of Abraham. Alternate translation: "not all of Abraham's descendants are"
children of God
This is a metaphor that refers to people who are spiritual descendants, those who have faith in Jesus.
children of the promise
This refers to people who will inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham.
Romans 9:9
this is the word of promise
"these are the words God used when he made the promise"
a son will be given to Sarah
You can translate this in an active form to express that God will give a son to Sarah. Alternate translation: "I will give Sarah a son"
Romans 9:10
our father
Paul refers to Isaac as "our father" because Isaac was the ancestor of Paul and of the Jewish believers in Rome.
had conceived
"had become pregnant"
Romans 9:11
for the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad
"before the children were born and before they had done anything, whether good or bad"
so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand
"so that what God wants to happen according to His choice will happen"
for the children were not yet born
"before the children were born"
Romans 9:12
Connecting Statement:
It may be necessary in your language to place this verse between verse 10 and verse 11: "... our father Isaac, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' For the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad, but so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand—not because of actions, but because of him who calls. It is just...."
because of him
because of God
it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."
"God said to Rebekah, 'The older son will serve the younger son'"
Romans 9:13
Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated
The word "hated" is an exaggeration. God loved Jacob much more than he loved Esau. He did not literally hate Esau.
Romans 9:14
What then will we say?
Paul is using the question to get the attention of his readers.
Is there unrighteousness with God?
"Is God unrighteous?" or "Is God unjust?"
May it never be
"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.
Romans 9:15
For he says to Moses
Paul speaks about God's talking with Moses as if it is being done in the present time. Alternate translation: "For God said to Moses"
Romans 9:16
it is not because of him who wills, nor because of him who runs
"it is not because of what people want or because they try hard"
nor because of him who runs
Paul speaks of a person who does good things in order to gain God's favor as if that person were running a race.
Romans 9:17
For the scripture says
Here the scripture is personified as if God were talking to Pharaoh. Alternate translation: "The scripture records that God said"
I ... my
God is referring to himself.
you
The word "you" in this verse is singular.
I raised you up
"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused something to be what it is." Alternate translation: "I made you the powerful man that you are"
so that my name might be proclaimed
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that people might proclaim my name"
my name
This metonym refers either 1) to God in all of his being. Alternate translation: "who I am" or 2) To his reputation. Alternate translation: "how great I am"
in all the earth
"wherever there are people"
Romans 9:18
whom he wishes, he makes stubborn
God makes stubborn whomever he wishes to make stubborn.
Romans 9:19
You will say then to me
Paul is talking to the critics of his teaching as though he were only talking to one person. You may need to use the plural here.
Why does he still find fault? For who has ever withstood his will?
These rhetorical questions are complaints against God. You can translate them as strong statements. Alternate translation: "He should not find fault with us. No one has ever been able to withstand his will."
he ... his
The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.
has ... withstood his will
"has ... stopped him from doing what he wanted to do"

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Romans 9:20

Will what has been molded say to the one who molds it, "Why ... way?"

Paul uses the potter's right to make any kind of container he wants from the clay as a metaphor for the creator's right to do whatever he wants with his creation. Paul asks questions to emphasize his point. This can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "What a person has molded should never say to the one who molds it, 'Why ... way?'"

Why did you make me this way?

This question is a rebuke and can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have made me this way!"

Romans 9:21

Does the potter not have the right ... for dishonorable use?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke. Alternate translation: "The potter certainlly has the right ... for dishonorable use."

honorable use ... dishonorable use

Some modern translations read, "special use ... daily use."

Romans 9:22

containers of wrath prepared for destruction

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people to whom he would show wrath and whom he will certainly destroy"

Romans 9:23

he ... his

The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.

containers of mercy, which

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. Alternate translation: "those to whom he would show mercy, whom"

the riches of his glory upon

Paul compares God's wonderful actions here to great "riches." Alternate translation: "his glory, which is of great value, upon"

which he had previously prepared for glory

Here "glory" refers to life in heaven with God. Alternate translation: "whom he prepared ahead of time in order that they might live with him"

Romans 9:24

also for us

The word "us" here refers to Paul and fellow believers.

called

Here "called" means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.

Romans 9:25

Connecting Statement:

In this section Paul explains how Israel's unbelief as a nation was told ahead of time by the prophet Hosea.

As he says also in Hosea

Here "he" refers to God. Alternate translation: "As God says also in the book that Hosea wrote"

Hosea

Hosea was a prophet.

I will call them 'my people' who were not my people

"I will choose those who were not my people to be my people"

her 'beloved' who was not beloved

Here "her" refers to Hosea's wife, Gomer, who represents the nation of Israel. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I will choose her whom I did not love to be one whom I love"

Romans 9:26

sons of the living God

The word "living" may refer to the fact that God is the only true God, and not like the false idols. Alternate translation: "children of the true God"

Romans 9:27

cries out

"calls out"

as the sand of the sea

Here Paul compares the number of the people of Israel to the number of grains of sand in the sea. Alternate translation: "too many to count"

will be saved

Paul uses the word "saved" in a spiritual sense. If God saves a person, it means that through believing in Jesus's death on the cross, God has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished for his sin. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save"

Romans 9:28

the Lord will execute his word on the earth

"the Lord will punish people on the earth as he has said he will"

Romans 9:29

us ... we

Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Isaiah and those to whom he spoke.

we would be like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah

God killed all of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. Alternate translation: "we all would have been destroyed like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" or "God would have destroyed all of us as he destroyed the people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"

Romans 9:30

What will we say then?

Paul uses this question to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "So this is what we must say."

That the Gentiles

"We will say that the Gentiles"

who were not pursuing righteousness

"who were not trying to get righteousness" or "who were not trying to be righteous"

righteousness, the righteousness by faith

Here "by faith" refers to placing one's trust in Christ. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "righteousness because God made them right with him when they trusted in Christ"

Romans 9:31

who did pursue a law of righteousness

"who tried to obey a law in order to get righteousness" or "who tried to be righteous by obeying a law"

did not arrive at that law

"could not keep that law" or "did not succeed at keeping that law"

Romans 9:32

Why not? Because they

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You can translate this rhetorical question as a statement and include the words from the ellipsis in your translation. Paul asks this question to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "Why could they not attain righteousness? Because they" or "This is why they could not attain righteousness: they"

by works

This refers to things that people do to try to please God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "by trying to do things that would please God" or "by keeping the Law"

Romans 9:33

as it has been written

You can indicate that Isaiah wrote this. You can also translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "as Isaiah the prophet wrote"

in Zion

Here Zion is a metonym that represents Israel. Alternate translation: "in Israel"

stone of stumbling and a rock of offense

These phrases mean basically the same thing and are metaphors that refer to Jesus and his death on the cross. It was as if the people stumbled over a stone because they were disgusted when they considered Jesus's death on the cross.

believes in it

Because the words "stone" and "rock" are a metaphors for a person, you may need to translate this as "believes in him."

Chapter 10

Romans 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 18-20 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.

Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's righteousness

Paul teaches here that while many Jews earnestly tried to be righteous, they did not succeed. We cannot earn God's righteousness. God gives us Jesus's righteousness when we believe in him. (See: righteous and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He does this to convince his readers that God does not save only the Hebrew people, so Christians must be ready to go and share the gospel with the whole world. (See: and save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"I will provoke you to jealousy by what is not a nation"

Paul uses this prophecy to explain that God will use the church to make the Hebrew people jealous. This is so they will seek God and believe the gospel.

Links:

Romans 10:1 Notes

Romans 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues stating his desire for Israel to believe but emphasizes that both those who are Jews and those who are not can only be saved by faith in Jesus.

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

my heart's desire

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions or inner being. Alternate translation: "my greatest desire"

is for them, for their salvation

"is that God will save the Jews"

Romans 10:2

I testify about them

"I declare truthfully about them"

Romans 10:3

For, failing to understand the righteousness that comes from God

Here "righteousness refers to the way God puts people right with himself. You can make this explicit in the translation. Alternate translation: "For because they did not know how God puts people right with himself"

they did not submit to God's righteousness.

"they did not accept God's way of putting people right with himself"

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the fulfillment of the law

"For Christ completely fulfilled the law"

law for righteousness for everyone who believes

Here "believes" means "trusts." Alternate translation: "law, and he makes everyone who trusts in him right before God"

Romans 10:5

the righteousness that comes from the law

Paul speaks of "righteousness" as if it were alive and able to move. Alternate translation: "how the law makes a person right before God"

"The man who does these things will live by them."

In order to be made right with God through the law, a

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person would have to keep the law perfectly, which is not possible. Alternate translation: "The person who perfectly obeys the law will live because the law will make him right before God"

will live

The words "will live" can refer to 1) eternal life or 2) mortal life in fellowship with God.

Romans 10:6

But the righteousness that comes from faith says this

Here "righteousness" is described as a person who can speak. Alternate translation: "But Moses writes this about how faith makes a person right before God"

Do not say in your heart

Moses was addressing the people as if he were speaking to only one person. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "Do not say to yourself"

Who will ascend into heaven?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one is able to go up to heaven"

that is, to bring Christ down

"in order that they might have Christ come down to earth"

Romans 10:7

Who will descend into the abyss?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "No person can go down and enter the place where the spirits of dead persons are."

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be brought up from among them is to become alive again.

dead

This word speaks of physical death.

Romans 10:8

But what does it say?

The word "it" refers to the scripture. Alternate translation: "But this is what Moses says"

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart

Paul speaks of God's message as if it were a person who can move. The word "mouth" is a metonym that refers to what a person says. The phrase "in your heart" is metonym that refers to what a person thinks and believes. Alternate translation: "You have heard the message. You know how to speak it, and you know what it means"

the word of faith

"God's message that tells us that we must believe in him"

Romans 10:9

if with your mouth you confess Jesus as Lord

"if you confess that Jesus is Lord"

believe in your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner person. Alternate translation: "believe in your mind" or "truly believe"

raised him from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

you will be saved

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you"

Romans 10:10

For with the heart one believes and has righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents the mind or will. Alternate translation: "For it is with the mind that a person trusts and is right before God, and it is with the mouth that a person confesses so that God saves him"

with the mouth

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that represents a person's capacity to speak.

Romans 10:11

For scripture says

Paul speaks of the scripture as if it were alive and had a voice. You can make explicit who wrote the scripture that Paul uses here. Alternate translation: "For Isaiah wrote in the scripture"

Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame

This is equivalent to: "If a person believes, then that person will not be shamed." The negative is used here for emphasis. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will honor everyone who believes in him" or "God will shame only those who do not believe in Jesus"

Romans 10:12

For there is no difference between Jew and Greek

Paul implies that God will treat all people the same. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "In this way, God treats the Jews and the non-Jews the same"

he is rich to all who call upon him

Here "he is rich" means that God blesses richly. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "he richly blesses all who trust in him"

Romans 10:13

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

Here the word "name" is a metonym for Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord will save everyone who trusts in him"

Romans 10:14

How then can they call on him in whom they have not believed?

Paul uses a question to emphasize the importance of taking the good news of Christ to those who have not heard. The word "they" refers to those who do not yet belong to God. Alternate translation: "Those who do not believe in God cannot call on him!"

How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate translation: "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard his message!" or "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard the message about him!"

believe in

trust and desire to obey

How can they hear without a preacher?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate

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translation: "And they cannot hear the message if someone does not tell them!"

Romans 10:15

How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news

Paul uses "feet" to represent those who travel and take the message to those who have not heard it. The feet were considered a dirty and ugly part of the body, so the idea of beautiful feet would have seemed odd to Paul's readers. Alternate translation: "How beautiful are even the feet of those who proclaim good news" or "It is wonderful when messengers go and tell others the good news"

Romans 10:16

not all of them obeyed

Here "they" refers to the Jews. "not all of the Jews obeyed"

Lord, who has believed our report?

Paul is using this question, which Isaiah prophesied in the Scriptures, to emphasize that many Jews would not believe in Jesus. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "Lord, so many of them do not believe our message!"

our report

Here, "our" refers to God and Isaiah and so is inclusive.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing

The abstract noun "faith" can be stated as the verb "believes." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood. Alternate translation: "So a person believes in Christ by hearing the message about Christ

and hearing by the word of Christ

Here "word" is a metonym that means "message." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood. Alternate translation: "and a person hears the message by someone preaching the message about Christ"

Romans 10:18

But I say, "Did they not hear?" Yes, most certainly

Paul uses a question for emphasis. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "But, I say the Jews certainly have heard the message about Christ"

Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Both of these statements mean basically the same thing and Paul uses them for emphasis. The word "their" refers to the sun, moon, and stars. Here they are described as human messengers that tell people about God. This refers to how their existence shows God's power and glory. You can make explicit that Paul is quoting Scripture here. Alternate translation: "As the Scriptures record, 'The sun, moon, and the stars are proof of God's power and glory, and everyone in the world sees them and knows the truth about God.'"

Romans 10:19

Moreover, I say, "Did Israel not know?"

Paul uses a question for emphasis. The word "Israel" is a metonym for the people who lived in the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "Again I tell you the people of Israel did know the message."

First Moses says, "I will provoke you ... I will stir you up

This means that Moses wrote down what God said. "I" refers to God, and "you" refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "First Moses says that God will provoke you ... God will stir you up"

by what is not a nation

"by those you do not consider to be a real nation" or "by people who do not belong to any nation"

By means of a nation without understanding

Here "without understanding" means that the people do not know God. Alternate translation: "By a nation with people who do not know me or my commands"

I will stir you up to anger

"I will make you angry" or "I will cause you to become angry"

you

This refers to the nation of Israel.

Romans 10:20

General Information:

Here the words "I" and "me" refer to God.

Then Isaiah was very bold when he says

This means the prophet Isaiah wrote what God had said.

I was found by those who did not seek me

Prophets often speak of things in the future as if they have already happened. This emphasizes that the prophecy will certainly come true. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Even though the Gentile people will not look for me, they will find me"

I appeared

"I made myself known"

he says

"He" refers to God, who is speaking through Isaiah.

Romans 10:21

General Information:

Here the word "my" refers to God.

All the day long I

This phrase is used to emphasize God's continual effort. "I continually"

I reached out my hands to a disobedient and stubborn people

"I tried to welcome you and to help you, but you refused my help and continued to disobey"

Chapter 11

Romans 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-10, 26-27, and 34-35, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Grafting

Paul uses the image of "grafting" to refer to the place of the Gentiles and Jews in the plans of God. Making one plant to be permanently part of another plant is called "grafting." Paul uses the picture of God grafting the Gentiles as a wild branch

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into his saving plans. But God has not forgotten about the Jews, who are spoken of as the natural plant. God will also save Jews who believe in Jesus.

Links:

Romans 11:1 Notes

Romans 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Though Israel as a nation has rejected God, God wants them to understand salvation comes by grace without works.

I say then

"I, Paul, say then"

did God reject his people?

Paul asks this question so that he can answer the questions of other Jews who are upset that God has included the Gentiles among his people, while the hearts of the Jewish people have been hardened.

May it never be.

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

tribe of Benjamin

This refers to the tribe descended from Benjamin, one of the 12 tribes into which God divided the people of Israel.

Romans 11:2

whom he foreknew

"whom he knew ahead of time"

Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel?

You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what the Scriptures record about when Elijah pleaded with God against Israel."

what the scripture says

Paul is referring to the scripture as if they were able to speak.

Romans 11:3

they have killed

"They" refers to the people of Israel.

I alone am left

The pronoun "I" here refers to Elijah.

seeking my life

"desiring to kill me"

Romans 11:4

But what does God's answer say to him?

Paul is using this question to bring the reader to his next point. Alternate translation: "But this is God's answer to him:"

him

The pronoun "him" refers to Elijah.

seven thousand men

"7,000 men"

Romans 11:5

remnant

Here this means a small part of people whom God chose to receive his grace.

Romans 11:6

But if it is by grace

Paul continues to explain how God's mercy works.

Alternate translation: "But since God's mercy works by grace"

Romans 11:7

What then?

"What should we conclude?" Paul asks this question to move his reader to his next point. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is what we need to remember" or "So"

Romans 11:8

God has given them a spirit of dullness, eyes so that they should not see, and ears so that they should not hear

This is a metaphor about the fact that the people are spiritually dull. They are not able to hear or receive spiritual truth.

spirit of

Here this means "having the characteristics of," such as the "spirit of wisdom."

eyes so that they should not see

The concept of seeing with one's eyes was considered to be equivalent to gaining understanding.

ears so that they should not hear

The concept of hearing with the ears was considered to be equivalent to obedience.

Romans 11:9

Let their table become a snare and a trap

"Table" here is a metonym that represents feasting, and "snare" and "trap" are metaphors that represent punishment. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Please, God, make their feasts like a trap that catches them"

a stumbling block

A "stumbling block" is anything that causes a person to trip so that he falls down. Here it represents something that tempts a person to sin. Alternate translation: "something that tempts them to sin"

a retribution for them

"something that allows you to take revenge on them"

Romans 11:10

bend their backs continually

Here "bend their backs" is a metonym for forcing slaves to carry heavy loads on their backs. This is a metaphor for making them suffer. Alternate translation: "make them suffer like people carrying heavy loads"

Romans 11:11

Connecting Statement:

With Israel as a nation rejecting God, Paul warns the Gentiles to be careful they do not make the same mistake.

Did they stumble so as to fall?

Paul uses this question to add introduce the next thing he wants to say. If your language uses a different way to introduce new topics, you can use it here. Here the words "stumble" and "fall" are metaphors for sinning and having God reject the sinner. Alternate translation: "Has God

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

rejected them forever because they sinned?"
May it never be.
"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.
provoke ... to jealousy
See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.
Romans 11:12
if their trespass is the riches of the world, and if their loss is the riches of the Gentiles
Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. If you need to, you can combine them in your translation. Alternate translation: "when the Jews trespassed, the result was that God abundantly blessed the non-Jews"
the riches of the world
Because the Jews rejected Christ, God richly blessed the Gentiles by giving them the opportunity to receive Christ.
the world
Here the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who live in the world, especially the Gentiles.
how much greater will their fulfillment be?
This can be translated as a statement. The words "their fulfillment" refer to either 1) the time when God blesses the Jews 2) when the Jews believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "their fulfillment will be much greater." or "how much better will it be for the non-Jews when all the Jews believe in Jesus?" or "how much better will it be for the non-Jews when God fully blesses the Jews?"
Romans 11:13
General Information:
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Romans 11:14
provoke to jealousy
See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.
those who are of my own flesh
This refers to "my fellow Jews."
Perhaps we will save some of them
God will save those who believe. Alternate translation: "Perhaps some will believe and therefore God will save them"
Romans 11:15
For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world
"For if because God rejected them, he will reconcile the rest of the world to himself"
their rejection
The pronoun "their" refers to Jewish unbelievers.
the world
Here "the world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people in the world"
what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?
Paul asks this question to emphasize that when God accepts the Jews, it will be a wonderful thing. The abstract noun "acceptance" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "how will it be when God accepts them? It will be like they have come back to life from among the dead!" or "then when God accepts them, it will be like they have died and become alive again!"
the dead
These words speak of all dead people together in the underworld.
Romans 11:16
If the firstfruits are holy, so is the lump of dough
Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the first grain or "firstfruits" to be harvested. He is also speaking of the Israelites who are descendants of those men as if they were a "lump of dough" made from the grain. Alternate translation: "If Abraham is counted as the first of what has been offered to God, all of our ancestors who followed should also be counted as God's possession"
firstfruits
The people always dedicated to God the first crops that they harvested. Here "firstfruits" stands for the first people to believe in Christ.
If the root is holy, so are the branches
Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the root of a tree, and the Israelites, who are descendants of those men, as if they were the tree's "branches."
Romans 11:17
But if some of the branches were broken off
Here Paul refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus as "broken branches." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "But if someone broke off some of the branches"
if you, a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them
Here Paul speaks of the Gentile Christians as if they were "grafted branches." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "if God grafted you, a wild olive branch, among them"
if you, a wild olive branch
The pronoun "you" is singular. Here "you" and the phrase "a wild olive branch," refer to a Gentile person, in general, who has accepted salvation through Jesus.
the rich root of the olive tree
Here "the rich root" is a metaphor that refers to the promises of God.
Romans 11:18
do not boast over the branches
Here "the branches" is a metaphor that stands for the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "do not say you are better than the Jewish people God has rejected"
it is not you who supports the root, but the root that supports you
Again Paul implies that the Gentile believers are branches. God saves them only because of the covenant promises that he made to the Jews.
Romans 11:19
Branches were broken off
Here "branches" refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus and whom God has now rejected. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God broke branches off"
I might be grafted in
Paul uses this phrase to refer to the Gentile believers whom God has accepted. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he might attach me in"
Romans 11:20
their ... they

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

The pronouns "their" and "they" refer to the Jewish people who did not believe.

but you stand firm because of your faith

Paul speaks of the Gentile believers remaining faithful as if they were standing firm and no one could move them. Alternate translation: "but you remain because of your faith"

be arrogant in your thoughts

"think that you are better than you are" or "be proud"

Romans 11:21

For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you

Here the "natural branches" refers to the Jewish people who rejected Jesus. Alternate translation: "Since God did not spare those unbelieving Jews, who grew up like a tree's natural branches that came from the root, then know that if you do not believe, he will not spare you either"

Romans 11:22

the kind actions and the severity of God

Paul is reminding the Gentile believers that although God may act very kindly toward them, he will not hesitate to judge and punish them.

severity came on the Jews who fell ... God's kindness comes on you

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "severity" and "kindness." Alternate translation: "God dealt harshly with the Jews who fell ... God acts kindly toward you"

the Jews who fell

Here "fell" is a metaphor that means to have done something wrong. Alternate translation: "the Jews who have done wrong" or "the Jews who have refused to trust in Christ"

if you continue in his kindness

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "kindness." Alternate translation: "if you continue doing what is right so that he continues being kind to you"

Otherwise you also will be cut off

Paul again uses the metaphor of a branch, which God can "cut off" if he needs to. Here "cut off" is a metaphor for rejecting someone. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise God will also cut you off" or "Otherwise God will also reject you"

Romans 11:23

if they do not continue in their unbelief

The phrase "do not continue in their unbelief" is a double negative. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "if they start believing"

will be grafted in

Paul speaks of the Jews as if they were branches that could be grafted back into a tree if they start to believe in Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will graft back in"

graft

This is a common process in which the end of a live branch of one tree is inserted into another tree so that the new branch will continue to grow in that tree.

they ... them

All occurrences of "they" or "them" refer to the Jews.

Romans 11:24

For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

Paul continues speaking of the Gentile believers and Jews as if they were branches of a tree. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For if God had cut you out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature had grafted you into a good olive tree, how much more will he graft these Jews, who are the natural branches, into their own olive tree?"

how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "then these Jews, who are the natural branches, will certainly be grafted back into their own olive tree."

branches

Paul is speaking of the Jews and Gentiles as if they were branches. The "natural branches" represent the Jews, and the "grafted branches" represent the Gentile believers.

Romans 11:25

I do not want you to be uninformed

Here Paul uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I very much want you to be informed"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

I

The pronoun "I" refers to Paul.

you ... you ... your

The pronouns "you" and "your" refer to the Gentile believers.

so that you may not be wise in your own thinking

Paul does not want the Gentile believers to think they are wiser than the Jewish unbelievers. Alternate translation: "so that you will not think you are wiser than you are"

A partial hardening has come upon Israel

This is the mystery that Paul referred to earlier in the sentence. This can be made a explicit. "A partial hardening" is a metaphor for many of the people remaining stubborn. Paul said this because some of the Jews stubbornly refused to trust Jesus. Alternate translation: "This mystery is that a partial hardening has come upon Israel" or "Many people of Israel remain stubborn"

until the full number of the Gentiles

Here "full number" means the amount determined by God. It does not mean all Gentiles. Alternate translation: "until the number of Gentiles determined by God"

comes in

This is a metaphor meaning to be saved or to become a Christian. Alternate translation: "is saved" or "believes in Christ"

Romans 11:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul says that, to the glory of God, a deliverer will come out of Israel.

Thus all Israel will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"Thus God will save all Israel"

just as it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the scriptures record"

Out of Zion

Here "Zion" is used as a metonym for the place where God dwells. Alternate translation: "From where God is among the Jews"

the Deliverer

"the one who brings his people to safety"

He will remove ungodliness

Paul speaks of ungodliness as if it were an object that someone could remove, such as a garment..

from Jacob

Here "Jacob" is used as a metonym for Israel. Alternate translation: "from the Israelite people"

Romans 11:27

I will take away their sins

Here Paul speaks of sins as if they were objects that someone could take away. Alternate translation: "I will remove the burden of their sins"

Romans 11:28

As far as the gospel is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions the gospel. Alternate translation: "Because the Jews rejected the gospel"

they are enemies for your sake

You can make explicit whose enemies they are, and how this was for the Gentiles' sake. Alternate translation: "they are God's enemies for your sake" or "God has treated them as enemies in order that you also might hear the gospel"

as far as election is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions election. Alternate translation: "because God has elected the Jews" or "because God has chosen the Jews"

they are beloved because of the patriarchs

You can make explicit who loves the Jews and why Paul mentions their forefathers. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God still loves them because of what he promised to do for their ancestors"

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable

Paul speaks of the spiritual and material blessings that God promised to give his people as if they were gifts. The call of God refers to the fact that God called the Jews to be his people. Alternate translation: "For God will never change his mind about what he has promised to give them, and about how he has called them to be his people" or "God will never take back his gifts or his call"

are irrevocable

"can never be taken back"

Romans 11:30

you were formerly disobedient to God

"you did not obey God in the past"

you have received mercy because of their disobedience

Here mercy means God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "because the Jews have rejected Jesus, you have received blessings that you did not deserve"

you

This refers to Gentile believers, and is plural.

Romans 11:31

General Information:

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Romans 11:32

God has shut up all into disobedience

God has treated people who disobey him like prisoners who are unable to escape from prison. Alternate translation: "God has made prisoners of those who disobey him. Now they cannot stop disobeying God"

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God

Here "wisdom" and "knowledge" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "How amazing are the many benefits of both God's wisdom and knowledge"

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering

"We are completely unable to understand the things that he has decided and to find out the ways in which he acts toward us"

Romans 11:34

For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his advisor?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one is as wise as the Lord. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one has ever known the mind of the Lord, and no one has become his advisor."

the mind of the Lord

Here "mind" is a metonym for knowing things or thinking about things. Alternate translation: "all that the Lord knows" or "what the Lord thinks about"

Romans 11:35

Or who has first given anything to God, that God must repay him?"

Paul uses this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "No one has ever given anything to God that he did not first receive from God"

Romans 11:36

For from him ... through him ... to him

Here, all occurrences of "him" refers to God.

To him be the glory forever

This expresses Paul's desire for all people to honor God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "May all people honor him forever"

Chapter 12

Romans 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 20, which is from the Old Testament.

Many scholars believe Paul uses the word "therefore" in Romans 12:1 to refer back to all of Chapters 1-11. Having

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

carefully explained the Christian gospel, Paul now explains how Christians should live in light of these great truths. Chapters 12-16 focus on living out one's Christian faith. Paul uses many different commands in these chapters to give these practical instructions. (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

Christian living

Under the law of Moses, people were required to offer temple sacrifices of animals or grain. Now Christians are required to live their lives as a type of sacrifice to God. Physical sacrifices are no longer required. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Body of Christ

The body of Christ is an important metaphor or image used in Scripture to refer to the church. Each church member has a unique and important function. Christians need each other.

Links:

Romans 12:1 Notes

Romans 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells what the life of a believer should be and how believers should serve.

I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "Fellow believers, because of the great mercy that God has given you I very much want you to present"

to present your bodies a living sacrifice

Here Paul uses the word "bodies" to refer to the entire beings of all those he is addressing. Paul is comparing a believer in Christ who completely obeys God to the animals that the Jews killed and then offered to God. Alternate translation: "to offer yourselves completely to God while you are alive as if you were a dead sacrifice on a temple altar"

holy, acceptable to God

Possible meanings are 1) "a sacrifice that you give to God alone and that pleases him" or 2) "acceptable to God because it is morally pure"

This is your reasonable service

"This is the right way to worship God"

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not behave as this world behaves" or "Do not do what this world does"

this world

This refers to unbelievers who live in the world.

but be transformed by the renewal of your mind

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but let God change the way you think and behave"

Romans 12:3

by the grace that was given to me I say

Here "grace" refers to God's choosing Paul to be an apostle and leader of the church. You can make this explicit in your translation. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God freely chose me to be an apostle, I can say"

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought

"Do not think you are better than other people"

rather, think with sober judgment

"instead, you should be wise in how you think about yourselves"

each according to the measure of faith that God has given you

Paul implies here that believers have different abilities that correspond to their faith in God. Alternate translation: "since God has given each of you different abilities because of your trust in him"

Romans 12:4

For

Paul uses this word to show that he will now explain why some Christians should not think they are better than others.

we have many members in one body

Paul refers to all the believers in Christ as if they were different parts of the human body. He does this to illustrate that although believers may serve Christ in different ways, each person belongs to Christ and serves in an important way.

members

Such parts of the body as eyes, ears, and hands.

Romans 12:5

are individually members of each other

Paul speaks of the believers as if God had physically joined them together like the parts of the human body. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has joined each believer together with all other believers"

Romans 12:6

We have different gifts according to the grace that was given to us

Paul speaks of believers' different abilities as being free gifts from God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has freely given each of us different abilities to do things for him"

let it be done according to the proportion of his faith

Possible meanings are 1) "let him speak prophecies that do not go beyond the amount of faith God has given us" or 2) "let him speak prophecies that agree with the teachings of our faith."

Romans 12:7

General Information:

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Romans 12:8

If one's gift is giving, let him do it

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Here "giving" refers to giving money and other things to people. You can make this meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "If one has the gift of giving money or other goods to people in need, let him give"

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "You must love people sincerely and truly"

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Romans 12:10

Concerning love of the brothers, be affectionate

Here Paul begins a list of nine items, each of the form "Concerning ... be" to tell the believers what kind of people they should be. You may need to translate some of the items as "Concerning ... do." The list continues to Romans 12:13.

Concerning love of the brothers

"As for how you love your fellow believers"

love

In the original language a different word is used for "love" here than is used in 12:9. This word means brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

be affectionate

"show affection"

Concerning honor, respect one another

"Honor and respect one another" or "Honor your fellow believers by respecting them"

Romans 12:11

Concerning diligence, do not be hesitant. Concerning the spirit, be eager. Concerning the Lord, serve him

"Do not be lazy in your duty, but be eager to follow the Spirit and to serve the Lord"

Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope

"Rejoice because of your hope" or "Rejoice as you hope." Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Rejoice because of what you confidently wait for" or "Rejoice as you confidently wait"

endure tribulation

"be patient when you suffer" or "wait patiently whenever you have troubles"

be faithful in prayer

"pray faithfully"

Romans 12:13

General Information:

This is the last item in the list that began in Romans 12:9.

Share in the needs of God's holy people

"When fellow Christians are in trouble, help them with what they need"

Find many ways to show hospitality

"Always welcome Christians into your home when they need a place to stay"

Romans 12:14

General Information:

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Romans 12:15

General Information:

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Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another

This is an idiom that means to live in unity. Alternate translation: "Agree with one another" or "Live in unity with each other"

Do not think in proud ways

"Do not think that you are more important than others"

accept lowly people

"welcome people who do not seem important"

Do not be wise in your own thoughts

"Do not think of yourselves as having more wisdom than everyone else"

Romans 12:17

Repay no one evil for evil

"Do not do evil things to anyone who has done evil things to you"

Do good things in the sight of all people

"Do things that everyone considers to be good"

Romans 12:18

as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people

"do whatever you can to live in peace with everyone"

Romans 12:19

give way to the wrath of God

Here "wrath" is a metonym for God's punishment. Alternate translation: "allow God to punish those who harm you"

For it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For someone has written"

Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that God will avenge his people. Alternate translation: "I will certainly avenge you"

Romans 12:20

your enemy ... feed him ... give him a drink ... if you do this, you will heap

All forms of "you" and "your" are addressed as to one person.

But "if your enemy is hungry ... his head."

Paul quotes another part of scripture. Alternate translation: "But the scripture also says, 'If your enemy is hungry ... his head.'"

feed him

"give him some food"

you will heap coals of fire on his head

Paul speaks of the blessings that the enemies will receive as if someone were pouring hot coals on their heads. Possible meanings are 1) "you will make the person who harmed you feel ashamed about how he has mistreated you" or 2) "you will give God a reason to judge your enemy more harshly"

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good

Paul describes "evil" as though it were a person. You can

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let those who are evil defeat you, but defeat those who are evil by doing what is good"

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil

These verbs are addressed as to one person and so are singular.

Chapter 13

Romans 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In the first part of this chapter, Paul teaches Christians to obey rulers who govern them. At that time, ungodly Roman rulers governed the land. (See: godly)

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungodly rulers

Some readers will find it difficult to understand what Paul teaches about obeying rulers, especially if they are in places where rulers persecute the church. Christians must obey their rulers as well as obey God, unless the rulers do not allow Christians to do something God explicitly commands them to do. There are times when a believer must submit to these rulers and suffer at their hands. Christians understand that this world is temporary and they will ultimately be with God forever. (See: eternity)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Links:

Romans 13:1 Notes

Romans 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers how to live under their rulers.

Let every soul be subject to

Here "soul" is a synecdoche for the whole person. "Every Christian should obey" or "Everyone should obey"

higher authorities

"government officials"

for

because

there is no authority unless it comes from God

"all authority comes from God"

The authorities that exist have been appointed by God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "And the people who are in authority are there because God put them there"

Romans 13:2

that authority

"that government authority" or "the authority that God placed in power"

those who oppose it will receive judgment on themselves

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will judge those who oppose government authority"

Romans 13:3

For

Paul uses this word to begin his explanation of Romans 13:2 and to tell about what will result if the government condemns a person.

rulers are not a terror to those who do good deeds, but to those who do evil deeds

"rulers do not cause terror for those who do good deeds, but for those who do evil deeds"

Do you desire to have no fear of the one in authority?

Paul uses this question to get people to think about what they need to do in order not to be afraid of rulers. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you how you can be unafraid of the ruler."

you will receive his praise

"the one in authority will say good things about you"

Romans 13:4

he does not carry the sword for no reason

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "he carries the sword for a very good reason" or "he has the power to punish people, and he will punish people"

carry the sword

Roman governors carried a short sword as a symbol of their authority.

an avenger for wrath on the one who does evil

Here "wrath" represents the punishment people receive when they do evil deeds. Alternate translation: "a person who punishes, on God's behalf, those who do evil"

Romans 13:5

not only because of the wrath, but also because of conscience

"not only so the government will not punish you, but also so you will have a clear conscience before God"

Romans 13:6

Because of this

"Because the government punishes evildoers"

you pay

Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.

For authorities

"This is why you should pay taxes: authorities"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

attend to
"administer" or "work on"
Romans 13:7
Pay to everyone
Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.
tax to whom tax is due, toll to whom toll is due, fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due
The word "pay" is understood from the previous phrase in the general sense of "give." Alternate translation: "pay tax to whom tax is due, pay toll to whom toll is due, pay fear to whom fear is due, and pay honor to him to whom honor is due"
fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due
Here paying fear and honor is a metaphor for fearing and honoring those who deserve to be feared and honored. Alternate translation: "fear those who deserve to be feared, and honor those who deserved to be honored" or "respect those whom you ought to respect, and honor those whom you ought to honor"
toll
This is a kind of tax.
Romans 13:8
Connecting Statement:
Paul tells believers how to act toward neighbors.
Owe no one anything, except to love one another
This is a double negative. You can translate it in a positive form. Alternate translation: "Pay all you owe to everyone, and love one another"
Owe
This verb is plural and applies to all the Roman Christians.
anything, except to love one another
This elliptical command includes the idea of "owe" from earlier in the sentence. Owing things or service to other people is a metaphor for the duty Christians have, in this case to love one another. Alternate translation: "anything, but remember that God has given you the duty to love one another"
love
The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.
Romans 13:9
covet
To covet is to desire to have or possess something that another person possesses.
Romans 13:10
Love does no harm to a neighbor
This phrase portrays love as a person who is being kind to other people. Alternate translation: "People who love their neighbors do not harm them"
Romans 13:11
you know the time, that it is already the hour for you to awake out of sleep
Paul speaks of the need for the Roman believers to change their behavior as if they needed to wake up from being asleep.
hour
"time"
Romans 13:12
The night has advanced
Paul speaks of the time when people do evil deeds as night. Alternate translation: "The sinful time is almost over" or "It is as though the night is almost finished"
the day is near
Paul speaks of the time when people do what is right as the day. Alternate translation: "the time of righteousness will begin soon" or "it is as though it will soon be day"
Let us therefore put aside the works of darkness
Paul speaks of of "works of darkness" as if they are clothing that a person puts aside. Here to "put aside" means to stop doing something. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for evil. Alternate translation: "Let us therefore stop doing the evil things that people do in the dark"
let us put on the armor of light
Here "light" is a metaphor for what is good and right. Paul speaks of people who are doing what is right as if they were putting on armor to protect themselves. Alternate translation: "let us start doing what is right. Doing this will protect us from what is evil, like armor protects a solider"
Romans 13:13
Let us
Paul includes his readers and other believers with himself.
Let us walk appropriately, as in the day
Paul speaks of people living as true believers as if they were walking while it is day. Alternate translation: "Let us walk in a visible way knowing, that everyone can see us"
sexual immorality or in uncontrolled lust
These concepts mean basically the same thing. You can combine them in your translation. Alternate translation: "sexually immoral acts"
strife
This refers to plotting against and arguing with other people.
jealousy
This refers to negative feelings against another person's success or advantage over others.
Romans 13:14
put on the Lord Jesus Christ
Paul speaks of accepting the moral nature of Christ as if he were our outer clothing that people can see.
put on
If your language has a plural form for commands, use it here.
make no provision for the flesh
Here the "flesh" refers to the self-directed nature of people who oppose God. This is the sinful nature of human beings. Alternate translation: "do not allow your old evil heart any opportunity at all for doing wicked things"

Chapter 14

Romans 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 11 of this chapter, which Paul quotes from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Weak in faith

Paul teaches that Christians can have real faith and at the same time be "weak in faith" in a given situation. This describes Christians whose faith is immature, not strong, or misunderstood. (See: faith)

Dietary restrictions

Many religions in the ancient Near East restricted what was eaten. Christians have freedom to eat what they want. But they need to use this freedom wisely, in a way that honors the Lord and does not cause others to sin. (See: sin)

The judgment seat of God

The judgment seat of God or Christ represents a time when all people, including Christians, will be held accountable for the way they lived their lives.

Links:

Romans 14:1 Notes

Romans 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages believers to remember that they are answerable to God.

weak in faith

This refers to those who felt guilty over eating and drinking certain things.

without giving judgment about arguments

"and do not condemn them for their opinions"

Romans 14:2

One person has faith to eat anything

Here "faith" refers to doing what a person believes God is telling him to do.

another who is weak eats only vegetables

This describes a person who believes God does not want him to eat meat.

Romans 14:3

General Information:

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Romans 14:4

Who are you, you who judge a servant belonging to someone else?

Paul is using a question to scold those who are judging others. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not God, and you are not allowed to judge one of his servants!"

you, you

The form of "you" here is singular.

It is before his own master that he stands or falls

Paul speaks of God as if he were a master who owned servants. Alternate translation: "Only the master can decide if he will accept the servant or not"

But he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand

Paul speaks of the servant who is acceptable to God as if he were being "made to stand" instead of falling. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "But the Lord will accept him because he is able to make the servant acceptable"

Romans 14:5

One person values one day above another. Another has concluded that every day is equal

"One person thinks one day is more important than some of the others, but another person thinks that all days are the same"

Let each person be convinced in his own mind

You can make the full meaning explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Let each person be sure what he is doing is to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:6

He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord

Here "observes the day" refers to considering a day as a special day on which to worship the Lord. Alternate translation: "Whoever treats a day as special does so to honor the Lord" or "The person who worships on a certain day does it to honor the Lord"

he who eats

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3]

eats for the Lord

"eats to honor the Lord" or "eats that way in order to honor the Lord"

He who does not eat

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3]

refrains from eating for the Lord

His purpose in refraining from eating certain foods is to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "refrains from eating certain foods in order to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:7

For none of us lives for himself

Here "lives for himself" means to live only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should live merely to please himself"

none of us

Paul is including his readers, so this is inclusive.

none dies for himself

Here "dies for himself" means to die only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should die merely to please himself"

Romans 14:8

General Information:

Paul is speaking of both himself and his readers, so all instances of "we" are inclusive.

Romans 14:9

General Information:

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Romans 14:10

why do you judge your brother? And you, why do you despise your brother?

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By using these questions, Paul is demonstrating how he might need to scold individuals among his readers. Alternate translation: "it is wrong for you to judge your brother, and it is wrong for you to despise your brother!" or "stop judging and despising your brother!"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God

The "judgment seat" refers to God's authority to judge. Alternate translation: "For God will judge us all"

Romans 14:11

For it is written, "As

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For someone has written in the Scriptures: 'As"

As I live

This phrase is used to start an oath or solemn promise. Alternate translation: "You can be certain that this is true"

to me every knee will bend, and every tongue will confess to God

Paul uses the words "knee" and "tongue" to refer to the whole person. Also, the Lord uses the word "God" to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "every person will bow and give praise to me"

Romans 14:12

will give an account of himself to God

"will have to explain his actions to God"

Romans 14:13

but instead decide this, that no one will place a stumbling block or a snare for his brother

Here "stumbling block" and "snare" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "but instead make it your goal not to do or say anything that might cause a fellow believer to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

Romans 14:14

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus

Here the words "know" and "am persuaded" mean basically the same thing; Paul uses them to emphasize his certainty. Alternate translation: "I am certain because of my relationship with the Lord Jesus"

nothing is unclean by itself

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "everything by itself is clean"

by itself

"by its nature" or "because of what it is"

Only for him who considers anything to be unclean, for him it is unclean

Paul implies here that a person should stay away from anything that he thinks is unclean. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "But if a person thinks something is unclean, then for that person it is unclean and he should stay away from it"

Romans 14:15

If because of food your brother is hurt

"If you hurt your fellow believer's faith over the matter of food." Here the word "your" refers to those who are strong in faith and "brother" refers to one who is weak in faith.

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

you are no longer walking in love

Paul speaks of the behavior of believers as if it were a walk. Alternate translation: "then you are no longer showing love"

Romans 14:16

So do not allow what you consider to be good to be spoken of as evil

"If someone thinks that something is evil, do not do it, even if you consider it to be good"

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not about food and drink, but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit

Paul argues that God set up his kingdom so he could give us a right relationship with himself, and could provide peace and joy. Alternate translation: "For God did not set up his kingdom so that he could rule over what we eat and drink. He set up his kingdom so we could have a right relationship with him, and so he could give us peace and joy"

Romans 14:18

approved by people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "people will approve of him" or "people will respect him"

Romans 14:19

let us pursue the things of peace and the things that build up one another

Here "build up one another" refers to helping each other grow in faith. Alternate translation: "let us seek to live peacefully together and help one another grow stronger in faith"

Romans 14:20

Do not destroy the work of God on account of food

You can make explicit the full meaning of this sentence. Alternate translation: "Do not undo what God has done for a fellow believer just because you want to eat a certain kind of food"

but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone to stumble

Here anything that "causes someone to stumble" means it causes a weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience. Alternate translation: "but it would be a sin for someone to eat food that another brother thinks is wrong to eat, if by eating this causes the weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience"

Romans 14:21

It is good not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything over which your brother stumbles

"It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that might cause your brother to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

your

This refers to the strong in faith and "brother" refers to the weak in faith.

Romans 14:22

The faith you have

This refers back to the beliefs about food and drink.

you ... yourself

singular. Because Paul is addressing the believers, you may have to translate this using plural.

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Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves
"Blessed are those who do not feel guilty for what they decide to do"
Romans 14:23
He who doubts is condemned if he eats
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will say that a person does wrong if he is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but he eats it anyway" or "A person who is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but then eats it anyway, will have a troubled conscience"
because it is not from faith
Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "and God will say that he is wrong because he is eating something he believes God does not want him to eat"
whatever is not from faith is sin
Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "you are sinning if you do something that you do not believe God wants you to do"

Chapter 15

Romans 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-11 and 21 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.
Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 12.
In Romans 15:14, Paul begins to speak more personally. He shifts from teaching to telling of his personal plans.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Strong/Weak
These terms are used to refer to people who are mature and immature in their faith. Paul teaches that those who are strong in faith need to help those who are weak in faith. (See: faith)

Links:

Romans 15:1 Notes

Romans 15:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul concludes this section about believers' living for others by reminding them how Christ lived.
Now
Translate this using the words your language uses to introduce a new idea into an argument.
we who are strong
Here "strong" refers to the people who are strong in their faith. They believe that God allows them to eat any kind of food. Alternate translation: "we who are strong in faith"
we
This refers to Paul, his readers, and other believers.
the weak
Here "the weak" refers to the people who are weak in their faith. They believe that God does not allow them to eat some kinds of food. Alternate translation: "those who are weak in faith"
Romans 15:2
to build him up
By this, Paul means to strengthen someone's faith. Alternate translation: "to strengthen his faith"
Romans 15:3
it was just as it is written
Here Paul refers to a scripture where Christ
The insults of those who insulted you fell on me
Those who blasphemed God insulted Christ. This is an indirect way of saying that those who slandered Christ were blaspheming God.
Romans 15:4
For whatever was previously written was written for our instruction
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For in times past, the prophets wrote everything in the Scriptures to teach us"
our ... we
Paul includes his readers and other believers.
in order that through patience and through encouragement of the scriptures
The meanings in the abstract nouns "patience" and "encouragement" can be expressed with the verbs "endure" and "encourage." Alternate translation "in order that by enduring and by being encouraged by the scriptures" or "in order that as we endure and as the scriptures encourage us"
we would have hope
Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." What the hope is about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "we would confidently wait for God" or "we would confidently expect that God will do what he has promised"
Romans 15:5
Now
This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul starts to tell a new part of the teaching.
may ... God ... grant
"I pray that ... God ... will grant"
to be of the same mind with each other
Here to be of the "same mind" is a metonym that means to

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be in agreement with each other. Alternate translation: "to be in agreement with each other" or "to be united"
Romans 15:6
with one mind you may glorify with one mouth
The phrases "one mind" and "one mouth" both represent people being united together. Alternate translation: "you may be united when you praise"
with one mind
This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.
Romans 15:7
receive one another ... received you
"accept one another ... accepted you"
Romans 15:8
For I say
The word "I" refers to Paul.
Christ has been made a servant of the circumcision
Here "the circumcision" is a metonym that refers to the Jews. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ has become a servant of the Jews"
in order to confirm the promises
This is one of the two purposes for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision.
the promises given to the patriarchs
Here "the fathers" refers to the ancestors of the Jewish people. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "the promises that God gave to the ancestors of the Jews"
Romans 15:9
and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy
This is the second reason for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision. Alternate translation: "and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy"
As it is written
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "As someone has written in the Scriptures"
sing praise to your name
Here "your name" is a metonym that refers to God. Alternate translation: "sing praise to you"
Romans 15:10
Again it says
"Again the scripture says"
with his people
This refers to God's people. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "with the people of God"
Romans 15:11
praise him
"praise the Lord"
Romans 15:12
root of Jesse
Jesse was the physical father of King David. Alternate translation: "descendant of Jesse"
in him the Gentiles will have hope
Here "him" refers to the descendant of Jesse and King David, the Messiah. The Gentiles will trust him to fulfill his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait" or confidently expect." Alternate translation: "the Gentiles will trust in him" or "the Gentiles will confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises"
Romans 15:13
the God of hope
"the God who gives hope" or "the God who causes us to hope." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "the God who causes us to confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises" or "the God who helps us to trust in him"
fill you with all joy and peace
Here "fill you" is a metaphor for "cause you to have." Alternate translation: "cause you to have great joy and peace" or "give you great joy and peace"
in believing
"as you believe in him"
Romans 15:14
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the believers in Rome that God chose him to reach the Gentiles.
I myself am also convinced about you, my brothers
Paul is quite sure that the believers in Rome are honoring each other in their behavior. Alternate translation: "I myself am completely sure that you yourselves have acted toward others in a completely good way"
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
filled with all knowledge
Paul exaggerates here to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "filled with sufficient knowledge to follow God"
Romans 15:15
the grace given me by God
Paul speaks of grace as if it were a physical gift that God had given him. God had appointed Paul an apostle even though he had persecuted believers before he decided to follow Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God gave me"
Romans 15:16
the offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable
Paul speaks of the Gentiles as if they were an offering brought to God. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles might be like an offering that pleases God"
sanctified by the Holy Spirit
"having been made holy by the Holy Spirit." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which the Holy Spirit made holy" or "which the Holy Spirit dedicated to God"
Romans 15:17
General Information:
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Romans 15:18
I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished
This double negative emphasizes that what Christ has accomplished is the only thing that Paul wants to speak about. Alternate translation: "I will dare to speak only of what Christ has accomplished"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

for the obedience of the Gentiles
"so that the Gentiles will obey God"
These are things done by word and action
This can be translated in active form: Alternate translation: Alternate translation: "These are things that Christ has accomplished through what I have said and done"
Romans 15:19
signs and wonders
These two words mean basically the same thing and refer to various kinds of miracles.
so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum
This is from the city of Jerusalem as far as the province of Illyricum, a region close to Italy.
Romans 15:20
In this way, my desire has been to proclaim the gospel, but not where Christ is known by name
Paul only wants to preach to people who have never heard of Christ. Alternate translation: "And so, my desire has been to preach the good news in places where people have never heard of Christ"
in order that I might not build upon another man's foundation
Paul speaks of his ministry work as if he were building a house on a foundation. Alternate translation: "in order that I might not be simply continuing the work that someone else already started. I do not want to be like a man who builds a house on someone else's foundation"
Romans 15:21
It is as it is written
Here Paul refers to what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures. You can translate this in an active form and make the meaning explicit. Alternate translation: "What is happening is like what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures"
Those to whom no report of him came
Here Paul speaks of the "report" or message about Christ as if it were alive and able to move by itself. Alternate translation: "Those whom no one had told the news about him"
Romans 15:22
Connecting Statement:
Paul tells the believers in Rome about his personal plans to visit them and asks the believers to pray.
I was also hindered
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they also hindered me" or "people also hindered me"
Romans 15:23
I no longer have any place in these regions
Paul implies that the reason he no longer has any place is because the Gospel had been preached in all these regions. Alternate translation: "there are no more places in these regions where people have not heard about Christ"
Romans 15:24
I hope to see you
Paul wanted to see the believers in Rome. He did not know if he actually would be able to see them. Alternate translation: "I want to see you" or "I plan to see you"
Spain
This is a roman province west of Rome that Paul desired to visit.
to be helped by you on my journey
Here Paul implies that he wants the Roman believers to provide some financial assistance to him for his journey to Spain. You may have to translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that you will help me on my journey"
have enjoyed your company
"have enjoyed spending some time with you" or "have enjoyed visiting you"
Romans 15:25
serving God's holy people
You may need to make explicit how Paul was serving the people. Alternate translation: "bringing aid to God's holy people")
Romans 15:26
it was the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia
Here the words "Macedonia" and "Achaia" are synecdoches for the people who live in those areas. Alternate translation: "the believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia were happy"
Romans 15:27
Yes, it was their good pleasure
"The believers in Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to do it"
and they owe it to them
"and the people of Macedonia and Achaia owe it to God's people in Jerusalem" or "and they are obligated to help them"
if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things
"since the Gentiles have shared in the spiritual things of the Jerusalem believers
minister to them
The word "minister" here means to serve in a formal way as part of their service to God, much like the priests offered sacrifices in the temple.
with their material things
"by giving them material things"
Romans 15:28
and have made sure that they receive all that was collected
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and have safely delivered this offering to them"
Romans 15:29
I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ
This phrase means that Christ will bless Paul and the Roman believers. Alternate translation: "And I know that when I visit you, Christ will abundantly bless us"
Romans 15:30
Now
If your language has a way to show that Paul has stopped talking about the good things he is confident of (Romans 15:29) and is now starting to talk about the dangers he faces, use it here.
I urge you
"I encourage you"
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
you strive

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"you work hard" or "you struggle"
Romans 15:31
I may be rescued from those who are disobedient
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God may rescue me from those who are disobedient" or "God may keep those who are disobedient from harming me"
that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's holy people
Here Paul expresses his desire that the believers in Jerusalem will gladly accept the money from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. Alternate translation: "pray that the believers in Jerusalem will be glad to receive the money that I am bringing them"
Romans 15:32
General Information:
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Romans 15:33
May the God of peace
The "God of peace" means the God who causes believers to have inner peace. Alternate translation: "I pray that God, who causes all of us to have inner peace, will"

Chapter 16

Romans 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul gives personal greetings to some of the Christians in Rome. It was common to end a letter in the ancient Near East with this type of personal greeting.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Because of the personal nature of this chapter, much of the context is unknown. This will make translation more difficult.

Links:

Romans 16:1 Notes

Romans 16:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul now greets many of the believers in Rome by name.
I commend to you Phoebe
"I want you to respect Phoebe"
Phoebe
This is a woman's name.
our sister
The word "our" refers to Paul and all believers. Alternate translation: "our sister in Christ"
Cenchreae
This was a town in Greece.
Romans 16:2
receive her in the Lord
Paul encourages the Roman believers to welcome Phoebe as a fellow believer. Alternate translation: "welcome her because we all belong to the Lord"
in a manner worthy of God's holy people
"in the way that believers should welcome other believers"
provide her with whatever help she may need from you
"help her by giving her whatever she needs"
has been a great help to many and to myself as well
"has supported many people, and she has also supported me"
Romans 16:3
Priscilla and Aquila
Priscilla was the wife of Aquila.
my fellow workers in Christ Jesus
Paul's "fellow workers" are people who also tell others about Jesus. Alternate translation: "who work with me to tell people about Christ Jesus"
Romans 16:4
General Information:
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Romans 16:5
Greet the church that is in their house
"Greet the believers who meet in their house to worship"
Epaenetus
This is the name of a man.
firstfruit of Asia to Christ
Paul speaks of Epaenetus as if he were a fruit that he harvested. Alternate translation: "first person in Asia to believe in Jesus"
Romans 16:6
Mary
This is a woman's name.
Romans 16:7
Andronicus
This is a man's name.
Junia
"Junia" is a woman's name. Some versions have "Junias," which would be a man's name.
They are well known among the apostles
You can translate this in an active form. "The apostles Alternate translations: "The apostles know them very well"
Romans 16:8
Ampliatus
This is a man's name.
my beloved in the Lord
"my dear friend and fellow believer"
Romans 16:9
Urbanus ... Stachys
These are the names of men.
Romans 16:10
Apelles ... Aristobulus
These are the names of men.
the approved in Christ
The word "approved" refers to someone who has been tested and proved to be genuine. Alternate translation: "whom Christ has approved"
Romans 16:11
Herodion ... Narcissus

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These are the names of men.

who are in the Lord

This refers to those who trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "who are believers" or "who belong to the Lord"

Romans 16:12

Tryphaena ... Tryphosa ... Persis

These are women's names.

Romans 16:13

Rufus

This is a man's name.

chosen in the Lord

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Lord has chosen"

his mother and mine

Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as if she were his own mother. Alternate translation: "his mother, whom I also think of as my mother"

Romans 16:14

Asyncritus ... Phlegon ... Hermes ... Patrobas ... Hermas

These are men's names.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

Romans 16:15

Philologus ... Nereus ... Olympas

These are men's names.

Julia

The name of a woman. Julia was probably the wife of Philologus.

Romans 16:16

a holy kiss

an expression of affection for fellow believers

All the churches of Christ greet you

Here Paul speaks in a general manner concerning the churches of Christ. Alternate translation: "The believers in all the churches in this area send their greetings to you"

Romans 16:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives one last warning to the believers about unity and living for God.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

who cause divisions and stumbling

This refers to those who argue and cause others to stop trusting in Jesus. Alternate translation: "who cause believers to argue with one another and to stop having faith in God"

contrary to the teaching that you have learned

"teaching things that do not agree with the truth you have already learned"

Turn away from them

"Turn away" here is an metaphor for "refuse to listen." Alternate translation: "Do not listen to them"

Romans 16:18

Christ, but their own stomach

The words "they serve" are understood from the previous phrase. This can be expressed as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "Christ. Rather, they serve their own stomach"

but their own stomach

Here "stomach" is a metonym that refers to physical desires. Serving there stomach represents satisfying their desires. Alternate translation: "but they only want to satisfy their own selfish desires"

By their smooth and flattering speech

The words "smooth" and "flattering" mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing how these people are deceiving believers. Alternate translation: "By saying things that seem to be good and true"

they deceive the hearts of the innocent

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the minds and inner beings of people. Alternate translation: "they deceive the innocent believers"

innocent

This refers to those who are simple, inexperienced, and naive. Alternate translation: "those who innocently trust them" or "those who do not know these teachers are fooling them"

Romans 16:19

For your example of obedience reaches everyone

Here Paul speaks of the Roman believers' obedience as if it were a person who could go to people. Alternate translation: "For everyone has heard how you obey Jesus"

innocent to that which is evil

"not involved in doing evil things"

Romans 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet

To say that a person will crush their enemy under their feet means that the person will have complete victory over their enemy. Here Paul speaks of the victory over Satan as if the Roman believers were trampling an enemy under their feet. Alternate translation: "Soon God will give you peace and complete victory over Satan"

Romans 16:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives greetings from the believers who are with him.

Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater

These are men's names.

Romans 16:22

Tertius, who write this epistle down

Tertius is the man who wrote down what Paul spoke.

greet you in the Lord

"greet you as a fellow believer"

Romans 16:23

Gaius ... Erastus ... Quartus

These are men's names.

the host

This refers to Gaius, the person in whose house Paul and his fellow believers gathered for worship.

the treasurer

This is a person who takes care of the money for a group.

Romans 16:24

General Information:

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Romans 16:25

Connecting Statement:

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Paul closes with a prayer of blessing.

Now

Here the word "now" marks the closing section of the letter. If you have a way of doing this in your language, you can use it here.

to make you strong

"to make your faith strong"

according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ

"by the good news that I have preached about Jesus Christ"

according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages

Paul says that God has revealed previously hidden truths to the believers. He speaks of these truths as if they were a secret. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God has revealed to us believers the secret that he was keeping for long ages"

for long ages

since the beginning of time

Romans 16:26

but now has been revealed and made known through the prophetic writings to all nations, by the command of the eternal God

The verbs "revealed" and "made known" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses both of them to emphasize his point. You can combine these words and translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but the eternal God has now made known to all the nations through the prophetic writings"

to bring about the obedience of faith

Here "obedience" and "faith" are abstract nouns. You can use the verbs "obey" and "trust" in your translation. You may need to make explicit who will obey and trust. Alternate translation: "so that all nations will obey God because they trust in him"

Romans 16:27

to the only wise God ... be glory forever. Amen

Here "through Jesus Christ" refers to what Jesus did. To give "glory" means to praise God. Alternate translation: "Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we will praise forever the one who alone is God and who alone is wise. Amen"

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Corinthians

Divisions in the church (1:10-4:21) Moral sins and irregularities (5:1-13) Christians taking other Christians to court (6:1-20) Marriage and related matters (7:1-40) Misuse of Christian liberty; food sacrificed to idols; fleeing idolatry; women's head coverings (8:1-13; 10:1-11:16) Paul's rights as an apostle (9:1-27) The Lord's Supper (11:17-34) The gifts of the Holy Spirit (12:1-31) Love (13:1-13) The gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy and languages (14:1-40) The resurrection of believers and the resurrection of Christ (15:1-58) Closing: the contribution for Christians in Jerusalem, requests, and personal greetings (16:1-24)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Corinthians?

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul started the church that met in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 1 Corinthians about?

1 Corinthians is a letter that Paul wrote to the believers who were in the city of Corinth. Paul had heard that there were problems among the believers there. They were arguing with each other. Some of them did not understand some of the Christian teachings. And some of them were behaving badly. In this letter, Paul responded to them and encouraged them to live in a way that pleased God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "First Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Corinth like?

Corinth was a major city located in ancient Greece. Because it was near the Mediterranean Sea, many travelers and traders came to buy and sell goods there. This resulted in the city having people from many different cultures. The city was famous for having people who lived in immoral ways. The people worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. As part of the ceremonies honoring Aphrodite, her worshipers had sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes.

What was the problem with meat sacrificed to idols?

Many animals were slaughtered and sacrificed to the false gods in Corinth. Priests and worshipers kept some of the meat. Much of the meat was sold in markets. Many Christians disagreed with each other over whether it was right for them to eat this meat, because it had been dedicated to a false god. Paul writes about this problem in 1 Corinthians.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 1 Corinthians in the ULB?

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The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, 1 Corinthians ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people." (See: 1:2; 3:17) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:1, 15) Sometimes the meaning in the passage implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "reserved for," or "sanctified." (See: 1:2; 6:11; 7:14, 34)

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What is the meaning of "flesh?"

Paul frequently used the terms "flesh" or "fleshly" to refer to Christians who did sinful things. However, it is not the physical world that is evil. Paul also described Christians who lived in a righteous way as "spiritual." This is because they did what the Holy Spirit taught them to do. (See: flesh and righteous and spirit)

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:2, 30, 31; 3:1; 4:10, 15, 17; 6:11, 19; 7:22; 9:1, 2; 11:11, 25; 12:3, 9, 13, 18, 25; 14:16; 15:18, 19, 22, 31, 58; 16:19, 24. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God. These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Corinthians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. Translators are advised to follow the modern versions of the Bible. However, if in the translators' region there are Bibles that read according to older versions of the Bible, the translators can follow those. If so, these verses should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to 1 Corinthians.

"Therefore glorify God with your body." Some older translations read "Therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (6:20) "I did this even though I myself was not under the law" (9:20). Some older versions leave this passage out. "for the sake of conscience—the conscience of the other man." Some older translations read "for the sake of conscience: for the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord: the conscience of the other man." (10:28) "and that I give my body to be burned" (13:3). Some older translations read, "and that I give my body so that I might boast." "But if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized" (14:38). Some older translations read, "But if anyone is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant."

Chapter 1

1 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first three verses are a greeting. In the ancient Near East, this was a common way of starting a letter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 19, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Disunity

In this chapter, Paul scolds the church for being divided and for following different apostles. (See: apostle)

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities to help the church. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. Paul lists spiritual gifts in Chapter 12. Some scholars believe the Holy Spirit gave some of these gifts only in the early church to help establish the developing church. Other scholars believe all the gifts of the Spirit are still available to help all Christians throughout the church history. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

In this chapter, Paul refers to the return of Christ using two different phrases: "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the Corinthians for dividing into factions and for relying on human wisdom.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Stumbling block

A stumbling block is a rock people stumble over. Here it represents the difficulty Jews have in believing that God allowed his Messiah to be crucified.

Links:

1 Corinthians 1:1 Notes 1 Corinthians intro

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1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Alternate translation: "I, Paul"

Sosthenes our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Sosthenes. Alternate translation: "Sosthenes, the brother you and I know"

1 Corinthians 1:2

to the church of God at Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the intended audience. Alternate translation: "am writing this letter to you in Corinth who believe in God"

those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus

Here "sanctified" refers to people who have been set apart as God's people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to those whom Christ Jesus has set apart for God" or "to those whom God has set apart for himself because they belong to Christ Jesus"

called to be holy people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has called to be holy people"

together with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this phrase tells who else is called to be holy, or 2) this phrase tells who else this letter is written to.

who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "name" here is a metonym for person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "who call on the Lord Jesus Christ"

their Lord and ours

The word "ours" includes Paul's audience. Jesus is the Lord of Paul and the Corinthians and all the churches.

1 Corinthians 1:3

General Information:

Paul and Sosthenes wrote this letter to the Christians who belonged to the church in Corinth. Unless otherwise noted, such words as "you" and "your" refer to Paul's audience and so are plural.

1 Corinthians 1:4

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes the believers' position and fellowship in Christ as they wait for his coming.

because of the grace of God that Christ Jesus gave to you

Paul speaks of grace as though it were a physical object that Jesus gives Christians as a gift. Alternate translation: "because Christ Jesus has made it possible for God to be kind to you"

1 Corinthians 1:5

He has made you rich

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ has made you rich" or 2) "God has made you rich."

made you rich in every way

Paul is speaking in general terms. Alternate translation: "made you rich with all kinds of spiritual blessings"

in all speech

God has enabled you to tell others about God's message in many ways.

all knowledge

God has enabled you to understand God's message in many ways.

1 Corinthians 1:6

the testimony about Christ has been confirmed as true among you

Possible meanings are 1) "you saw for yourselves that what we had said about Christ was true" or 2) "other people learned from seeing how you now live that what we and you say about Christ is true."

1 Corinthians 1:7

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

you lack no spiritual gift

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you have every spiritual gift"

the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "the time when God will reveal the Lord Jesus Christ" or 2) "the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal himself."

1 Corinthians 1:8

you will be blameless

There will be no reason for God to condemn you.

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, who called ... our Lord

"God, who called ... our Lord, will do everything he has said he will do"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that they are to live in unity with each other and that the message of the cross of Christ, not baptism by people, is what saves.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by means of our Lord Jesus Christ"

that you all agree

"that you live in harmony with one another"

that there be no divisions among you

"that you do not divide into separate groups among

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yourselves"

be joined together with the same mind and by the same purpose

"live in unity, agree with other, and work together to accomplish the same things"

1 Corinthians 1:11

Chloe's people

This refers to family members, servants, and others who are part of the household of which Chloe, a woman, is the head.

there are factions among you

"you are in groups that quarrel one with another"

1 Corinthians 1:12

Each one of you says

Paul is expressing a general attitude of division.

1 Corinthians 1:13

Is Christ divided?

Paul used a question to emphasize that there is only Christ, so it does not make sense for Christians to be divided among themselves. Alternate translation: "Christ is certainly not divided!" or "There is only one Christ!"

Was Paul crucified for you?

Paul used a question to emphasize that it was Christ, not Paul or Apollos, who was crucified. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It certainly was not Paul whom they put to death on the cross for your salvation!"

Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

Paul used a question to emphasize that we all are baptized into the name of Christ. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was not into the name of Paul that people baptized you!"

into the name of Paul

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of." Alternate translation: "by Paul's authority"

1 Corinthians 1:14

I baptized none of you, except

"among you I baptized only"

Crispus

He was a synagogue ruler who became a Christian.

Gaius

He traveled with the Apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 1:15

This was so that no one would say that you were baptized into my name

Here "name" represents "authority." This means Paul did not baptize others because they may claim that they became Paul's disciples. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For some of you might have claimed that I baptized you to make you my disciples"

1 Corinthians 1:16

the household of Stephanas

This refers to the family members and slaves in the house where Stephanas, a man, was the head.

1 Corinthians 1:17

Christ did not send me to baptize

This means that baptism was not the primary goal of Paul's ministry.

not with clever speech, in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

The phrase "in order ... would not" can be stated in positive form, and "be emptied" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not with clever speech, because clever speech would empty the cross of its power" or "not with clever speech, because this would cause the cross of Christ to lose its power"

in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

Paul speaks of God's power to save people who trust in Christ as if the cross on which Christ died had power. The cross being emptied of its power represents people not recognizing God's power to save them through Christ's death. If Paul were to use clever speech, people might pay more attention to his clever speech than to Christ's death. Alternate translation: "in order that people might recognize God's power to save them through Jesus's death on the cross" or "because clever speech would distract people from God's power as shown in the cross"

1 Corinthians 1:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes God's wisdom rather than man's wisdom.

the message about the cross

"the preaching about the crucifixion" or "the message of Christ's dying on the cross"

is foolishness

"is senseless" or "is silly"

to those who are perishing

"dying." This refers to dying in rebellion against God.

it is the power of God

"it is God working powerfully in us"

1 Corinthians 1:19

I will set aside the understanding of the intelligent

"I will confuse intelligent people" or "I will make the plans that intelligent people make completely fail"

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this world?

Paul emphasizes that truly wise people are nowhere to be found. Alternate translation: "Compared with the wisdom of the gospel, there are no wise people, no scholars, no debaters!"

the scholar

a person who is recognized as someone who has studied a great deal

the debater

a person who argues about what he knows or who is skilled in such arguments

Has not God turned the wisdom of the world into foolishness?

Paul uses this question to emphasize what God has done to the wisdom of this world. Alternate translation: "God has shown that everything they call wisdom is really foolishness"

1 Corinthians 1:21

those who believe

Possible meanings are 1) "all who believe the message" or 2) "all who believe in Christ."

1 Corinthians 1:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 1:23

General Information:

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Here the word "we" refers to Paul and other Bible teachers.

Christ crucified

"about Christ, who died on a cross"

a stumbling block

Just as a person can stumble over a block on a road, so the message of salvation through the crucifixion of the Christ keeps Jews from believing in Jesus. Alternate translation: "not acceptable" or "very offensive"

1 Corinthians 1:24

to those whom God has called

"to the people God calls"

we preach Christ

"we teach about Christ" or "we tell all people about Christ"

we preach Christ as the power and the wisdom of God

Possible meanings are 1) "we preach that God acted powerfully and wisely by sending Christ to die for us" or "we preach that through Christ God has shown how strong and wise he is."

the power ... of God

Another possible meaning is that Christ is powerful and it is through Christ that God saves us.

the wisdom of God

Another possible meaning is that God shows the content of his wisdom through Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:25

the foolishness of God is wiser than people, and the weakness of God is stronger than people

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is speaking ironically about God's foolishness and weakness. Paul knows God is not foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what seems to be the foolishness of God is wiser than people's wisdom, and what seems to be the weakness of God is stronger than the people's strength" or 2) Paul is speaking from the point of view of the Greek people who may think God is foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what people call God's foolishness is really wiser than what people call wisdom, and what people call God's weakness is really stronger than people's strength"

1 Corinthians 1:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes the believer's position before God.

Not many of you

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Very few of you"

wise according to the flesh

"wise according to human standards" or "what most people would call wise"

of noble birth

"special because your family is important"

1 Corinthians 1:27

God chose ... wise. God chose ... strong

Paul repeats many of the same words in two sentences that mean almost the same thing to emphasize the difference between God's way of doing things and how people think God should do them.

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise

"God chose to use the things that the world thinks are foolish to shame those whom the world thinks are wise"

God chose what is weak in the world to shame what is strong

"God chose to use things that the world thinks are weak to shame the things that the world thinks are strong"

1 Corinthians 1:28

what is low and despised

"the things that are humble and hated"

things that are regarded as nothing

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that which people usually regard as without value"

nothing, to bring to nothing things that are held as valuable

"nothing. He did this so he could show that the things that are held as valuable are really worthless"

things that are held as valuable

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that people think are worth money" or "things that people think are worth respect"

1 Corinthians 1:29

He did this

"God did this"

no flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people, who are made of flesh. Alternate translation: "no people"

1 Corinthians 1:30

Because of what God did

This refers to the work of Christ on the cross.

us ... our

These words refer to Paul, those with him, and the Corinthians.

Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ Jesus, who has made clear to us how wise God is" or 2) "Christ Jesus, who has given us God's wisdom."

1 Corinthians 1:31

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord

"If a person boasts, he should boast about how great the Lord is"

Chapter 2

1 Corinthians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9 and 16. These poetic lines are from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wisdom

Paul continues the discussion from the first chapter that contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. For Paul, human wisdom can be foolish. He says the wisdom from the Holy Spirit is the only true wisdom. Paul uses the phrase "hidden wisdom" when he refers to previously unknown truths. (See: wise and foolish)

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Links:

[1 Corinthians 2:1 Notes]

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1 Corinthians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. He emphasizes that spiritual wisdom comes from God.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 2:2

I decided to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ

When Paul said that he "decided to know nothing" he exaggerated to emphasize that he decided to focus on and teach about nothing other than Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "I decided to teach nothing ... except Jesus Christ" or "I decided not to teach anything ... except Jesus Christ"

to know nothing when I was among you except Jesus Christ

The double negative here emphasizes that Jesus Christ was the only thing Paul wanted to think about. Alternate translation: "when I was among you to know only Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 2:3

I was with you

"I was visiting with you"

in weakness

Possible meanings are: 1) "physically weak" or 2) "feeling like I could not do what I needed to do."

1 Corinthians 2:4

my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom

The ideas in the nouns "message" and "proclamation" can be expressed with the verbs "speak" and "preach." Alternate translation: "I did not speak and preach with persuasive words of wisdom"

persuasive words of wisdom

These are words that sound wise and with which the speaker hopes to cause people to do or believe something. Alternate translation: "wise and pursuasive words"

1 Corinthians 2:5

so that your faith might not be in the wisdom of humans

"so that you will not trust in human wisdom"

but in the power of God

"but your faith will be in the power of God" or "but you will trust in the power of God"

1 Corinthians 2:6

General Information:

Paul interrupts his main argument to explain what he means by "wisdom" and to whom he desires to speak.

Now we do speak

The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Paul begins to explain that true wisdom is God's wisdom.

speak wisdom

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as the adjective "wise." Alternate translation: "speak wise words" or "speak a wise message"

the mature

"mature believers"

1 Corinthians 2:7

before the ages

"before God created anything"

for our glory

"in order to ensure our future glory"

1 Corinthians 2:8

the Lord of glory

"Jesus, the glorious Lord"

1 Corinthians 2:9

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has imagined

This is a triplet referring to all parts of a person to emphasize that no man has ever been aware of the things that God has prepared.

what God has prepared for those who love him

The Lord has created in heaven wonderful surprises for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:10

these things

the truths about Jesus and his death on the cross

the Spirit searches everything out

"the Spirit studies everthing accurately" or "the Spirit investigates everything." This implies that the Spirit knows everything.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of the person in him?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows what a person is thinking except the person himself. Alternate translation: "No one knows what a person is thinking except that person's spirit"

spirit of the person

This refers to a person's inner being, his own spiritual nature.

no one knows the deep things of God except the Spirit of God

"only the Spirit of God knows the deep things of God"

1 Corinthians 2:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.

freely given to us by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God freely gave to us" or "that God has kindly given us"

1 Corinthians 2:13

interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people

The meaning of the original language here is uncertain. Other translations of the Bible translate this as "interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words."

to spiritual people

Here "spiritual people" refers to those who are led by the Holy Spirit to obey God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.

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unspiritual person
the non-Christian person, who has not received the Holy Spirit
because they are spiritually discerned
"because understanding these things requires the aid of the Spirit"
1 Corinthians 2:15
The one who is spiritual
"The believer who has received the Spirit"
he is not judged by others
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "others cannot judge him" or "no one can judge him"
1 Corinthians 2:16
For who can know the mind of the Lord, that he can instruct him?
Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows the mind of the Lord. No one is as wise as the Lord. Alternate translation: "No one can know the mind of the Lord, so no one can teach him anything he does not already know"

Chapter 3

1 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verses 19 and 20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Fleshly people

The Corinthian believers were immature because of their unrighteous actions. He calls them "fleshly," meaning acting as nonbelievers. This term is used in opposition to those who are "spiritual." Christians following their "flesh" are acting foolishly. They are following the wisdom of the world. (See: righteous, flesh, spirit and foolish and wise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

There are many metaphors in this chapter. Paul uses "little children" and "milk" to illustrate spiritual immaturity. He uses the metaphors of planting and watering to describe the roles he and Apollos played in growing the church in Corinth. Paul uses other metaphors to help teach spiritual truths to the Corinthians and to help them to understand his teachings.

Links:

1 Corinthians 3:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 3:1
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
spiritual people
people who obey the Spirit
fleshly people
people who follow their own desires
as to little children in Christ
The Corinthians are compared to children very young in age and understanding. Alternate translation: "as to very young believers in Christ"
1 Corinthians 3:2
I fed you milk, not solid food
Babies can only drink milk because they have not grown enough to eat solid food. Paul uses this image as a metaphor to mean that the Corinthians can only understand easy truths. They are not mature enough to understand greater truths.
you are not yet ready
It is implied that they are not ready to understand more difficult teachings. Alternate translation: "you still are not ready to understand the harder teachings about following Christ"
1 Corinthians 3:3
still fleshly
still behaving according to sinful or worldly desires
are you not living according to the flesh, and are you not walking by human standards?
Paul uses questions to rebuke the Corinthians for their sinful behavior. Here "walking" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are behaving according to your sinful desires and you are living according to human standards!"
1 Corinthians 3:4
are you not merely human beings?
Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are living the same way that people who do not have the Spirit live."
1 Corinthians 3:5
Who then is Apollos? Who is Paul?
Paul is emphasizing that he and Apollos are not the original source of the gospel, and therefore the Corinthians should not follow them. Alternate translation: "It is wrong to form groups to follow Apollos or Paul!" or
Who is Paul?
Paul is speaking of himself as though he were speaking of someone else. Alternate translation: "I am not important!" or "Who am I?"
Servants through whom you believed
Paul answers his own question by saying that he and Apollos are God's servants. Alternate translation: "Paul and Apollos are servants of Christ, and you believed in Christ because we served him"
Servants through whom you believed, just as the Lord gave tasks to

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each
This can be stated with the understood information. Alternate translation: "We are servants through whom you believed, and to each of us the Lord gave different tasks"
1 Corinthians 3:6
I planted
The knowledge of God is compared to a seed which must be planted in order to grow. Alternate translation: "When I preached God's word to you, I was like one who plants seeds in a garden"
Apollos watered
As seeds need water, faith needs further teaching in order for it to grow. Alternate translation: "and when Apollos continued to teach you God's word, he was like one who waters a garden"
but God gave the growth
As plants grow and develop, so faith and knowledge in God also grow and become deeper and stronger. Alternate translation: "but God caused you to grow" or "but just as God causes plants to grow, he caused you to grow spiritually"
1 Corinthians 3:7
neither he who plants ... is anything. But it is God who gives the growth
Paul stresses that neither he nor Apollos is responsible for the believers' spiritual growth, but it is God's doing.
it is God who gives the growth
Here to give growth means to cause growth. The abstract noun "growth" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "it is God who causes you to grow"
1 Corinthians 3:8
he who plants and he who waters are one
Paul speaks of telling people the good news and teaching those who have accepted it as if they were planting and watering plants.
are one
Possible meanings are "one" are 1) "united in purpose" or 2) "equal in importance."
wages
an amount of money that a worker receives for his work
1 Corinthians 3:9
we
This refers to Paul and Apollos but not the Corinthian church.
God's fellow workers
Paul considers himself and Apollos as working together.
You are God's garden
Possible meanings are 1) being God's garden represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that belongs to God" or 2) being God's garden represents God causing us to grow. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that God makes grow"
God's building
Possible meanings are 1) being God's building represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that belongs to God" or 2) being God's building represents God causing us to become what he wants. Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that God is constructing"
1 Corinthians 3:10
According to the grace of God that was given to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "According to the task that God freely gave me to do"
I laid a foundation
Paul equates his teaching of faith and salvation in Jesus Christ to laying a foundation for a building.
another is building on it
Paul is referring to the person or people who are teaching the Corinthians at that time as if they are carpenters who are constructing the building above the foundation.
let each man
This refers to God's workers in general. Alternate translation: "let each person who serves God"
1 Corinthians 3:11
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues his metaphor about a foundation.
no one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid
The phrase "has been laid" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one can lay a foundation other than the one and only foundation"
1 Corinthians 3:12
General Information:
Paul speaks of what builders usually do when constructing a building to describe what the teachers in Corinth are actually doing. Builders usually only use gold, silver, or precious stones as decorations on buildings.
Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw
The building materials used to build a new building are being compared to the spiritual values used to build a person's behavior and activities during his lifetime. Alternate translation: "Whether a person builds with valuable materials that will last or with cheap materials that burn easily"
precious stones
"expensive stones"
1 Corinthians 3:13
his work will be revealed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will show everyone what the builder has done"
for the day will reveal it
The "day" refers to the time when God will judge everyone. When God shows everyone what these teachers have done, it will be like the sun has come up to reveal what happened during the night.
For it will be revealed in fire. The fire will test the quality of what each one has done
Just as fire will reveal the strengths or destroy the weaknesses of a building, God's fire will judge man's efforts and activities. Alternate translation: "God will use fire to show the quality of his work"
1 Corinthians 3:14
work remains
"work lasts" or "work survives"
1 Corinthians 3:15
if anyone's work is burned up
This is a metaphor for a person's work being shown to have no value. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if the fire destroys anyone's work" or "if the

judgement shows that a person's work has no value"
he will suffer loss
The abstract noun "loss" can be expressed with the verb "lose." Alternate translation: "he will lose his reward"
but he himself will be saved, as though escaping through fire
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but God will save him as though through fire"
as though escaping through fire
This is a simile showing the danger that such a person is in if his works have no value. (See:
1 Corinthians 3:16
Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?
Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You act as though you do not know that you are God's temple and the Spirit of God lives in you!"
Do you ... you are ... in you
All instances of "you" in this verse are plural.
1 Corinthians 3:17
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 3:18
Let no one deceive himself
Nobody should believe the lie that he himself is wise in this world.
in this age
according to the way people who do not believe decide what is wise
let him become a "fool"
"that person should be willing to have people who do not believe call him a fool"
1 Corinthians 3:19
He catches the wise in their craftiness
God traps the people who think they are clever and uses their own schemes to trap them.
1 Corinthians 3:20
The Lord knows that the reasoning of the wise is futile
"The Lord knows that what people who think they are wise plan to do is futile"
futile
useless
1 Corinthians 3:21
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 3:22
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 3:23
you are Christ's, and Christ is God's
"you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God"

Chapter 4

1 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Pride

Paul contrasts the Corinthians' pride with the apostles' humility. The Corinthian believers had no reason to be proud. All that they had, and all they were, was a gift from God. (See: apostle)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. He describes the apostles as servants. Paul speaks of a victory parade where the apostles are the prisoners who will be killed. He uses a rod to stand for punishment. He calls himself their father because he is their "spiritual father." (See: and spirit)

Irony

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians for being proud. The Corinthian believers are reigning but the apostles are suffering.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

1 Corinthians 4:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 4:1
Connecting Statement:
Having just reminded the people not to be proud concerning who had taught them about the Lord and who had baptized them, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that all believers are to be humble servants.
1 Corinthians 4:2
of stewards is that they
Paul is speaking of himself as if he were speaking about other people. Alternate translation: "of us stewards is that we"
1 Corinthians 4:3
it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you
Paul is comparing the difference between human judgment and God's judgment. Man's judgment is not important compared to God's true judgment upon man.
1 Corinthians 4:4
I am not aware of any charge being made against me
"I have not heard anyone accuse me of doing wrong"
that does not justify me
It would still be possible for Paul to be guilty even if there were no charge against him. This can be translated in

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active form. Alternate translation: "that does not mean that God has declared me innocent"

The one who judges me is the Lord

"It is the Lord who will decide if I am innocent or guilty"

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart

Here "bring to light the hidden things of darkness" is a metaphor for making known to everyone things that were done in secret. Here "heart" is a metonym for people's thoughts and intentions. Alternate translation: "Like a light that shines on things in darkness, God will show what people have secretly done and what they secretly planned"

1 Corinthians 4:6

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

for your sakes

"for your welfare"

1 Corinthians 4:7

between you ... do you have that you did not receive ... you have received ... do you boast ... you did not

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" here are singular.

For who sees any difference between you and others?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians who think they are better than those who heard the gospel from someone else. Alternate translation: "For there is no difference between you and others." or "For you are not superior to other people."

What do you have that you did not receive?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that they did not earn the things they have. Alternate translation: "Everything that you have is what you have received." or "God gave to you everything that you have!"

why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Paul was rebuking them for boasting in what they had. Alternate translation: "you should not boast as if you had not received it." or "you have no right to boast!"

1 Corinthians 4:8

General Information:

Paul uses irony here to shame the Corinthians and make them realize that they are sinning when they are proud of themselves and their teachers.

1 Corinthians 4:9

God has put us apostles on display

Paul expresses two ways that God has put his apostles on display for the world to see.

has put us apostles on display

God has displayed the apostles just like prisoners who are at the end of a Roman military parade and who are humiliated before their execution.

like men sentenced to death

God put the apostles on display like men who are about to be executed.

to the world—to angels, and to human beings

Possible meanings are 1) "the world" consists of both supernatural

1 Corinthians 4:10

We are fools ... in dishonor

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians so they will think about what he is saying.

You are held in honor

"People treat you Corinthians as though you were important people"

we are held in dishonor

"people shame us apostles"

1 Corinthians 4:11

Up to this present hour

"Until now" or "Up to now"

we are beaten

This refers to hitting with the hand, not with whips or clubs. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people beat us"

we are homeless

Paul means that they have to move around from place to place. Although they have places to stay, they have no permanent home.

1 Corinthians 4:12

When we are slandered, we bless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people slander us, we bless them" or "When people scorn us, we bless them"

When we are persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people persecute us"

1 Corinthians 4:13

When we are slandered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people slander us"

We have become as the refuse of the world

"People began to consider us—and they still consider us—to be the garbage of the world"

the refuse of the world

"the worst kind of garbage in the world"

1 Corinthians 4:14

I do not write these things to shame you, but to warn you

"I do not intend to shame you, but I want to correct you"

my beloved children

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, they are like his spiritual children.

1 Corinthians 4:15

ten thousand guardians

This is an exaggeration of the number of people guiding them, to emphasize the importance of the one spiritual father. Alternate translation: "very many guardians" or "a large crowd of guardians"

I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel

Paul is emphasizing firstly that his relationship with the Corinthians is most importantly "in Christ," secondly that it came because he told them the good news, and thirdly that he is the one who is like a father to them. Alternate translation: "it was because God joined you to Christ when I told you the good news that I was the one who became your father"

I became your father

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, he is like a father to them.

1 Corinthians 4:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 4:17

my beloved and faithful child in the Lord

"whom I love and whom I teach about the Lord as if he were my own child"

1 Corinthians 4:18

Now

This word indicates that Paul is shifting his topic. Here he begins to rebuke the arrogant behavior of the Corinthian believers.

1 Corinthians 4:19

I will come to you

"I will visit you"

1 Corinthians 4:20

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 4:21

What do you want?

Paul was making a last appeal to the Corinthians, as he has been rebuking them for the errors they had made. Alternate translation: "Tell me what you want to happen now."

Should I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

Paul is offering the Corinthians two opposing attitudes he could use when approaching them. Alternate translation: "If you want, I can come to punish you, or I can come to show you how much I love you by being gentle with you."

of gentleness

"of kindness" or "of tenderness"

Chapter 5

1 Corinthians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 13.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses euphemisms to describe sensitive topics. This chapter deals with sexual immorality of one church member. (See: and fornication)

Metaphor

Paul uses an extended comparison that contains many metaphors. Yeast represents evil. The loaf probably represents the whole congregation. The unleavened bread represents living purely. So the whole passage means: Don't you know that a little evil will affect the whole congregation? So get rid of the evil so you can live purely. Christ has been sacrificed for us. So let us be sincere and truthful and not wicked and behaving badly. (See:, evil, unleavenedbread, purify, and passover)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 5:1 Notes]

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1 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul now specifically states about what sin of theirs he has heard, and how the Corinthian believers are proud of their acceptance of that man and his sin.

that is not even permitted among the pagans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that not even the Gentiles permit"

A man has his father's wife

"A man among you is commiting adultery with his father's wife"

father's wife

the wife of his father, but probably not his own mother

1 Corinthians 5:2

Should you not mourn instead ... among you?

This rhetorical question is used to scold the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You should mourn over this instead ... among you!"

the one who did this deed might be removed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you can remove from among you the one who did this deed"

1 Corinthians 5:3

I am present in spirit

"I am with you in spirit." Being with them in spirit represents caring about them or wanting to be with them. Alternate translation: "I care about you" or "I want to be with you"

I have already passed judgment on the one who did this

Possible meanings are 1) "I have decided what you should do with the one who did this" or 2) "I have found the person who did this guilty"

1 Corinthians 5:4

When you are assembled

"When you are together" or "When you meet together"

in the name of our Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) the name of the Lord Jesus is a metonym that represents his authority. Alternate translation: "with the authority of our Lord Jesus" or 2) being assembled in the Lord's name implies meeting

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together to worship him. Alternate translation: "to worship our Lord Jesus"

1 Corinthians 5:5

deliver this man over to Satan

This means make the man leave the Christian community so that he will no longer be protected from Satan. Alternate translation: “hand this man over to Satan by sending him away from the Christian community”

for the destruction of the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to his physical body. Alternate translation: "so that Satan may harm his body" or 2) "flesh" is a metaphor for the sinful nature. Alternate translation: "so that his sinful nature will be destroyed" or "so that he will not continue to live according to his sinful nature"

so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may save his spirit on the day of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 5:6

Your boasting is not good

"Your boasting is bad"

Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole loaf?

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is sinning can harm the entire Christian community.

Do you not know that a little yeast ... loaf?

Here Paul uses a rhetorical question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "You know that a little yeast ... loaf." or "A little yeast ... loaf."

1 Corinthians 5:7

Cleanse yourselves of the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough, unleavened

Paul uses the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "old yeast" is a metaphor for the sins that the people were committing. "Unleavened dough" is the type of bread that God told the Israelites was acceptable to eat when celebrating Passover. Paul is telling his audience to stop sinning so that they may be acceptable to God.

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed

As the Passover lamb covered the sins of Israel by faith each year, so did Christ's death cover the sins of all who trust in Christ by faith for eternity. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord has sacrificed Christ, our Passover lamb"

1 Corinthians 5:8

not with the old yeast, the yeast of bad behavior and wickedness ... the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth

Paul continues using the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "yeast" is a metaphor for sin, and "unleavened bread" is metaphor for behaviors acceptable to God.

1 Corinthians 5:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 5:10

the immoral people of this world

This means unbelievers who have chosen to live immoral lives.

the greedy

"those who are greedy" or "those who are willing to be dishonest to get what others have"

swindlers

This means people who cheat to get others' property.

you would need to go out of the world

"you would need to avoid all people"

1 Corinthians 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells them how to treat believers in the church who refuse to be corrected for their involvement in sexual immorality or other obvious sins.

anyone who is called

"anyone who calls himself"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, either a man or a woman.

1 Corinthians 5:12

how am I involved with judging those who are outside the church?

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he is not the one to judge people outside the church. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am not the one who should judge people who do not belong to the church."

are you not to judge those who are inside the church?

Paul is using a question to scold the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should know that you are the ones who should judge those who are inside the church."

1 Corinthians 5:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 6

1 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Lawsuits

Paul teaches that a Christian should not take another Christian to court before a non-Christian judge. It is better to be cheated. Christians will judge the angels. So they should be able to solve problems among themselves. (See: judge)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

The temple of the Holy Spirit is an important metaphor. It refers to the place where the Holy Spirit stays and is worshiped.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Links:

[1 Corinthians 6:1 Notes]

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1 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how believers are to settle disagreements with other believers.

dispute

in this case a legal complaint, argument, or disagreement

does he dare ... holy people?

Paul is angry because the Corinthians are doing a great wrong by taking their disputes with each other to the civil court. Alternate translation: "it is wrong for him to dare ... holy people." or "he should fear God and not ... God's holy people."

to bring a lawsuit before the unrighteous rather than before God's holy people

to ask unrighteous people, rather than God's holy people, to judge who is right and who is wrong

1 Corinthians 6:2

Do you not know that God's holy people will judge the world?

Paul uses a question to shame the Corinthians for their behavior. Alternate translation: "You act like you do not know that God's holy people will judge the world."

If then you will judge the world, are you not able to settle matters of little importance?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "You will judge the world in the future, so you should be able to settle this small matter now."

1 Corinthians 6:3

judge matters of this life

"stop arguments about things that have to do with this life"

Do you not know that we will judge the angels?

Paul is surprised that they do not seem to know. Alternate translation: "You know that we will judge the angels."

we

Paul includes himself and the Corinthians.

How much more, then, can we judge matters of this life?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "Because we know we will judge the angels, we can also be sure that God will enable us to judge matters in this life."

1 Corinthians 6:4

If then you have to make judgments that pertain to daily life

"If you are called upon to make decisions about daily life" or "If you must settle matters that are important in this life"

do you lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church?

Possible meanings are that 1) this is a rhetorical question and Paul is rebuking the Corinthians for laying their cases before people of no standing in the church. Alternate translation: "you should not lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church." or 2) this is a command to lay their cases before even people of no standing in the church, rather than to people outside of the church. Alternate translation: "lay cases such as these even before people in the church who have no standing, not before people outside of the church."

1 Corinthians 6:5

to your shame

"to your dishonor" or "to show how you have failed in this matter"

Is there no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between brothers?

Paul is shaming the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You should be ashamed that you cannot find a wise believer to settle arguments between brothers"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

dispute

argument or disagreement

1 Corinthians 6:6

But one brother brings a lawsuit against another brother—and this before unbelievers

"But brothers who have disputes with each other ask judges who do not believe in Christ to make decisions for them" or "It is bad that brothers have such bad disputes with each other that they go to court; it is even worse that those courts are run by unbelievers"

brother brings a lawsuit against another brother

Here "brother" means fellow Christian, including both men and women.

brings a lawsuit

asks the civil court to judge the matter

and this before unbelievers

Possible meanings are 1) "and the brothers have unbelieving judges make decisions for them" or 2) "and unbelievers in the community see brothers disputing with one another"

1 Corinthians 6:7

is already a defeat

"is already a failure"

Why not rather suffer the wrong? Why not rather allow yourselves to be cheated?

Paul continues to shame the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "It would be better to let others wrong you and cheat you than to take them to court."

1 Corinthians 6:8

your own brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Do you not know that ... kingdom of God?

Paul emphasizes that they should already know this truth. Alternate translation: "You already know that ... kingdom of God."

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

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inherit the kingdom of God

God will not judge them as righteous at the judgment, and they will not enter eternal life.

nor men who submit to homosexual acts, nor men who perform homosexual acts

Both of these phrases refer to men who have sex with other men.

1 Corinthians 6:10

thieves

people who steal from others

the greedy

people who are willing to use evil means to take others' property

1 Corinthians 6:11

you have been cleansed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has cleansed you"

you have been sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has set you apart for himself"

you have been justified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has made you right with him"

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by the power and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that God wants them pure because Christ has bought them with his death. Their bodies are now God's temple. He does so by saying what the Corinthians might say and then correcting them.

"Everything is lawful for me," but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation: "People say, 'I am allowed to do anything,' but" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything, but"

but not everything is profitable

Paul is answering whoever says, "Everything is lawful for me." Alternate translation: "but not everything is good for me"

I will not be mastered by any of them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not allow these things to rule over me like a master"

1 Corinthians 6:13

"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will do away with both of them

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is correcting what some Corinthians might be thinking, "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," by answering that God will do away with both the stomach and food or 2) Paul actually agrees that "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but he is adding that God will do away with both of them.

Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food

One possible meanings is that the speaker is speaking indirectly of the body and sex, but you should translate this literally as "stomach" and "food."

do away with

"destroy"

1 Corinthians 6:14

raised the Lord

"caused the Lord to live again"

1 Corinthians 6:15

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

The word translated as "members" refers to parts of a body. Our belonging to Christ is spoken of as if we were parts of his body. We belong to him so much that even our bodies belong to him. Paul uses this question to remind the people of something they should already know. Alternate translation: "You should know that your bodies belong to Christ."

Should I then take the members of Christ and join them to a prostitute? May it not be!

Paul uses this question to emphasize how wrong it is for someone who belongs to Christ to go to a prostitute. Alternate translation: "I am part of Christ. I will not take my body and join myself to a prostitute!" or "We are parts of Christ's body. We must not take our bodies and join ourselves to prostitutes!"

May it not be!

"That should never happen!" or "We must never do that!"

1 Corinthians 6:16

Do you not know that ... her?

Paul begins to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing a truth that they already know. "I want to remind you that ... her."

he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when a man joins his body to the body of a prostitute, it is as if their bodies become one body"

1 Corinthians 6:17

he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the Lord joins his spirit to the spirit of a person, it is as if their spirits become one spirit"

1 Corinthians 6:18

Run away from

Paul speaks of a person rejecting sexual sin as if that person were running away from danger. Alternate translation: "Get away from"

immorality! Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is showing that sexual sin is especially bad because it is not only against others but against the sinner's own body or 2) Paul is quoting what some Corinthians were thinking. Alternate translation: "immorality! Some of you are saying, 'Every sin that a person commits is outside the body,' but I say that"

sin that a person commits

"evil deed that a person does"

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know ... God? Do you not know that you are not your own?

Paul is continuing to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing what they already know. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you ... God and that you are not your own."

your body

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the body of each individual Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit

temple of the Holy Spirit

A temple is dedicated to divine beings, and it is also where they dwell. In the same way, the bodies of believers are like temples because the Holy Spirit lives within them.

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you were bought with a price

God paid for the freedom of the Corinthians from the slavery of sin. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God paid for your freedom"

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

Chapter 7

1 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins to answer a series of questions that the Corinthians may have asked him. The first question is about marriage. The second question is about a slave trying to become free, a Gentile becoming a Jew, or a Jew becoming a Gentile.

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Paul says married Christians should not divorce. A Christian married to an unbeliever should not leave their husband or wife. If the unbelieving husband or wife leaves, this is not a sin. Paul advises that, because of the difficult times and because it is near to the time that Jesus will return, it is good to remain unmarried. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses many euphemisms to discreetly refer to sexual relations. This is often a sensitive topic. Many cultures do not wish to speak openly about these matters.

Links:

1 Corinthians 7:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the believers some specific instructions on marriage.

Now

Paul is introducing a new topic in his teaching.

the issues you wrote about

The Corinthians had written a letter to Paul to ask for answers to certain questions.

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is quoting what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "you wrote, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman.'" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks. Alternate translation: "my answer is that yes, it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

It is good

"It is most helpful"

for a man

Possible meanings are 1) "a man" refers to a married man. Alternate translation: "a husband" or 2) "a man" refers to any man.

not to touch a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "touch a woman" is a euphemism for having sexual relations. Alternate translation: "not to have sexual relations with his wife for a while" or 2) "touch a woman" is a metonym for marry. Alternate translation: "not to marry"

1 Corinthians 7:2

But because

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is responding to what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "That is true, but because" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks.

But because of temptations for many immoral acts, each

"But because Satan tempts people to commit sexual sin, each" or "But we desire to commit sexual sin because of our sinful nature, so each"

1 Corinthians 7:3

fulfill his duty to have sexual relations with his wife

Husbands should regularly have sexual relations with their wives. Alternate translation: "should give to his wife her sexual rights"

in the same way the wife to her husband

The words "should fulfill" and "duty to have sexual relations" are understood from the previous phrase, as is the meaning of the euphemism. Alternate translation: "in the same way, the wife should fulfill her duty to have sexual relations with her husband" or "in the same way, the wife should give to her husband his sexual rights"

1 Corinthians 7:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive each other, except by mutual agreement and for

This double negative emphasizes that mutual agreement is necessary. Alternate translation: "Only if you both agree to deprive each other should you do so, and even then only do so for"

Do not deprive each other

The word "deprive" means to keep from someone something that the other person has the right to receive, in this case marital relations. "Do not refuse to have marital

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relations with your spouse"
so that you may devote yourselves to prayer
in order to have a period of especially deep prayer
devote yourselves
"commit yourselves"
come together again
"sleep together again"
because of your lack of self-control
"because after some days, your sexual desires will be harder to keep under control"
1 Corinthians 7:6
I say these things to you as a concession and not as a command
Possible meanings are Paul is telling the Corinthians that he is allowing them, but not commanding them, 1) to marry and sleep together or 2) to stop sleeping together for a time.
1 Corinthians 7:7
were as I am
Either Paul had never married or his wife had died. It is unlikely that he had been through a divorce.
But each one has his own gift from God. One has this kind of gift, and another that kind
"But God enables people to do different things. He enables one person to do one thing and another person to do something different"
1 Corinthians 7:8
the unmarried
"those who are not married"
to widows
"to women whose husbands have died"
it is good
See how you translated this in 1 Corinthians 7:1.
1 Corinthians 7:9
to burn with passion
"to live with the constant desire to sleep with someone"
1 Corinthians 7:10
should not separate from
Paul's readers knew no difference between separating and divorcing. To stop living with someone was to end the marriage. Alternate translation: "should not divorce"
1 Corinthians 7:11
be reconciled to her husband
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she should make peace with her husband and return to him"
should not divorce
Paul's readers knew no difference between divorcing and simply separating. To do either was to end the marriage. Alternate translation: "should not separate from"
1 Corinthians 7:12
content
willing or satisfied
1 Corinthians 7:13
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 7:14
For the unbelieving husband is set apart because of his wife
Possible meanings are 1) "For God has set apart the unbelieving husband for himself because of his believing wife" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving husband as he would treat a son for the sake of his believing wife"
the unbelieving wife is set apart because of the brother
Possible meanings are 1) "God has set apart the unbelieving wife for himself because of her husband who believes" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving wife as he would treat a daughter for the sake of her husband who believes"
the brother
the believing man or husband
they are set apart
Possible meanings are 1) "God has set them apart for himself" or 2) "God treats them as he would treat his own children"
1 Corinthians 7:15
In such cases, the brother or sister is not bound to their vows
Here "brother" and "sister" refers to a Christian husband or wife. Here "not bound to their vows" is a metaphor that mean the person is not obligated to do what they vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "In such cases, God does not require the believing spouse to continue to obey the marriage vow"
1 Corinthians 7:16
do you know, woman ... you will save your husband ... do you know, man ... you will save your wife
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and "your" here are singular.
how do you know, woman, whether you will save your husband?
Paul uses a question to cause women to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving husband."
how do you know, man, whether you will save your wife?
Paul uses a question to cause men to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving wife."
1 Corinthians 7:17
However
No matter what is true for the people in any of the situations Paul has just been discussing, he addresses the following words to everyone.
as the Lord has given each one his portion
God giving people skills and work to do and guiding the events of their lives is spoken of as if he were dividing physical objects and giving parts out to them. Alternate translation: "as the Lord has assigned each one his life"
each one
"each believer"
let each one walk as God has called him
The word "walk" is a metaphor for "live." Possible meanings of the word "called" are 1) it refers to people responding to the gospel. Alternate translation: "each one should live as he was when he became a Christian." Or 2) it is a metaphor for "commanded" or "instructed." Alternate translation: "each one should live as God has instructed him to" or "each one should follow God's commands as he lives his life"
This is my rule in all the churches
Paul was teaching believers in all the churches to act in this manner.
1 Corinthians 7:18
Was anyone circumcised when he was called to believe? He

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Paul was addressing the circumcised ones
Was anyone uncircumcised when he was called to faith? He
Paul was now addressing the uncircumcised ones. Alternate translation: "If someone was uncircumcised when God called him to believe, he"
1 Corinthians 7:19
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 7:20
remain in the calling
Here "calling" refers to the work or social position in which you were involved. Alternate translation: "live and work as you did"
1 Corinthians 7:21
Were you ... called you? Do not be ... you can become
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and the command "be" here are singular.
Were you a slave when God called you? Do not be concerned
This can be stated as a statement. Alternate translation: "To anyone who was a slave when God called you to believe, I say this: do not be concerned"
1 Corinthians 7:22
the Lord's freeman
This freeman is forgiven by God and therefore free from Satan and sin.
1 Corinthians 7:23
You have been bought with a price
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ bought you by dying for you"
1 Corinthians 7:24
Brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
whatever situation he was in when he was called
"whether he was married or unmarried, slave or free, when he was called"
he was called
You may need to make explicit who called and use an active verb. Alternate translation: "God called him"
called
called to believe in Christians
let each one remain
"each one should remain." That is, each one should remain slave, free, married, or unmarried, as he was when he first believed in Christ.
with God
"as a person responsible to God"
1 Corinthians 7:25
Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord
Paul knows no teaching of Jesus that speaks about this situation. Alternate translation: "The Lord has not commanded me to say anything to people who have never married"
virgins
This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. Alternate translation: "people who have never married"
I give my opinion
"I tell you what I think"
as one who, by the Lord's mercy, is trustworthy
"because, by the Lord's mercy, I am trustworthy"
1 Corinthians 7:26
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 7:27
General Information:
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if he were speaking to each person, so all these instances of "you" and the command "do not seek" here are singular.
Are you bound to a wife? Do not ...
Paul uses this question to introduce a possible condition. The question can be translated as a phrase with "if." Alternate translation: "If you are bound to a wife, do not"
bound
married
Do not seek a divorce
"Do not try to divorce her" or "Do try to separate from her"
do not seek a wife
"do not try to get married"
1 Corinthians 7:28
fleshly trouble
The word "fleshly" is a metonym for mortal life. Alternate translation: "trouble in this life"
I want to spare you from this
The word "this" refers to the kinds of worldly trouble that married people might have. Alternate translation: "I want to help you not to have worldly trouble"
virgin
This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. See how you translated "virgins" in [1 Corinthians 7:25]
1 Corinthians 7:29
The time is short
"There is little time" or "Time is almost gone"
1 Corinthians 7:30
weep
cry or grieve with tears
1 Corinthians 7:31
those who use the world
"those who deal every day with unbelievers"
should not act as though they are using it to the full
"should show by their actions that they have their hope in God"
1 Corinthians 7:32
free from worries
Being "free from" something is an idiom which means having the ability to live without it." Alternate translation: "without needing to worry"
concerned about
"focused on"
1 Corinthians 7:33
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 7:34
he is divided
"he is trying to please God and please his wife at the same time"

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The unmarried woman or the virgin
Possible meanings are 1) "virgin" refers only to virgins, while "unmarried woman" could be a divorcée or any other unmarried non-virgin, and 2) "unmarried woman" explains what Paul means by "virgin."
1 Corinthians 7:35
constraint
restriction
may be devoted to
"can concentrate on"
1 Corinthians 7:36
not treating his virgin with respect
"not being kind to his virgin" or "not honoring his virgin"
his virgin
Possible meanings are 1) "the woman whom he promised to marry" or "his fiancée" or 2) "his virgin daughter."
They should marry
Possible meanings are 1) "He should marry his fiancée" or 2) "He should let his daughter get married."
1 Corinthians 7:37
But if he is standing firm in his heart
Here "standing firm" is a metaphor for deciding something with certainty. Here "heart" is metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: "But if he has decided firmly in his own mind"
1 Corinthians 7:38
So the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who chooses not to marry will do even better
Or "So the one who allows his virgin daughter to marry does well, and the one who chooses not to have her marry will do even better." See how you translated "virgin" and "He should marry" in 1 Corinthians 7:36.
1 Corinthians 7:39
A woman is bound to her husband
Here "bound" is a metaphor for a close relationship between people in which they support each other emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Here it means the union of marriage. Alternate translation: "A woman is married to her husband" or "A woman is united with her husband"
while he lives
"for as long as he lives" or "until he dies"
in the Lord
"if the new husband is a believer"
1 Corinthians 7:40
my judgment
"my understanding of God's word"
happier
more contented, more joyful
lives as she is
"remains unmarried"

Chapter 8

1 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In Chapters 8-10, Paul answers the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

Special concepts in this chapter

Meat sacrificed to idols

Paul answers the question about eating meat sacrificed to idols by saying that idols are supposed to be gods but that those gods do not really exist. Therefore nothing is wrong with the meat. Christians are free to eat it. However, someone who does not understand this may see a Christian eating it. They may then be encouraged to eat the meat as an act of worship to the idol.

Links:

1 Corinthians 8:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 8:1
General Information:
"We" means Paul and, though specifically writing to the Corinthian believers, includes all believers.
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the believers that though idols have no power, believers must be careful not to affect the weaker believers who might think that the believers care about idols if the believers eat food that was sacrificed to idols. He tells believers to be careful with the freedom that they have in Christ.
Now concerning
Paul uses this phrase to move on to the next question the Corinthians had asked him.
food sacrificed to idols
Gentile worshipers would offer grain, fish, fowl, or meat to their gods. The priest would burn a portion of it on the altar. Paul is speaking of the portion the priest would give back for the worshiper to eat or sell in the market.
Knowledge puffs up
"Knowledge puffs people up." Here "puffs up" is a metaphor for making someone proud. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be expressed with the verb "know." Alternate translation: "Knowledge makes people proud" or "People who think that they know a lot become proud"
but love builds up
The abstract noun "love" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "but when we love people, we build them up"
love builds up
Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. Alternate translation: "love strengthens people" or "when we love people, we strengthen them"

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1 Corinthians 8:2
thinks he knows something
"believes he knows everything about something"
1 Corinthians 8:3
that person is known by him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows that person"
1 Corinthians 8:4
General Information:
"We" here refers to all believers and include Paul's audience.
We know that an idol in this world is nothing and that there is no God but one
Paul is probably quoting phrases that some Corinthians used. Being "nothing" represents having no power. Alternate translation: "We all know, as you yourselves like to say, that an idol in this world has no power and that there is no God but one"
1 Corinthians 8:5
so-called gods
"things that people call gods"
many "gods" and many "lords"
Paul does not believe that many gods and many lords exist, but he recognizes that the pagans believe they do.
1 Corinthians 8:6
General Information:
"Us" and "we" here refer to all believers and include Paul's audience.
yet for us there is only one God
"yet we know that there is only one God"
1 Corinthians 8:7
General Information:
Paul is speaking here of "weak" brothers, people who cannot separate food sacrificed to idols from the worship of those idols. If a Christian eats food that has been sacrificed to an idol, weak brothers might think that God will allow them to worship the idol by eating the food. Even if the eater has not worshiped the idol and is simply eating the food, he has still corrupted his weak brothers' conscience.
everyone ... some
"all people ... some people who are now Christians"
defiled
ruined or harmed, especially as regards the person's relationship with God
1 Corinthians 8:8
food will not present us to God
Paul speaks of food as though it were a person who could make God welcome us. Alternate translation: "food does not give us favor with God" or "the food we eat does not make God pleased with us"
We are not worse if we do not eat, nor better if we do eat it
"Some people might think that if we do not eat some things, God will love us less. But they are wrong. Those who think that God will love us more if we do eat those things are also wrong"
1 Corinthians 8:9
someone who is weak
believers not strong in their faith
1 Corinthians 8:10
sees you, who have
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so these words are singular.
his ... conscience
what he understands to be right and wrong
emboldened to eat
"encouraged to eat"
1 Corinthians 8:11
your understanding
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "your" here is singular.
the weaker one ... is destroyed
The brother or sister who is not strong in his or her faith will sin or lose his or her faith.
1 Corinthians 8:12
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 8:13
Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true"
if food causes
"Food" here is a metonym for the eating of food. Alternate translation: "if by eating I cause" or "if I, because of what I eat, cause"

Chapter 9

1 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul defends himself in this chapter. Some people claimed that he was trying to gain financially from the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

Earning money from the church

People accused Paul of just wanting money from the church. Paul answered that he rightfully could get money from the church. The Old Testament taught that those who worked should get their living from their work. He and Barnabas purposefully never used this right and earned their own living.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. These metaphors teach complex truths.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Contextualization

This passage is important because Paul "contextualizes" ministering the gospel to different audiences. This means that

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Paul makes himself and the gospel understandable without his actions hindering the gospel being received. The translator should take extra care to preserve aspects of this "contextualization" if possible. (See: goodnews)
Rhetorical questions
Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize various points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 9:1 Notes]

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1 Corinthians 9:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul explains how he uses the liberty he has in Christ.
Am I not free?
Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am a free person."
Am I not an apostle?
Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is and the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am an apostle."
Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?
Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is. Alternate translation: "I have seen Jesus our Lord."
Are you not my work in the Lord?
Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of their relationship to him. Alternate translation: "You believe in Christ because I have worked the way the Lord wants me to."
my work
"the result of the work that I have done"
1 Corinthians 9:2
you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord
The word "seal" here is a metaphor for the evidence needed to prove something. Alternate translation: "you are evidence I can use to prove that the Lord has chosen me to be an apostle"
1 Corinthians 9:3
This is my defense ... me:
Possible meanings are 1) the words that follow are Paul's defense or 2) the words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 are Paul's defense. Alternate translation: "This is my defense ... me."
1 Corinthians 9:4
Do we not have the right to eat and drink?
Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We have the right to receive food and drink from the churches."
we
Here "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas.
1 Corinthians 9:5
Do we not have the right ... Cephas?
Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We certainly have the right ... Cephas."
a wife who is a believer
"a believing wife" or "a Christian wife"
1 Corinthians 9:6
Or do only I and Barnabas not have the right to not work at a trade?
Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "You seem to think that Barnabas and I are the only apostles who have no authority to not work at a trade"
not have the right to not work at a trade
If this double negative causes confusion in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "have to work at a trade" or "have to have another job"
1 Corinthians 9:7
Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?
Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that no soldier has to buy his own supplies." or "We all know that every soldier receives his supplies from the government."
Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit?
Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that the one who plants a vineyard will be allowed to eat its fruit." or "No one expects that someone who plants a vineyard will be forbidden to eat its fruit."
Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink milk from it?
Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that those who shepherd flocks may drink milk from the flocks"
1 Corinthians 9:8
Do I say these things based on human authority? Does not the law also say this?
Paul uses these rhetorical questions as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "I am not saying these things based on human authority. The law also says this."
1 Corinthians 9:9
Do not put
Moses was speaking to the Israelites as if they were one person, so this command is singular.
Is it really the oxen that God cares about?
Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "God does not only care about the oxen."
1 Corinthians 9:10
Is he not speaking about us?
Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument

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to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "Instead, God was certainly speaking about us."

should plow in hope

"should plow, expecting to receive something for his work" or "should plow, expecting to share in the harvest"

should thresh in the hope of sharing in the harvest

"should thresh, expecting to share in the harvest"

sharing in the harvest

"receiving some of the crop that is collected"

1 Corinthians 9:11

If we sowed spiritual things among you, is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Here "sowed spiritual things" and "reap physical things" are metaphors meaning Paul and Barnabas taught the Corinthians about Christ and spiritual things, so they deserve for the church to support them for their work. Alternate translation: "If we taught you about Christ and spiritual truths, is it too much for us to receive money from you for our work?

is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "then it should not be too much for us to reap physical things from you."

1 Corinthians 9:12

If others exercised ... you, do we not have even more?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "If others exercised ... you, then we have that right even more."

If others exercised this right

Paul and the Corinthians both know that others exercised the right. Alternate translation: "Since others exercised this right"

others

other workers of the gospel

this right

the right to have the believers at Corinth provide for the living expenses of those who told them the good news

be a hindrance to

"be a burden to" or "stop the spread of"

1 Corinthians 9:13

Do you not know that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple."

perform sacred duties

"perform sacred duties in the temple" or "work in the temple"

Do you not know that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who serve at the altar get some of the foods and meat that people offer on the altar."

1 Corinthians 9:14

get their living from the gospel

The words "the gospel" here are a metonym for 1) the people to whom they tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need from those to whom they teach the good news," or 2) the result of working to tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need because they work to tell the good news."

1 Corinthians 9:15

these rights

"these things that I deserve"

so something might be done for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so you will do something for me"

It would be better for me to die than—No one will make my boast empty!

Paul seems to have started a new sentence before finishing the first one. Some modern translations read, "It would be better for me to die than to have someone deprive me of this boast."

It would be better for me to

"I would rather." Paul is speaking of what he desires, not necessarily of what God thinks is best.

make my boast empty

"take away this opportunity I have to boast" or "make it so I have nothing to boast about"

1 Corinthians 9:16

I must do this

"I must preach the gospel"

woe be to me if

"may I suffer misfortune if"

1 Corinthians 9:17

if I do this willingly

"if I preach willingly" or "if I preach because I want to"

But if not willingly

The words "I do this" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "But if I do this unwillingly" or "But if I do this even though I do not want to" or "But if I do this because I was forced to do it"

I still have a stewardship that was entrusted to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I still must complete this work that God entrusted to me" or "I still must do this work that God gave me to complete"

1 Corinthians 9:18

What then is my reward?

Paul is preparing them for the new information he is going to give them. Alternate translation: "This is my reward."

That when I preach, I may offer the gospel without charge

"My reward for preaching is that I can preach without receiving payment"

offer the gospel

"preach the gospel"

so not take full use of my right in the gospel

"so not ask people to support me as I travel and preach"

1 Corinthians 9:19

I am free from all

Paul uses the image of freedom from slavery to talk about

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not being obligated to others. Alternate translation: "I am free of obligation to all" or "Though I am not obligated to anyone"

I became a servant to all

Paul uses the image of slavery to talk about his willingness to meet others' needs. Alternate translation: "I became like a servant to all" or "I became willing to serve all"

win more

"persuade others to believe" or "help others trust in Christ"

1 Corinthians 9:20

I became like a Jew

"I acted like a Jew" or "I practiced Jewish customs"

I became like one under the law

"I became like one committed to following the demands of the Jewish leadership, accepting their understanding of the Jewish scriptures"

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those outside the law, I became like one outside the law

To be "outside the law" is a metaphor that means not to be obligated to obey the law. "The "law" refers to the law of Moses, and "those outside the law" refers to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "To Gentiles, who are not obligated to follow the law of Moses, I became like them"

although I was not outside the law of God myself, but under the law of Christ

The phrases "not outside the law" and "under the law" are metaphors that mean to be obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: "although I was not one of those who is not obligated to obey the law of God, but I was obligated to obey the law of Christ"

1 Corinthians 9:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:23

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he uses the liberty he has in Christ to discipline himself.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run the race, but that only one receives the prize?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "Let me remind you that although all runners run the race, only one runner receives the prize."

run the race

Paul compares living the Christian life and working for God to running a race and being an athlete. As in a race, the Christian life and work require strict discipline on the part of the runner, and, as in a race, the Christian has a specific goal.

run to win the prize

Paul is speaking of the reward God will give his faithful people as if it were a prize given for an athletic contest.

1 Corinthians 9:25

a wreath that is perishable ... one that is imperishable

A wreath is a bunch of leaves twisted together. Wreaths were given as prizes to athletes who won games and races. Paul speaks of eternal life as if it were a wreath that would never dry up.

1 Corinthians 9:26

run ... box

These are both metaphors for living the Christian life and serving God by working as hard as one can to succeed and so gain something good and to avoid failing and so losing something good.

run

This is running in a race to win a prize.

run, as not without purpose

If this double negative would confuse the reader in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "run: with purpose"

box

to beat another person with the fists in a sporting contest

1 Corinthians 9:27

I myself may not be disqualified

This passive sentence can be rephrased to an active form. The judge of a race or competition is a metaphor for God. Alternate translation: "the judge will not disqualify me" or "God will not say that I have failed to obey the rules"

Chapter 10

1 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8-10 together answer the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

In this chapter, Paul uses the exodus to warn people not to sin. Then he returns to discussing meat offered to idols. He uses the Lord's Supper as an example. (See: sin)

Special concepts in this chapter

Exodus

Paul uses the experiences of Israel leaving Egypt and roaming the desert as a warning to the believers. Although the Israelites all followed Moses, God did not allow most of them to enter the Promised Land. Some worshiped an idol, some tested God, and some grumbled. Paul warns Christians not to sin. We can resist temptation because God provides a way of escape. (See: promisedland)

Eating meat sacrificed to idol

Paul discusses meat offered to idols. Christians are allowed to eat, but doing so may hurt others. So when buying meat or eating meat with a friend, do not ask if it has been offered to idols. But if someone tells you it has been offered to idols, don't eat it for the sake of that person. Do not offend anyone. Seek to save them instead. (See: save)

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Rhetorical questions
Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

1 Corinthians 10:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 10:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the Corinthians of the example of their ancient Jewish fathers' experiences with immorality and idolatry.
our fathers
Paul is referring to the time of Moses in the book of Exodus when Israel fled through the Red Sea as the Egyptian army pursued them. Here "our" refers to Paul and includes the Corinthians. The Corinthians were not acutal descendants of the Israelites who escaped Egypt. Paul means that all Christians are spiritual descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"
were all under the cloud
When the Israelites left Egypt, God traveled with them in a pillar of cloud. Alternate translation: "were all led by God who was in the cloud"
passed through the sea
This sea is known by two names, the Red Sea and the Sea of Reeds.
passed through
"walked through" or "traveled through"
1 Corinthians 10:2
All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea
To be "baptized into Moses" means to become united with or to become a follower of Moses through baptism. The Israelites were not baptized in the way that Christians were baptized in the New Testament. Paul is comparing Christian being baptized as followers of Christ with the Israelites, who became followers of Moses as they walked across the Red Sea with God leading them in the cloud. Alternate translation: "It was like all of them were baptized when they followed Moses across the sea as God led them in the cloud"
All were baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All received baptism"
1 Corinthians 10:3
all ate the same spiritual food
Here "spiritual food" refers to the manna that God supernaturally supplied to the Israelites while they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "All ate the same food that God supernaturally provided from heaven"
1 Corinthians 10:4
drank the same spiritual drink ... spiritual rock
Here "spiritual drink" refers to the water that God supernaturally caused to flow out of a rock. Alternate translation: "drank the same water that God supernaturally caused to come out of the rock ... supernatural rock"
that rock was Christ
The "rock" was a literal, physical rock, so it would be best to translate this literally. If your language cannot say that a rock "was" a person's name, treat the word "rock" as a metonym for the power of Christ that worked through the rock. Alternate translation: "it was Christ who worked through that rock"
1 Corinthians 10:5
not well pleased
"displeased" or "angry"
most of them
"most of the Israelite fathers" or "most of our ancestors"
their corpses were scattered about
"God scattered their dead bodies around" or "God killed them and scattered their bodies"
in the wilderness
the desert land between Egypt and Israel through which the Israelites wandered for 40 years
1 Corinthians 10:6
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 10:7
idolaters
people who worship idols
sat down to eat and drink
"sat down to eat a meal"
play
Paul is quoting the Jewish scriptures. His readers would have understood from this one word that the people were worshiping an idol by singing and dancing and engaging in sexual activities, not simply enjoying innocent fun.
1 Corinthians 10:8
In one day, twenty-three thousand people died
"God killed 23,000 people in one day"
because of it
"because they committed those unlawful sexual acts"
1 Corinthians 10:9
as many of them tested him
or "as many of them did"
tested him and were destroyed by snakes
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "tested him. As a result, snakes destroyed them"
1 Corinthians 10:10
grumble
"complain"
did and were destroyed by an angel of death
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did. As a result, an angel of death destroyed them"
1 Corinthians 10:11
these things happened to them
"God punished our ancestors"
examples for us
Here "us" refers to all believers.
the end of the ages
"the last days"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

1 Corinthians 10:12
does not fall
does not sin or reject God
1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all humanity
This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "Every temptation that has overtaken you is common to all humanity" or "The temptations that affect you are temptations that all people experience"
He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability
"He will only allow you to be tempted in ways that you are strong enough to resist"
will not let you be tempted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not allow anyone to tempt you"
1 Corinthians 10:14
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to remind them to be pure and to stay away from idolatry and immorality as he talks about communion, which represents the blood and body of Christ.
run away from idolatry
Paul is speaking of the practice of worshiping idols as if it were a physical thing like a dangerous animal. Alternate translation: "do all you can to get away from worshiping idols"
1 Corinthians 10:15
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 10:16
The cup of blessing
Paul is speaking of God's blessing as though it were the wine in the cup used in the ritual of the Lord's Supper.
that we bless
"for which we thank God"
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?
Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know, that the cup of wine that we share represents us sharing in the blood of Christ. Alternate translation: "we share in the blood of Christ."
The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?
Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know. Alternate translation: "We share in the body of Christ when we share bread."
a sharing in
"taking part in" or "equally participating with others in"
1 Corinthians 10:17
loaf of bread
a single unit of baked bread that is sliced or broken into pieces before it is eaten
1 Corinthians 10:18
the Israel that is according to the flesh
This refers to people who belonged to Israel because they were descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "the natural Israel" or "the physical Israel" or "the people of Israel"
Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?
Paul uses a question to remind the Corinthians of what they already know so that he can give them new information. Alternate translation: "Those who eat the sacrifices share in the activities and the blessings of the altar."
1 Corinthians 10:19
What am I saying then? That an idol is anything? Or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?
Paul uses these rhetorical questions to clear up any confusion the Corinthians might have about what he meant. The second and third questions are elliptical, and the understood words can be provided. Alternate translation: "I am not saying that an idol is anything or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything." or "I am not saying that an idol is a real god or that food that has been sacrificed to idols has any power." or "What am I saying then? Am I saying that an idol is anything? Or am I saying that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?"
1 Corinthians 10:20
the things they sacrifice
You may need to make explicit that the word "they" refers to Gentile pagans. Alternate translation: "the things that the Gentile pagans sacrifice"
1 Corinthians 10:21
You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons
Drinking from the cup of the Lord is a symbol of being united to the Lord, and drinking from the cup of demons is a symbol of being united to demons. It is impossible to be united to both the Lord and demons. Alternate translation: "You cannot be united to the Lord by drinking from his cup and also be united to demons by drinking from their cup
You cannot drink the cup
Here "cup" is a metonym for the wine in the cup. Alternate translation: "You cannot drink from the cup" or "You cannot drink the wine from the cup"
the cup of the Lord
This refers to the cup of wine that people drink from when celebrating the Lord's supper.
the cup of demons
This refers to anything people might drink during a meal dedicated to demons.
You cannot participate at the table of the Lord and the table of demons
Here "participate at the table" refers to eating a meal together. The "table of the Lord" refers to a meal that people eat to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "You cannot eat together at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons" or "You cannot join in eating to honor the Lord and join in eating to honor demons"
1 Corinthians 10:22
Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?
Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not want to provoke the Lord to jealousy."
provoke
to anger or irritate
Are we stronger than he is?
Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "You are not stronger than he is."
1 Corinthians 10:23
Connecting Statement:
In the rest of this chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

that though they are free, they must care about others and not do things that could lead others to sin.

Everything is lawful

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation: "People say, 'I am allowed to do anything'" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything." This should be translated as in 1 Corinthians 6:12.

not everything is profitable

"some things are not profitable" or "some things do not help people"

not everything builds people up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 10:24

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:25

Eat everything sold in the market

Or "You may eat anything sold in the market." Paul is granting permission, not issuing a command.

without asking questions of conscience

Questions of conscience are questions that a person asks because he wants to know if something is sinful or not. In this case, a person might ask if the food at the market was offered to idols; if he thinks that it is sinful to eat food sacrificed to idols, he would feel guilty about eating it. Paul is saying that the person does not need to ask if the food has been sacrificed to an idol or not. Alternate translation: "without asking questions that could make the conscience feel guilty" or "without asking questions about whether it is sinful to eat it"

1 Corinthians 10:26

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

and the fullness of it

"and everything in it." This means that everything on the earth belongs to the Lord. By saying this, Paul shows that even meat at the market that was offered to idols belongs to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:27

without asking questions of conscience

See how you translated a similar phrase in 1 Corinthians 10:25.

1 Corinthians 10:28

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

This has been offered in sacrifice

Here being offered in sacrifice means that it was offered to idols. This was the part of the meat that the worshiper was allowed to bring home after killing an animal as a sacrifice to an idol.

for the sake of the one who informed you

This is the first reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "for the good of the one who informed you"

and for the sake of conscience

This is the second reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "and because of conscience" or "and in order not to cause concerns about whether or not it is sinful"

1 Corinthians 10:29

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

the conscience of the other man, I mean, and not yours

Here Paul explains whose conscience he was writing about in verse 28.

For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be judged" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "For another person's conscience should not judge my freedom."

my freedom

The abstract noun "freedom" can be expressed with the adjective "free." Alternate translation: "my being free" or "what I do because I am free"

1 Corinthians 10:30

If I partake of the meal with gratitude

The meaning of the abstract noun "gratitude" can be expressed with the phrase "give thanks." It can be made explicit that the thanksgiving is to God. Alternate translation: "If I give thanks to God for the food when I share in the meal"

why am I being insulted for that for which I gave thanks?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be insulted" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "I should not be insulted for that for which I gave thanks." or "People should not be insult me for eating food that I have thanked God for." (See: and)

1 Corinthians 10:31

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:32

Be blameless both to Jews and to Greeks, and to the church of God

"Be blameless in the opinion of both Jews and Greeks, and of the church of God" or "Make sure that neither Jews nor Greeks nor the church of God can accuse you of doing wrong"

1 Corinthians 10:33

please all people

"make all people glad"

I do not seek my benefit, but that of the many

"I do not do things I desire for myself, but things that help as many people as possible"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Chapter 11

1 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the beginning of a new section of the letter (Chapters 11-14). Paul now talks about proper church services. In this chapter, he deals with two different problems: women in the church services (verses 1-16) and the Lord's Supper (verses 17-34).

Special concepts in this chapter

Proper conduct in a church service

Disorderly women

Paul's instructions here are debated among scholars. There may have been women who were abusing their Christian freedom and causing disorder in the church by going against established cultural customs. The disorder that their actions created would have caused him to be concerned.

The Lord's Supper

There were problems in how the Corinthians were handling the Lord's Supper. They did not act in a unified manner. During the feast celebrated along with the Lord's Supper, some of them ate their own food without sharing. Some of them got drunk while the poor people remained hungry. Paul taught that the believers dishonored Christ's death if they participated in the Lord's Supper while they were sinning or while they were in broken relationships with each other. (See: sin and reconcile)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the people for their unwillingness to follow the rules for worship he has suggested.

The head

Paul uses "head" as a metonym for authority in verse 3 and also to refer to a person's actual head in verse 4 and following. Since the verses are so close together, it is likely that Paul intentionally used "head" in this way. This would show that the ideas in these verses are connected.

Links:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

After reminding them to follow him in the same way that he follows Christ, Paul gives some specific instructions about how women and men are to live as believers.

1 Corinthians 11:2

you remember me in everything

"you think of me at all times" or "you always try act as I would want you to act" The Corinthians had not forgotten who Paul was or what he had taught them.

you hold firmly

Paul speaks of the Corinthians believing what he taught them and obeying his commands as if he had given them a solid object that they were holding on to while someone tried to take it away. Alternate translation: "you believe and practice"

1 Corinthians 11:3

Now I want

Possible meanings are 1) "Because of this, I want" or 2) "However, I want."

is the head of

has authority over

a man is the head of a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "men are to have authority over women" or 2) "the husband is to have authority over the wife"

1 Corinthians 11:4

with his head covered

This means to have some kind of garment on his head that covers his hair.

dishonors his head

Possible meanings are 1) "brings disgrace on himself" or 2) "brings disgrace on Christ, who is his head."

1 Corinthians 11:5

woman who prays ... dishonors her head

Possible meanings are 1) "woman who prays ... brings disgrace on herself" or 2) "wife who prays ... brings disgrace on her husband."

with her head uncovered

That is, without the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders.

as if her head were shaved

as if she had removed all the hair on her head with a razor

1 Corinthians 11:6

If it is disgraceful for a woman

It was a mark of disgrace or humiliation for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short.

cover her head

place on her head the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders

1 Corinthians 11:7

should not have his head covered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

Possible meanings are 1) "must not cover his head" or 2) "does not need to cover his head"

glory of the man

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Just as man reflects God's greatness, the woman reflects the man's character.

1 Corinthians 11:8

For man was not made from woman. Instead, woman was made from man

God made the woman by taking a bone from the man and making the woman from that bone. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make the man from the woman. Instead, he made the woman from the man"

1 Corinthians 11:9

For neither ... for man

These words and all of 1 Corinthians 11:8 could be put in parentheses so that the reader can see that the word "this" in "this is why ... the angels" clearly refers back to the words "the woman is the glory of the man" in 1 Corinthians 11:7.

1 Corinthians 11:10

have a symbol of authority on her head

Possible meanings are 1) "to symbolize that she has man as her head" or 2) "to symbolize that she has the authority to pray or prophesy."

1 Corinthians 11:11

Nevertheless, in the Lord

"While what I have just said is all true, the most important thing is this: in the Lord"

in the Lord

Possible meanings are 1) "among Christians, who belong to the Lord" or 2) "in the world as created by God."

the woman is not independent from the man, nor is the man independent from the woman

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "the woman depends on the man, and the man depends on the woman"

1 Corinthians 11:12

For as the woman comes from the man, so does the man come from the woman

This means that the first woman, Eve, was made from the rib of the first man, Adam, and since then all men have been born by women.

all things come from God

"God created everyone and everything" or "God created all"

1 Corinthians 11:13

Judge for yourselves

"Judge this issue according to the local customs and church practices you know"

Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. This can be stated in active form. "To honor God as she prays to him, a woman should have a covering on her head."

1 Corinthians 11:14

Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?

Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. Alternate translation: "Nature itself even teaches you ... for him."

Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?

He is speaking of the way people in society normally act as if it were a person who teaches. Alternate translation: "You know just from looking at the way people normally act ... for him."

1 Corinthians 11:15

For her hair has been given to her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God created woman with hair"

1 Corinthians 11:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 11:17

Connecting Statement:

As Paul talks about communion, the Lord's supper, he reminds them to have right attitudes as well as unity. He reminds them that if they fail in those things when taking communion, they will become sick and die, as has already happened to some of them.

in the following instructions, I do not praise you. For when

Another possible meaning is "as I give you these instructions, there is something for which I cannot praise you: when"

the following instructions

"the instructions I am about to talk about"

come together

"gather together" or "meet"

it is not for the better but for the worse

"you do not help each other; instead, you harm each other"

1 Corinthians 11:18

in the church

"as believers." Paul is not talking about being inside a building.

there are divisions among you

"you divide yourselves into opposing groups"

1 Corinthians 11:19

For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you

Possible meanings 1) Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians for dividing the people they thought were more important from those they thought were less important. Alternate translation: "For you seem to want to have factions among you so that everyone will know whom you consider to be most important" or 2) Paul means factions are necessary so that God can show those whom he approves. Alternate translation: "For it is necessary for there to be factions among you so that you will know which people God has approved"

factions

opposing groups of people

1 Corinthians 11:20

come together

"gather together"

it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat

"you may believe you are eating the Lord's Supper, but you are not, because you do not treat it with respect"

1 Corinthians 11:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 11:22

to eat and to drink in

"in which to gather for a meal"

despise

hate or treat with dishonor and disrespect

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

humiliate

embarrass or cause to feel shame

What should I say to you? Should I praise you?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I can say nothing good about this. I cannot praise you."

1 Corinthians 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord

"For it was from the Lord that I heard what I told you, and it was this: the Lord"

on the night when he was betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on the night that Judas Iscariot betrayed him"

1 Corinthians 11:24

he broke it

"he pulled pieces from it"

This is my body

"The bread I am holding is my body"

1 Corinthians 11:25

the cup

It is best to translate this literally. The Corinthians knew which cup he took, so it is not simply "a cup" or "some cup" or "any cup." Possible meanings are that it was 1) the cup of wine that one would expect him to use or 2) the third or fourth of the four cups of wine that the Jews drank at the Passover meal.

Do this as often as you drink it, to remember me

"Drink from this cup, and as often as you drink from it, remember me"

1 Corinthians 11:26

proclaim the Lord's death

teach about the crucifixion and resurrection

until he comes

Where Jesus comes to can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "until Jesus comes back to the earth"

1 Corinthians 11:27

eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord

"eats the bread of the Lord or drinks the cup of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 11:28

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how "test the quality" is translated in [1 Corinthians 3:13]

1 Corinthians 11:29

without discerning the body

Possible meanings are 1) "and does not recognize that the church is the body of the Lord" or 2) "and does not consider that he is handling the Lord's body."

1 Corinthians 11:30

weak and ill

These words mean almost the same thing and can be combined, as in UDB.

and some of you have fallen asleep

"Sleep" here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "and some of you have died" .

some of you

If this would sound like Paul is talking to those who have died, you may need to make explicit that he is not. Alternate translation: "some of the members of your group"

1 Corinthians 11:31

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 11:28]

we will not be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not judge us"

1 Corinthians 11:32

we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord judges us, he disciplines us, so that he will not condemn us"

1 Corinthians 11:33

wait for one another

"allow the others to arrive before beginning the meal"

1 Corinthians 11:34

let him eat at home

"let him eat before attending this gathering"

it will not be for judgment

"it will not be an occasion for God to discipline you"

Chapter 12

1 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

This chapter begins a new section. Chapters 12-14 discuss spiritual gifts within the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

The church, the body of Christ

This is an important metaphor in Scripture. The church has many different parts. Each part has different functions. They combine to make one church. All of the different parts are necessary. Each part is to be concerned for all the other parts, even those that seem less important.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

In reading the Old Testament, the Jews would have substituted the word "Lord" for the word "Yahweh." This sentence probably means that no one can say that Jesus is Yahweh, God in the flesh, without the Holy Spirit's influence drawing them to accept this truth. If this statement is translated poorly, it can have unintended theological consequences.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Links:

[1 Corinthians 12:1 Notes]

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1 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul lets the Corinthians know that God has given special gifts to believers. These gifts are to help the body of believers.

I do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "I want you to be informed"

1 Corinthians 12:2

you were led astray to idols who could not speak, in whatever ways you were led by them

Here "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Being led astray to idols represents being wrongly persuaded to worship idols. The phrases "were led astray" and "you were led by them" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you were persuaded in some way to worship idols who cannot speak" or "you believed lies somehow and so you worshiped idols who cannot speak"

1 Corinthians 12:3

no one who speaks by the Spirit of God can say

Possible meanings are 1) "no Christian who has the Spirit of God in him can say" or 2) "no one who is prophesying by the power of the Spirit of God can say."

Jesus is accursed

"God will punish Jesus" or "God will make Jesus suffer"

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit

This double negative emphasizes that "by the Holy Spirit" is what makes it possible for one to say, "Jesus is Lord." Alternate translation: "One can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' only by the Holy Spirit"

by the Holy Spirit

"with the help of the Holy Spirit" or "by the power that the Holy Spirit gives him"

1 Corinthians 12:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:6

works all in all

Possible meanings are 1) "makes active all the gifts in everyone who has received them" or 2) "works all things in all people."

1 Corinthians 12:7

to each one is given

This can be stated in active form. God is the one who does the giving

1 Corinthians 12:8

to one is given by the Spirit the word

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by means of the Spirit God gives to one person the word"

the word

"the message"

by the Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the Spirit.

wisdom ... knowledge

The difference between these two words is not as important here as the fact that God gives them both by the same Spirit.

the word of wisdom

Paul is communicating one idea through two words. Alternate translation: "wise words"

the word of knowledge

Paul is communicating one idea through two words. Alternate translation: "words that show knowledge"

1 Corinthians 12:9

is given

This can be stated in active form. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 12:8]

to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit

The words "are given" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit are given"

1 Corinthians 12:10

to another prophecy

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another prophecy is given by the same Spirit"

to another various kinds of tongues

The phrase "are given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another various kinds of tongues are given by the same Spirit"

various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "the ability to speak different languages"

to another the interpretation of tongues

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another the interpretation of tongues is given by the same Spirit"

the interpretation of tongues

This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "the ability to interpret what is said in other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:11

one and the same Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the one and only Holy Spirit. See how this is translated in 1 Corinthians 12:8.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk of the variety of gifts God gives believers. God gives different gifts to different believers, but Paul wants them to know that all believers are made into one body, which is called the body of Christ. For this reason believers should have unity.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized

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Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit is the one who baptizes us, "For one Spirit baptized us" or 2) that the Spirit, like the water of baptism, is the medium through which we are baptized into the body, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized"

all were made to drink of one Spirit

This is a metaphor meaning everyone received and share in the same Spirit. The phrase "all were made" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave us all the same Spirit, which we share as people might share a drink"

1 Corinthians 12:14

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:15

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:17

where would the sense of hearing be? ... where would the sense of smell be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "you could not hear anything. ... you could not smell anything."

1 Corinthians 12:18

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:19

the same member

The word "member" is a general word for the parts of the body, like the head, arm, or knee. Alternate translation: "the same part of the body"

where would the body be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "there would be no body."

1 Corinthians 12:20

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:21

I have no need of you

"I do not need you"

1 Corinthians 12:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:23

less honorable

"less important"

our unpresentable members

This probably refers to the private parts of the body, which people keep covered.

1 Corinthians 12:24

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:25

there may be no division within the body, but

"the body may be unified, and"

1 Corinthians 12:26

one member is honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone gives honor to one member"

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are

Here the word "now" is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

1 Corinthians 12:28

first apostles

Possible meanings for "first" are 1) the first in the list or 2) the most important in the list.

those who provide helps

"those who provide help to other believers"

those who do the work of administration

"those who govern the church"

those who have various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "those who have the ability to speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 12:29

General Information:

Paul is reminding his readers of what they already know.

Are all of them apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do miracles?

The answer Paul expects to all of these rhetorical questions is no. You may need to translate them as statements. Alternate translation: "Not all of them are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all do miracles, do they?" or "You and I all know that not all of them are apostles, not all are prophets, not all are teachers, and not all do powerful deeds."

1 Corinthians 12:30

Do all of them have gifts of healing?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them have gifts of healing."

Do all of them speak with tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them speak with tongues."

speak with tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "speak different languages"

Do all of them interpret tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them interpret tongues."

interpret tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. To "interpret tongues" means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "interpret what is said in other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:31

Zealously seek the greater gifts.

Possible meanings are 1) "You must eagerly seek from God the gifts that best help the church." or 2) "You are eagerly looking for gifts that you think are greater because you think they are more exciting to have."

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Chapter 13

1 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul seems to interrupt his teaching about spiritual gifts to speak about love.

Special concepts in this chapter

Love

Love is the most important characteristic of the believer. This chapter fully describes love. Paul tells why love is more important than the gifts of the Spirit. (See: love)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He uses these metaphors to instruct the Corinthians, especially on difficult topics. Readers often need spiritual discernment to understand these teachings.

Links:

1 Corinthians 13:1 Notes

---

1 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Having just talked about the gifts that God gives to believers, Paul emphasizes what is more important.

the tongues of ... angels

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is exaggerating for the sake of effect and does not believe that people speak the language that angels use or 2) Paul thinks that some who speak in tongues actually speak the language that angels use.

I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

I have become like instruments that make loud, annoying sounds

gong

a large, thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, low-pitched sound

a clanging cymbal

a thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, high-pitched sound

1 Corinthians 13:2

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:3

I give my body to be burned

The phrase "to be burned" can be made active. Alternate translation: "I allow those who persecute me to burn me to death"

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is ... Love is not ... It is not

Paul describes the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Whoever loves is ... He is not ... He is not"

1 Corinthians 13:5

It does not ... It is not ... does it keep

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "He does not ... He does not ... does he keep"

seek its own

The word "seek" here means to desire and work for something. The person who loves wants and works for what is good for others as much as or more than what is good for himself.

It is not provoked

"It does not become angry easily." The person who loves controls his anger.

nor does it keep a count of wrongs

The person who loves others does not keep a record of the wrongs that people have done to him.

1 Corinthians 13:6

It does not ... it rejoices

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "He does not ... he rejoices"

does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Instead, it rejoices in the truth

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "rejoices only in righteousness and truth"

1 Corinthians 13:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues speaking about love as if it were a person.

bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things

The phrase "all things" here appears to be an idiom meaning "always". Alternate translation: "always perseveres, always believes, always hopes, and always endures"

hopes all things

This means that whoever loves others always expects that what is good will happen.

1 Corinthians 13:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 13:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:10

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:11

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see indirectly in a mirror

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Mirrors in Paul's day were made of polished metal rather than glass and provided a dim, vague reflection.

now we see

Possible meanings are 1) "now we see Christ" or 2) "now we see God."

but then face to face

The understood words "we will see" can be supplied. Seeing face to face is a metaphor or synecdoche for being physically present with the one we will see. Alternate translation: "but then we will see face to face"

I will know fully

The word "Christ" is understood. Alternate translation: "I will know Christ fully"

just as I have been fully known

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "just as Christ has known me fully"

1 Corinthians 13:13

faith, hope, and love

These abstract nouns can be expressed in phrases with verbs. Alternate translation: "we must trust the Lord, be confident that he will do what he has promised, and love him and others"

Chapter 14

1 Corinthians 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul returns to discussing spiritual gifts.

Some translations set what is quoted from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the words of verse 21.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of the gift of tongues. Paul describes the gift of tongues as a sign for unbelievers. It does not serve the whole church, unless someone interprets what is spoken. It is very important that the church uses this gift properly.

Prophecy

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of prophecy as a spiritual gift. Paul says prophets can build up the entire church. He describes prophecy as a gift for believers. (See: prophet)

Links:

1 Corinthians 14:1 Notes

1 Corinthians 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that though teaching is more important because it instructs people, it must be done with love.

Pursue love

Paul speaks of love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Follow after love" or "Work hard to love people"

especially that you may prophesy

"and work especially hard to be able to prophesy"

1 Corinthians 14:2

in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the person speaks by the power of the Holy Spirit or 2) he speaks in his own spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:3

to build them up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

to exhort them

or "to encourage them"

1 Corinthians 14:4

builds up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:5

spoke in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "had the ability to speak different languages"

The one who prophesies is greater

Paul is emphasizing that the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of speaking in tongues. Alternate translation: "The one who prophesies has a greater gift"

interprets

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

the church may receive edification

The abstract noun "edification" can be translated using the verb "edify," which means to build something up. This is a metonym for the words through which the people in the church learn God's word and love God more, and the word "church" here is a metonym for the people who make up the church. Alternate translation: "the people in the church may become stronger" or "the one who prophesies may help the people know and love God better"

1 Corinthians 14:6

how will I benefit you?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not benefit you." or "I will not have done anything that helps you."

1 Corinthians 14:7

they do not produce different tones

This refers to sounds of different pitch that make up the

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melody, not to the difference between a flute sound and a harp sound.

how will anyone know what tune the flute or harp is playing?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves. Alternate translation: "no one will know what tune the flute or harp is playing."

tune

melody or song

1 Corinthians 14:8

how will anyone know when it is time to prepare for battle?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves. Alternate translation: "no one would know when it is time to prepare for battle."

1 Corinthians 14:9

you with the tongue. If you utter speech

or "you. If with the tongue you utter speech"

with the tongue

The word "tongue" here is a synecdoche for all the parts of the body which a person uses in order to speak.

If you utter speech that is not clear

Clear speech is language that people can understand. Paul was talking about people speaking in other languages during church services. Alternate translation: "If you speak in a language that people do not know"

how will what is said be understood

These passive clauses can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "how will anyone understand what you have said"

1 Corinthians 14:10

none is without meaning

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "they all have meaning"

1 Corinthians 14:11

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 14:12

General Information:

All instances of "you" and the imperatives are plural.

for the manifestations of the Spirit

"to do things that show that the Spirit controls you"

seek for the edification of the church so that you might abound

Some modern translations read, "seek that you might abound in those things that edify the church." Paul speaks of the church as if it were a house that one could build. Alternate translation: "try to succeed greatly in making God's people more able to serve God so that things will go well with you"

1 Corinthians 14:13

interpret

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:14

my mind is unfruitful

The mind not understanding what is being prayed and, therefore, receiving no benefit from the prayer is spoken of as if the "mind is unfruitful." Alternate translation: "I do not understand it in my mind" or "my mind does not benefit from the prayer, because I do not understand the words I am saying"

1 Corinthians 14:15

What am I to do?

Paul is introducing his conclusion. Alternate translation: "This is what I will do."

pray with my spirit ... pray with my mind ... sing with my spirit ... sing with my mind

Prayers and songs must be in a language that the people present can understand.

with my mind

"with words that I understand"

1 Corinthians 14:16

you bless God ... you are giving thanks ... you are saying

Though "you" is singular here, Paul is addressing everyone who prays only in the spirit, but not with the mind.

how will the outsider say "Amen" ... saying?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "the outsider will never be able to say 'Amen' ... saying."

the outsider

Possible meanings are 1) "another person" or 2) "people who are new to your group."

say "Amen"

"agree"

1 Corinthians 14:17

you certainly give

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.

the other person is not built up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. This can be stated in active form. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:18

I speak in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "I speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 14:19

than ten thousand words in a tongue

Paul was not counting words, but used exaggeration to emphasize that a few understandable words are far more valuable than even a great number of words in a language that people cannot understand. Also, here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "10,000 words in a different language" or "a great many words in a different language"

1 Corinthians 14:20

General Information:

Paul tells the Corinthians that people being able to speak in different languages was told ahead of time by the prophet Isaiah, many years before such speaking happened at the start of Christ's church.

do not be children in your thinking

Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "do not think like children"

1 Corinthians 14:21

In the law it is written,

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The prophet wrote these words in the law:"

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By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers
These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are used together for emphasis.
1 Corinthians 14:22
Connecting Statement:
Paul gives specific instructions about an orderly way to use gifts in the church.
sign, not for unbelievers, but for believers
"sign only for believers"
1 Corinthians 14:23
would they not say that you are insane?
This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "they would say that you are insane."
1 Corinthians 14:24
he would be convicted by all he hears. He would be judged by all that is said
Paul says basically the same thing twice for emphasis. Alternate translation: "he would realize that he is guilty of sin because he hears what you are saying"
1 Corinthians 14:25
The secrets of his heart would be revealed
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would reveal to him the secrets of his heart" or "He would recognize his own private inner thoughts"
he would fall on his face and worship God
"Fall on his face" here is an idiom, meaning to bow down. Alternate translation: "He would bow down and worship God"
1 Corinthians 14:26
What is next then, brothers?
Paul uses a question to introduce the next part of his message. Alternate translation: "Because everything I have just told you is true, this is what you need to do, my fellow believers."
interpretation
This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.
1 Corinthians 14:27
speaks in a tongue
Here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "speaks in a different languages"
and each one in turn
"and they should speak one after another" or "and they should speak one at a time"
interpret what is said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "interpret what they said"
interpret
This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.
1 Corinthians 14:28
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 14:29
Let two or three prophets speak
Possible meanings are 1) only two or three prophets speak at any one meeting or 2) only two or three prophets take turns speaking at any one time.
to what is said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to what they say"
1 Corinthians 14:30
there is a revelation
"God reveals something" or "God speaks"
to one who is sitting
"to one of the people sitting there listening to the prophets"
the first
the person who has been speaking
1 Corinthians 14:31
prophesy one by one
Only one person should prophesy at a time.
all may be exhorted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you may exhort all"
1 Corinthians 14:32
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 14:33
God is not a God of confusion
God does not create confusing situations by making people all speak at the same time.
1 Corinthians 14:34
keep silent
Possible meanings are 1) stop speaking, 2) stop speaking when someone is prophesying, or 3) be absolutely silent during the church service.
1 Corinthians 14:35
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 14:36
Did the word of God come from you? Are you the only ones it has reached?
Paul emphasizes that the Corinthians are not the only ones who understand what God wants Christians to do. Alternate translation: "The word of God did not come from you in Corinth; you are not the only people who understand God's will."
the word of God
"Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "God's message"
1 Corinthians 14:37
he should acknowledge
A true prophet or truly spiritual person will accept Paul's writings as coming from the Lord.
1 Corinthians 14:38
if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized
"if anyone ignores this, let him be ignored"
let him not be recognized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you should not recognize him"
1 Corinthians 14:39
do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues
Paul makes it clear that speaking in tongues at a church gathering is permissible and acceptable.
1 Corinthians 14:40

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But let all things be done properly and in order
Paul is stressing that church gatherings should be held in an orderly manner. Alternate translation: "But do all things properly and in order" or "But do everything in an orderly, appropriate way"

Chapter 15

1 Corinthians 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Resurrection
This chapter includes a very important teaching about the resurrection of Jesus. The Greek people did not believe that people could live after they died. Paul defends the resurrection of Jesus. He teaches why it is important to all believers. (See: resurrection and believe)

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection
Paul presents the resurrection as the ultimate proof that Jesus is God. Christ is the first of many whom God will raise to life. The resurrection is central to the gospel. Few doctrines are as important as this one. (See: goodnews and raise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Paul uses many different figures of speech in this chapter. He uses them to express difficult theological teachings in a way that people can understand.

Links:

1 Corinthians 15:1 Notes

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1 Corinthians 15:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is the gospel that saves them and he tells them again what the gospel is. Then he gives them a short history lesson which ends with what will yet happen.
make known to you, brothers, the gospel
Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants to remind them by making the gospel known again, "help you remember, brothers, the gospel" or 2) he wants to make sure they understand the gospel, "make clear to you, brothers, the gospel."
on which you stand
Paul is speaking of the Corinthians as if they were a house and the gospel as if it were the foundation on which the house was standing.
1 Corinthians 15:2
you are being saved
This can be stated in active form. "God will save you"
the word I preached to you
"the message I preached to you"
1 Corinthians 15:3
as of first importance
Possible meanings are 1) as the most important of many things or 2) as the first in time of important things.
for our sins
"to pay for our sins" or "so that God could forgive our sins"
according to the scriptures
"just as the propets predicted in the scriptures." Here "scriptures" means the Old Testament.
1 Corinthians 15:4
he was buried
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him"
he was raised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God raised him"
was raised
"was caused to live again"
1 Corinthians 15:5
appeared to
"showed himself to"
and then to the twelve
The information that is understood here can be included. Alternate translation: "and then he appeared to the twelve disciples"
to the twelve
Paul used the term "the twelve" to mean the original disciples, known as apostles, that followed Jesus. Although, when Jesus appeared to the apostles, Judas had already died, Paul still refers to the groups as "twelve." Alternate translation: "to the rest of the apostles"
1 Corinthians 15:6
five hundred
500
some have fallen asleep
"Sleep" here is a common euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "some have died"
1 Corinthians 15:7
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:8
Last of all
"Finally, after he had appeared to the others"
Last of all, he appeared to me, as if to one born prematurely
This is a simile, but its meaning is unclear. These words could refer to 1) a baby that is born unexpectedly early, in which case Paul means that he was unexpectedly called to be an apostle, or 2) a baby who is born early and is very small, in which case Paul means that he had not learned

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from Christ and grown spiritually as the other apostles had, or 3) a baby who is born dead, in which case Paul means that Christ appeared to him when he was spiritually dead.
one born prematurely
"a baby born too early"
1 Corinthians 15:9
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:10
the grace of God I am what I am
God's grace or kindness has made Paul as he is now.
his grace in me was not in vain
Paul is emphasizing through litotes that God worked through Paul. Alternate translation: "because he was kind to me, I was able to do much good work"
the grace of God that is with me
Paul speaks of the work he was able to do because God was kind to him as if grace were actually doing the work. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) this is literally true, and God actually did the work and kindly used Paul as a tool or 2) Paul is using a metaphor and saying that God was kind to let Paul do the work and to make Paul's work have good results.
1 Corinthians 15:11
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:12
how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?
Paul is using this question to begin a new topic. Alternate translation: "you should not be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead!"
raised
made alive again
1 Corinthians 15:13
if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised
Paul uses this statement to argue that there is a resurrection of the dead. He knows that Christ has been raised and so infers that all who die will be resurrected. To say that there is no resurrection is to say that Christ has not been raised, but this is false because Paul has seen the resurrected Christ
not even Christ has been raised
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has not raised even Christ"
1 Corinthians 15:14
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:15
Connecting Statement:
Paul wants to assure the Corinthians that Christ rose from the dead.
we are found to be false witnesses about God
Paul is arguing that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then they are bearing false witness or lying about Christ's coming alive again.
we are found to be
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone will realize that we are"
1 Corinthians 15:16
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:17
your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins
Their faith is based on Christ having risen from the dead, so if that did not happen, their faith will do them no good.
1 Corinthians 15:18
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
1 Corinthians 15:19
If only in this life we hope in Christ
Here to hope in Christ is to confidently expect good from him. Alternate translation: "If only in this life we can confidently expect Christ to help us" or "If we can trust in Christ to save us only in this life"
of all people we are most to be pitied
"people should feel sorry for us more than they do for anyone else"
1 Corinthians 15:20
now Christ
"as it is, Christ" or "this is the truth: Christ"
Christ has been raised from the dead
"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has raised Christ from the dead"
dead as the firstfruits
Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead, and all who believe in him will also be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "dead, like the first part of the harvest" or "dead; he is like the first part of the harvest"
those who sleep
Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "those who have died"
1 Corinthians 15:21
death came by a man
The abstract noun "death" can be expressed with the verb "die." Alternate translation: "people die because of what one man did"
by a man also came the resurrection of the dead
The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb "raise." Alternate translation: "people are raised from the dead because of another man" or "people will become alive again because of what one man did"
1 Corinthians 15:22
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:23
who is the firstfruits
Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "who is like the first part of the harvest"
1 Corinthians 15:24
General Information:
Here the word "he" refers to Christ.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

he will abolish all rule and all authority and power
"he will stop those people who rule, who have authority, and who have power, from doing what they are doing"
1 Corinthians 15:25
For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet
Possible meanings are 1) all occurrences of "he" and "his" refer to Christ or 2) "For Christ must reign until God the Father has put all Christ's enemies under Christ's feet"
until he has put all his enemies under his feet
Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to their power over their enemies. Alternate translation: "until he has put all his enemies under his power"
1 Corinthians 15:26
The last enemy to be destroyed is death
Paul speaks of death here as if it were a person who will be killed. The passive verb can be stated as active. Possible meanings are 1) Christ will destroy death or 2) God the Father will destroy death. Alternate translation: "The final enemy that he will destroy is death itself"
1 Corinthians 15:27
he has put everything under his feet
Possible meanings are 1) "God the Father has put everything under Christ's feet" or 2) "Christ has put everything under his own feet"
put everything under his feet
Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to show they have power over their enemies. See how "put ... under his feet" is translated in [1 Corinthians 15:25]
this does not include the one who put everything in subjection under him
"this does not include God the Father, who put everything in subjection under the Son"
1 Corinthians 15:28
all things are subjected under him
This can stated as active. Alternate translation: "God the Father has made all things subject to the Son"
the Son himself will be subjected
This can stated as active. Alternate translation: "the Son himself will become subject"
the Son himself
In the previous verses he was referred to as "Christ." Alternate translation: "Christ, that is, the Son himself,"
Son
This is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God.
1 Corinthians 15:29
Or else what will those do who are baptized for the dead?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise it would be useless for Christians to receive baptism for the dead."
If the dead are not raised at all, why are they baptized for them?
Paul uses this question to argue that the dead are raised. Apparently some people, probably some members of the church in Corinth, were being baptized for the dead. Paul infers that those people did so because they believed that the dead would be raised.
If the dead are not raised at all
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "If God does not raise the dead at all"
are not raised
"are not caused to live again"
why are they baptized for them?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "there would be no reason for them to have people baptize them on behalf of dead people."
1 Corinthians 15:30
Why then are we in danger every hour?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. The reason he and others were in danger is that some people were angry that they taught that Jesus will raise people from death. Alternate translation: "If people will not rise from the dead, we gain nothing by being in danger every hour for teaching that people will rise."
1 Corinthians 15:31
I die every day!
This exaggeration means he was in danger of dying. He knew that some people wanted to kill him because they did not like what he was teaching. Alternate translation: "Every day I am in danger of dying" or "Every day I risk my life!"
This is as sure as my boasting in you
Paul uses this statement as evidence that he faces death every day. Alternate translation: "You can know that this is true, because you know about my boasting in you" or "You can know that this is true, because you know about how much I boast in you"
my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord
Paul boasted in them because of what Christ Jesus had done for them. Alternate translation: "my boasting in you, which I do because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done for you"
my boasting in you
"the way I tell other people how good you are"
1 Corinthians 15:32
What do I gain ... if I fought with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised?
Paul wants the Corinthians to understand without him having to tell them. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I gained nothing ... by fighting with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised."
I fought with beasts at Ephesus
Paul is referring to something that he actually did. Possible meanings are 1) Paul was speaking figuratively about his arguments with learned pagans or other conflicts with people who wanted to kill him or 2) he was actually put into the arena to fight against dangerous animals.
Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die
Paul concludes that if there is no further life after death, it is better for us to enjoy this life as we can, for tomorrow our life will end without any further hope.
1 Corinthians 15:33
Bad company corrupts good morals
If you live with bad people, you will act like them. Paul is quoting a common saying.
1 Corinthians 15:34
Sober up

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"You must think seriously about this"
1 Corinthians 15:35
Connecting Statement:
Paul gives some specifics about how the resurrection of the believers' bodies will take place. He gives a picture of natural and spiritual bodies (15:36-44) and compares the first man Adam with the last Adam, Christ (15:45-49).
But someone will say, "How are the dead raised, and with what kind of body will they come?"
Possible meanings are 1) The person is asking sincerely or 2) the person is using the question to mock the idea of a resurrection. Alternate translation: "But some will say that they cannot imagine how God will raise the dead, and what kind of body God would give them in the resurrection."
someone will say
"someone will ask"
with what kind of body will they come
That is, will it be a physical body or a spiritual body? What shape will the body have? What will the body be made of? Translate using the most general question that someone who wants to know the answers to these questions would ask.
1 Corinthians 15:36
You fool! What you sow
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so both instances of "you" here are singular.
fool
"unthinking person." Paul is accusing them of not thinking carefully, He is not accusing them of moral error.
What you sow will not come to life unless it dies
A seed will not grow unless it is first buried underground. In the same way, a person has to die before God can resurrect him.
1 Corinthians 15:37
What you sow is not the body that will be
Paul uses the metaphor of the seed again to say that God will resurrect the dead body of the believer, but that body will not appear as it was.
What you sow
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.
1 Corinthians 15:38
God will give it a body as he chooses
"God will decide what kind of body it will have"
1 Corinthians 15:39
Not all flesh is the same ... there is one flesh ... another flesh
"Not all kinds of bodies are the same ... there is one kind of body ... another kind of body"
1 Corinthians 15:40
heavenly bodies
"bodies in the sky"
earthly bodies
"bodies on the earth." This refers to the kinds of bodies mentioned in 15:41.
the glory of the heavenly body is one kind and the glory of the earthly is another
"the glory that the bodies in the sky have is different from the glory that the bodies on the earth have"
glory
Possible meanings are 1) "brightness" or "radiance" or 2) "beauty" or "splendor"
1 Corinthians 15:41
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:42
What is sown ... what is raised
The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What goes into the ground ... what comes out of the ground" or "What people bury ... what God raises"
is raised
"is caused to live again"
is perishable ... is imperishable
"can rot ... cannot rot"
1 Corinthians 15:43
It is sown ... it is raised
The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"
1 Corinthians 15:44
It is sown ... it is raised
The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"
1 Corinthians 15:45
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 15:46
But the spiritual did not come first but the natural, and then the spiritual
"The natural being came first. The spiritual being is from God and came later."
natural
created by earthly processes, not yet connected to God
1 Corinthians 15:47
The first man is of the earth, made of dust
God made the first man, Adam, from the dust of the earth.
dust
dirt
1 Corinthians 15:48
the man of heaven
Jesus Christ
those who are of heaven
"those who belong to God"
1 Corinthians 15:49
we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven

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"we have been just like the man of dust, we will also be just like the man of heaven"

1 Corinthians 15:50

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to realize that some believers will not die physically but will still get a resurrected body through Christ's victory.

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither does what is perishable inherit what is imperishable

Possible meanings are 1) the two sentences mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "human beings who will surely die cannot inherit the permanent kingdom of God" or 2) the second sentence finishes the thought begun by the first. Alternate translation: "weak human beings cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither can those who will certainly die inherit a kingdom that will last forever"

flesh and blood

Those who inhabit a body that is doomed to die.

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if property and wealth were being inherited from a family member.

is perishable ... is imperishable

"can rot ... cannot rot." See how these words are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:51

We will not all sleep

Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "We will not all die"

we will all be changed

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "God will change us all"

1 Corinthians 15:52

We will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will change us"

in the twinkling of an eye

It will happen as fast as it takes for a person to blink his or her eye.

at the last trumpet

"when the last trumpet sounds"

the dead will be raised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise the dead"

raised

"caused to live again"

imperishable

"in a form that cannot rot." See how a similar phrase is translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:53

this perishable body ... is imperishable

"this body that can rot ... cannot rot." See how similar phrases are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

must put on

Paul is speaking of God making our bodies so they will never die again as if God were putting new clothes on us.

1 Corinthians 15:54

when this perishable body has put on what is imperishable

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and becoming imperishable is spoken of as if being imperishable were clothing that a body would wear. Alternate translation: "when this perishable body has become imperishable" or "when this body that can rot can no longer rot"

when this mortal body has put on immortality

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and becoming immortal is spoken of as if being immortal was clothing that a body would wear. Alternate translation: "when this mortal body has become immortal" or "when this body that can die can no longer die"

1 Corinthians 15:55

Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

Paul speaks as if death were a person, and he uses this question to mock the power of death, which Christ has defeated. Alternate translation: "Death has no victory. Death has no sting."

your ... your

These are singular.

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin

It is through sin that we are destined to face death, that is, to die.

the power of sin is the law

God's law that was passed down by Moses defines sin and shows us how we sin before God.

1 Corinthians 15:57

gives us the victory

"has defeated death for us"

1 Corinthians 15:58

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants believers, while they work for the Lord, to remember the changed, resurrected bodies that God is going to give them.

be steadfast and immovable

Paul speaks of someone who lets nothing stop him from doing what he has decided to do as if he could not be physically moved. Alternate translation: "be determined"

Always abound in the work of the Lord

Paul speaks of efforts made in working for the Lord as if they were objects that a person could acquire more of. Alternate translation: "Always work for the Lord faithfully"

Chapter 16

1 Corinthians 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul briefly covers many topics in this chapter. It was common in the ancient Near East for the last part of letters to have personal greetings.

Special concepts in this chapter

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Preparation for his coming

Paul gives practical instructions to help prepare the Corinthian church for his visit. He tells them to start collecting money every Sunday for the believers in Jerusalem. He hopes to come and spend the winter with them. He tells them to help Timothy when he comes. He had hopes Apollos would go to them, but Apollos did not think it was the right time. Paul also tells them to obey Stephanus. Finally, he sends his greetings to everyone.

Links:

1 Corinthians 16:1 Notes

1 Corinthians 16:1

Connecting Statement:

In his closing notes, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers to collect money for the needy believers in Jerusalem.

for God's holy people

Paul was collecting money from his churches for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea.

1 Corinthians 16:2

store it up

Possible meanings are: 1) "keep it at home" or 2) "leave it with the church"

as he may prosper

"according to how he prospers" or "according to how much he earns"

so that there will be no collections when I come

"so that you will not have to collect more money while I am with you"

1 Corinthians 16:3

to whomever you approve, I will give letters of introduction to them and will send them

Some modern translations read, "to whomever you have approved by letter of introduction, I will send"

1 Corinthians 16:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:6

you may help me on my way

This means they might give Paul money or other things he needs so that he and his ministry team could continue to travel.

1 Corinthians 16:7

I hope to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits

Paul wanted to see the believers in Corinth, but he did not know if he actually would be able to do that. Alternate translation: "I expect to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits" or "I plan to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits"

1 Corinthians 16:8

Pentecost

Paul would stay in Ephesus until this festival, which comes in May or June, 50 days after Passover. He would then travel through Macedonia, and later try to arrive in Corinth before winter started.

1 Corinthians 16:9

a wide door has opened

Paul speaks of the opportunity God has given him to win people to the gospel as if it were a door that God had opened so he could walk through it.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Now

"Now" here marks a change in topic. Here Paul begins to talk about Timothy's visit to Corinth.

see that he is with you unafraid

"see that he has no cause to fear being with you"

1 Corinthians 16:11

Let no one despise him

Because Timothy was much younger than Paul, sometimes he was not shown the respect he deserved as a minister of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:12

our brother Apollos

Here the word "our" refers to Paul and his readers, so it is inclusive.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be watchful, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong

Paul is describing what he wants the Corinthians to do as if he were giving four commands to soldiers in war. These four commands mean almost the same thing and are used for emphasis.

Be watchful

Paul speaks of people being aware of what is happening as if they were guards keeping watch over a city or vineyard. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "Be careful whom you trust" or "Watch out for danger"

stand fast in the faith

Paul speaks of people continuing to believe in Christ according to his teaching as if they were soldiers refusing to retreat when the enemy attacks. Possible meanings are 1) "keep strongly believing what we have taught you" or 2) "keep strongly trusting in Christ"

act like men

In the society in which Paul and his audience lived, men usually provided for families by doing the heavy work and fighting against invaders. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "be responsible"

1 Corinthians 16:14

Let all that you do be done in love

"Everything you do should show people that you love them"

1 Corinthians 16:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to close his letter and sends greetings from other churches, as well as from Prisca, Aquila, and Paul himself.

household of Stephanas

Stephanas was one of the first believers in the church at Corinth.

the firstfruits of Achaia

"the first people in Achaia to believe in Christ"

Achaia

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This is the name of a province in Greece.
1 Corinthians 16:16
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 16:17
Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus
These men were either some of the first Corinthian believers or church elders who were co-workers with Paul.
Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus
These are men's names.
They have made up for your absence
"They made up for the fact that you were not here."
1 Corinthians 16:18
For they have refreshed my spirit
Paul is saying he was encouraged by their visit.
acknowledge people like them
The word "acknowledge" here might be an understatement. Paul wants the Corinthians to honor Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus
1 Corinthians 16:19
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 16:20
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 16:21
I, Paul, write this with my own hand
Paul was making it clear that the instructions in this letter are from him, even though one of his co-laborers wrote what Paul was saying in the rest of the letter. Paul wrote this last part with his own hand.
1 Corinthians 16:22
may he be accursed
"may God curse him." See how "accursed" was translated in 1 Corinthians 12:3.
1 Corinthians 16:23
General Information:
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1 Corinthians 16:24
General Information:
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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Corinthians

Paul thanks God for the Corinthian Christians (1:1-11) Paul explains his conduct and his ministry (1:12-7:16) Paul speaks about contributing money for the Jerusalem church (8:1-9:15) Paul defends his authority as an apostle (10:1-13:10) Paul gives final greetings and encouragement (13:11-14)

Who wrote the Book of 2 Corinthians?

Paul was the author. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul started the church in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 2 Corinthians about?

In 2 Corinthians, Paul continued to write about the conflicts among the Christians in the city of Corinth. It is clear in this letter that the Corinthians had obeyed his previous instructions to them. In 2 Corinthians, Paul encouraged them to live in a way that would please God.

Paul also wrote to assure them that Jesus Christ sent him as an apostle to preach the Gospel. Paul wanted them to understand this because a group of Jewish Christians opposed what he was doing. They claimed Paul was not sent by God and that he was teaching a false message. This group of Jewish Christians wanted Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Second Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Corinth like?

Corinth was a major city located in ancient Greece. Because it was near the Mediterranean Sea, many travelers and traders came to buy and sell goods there. This resulted in the city having people from many different cultures. The city was famous for having people who lived in immoral ways. The people worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. As part of the ceremonies honoring Aphrodite, her worshipers had sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes.

What did Paul mean by "false apostles" (11:13)?

These were Jewish Christians. They taught that Gentile Christians had to obey the law of Moses in order to follow Christ. Christian leaders had met in Jerusalem and decided on the matter (See: Acts 15). However, it is clear that there were still some groups that disagreed with what the leaders in Jerusalem decided.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

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Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers in Corinth. There are two exceptions to this: 6:2 and 12:9.

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 2 Corinthians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people."

The meaning in most passages in 2 Corinthians is a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; 13:13)

Sometimes the meaning in the passage implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "reserved for," or "sanctified."

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:19, 20; 2:12, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19, 21; 10:17; 12:2, 19; and 13:4. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” See, for example, "A door was opened for me in the Lord," (2:12) where Paul specifically meant that a door was opened for Paul by the Lord. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What does it mean to be a "new creation" in Christ (5:17)?

Paul's message was that God makes Christians part of a "new world" when a person believes in Christ. God gives a new world of holiness, peace, and joy. In this new world, believers have a new nature that has been given them by the Holy Spirit. Translators should try to express this idea.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Corinthians?

"and in your love for us" (8:7). Many versions, including the ULB and UDB, read this way. However, many other translations read, "and in our love for you." There is strong evidence that each reading is original. Translators should probably follow the reading preferred by other versions in their region.

Chapter 1

2 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first paragraph reflects a common way to begin a letter in the ancient Near East.

Special Concepts

Paul's integrity

People were criticizing Paul and saying he was not sincere. He refutes them by explaining his motives for what he was doing.

Comfort

Comfort is a major theme of this chapter. The Holy Spirit comforts Christians. The Corinthians probably were afflicted and needed to be comforted.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

Paul uses two rhetorical questions to defend himself against a charge of not being sincere.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul uses the pronoun "we". This likely represents at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Guarantee

Paul says the Holy Spirit is the guarantee, which means pledge or down payment, of a Christian's eternal life. Christians are securely saved. But they will not experience all of God's given promises until after they die. The Holy Spirit is a personal guarantee that this will happen. This idea comes from a business term. A person gives some valuable item to another person as a "guarantee" that they will repay money. (See: eternity and save)

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Links:

2 Corinthians 1:1 Notes 2 Corinthians intro

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2 Corinthians 1:1

Paul ... to the church of God that is in Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: "I, Paul ... wrote this letter to you, the church of God that is in Corinth"

Timothy our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Timothy and considered him to be their spiritual brother.

Achaia

This is the name of a Roman province in the southern part of modern-day Greece.

2 Corinthians 1:2

General Information:

The word "you" throughout this letter refers to the people of the church in Corinth and to the rest of the Christians in that area.

May grace be to you and peace

This is a common greeting that Paul uses in his letters.

2 Corinthians 1:3

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May we always praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

These two phrases express the same idea in two different ways. Both phrases refer to God.

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

Possible meanings are 1) that the words "mercies" and "all comfort" describe the character of "Father" and "God" or 2) that the words "Father" and "God" refer to one who is the source of "mercies" and "all comfort."

2 Corinthians 1:4

comforts us in all our tribulation

Here "us" and "our" include the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 1:5

For just as the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake

Paul speaks of Christ's sufferings as if they were objects that could increase in number. Alternate translation: "For just as Christ suffered greatly for our sake"

the sufferings of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) that this refers to the suffering that Paul and Timothy experience because they preach the message about Christ or 2) that this refers to the suffering that Christ experienced on their behalf.

our comfort abounds

Paul speaks of comfort as if it were an object that could increase in size.

2 Corinthians 1:6

But if we are afflicted

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy, but not to the Corinthians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But if people afflict us"

if we are comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if God comforts us"

Your comfort is working effectively

"You experience effective comfort"

2 Corinthians 1:7

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Hope is spoken of here as if it were a building that could be shaken and destroyed. Paul means that his hope for the Corinthians is strong and he continues to have hope for them. Alternate translation: "Our hope concerning you is strong" or "We have not stopped having hope for you"

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Paul was probably hoping that the Corinthian Christians would continue to have faith in God, even though they were suffering, and that they would be comforted. Alternate translation: "We continue to be confident concerning you" or "We continue to confidently expect good for you"

2 Corinthians 1:8

we do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "we want you to know"

We were utterly burdened beyond our strength

The word "burdened" is a metaphor for feeling stressed or overwhelmed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We felt so overwhelmed beyond our strength" or "The troubles we had caused us so much more stress than we could handle"

we despaired even of life

"we could not see any way we could stay alive" or "we were sure we would die"

2 Corinthians 1:9

we had the sentence of death on us

Paul and Timothy are comparing their feeling of despair to that of someone condemned to die. Alternate translation: "we were in despair like someone who is condemned to die"

but instead in God

The words "put our trust" are left out of this phrase. Alternate translation: "but instead to put our trust in God"

who raises the dead

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "who causes the dead to live again"

2 Corinthians 1:10

He rescued us from such a deadly peril

"He saved us from such a dangerous situation where we could have died"

On him we have set our hope that he will rescue us

Paul and those with him hoped firmly in God. Alternate translation: "We trust in him to rescue us" or "We confidently expect that he will rescue us"

2 Corinthians 1:11

He will do this as you also help us

"God will rescue us from danger as you, the people of the church of Corinth, also help us"

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the favor given to us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the favor that God has given to us"

2 Corinthians 1:12

General Information:

In this verse Paul uses the words "we," "our," and "ourselves" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. These words do not include the people he was writing to.

Our boast is this

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically here. Boasting is usually a bad thing, but Paul is confident that he has lived "with integrity and godly sincerity," and he is telling the Corinthians so.

Our conscience testifies

Paul speaks of not being guilty as if his conscience were a person that could speak. Alternate translation: "We know by our conscience"

not relying on fleshly wisdom but on the grace of God

Here "fleshly" represents human. Alternate translation: "not relying on human wisdom but on the grace of God"

2 Corinthians 1:13

We write to you nothing that you cannot read and understand

The double negative here emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Everything we write to you is something you can read and understand" or "You can read and understand everything we write to you"

I hope that you will fully understand

Paul wanted them to understand, and he expected that they should be able to understand, but he didn't know for sure if they would. Alternate translation: "I expect that you will fully understand" or "I trust you will fully understand"

2 Corinthians 1:14

General Information:

In this vers Paul uses the word "us" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. This word does not include the people he was writing to.

you can boast

The word "boast" here is used in the positive sense of feeling great satisfaction and joy in something.

2 Corinthians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains his sincere expectation with pure motives to come see the believers in Corinth after his first letter.

Because I was confident about this

The word "this" refers to Paul's previous comments about the Corinthians.

so that you might receive a second favor

Paul hoped to visit the Corinthians two times. Each visit would be a favor to the people. Alternate translation: "so that you might benefit from me visiting you twice"

2 Corinthians 1:16

send me on my way to Judea

"assist me on my way to Judea"

2 Corinthians 1:17

was I hesitating?

Paul uses this question to emphasize he was sure about his decision to visit the Corinthians. The expected answer to the question is no. Alternate translation: "I was not hesitating." or "I was confident in my decision."

Do I plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that his plans to visit the Corinthians were sincere. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. Alternate translation: "human standards" or "the way most people act"

Do I plan things ... so that I say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

This means that Paul did not say both that he would visit and that he would not visit at the same time. The words "yes" and "no" are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things ... so that I say 'Yes, I will certainly visit' and 'No, I will definitely not visit' at the same time!"

2 Corinthians 1:18

our word to you

"what we say to you"

2 Corinthians 1:19

For the Son of God ... is not "Yes" and "No." Instead, he is always "Yes."

Jesus says "Yes" concerning the promises of God, which means that he guarantees that they are true. Alternate translation: "For the Son of God ... does not say 'Yes' and 'No' concerning God's promises. Instead, he always says 'Yes.'"

the Son of God

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

2 Corinthians 1:20

all the promises of God are "Yes" in him

This means that Jesus guarantees all of God's promises. Alternate translation: "all the promises of God are guaranteed in Jesus Christ"

"Yes" in him ... through him we say

The word "him" refers to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:21

God who confirms us with you

Possible meanings are 1) "God who confirms our relationship with each other because we are in Christ" or 2) "God who confirms both our and your relationship with Christ."

he anointed us

Possible meanings are 1) "he sent us to preach the gospel" or 2) "he chose us to be his people."

2 Corinthians 1:22

he set his seal on us

Paul speaks of God showing that we belong to him as if God had put a mark on us as a sign that we belong to him. Alternate translation: "he has put his mark of ownership on us" or "he has shown that we belong to him"

gave us the Spirit in our hearts

The word "heart" is often used to refer to the innermost part of a person. Alternate translation: "gave us the Spirit to live within each of us"

the Spirit ... as a guarantee

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a partial downpayment toward eternal life.

2 Corinthians 1:23

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

as witness to my soul
The word "soul" here is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: "as witness for me" or "to testify for me"
so that I might spare you
"so that I might not cause you more suffering"
2 Corinthians 1:24
be lords over your faith
"control what your faith should be" or "control what you believe"
we are fellow laborers with you for your joy
"we are working with you so that you may have joy"
stand firm in your faith
The word "stand" can refer to not changing. Alternate translation: "remain firm in your faith"

Chapter 2

2 Corinthians 2 General Notes

Special Concepts

Harsh writing

In this chapter, Paul refers to a letter he previously wrote to the Corinthians. Some scholars believe this refers to the letter known as First Corinthians. Other scholars believe this refers to a letter Paul wrote after the letter known as First Corinthians and before this letter. In either case, Paul had told the church to rebuke an erring member. Paul is now encouraging them to be gracious to that person.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Aroma

A sweet aroma is a pleasing smell. Scripture often describes things that are pleasing to God as having a pleasing aroma.

Links:

2 Corinthians 2:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 2:1
Connecting Statement:
Because of his great love for them, Paul makes it clear that his rebuke in a previous letter to them caused him pain as well as pain to the church people in Corinth and the immoral man.
I decided for my own part
"I made the decision"
in sorrow
Possible meanings are 1) this is a metonym that refers to causing the Corinthians sorrow. Alternate translation: "in a way that would cause you sorrow" or 2) this refers to Paul's own sorrow. Alternate translation: "while I am sorrowful"
sorrow
great sadness
2 Corinthians 2:2
If I caused you sorrow, who could make me glad but the very one who was made sorrowful by me?
Paul uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that neither he nor they would benefit if his coming to them would cause them pain. Alternate translation: "If I caused you sorrow, the only ones who could make me glad would be the very ones whom I had made sorrowful."
sorrow ... sorrowful
See how you translated "sorrow" in 2 Corinthians 2:1.
the very one who was made sorrowful by me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the very one whom I had hurt"
2 Corinthians 2:3
I wrote as I did
Paul is referring to a letter he wrote previously to the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I wrote as I did in my previous letter"
I might not be hurt by those who should have made me rejoice
Paul is speaking about the behavior of certain Corinthian believers who caused him emotional pain. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those who should have made me rejoice might not hurt me"
my joy is the same joy you all have
"what gives me joy is what gives you joy, too"
2 Corinthians 2:4
from great tribulation
Here the word "tribulation" refers to emotional pain.
with anguish of heart
Here the word "heart" refers to the location of the emotions. Alternate translation: "with extreme sorrow"
with many tears
"with much crying"
2 Corinthians 2:5
not to burden you
The "burden" here is the message. Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not want to say words that will make the Corinthians sad. Alternate translation: "not to say this too harshly" Or 2) Paul does not want to say more than is true. Alternate translation: "not to exaggerate"
2 Corinthians 2:6
This punishment of that person by the majority is enough
This can be stated in active form. The word "punishment" can be translated using a verb. Alternate translation: "The way that the majority has punished that person is enough"
is enough
"is sufficient"
2 Corinthians 2:7
he is not overwhelmed by too much sorrow
This means to have a strong emotional response of too much sorrow. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "too much sorrow does not overwhelm him"
2 Corinthians 2:8

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Connecting Statement:
Paul encourages the church in Corinth to show love and to forgive the person they have punished. He writes that he, also, has forgiven him.
confirm your love for him
"show him that you truly love him"
2 Corinthians 2:9
you are obedient in everything
Possible meanings are 1) "you are obedient to God in everything" or 2) "you are obedient in everything that I have taught you"
2 Corinthians 2:10
it is forgiven for your sake
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven it for your sake"
forgiven for your sake
Possible meanings are 1) "forgiven out of my love for you" or 2) "forgiven for your benefit."
2 Corinthians 2:11
For we are not ignorant of his schemes
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For we know his schemes well"
2 Corinthians 2:12
Connecting Statement:
Paul encourages the believers in Corinth by telling them of the opportunities he has had to preach the gospel in Troas and Macedonia.
A door was opened to me by the Lord ... to preach the gospel
Paul speaks of his opportunity to preach the gospel as if it were a door through which he was allowed to walk. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord opened a door to me ... to preach the gospel" or "The Lord gave me the opportunity ... to preach the gospel"
2 Corinthians 2:13
I had no relief in my spirit
"My mind was troubled" or "I was worried"
my brother Titus
Paul speaks of Titus as his spiritual brother.
So I left them
"So I left the people of Troas"
2 Corinthians 2:14
God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph
Paul speaks of God as if he were a victorious general leading a victory parade, and of himself and his coworkers as those who take part in that parade. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are being led as prisoners in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as prisoners in Christ's victory parade" or 2) Paul and his coworkers are led as victorious soldiers in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as victorious soldiers in Christ's triumphal parade"
Through us he reveals the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere
Paul speaks of people learning about Christ from Paul and his companions as if they were smoke from incense that has a pleasing smell spreading around so people could smell it. He mixes his metaphor by saying that God "reveals" that pleasing smell. Alternate translation: "He causes the knowledge of Christ to spread to everyone who hears us, just as the sweet smell of burning incense spreads to everyone near it"
everywhere
"everywhere we go"
2 Corinthians 2:15
we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ
Paul speaks of his ministry as if it were an offering or incense that was being burned, creating a pleasant smell to God.
the sweet aroma of Christ
Possible meanings are 1) "the sweet aroma which is the knowledge of Christ" or 2) "the sweet aroma that Christ offers."
those who are saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has saved"
2 Corinthians 2:16
it is an aroma
"the knowledge of Christ is an aroma." This refers back to [2 Corinthians 2:14]
an aroma from death to death
Possible meanings are 1) that the word "death" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an aroma that causes death" or 2) "an aroma of death that causes people to die"
the ones being saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God is saving"
aroma from life to life
Possible meanings are 1) that the word "life" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an aroma that gives life" or 2) "an aroma of life that gives people life"
Who is worthy of these things?
"Who is qualified to do these things?" The phrase "these things" refers to preaching God's message about Christ. Paul uses a rhetorical question to express amazement that anyone could be worthy of doing this. Alternate translation: 'Who is worthy to spread the knowledge of Christ?" or "It is amazing that anyone is worthy of these things!"
2 Corinthians 2:17
who sell the word of God
"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "who sell God's message"
purity of motives
"pure motives"
we speak in Christ
"we speak as people who are joined to Christ" or "we speak with the authority of Christ"
as we are sent from God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as people whom God has sent"
in the sight of God
This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers preach the gospel with the awareness that God is watching them. Alternate translation: "speaking in the presence of God"

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Chapter 3

2 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues his defense. Paul views the Corinthian Christians as the proof of his work.

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

Paul alludes to God giving the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. This represents the law of Moses. The law was good because it came from God. But God punished the Israelites because they disobeyed it. This chapter may be difficult for translators to understand if the Old Testament has not yet been translated. (See: lawofmoses and covenant and reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter to explain complex spiritual truths. It is unclear whether this makes Paul's teachings easier or more difficult to understand.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"This is a covenant not of the letter but of the Spirit."

Paul contrasts the old and new covenants. The new covenant is not a system of rules and regulations. Here "Spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit. It may also refer to the new covenant being "spiritual" in nature. (See: spirit)

Links:

2 Corinthians 3:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is not boasting as he tells them about what he has done through Christ.

Are we beginning to praise ourselves again?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that they are not bragging about themselves. Alternate translation: "We are not beginning to praise ourselves again."

We do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people, do we?

Paul says this to express that the Corinthians already know about Paul and Timothy's good reputation. The question prompts a negative answer. Alternate translation: "We certainly do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people do."

letters of recommendation

This is a letter that a person writes to introduce and give their approval of someone else.

2 Corinthians 3:2

General Information:

Paul begins an extended metaphor that speaks of the way that the Corinthians have been obeying Christ as if it were a letter that Christ had written first to Paul and his companions and then to all the people in the world.

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation

Paul speaks of the Corinthians as if they are a letter of recommendation. That they have become believers serves to validate Paul's ministry to others. Alternate translation: "You yourselves are like our letter of recommendation"

written on our hearts

Here the word "hearts" refers to their thoughts and emotions. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are sure about the Corinthians being their letter of recommendation or 2) Paul and his coworkers care very deeply for the Corinthians.

written on our hearts

This can be stated in active form with "Christ" as the implied subject. Alternate translation: "which Christ has written on our hearts"

known and read by all people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that all people can know and read"

2 Corinthians 3:3

General Information:

Paul continues the extended metaphor that he began in [2 Corinthians 3:2]

you are a letter from Christ

Paul clarifies that Christ is the one who has written the letter. Alternate translation: "you are a letter that Christ has written"

the result of our ministry

Because of the work Paul and his companions had done, the world could look at the Corinthians and see how Christ blesses people in this life. Some modern translations read, "delivered by us."

It was written not with ink ... on tablets of human hearts

Paul clarifies that the Corinthians are like a spiritual letter, not like a letter that humans write with physical objects.

It was written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was written not with ink but it was written by the Spirit of the living God" or "It is not a letter that people wrote with ink but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote"

It was not written on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is not a letter that people engraved on stone tablets but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote on tablets of human hearts"

tablets of human hearts

Paul speaks of their hearts as if they are flat pieces of stone or clay upon which people engraved letters.

2 Corinthians 3:4

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

this is the confidence
This refers to what Paul has just said. His confidence comes from knowing that the Corinthians are the validation of his ministry before God.
2 Corinthians 3:5
competent in ourselves
"qualified in ourselves" or "sufficient in ourselves"
to claim anything as coming from us
Here the word "anything" refers to anything pertaining to Paul's apostolic ministry. Alternate translation: "to claim that anything we have done in ministry comes from our own efforts"
our competence is from God
"God gives us our sufficiency"
2 Corinthians 3:6
a covenant not of the letter
Here the word "letter" means letters of the alphabet and refers to words that people write down. The phrase alludes to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "a covenant not based on commands that men have written"
but of the Spirit
The Holy Spirit is the one who establishes God's covenant with people. Alternate translation: "but a covenant of the Spirit" or "but a covenant based on what the Spirit does"
the letter kills
Paul speaks of the Old Testament law as a person who kills. Following that law leads to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "the written law leads to death"
2 Corinthians 3:7
Connecting Statement:
Paul contrasts the fading glory of the old covenant with the superiority and freedom of the new covenant. He contrasts the veil of Moses with the clarity of present revelation. During the time of Moses there was a less clear picture of what is now revealed.
Now the ministry of death ... came in such glory
Paul emphasizes that although the law leads to death, it was still very glorious.
the ministry of death
This refers to the Old Testament law that God gave through Moses. Alternate translation: "the ministry that causes people to die because it is based on the law"
engraved in letters on stones
"carved in letters on stone." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God carved in letters on stone"
in such glory
"in so much glory"
This is because
"They could not look because"
2 Corinthians 3:8
How much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?
Paul uses this question to emphasize that "the service that the ministry of the Spirit" must be more glorious than "the ministry of death" [2 Corinthians 3:7]
the ministry of the Spirit
This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that gives life because it is based on the Spirit"
2 Corinthians 3:9
the ministry of condemnation
"the ministry of condemnation." This refers to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "the ministry that condemns people because it is based on the law"
how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory!
Here the word "how" marks this phrase as an exclamation, not as a question. Alternate translation: "then the ministry of righteousness must abound in so much more glory!"
the ministry of righteousness abound in glory
Paul speaks of "the ministry of righteousness" as if it were an object that could produce or multiply another object. He means that "the ministry of righteousness" is far more glorious than the law, which also had glory.
the ministry of righteousness
This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that makes people righteous because it is based on the Spirit"
2 Corinthians 3:10
that which was once made glorious is no longer glorious ... because of the glory that exceeds it
The Old Testament law no longer appears glorious when compared with the new covenant, which is much more glorious.
that which was once made glorious
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law which God once made glorious"
in this respect
"in this way"
2 Corinthians 3:11
that which was passing away
This refers to "the service of condemnation," which Paul speaks of as if it were an object capable of disappearing. Alternate translation: "that which was becoming useless"
2 Corinthians 3:12
Since we have such a hope
This hope is a confident hope. It refers to what Paul has just said. His hope comes from knowing that the new covenant leads to an eternal glory. Alternate translation: "Since we confidently expect this" or "Since we confidently wait to receive this glory"
such a hope
"such confidence"
2 Corinthians 3:13
the ending of a glory that was passing away
The refers to the glory that shined on Moses's face. Alternate translation: "the glory on Moses's face as it faded away completely"
2 Corinthians 3:14
But their minds were hardened
Paul speaks of the minds of the Israelite people as objects that could be made hard. This expression means that they were unable to understand what they saw. Alternate translation: "But the Israelites could not understand what they saw"
For to this day
to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians
when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains
Just as the Israelites could not see the glory on Moses's face

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

because he covered his face with a veil, there is a spiritual veil that prevents people from understanding when they read the old covenant.

when they read the old covenant

"when they hear someone read the old covenant"

It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away

Here both occurrences of the word "it" refer to "the same veil." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one removes the veil, because only in Christ does God remove it"

2 Corinthians 3:15

But even today

This phrase refers to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians.

whenever Moses is read

Here the word "Moses" refers to the Old Testament law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whenever someone reads the Mosaic law"

a veil covers their hearts

Here the word "hearts" represents what people think, and the people being unable to understand the old covenant is spoken of as if they have a veil that covers their hearts the way a physical veil would cover their eyes. Alternate translation: "they are unable to understand what they are hearing"

2 Corinthians 3:16

when a person turns to the Lord

Here "turns to" is a metaphor that means to become loyal to someone. Alternate translation: "when a person starts to worship the Lord" or "when a person starts to trust in the Lord"

the veil is taken away

God gives them the ability to understand. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God lifts the veil away" or "God gives them the ability to understand"

2 Corinthians 3:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Now all of us

Here the word "us" refers to all believers, including Paul and the Corinthians.

with unveiled faces, see the glory of the Lord

Unlike the Israelites who could not see God's glory reflected on Moses's face because he had covered it with a veil, there is nothing to prevent believers from seeing and understanding God's glory.

We are being transformed into the same glorious likeness

The Spirit is changing believers to be glorious like him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord is transforming us into his same glorious likeness"

from one degree of glory into another

"from one amount of glory to another amount of glory." This means that the Spirit is constantly increasing the glory of believers.

just as from the Lord

"just as this comes from the Lord"

Chapter 4

2 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins with the word "therefore." This connects it to what the previous chapter teaches. How these chapters are divided may be confusing to the reader.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ministry

Paul ministers to people by telling them about Christ. He does not try to trick people into believing. If they do not understand the gospel, it is because the problem is ultimately spiritual. (See: spirit)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Life and death

Paul does not refer here to physical life and death. Life represents the new life a Christian has in Jesus. Death represents the old way of living before believing in Jesus. (See: life and death and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hope

Paul uses a repeated pattern in a purposeful way. He makes a statement. Then he denies a seemingly opposite or contradictory statement or gives an exception. Together these give the reader hope in difficult circumstances. (See: hope)

Links:

2 Corinthians 4:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul writes that he is honest in his ministry by preaching Christ, not praising himself. He shows the death and the life

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of Jesus in how he lives so that life can work in the Corinthian believers.

we have this ministry

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and his coworker, but not to the Corinthians.

and just as we have received mercy

This phrase explains how Paul and his coworkers "have this ministry." It is a gift that God has given to them through his mercy. Alternate translation: "because God has shown us mercy"

2 Corinthians 4:2

we have rejected secret and shameful ways

This means that Paul and his coworkers refuse to do "secret and shameful" things. It does not mean that they had done these things in the past.

secret and shameful ways

The word "secret" describes the things that people do secretly. Things that are shameful should cause people who do them to feel ashamed. Alternate translation: "the things that people do secretly because they cause shame"

walk in craftiness

The word "walk" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "live by deceiving people"

we do not mishandle the word of God

The phrase "word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. The words "we do not mishandle" use two negative thoughts to express a positive thought. Alternate translation: "we handle God's message correctly" or "we use the word of God properly"

we recommend ourselves to everyone's conscience

This means that they provide enough evidence for each person who hears them to decide whether they are right or wrong.

in the sight of God

This refers to God's presence. God's understanding and approval of Paul's truthfulness is referred to as God being able to see them. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness"

2 Corinthians 4:3

But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing

This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 3:14]

if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if a veil covers our gospel, that veil covers it"

our gospel

"the gospel that we preach"

2 Corinthians 4:4

the god of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds

Paul speaks of their minds as if they had eyes, and their inability to understand as their minds being unable to see. Alternate translation: "the god of this world has prevented unbelievers from understanding"

the god of this world

"the god who rules this world." This phrase refers to Satan.

they are not able to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

As the Israelites could not see God's glory that shined on Moses's face because he covered it with a veil (2 Corinthians 3:13), unbelievers are not able to see Christ's glory that shines in the gospel. This means that they are unable to understand "the gospel of the glory of Christ"

the light of the gospel

"the light that comes from the gospel"

the gospel of the glory of Christ

"the gospel about Christ's glory"

2 Corinthians 4:5

but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants

You can supply the verb for these phrases. Alternate translation: "but we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and we proclaim ourselves as your servants"

for Jesus' sake

"because of Jesus"

2 Corinthians 4:6

Light will shine out of darkness

With this sentence, Paul refers to God creating light, as described in the book of Genesis.

He has shone ... to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

Here the word "light" refers to the ability to understand. Just as God created light, he also creates understanding for believers. Alternate translation: "He has shone ... to enable us to understand the glory of God"

in our hearts

Here the word "hearts" refers to the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "in our minds"

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the presence

"the light, which is the knowledge of the glory of God, in the presence"

the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ

"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Just as God's glory shone upon Moses's face (2 Corinthians 3:7), it also shines upon Jesus's face. This means that when Paul preaches the gospel, people are able to see and understand the message about God's glory.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and his coworkers, but not to the Corinthians.

we have this treasure in jars of clay

Paul speaks of the gospel as if it were a treasure and their bodies as if they were breakable jars made out of clay. This emphasizes that they are of little value compared to the worth of the gospel that they preach.

so that it is clear

"so that it is clear to people" or "so that people clearly know"

2 Corinthians 4:8

We are afflicted in every way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People afflict us in every way"

2 Corinthians 4:9

We are persecuted but not abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People persecute us, but God does not abandon us" or "People persecute us, but God does not stop caring for us"

abandoned; struck down but not destroyed

This can be stated in active form and as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "abandoned. People strike us down but do not destroy us"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

struck down
"hurt badly"
2 Corinthians 4:10
always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus
Paul speaks of his sufferings as if they are an experience of the death of Jesus. Alternate translation: "often in danger of dying, as Jesus died" or "always suffering in such a way that we experience the death of Jesus"
the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "people can see that we will live in bodies again because Jesus is alive" or 2) "we can show other people in our bodies the spiritual life that Jesus gives."
2 Corinthians 4:11
we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake
Carrying the death of Jesus represents being in danger of dying because of being loyal to Jesus. Alternate translation: "God is always leading those of us who are alive to face death because we are joined to Jesus" or "People are always causing us who are alive to be in danger of dying because we are joined to Jesus"
so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may reveal the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh"
the life of Jesus may be revealed
Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus lives. Alternate translation: "God may reveal that Jesus is alive" 2) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus gives to his people. Alternate translation: "God may reveal the life that Jesus gives to his people"
our mortal flesh
Paul is referring to our physical bodies, which will die someday.
2 Corinthians 4:12
death is at work in us, but life is at work in you
Paul speaks of death and life as if they are persons who can work. This means that they are always in danger of physical death so that the Corinthians can have spiritual life.
2 Corinthians 4:13
the same spirit of faith
"the same attitude of faith." Here the word "spirit" refers a person's attitude and temperament.
according to that which was written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the one who wrote these words"
I believed, and so I spoke
This is a quote from the Psalms.
2 Corinthians 4:14
that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will
Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "that the one who caused the Lord Jesus to live again will" or "God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will"
2 Corinthians 4:15
For everything is for your sake
Here the word "everything" refers to all of the sufferings that Paul has described in previous verses.
the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God
Paul speaks of more and more people experiencing God's grace as if grace were "reaching" people. And, Paul speaks of more and ore people giving thanks to God as if thanksgiving were an object that could become larger by itself. Alternate translation: "God may show his grace to many people, causing more and more people to give thanks, to the glory of God"
2 Corinthians 4:16
Connecting Statement:
Paul writes that the Corinthian difficulties are minor and do not last long when compared to the unseen eternal things.
So we do not become discouraged
This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "So we remain confident"
outwardly we are wasting away
This refers to their physical bodies decaying and dying. Alternate translation: "our physical bodies are getting weak and dying"
inwardly we are being renewed day by day
This refers to their inward, spiritual lives getting stronger. Alternate translation: "our spiritual beings are being strengthened day by day"
inwardly we are being renewed day by day
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is renewing our inward being more each day"
2 Corinthians 4:17
this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal burden of glory
Paul speaks of his sufferings and the glory that God will give him as if they were objects that can be weighed. He uses irony to call affliction, which people usually think of as if it were a heavy burden, a light burden and glory, which people usually think of as relief from suffering, as if it were a heavy burden. Through this metaphor he is saying that the glory to come will be much greater than the affliction.
that exceeds all measurement
The glory that Paul will experience is so great that no one can measure it. The abstract noun "measurement" can be translated as the verb "measure." Alternate translation: "that no one can measure"
2 Corinthians 4:18
things that are seen ... things that are unseen ... things that are unseen
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that we can see ... things that we cannot see ... things that we cannot see"
but for things that are unseen
You can supply the verb for this phrase. Alternate translation: "but we are watching for things that are unseen"

Chapter 5

2 Corinthians 5 General Notes

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Special concepts in this chapter

New bodies in heaven

Paul knows that when he dies he will receive a much better body. Because of this, he is not afraid of being killed for preaching the gospel. So he tells others that they too can be reconciled to God. Christ will take away their sin and give them his righteousness. (See: goodnews, reconcile, sin, and righteous)

New creation

The old and new creation probably refer to how Paul illustrates the old and new self. These concepts are also the same as the old and new man. The term "old" probably does not refer to the sinful nature with which a person is born. It refers to the old way of living or the Christian formerly being bound to sin. The "new creation" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Home

The Christian's home is no longer in the world. A Christian's real home is in heaven. By using this metaphor, Paul emphasizes that the Christian's circumstances in this world are temporary. It gives hope to those who are suffering. (See: heaven and and hope)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The message of reconciliation"

This refers to the gospel. Paul calls for people who are hostile to God to repent and be reconciled to him. (See: repent and reconcile)

Links:

2 Corinthians 5:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues by contrasting believers' earthly bodies to the heavenly ones God will give.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have a building from God

Here a temporary "house" or "tent" is a metaphor for a person's physical body and a permanent "building from God" is a metaphor for the new body that God will give believers after they die.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if people destroy our earthly house—the tent—we have" or "if people kill our bodies, we have"

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed

"if the tent that is our home on earth is destroyed"

It is a house not made by human hands

Here "house" means the same thing as "building from God." Here "hands" is a synecdoche that represents the human as a whole. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is a house that humans did not make"

2 Corinthians 5:2

in this tent we groan

Here "this tent" means the same thing as "the earthly dwelling that we live in." A groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good.

longing to be clothed with our heavenly residence

The words "our heavenly residence" means the same thing as "the place God will give us to live in." Paul speaks of the new body that believers receive after they die as if it were both a house to live in and a piece of clothing that a person can put on.

2 Corinthians 5:3

by putting it on

"by putting on our heavenly dwelling"

we will not be found to be naked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we will not be naked" or "God will not find us naked"

2 Corinthians 5:4

while we are in this tent

Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a "tent."

in this tent, we groan

The word "tent" refers to "the earthly dwelling that we live in." The word groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good. See how you translated this in 2 Corinthians 5:2.

being burdened

Paul refers to the difficulties that the physical body experiences as if they were heavy objects that are difficult to carry.

We do not want to be unclothed ... we want to be clothed

Paul speaks of the body as if it were clothing. Here "to be unclothed" refers to the death of the physical body; "to be clothed" refers to having the resurrection body that God will give.

to be unclothed

"to be without clothes" or "to be naked"

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

Paul speaks of life as if it were an animal that eats "what is mortal." The physical body that will die will be replaced by a resurrection body that will live forever.

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that life may swallow up what is mortal"

2 Corinthians 5:5

who gave us the Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a down payment toward eternal life. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 1:22]

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

2 Corinthians 5:6
Connecting Statement:
Because believers will have a new body and have the Holy Spirit as a pledge, Paul reminds them to live by faith so that they may please the Lord.
while we are at home in the body
Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a place where a person dwells. Alternate translation: "while we are living in this earthly body"
we are away from the Lord
"we are not at home with the Lord" or "we are not in heaven with the Lord"
2 Corinthians 5:7
we walk by faith, not by sight
Here "walk" is a metaphor for "live" or "behave." Alternate translation: "we live according to faith, not according to what we see"
2 Corinthians 5:8
We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord
You may need to make explicit that they do not prefer to remain alive in this present world. Alternate translation: "We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord than to remain in the body and away from the Lord"
We would prefer to be away from the body
Here the word "body" refers to the physical body.
at home with the Lord
"at home with the Lord in heaven"
2 Corinthians 5:9
whether we are at home or away
Possible meanings are 1) "whether we are at home in the body or away from it" or 2) "whether we are at home with the Lord or away from him." Either way, Paul means that, whether in this life or in the next life, believers should try to please the Lord.
to please him
"to please the Lord"
2 Corinthians 5:10
we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ
Here "judgment seat of Christ" represents Christ himself, who will judge all people. Alternate translation: "we all must stand in the presence of Christ to be judged" or "Christ will judge all of us"
appear
"go" or "be present" or "stand"
each one may receive what is due
"each person may receive what he deserves"
the things done in the body
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things he has done in the physical body"
whether for good or for bad
"whether those things were good or bad"
2 Corinthians 5:11
knowing the fear of the Lord
"knowing what it means to fear the Lord"
we persuade people
Possible meanings are 1) "we persuade people of the truth of the gospel" or 2) "we persuade people that we are legitimate apostles."
What we are is clearly seen by God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God clearly sees what kind of people we are"
I hope that it is also clear to your conscience
Paul wanted the the Corinthians to know what kind of people he and those with him were. "I expect that it is also clear to your conscience" or "I trust that it is also clear to your conscience"
that it is also clear to your conscience
"that you are also convinced of it"
2 Corinthians 5:12
We are not commending ourselves to you again
"We are not recommending ourselves to you again" or "We are not trying to show you again that we are worthy"
so you may have an answer for those
"so you may have something to say to those"
those who boast about appearances but not about what is in the heart
Here the word "appearances" refers to outward expressions of things like ability and status. The word "heart" refers to the inward character of a person. Alternate translation: "those who praise their own actions, but do not care about what they really are in their inner being"
2 Corinthians 5:13
if we are out of our minds ... if we are in our right minds
Paul is speaking about the way others think of him and his coworkers. Alternate translation: "if people think we are crazy ... if people think we are sane"
2 Corinthians 5:14
the love of Christ
Possible meanings are 1) "our love for Christ" or 2) "Christ's love for us."
died for all
"died for all people"
2 Corinthians 5:15
him who for their sake died and was raised
"him who for their sake died and whom God caused to live again" or "Christ, who died for their sake and whom God raised"
for their sake
Possible meanings are 1) these words refer only to "died" or 2) these words refer to both "died" and "was raised."
2 Corinthians 5:16
Connecting Statement:
Because of Christ's love and death, we are not to judge by human standards. We are appointed to teach others how to be united with and have peace with God through Christ's death and to receive God's righteousness through Christ.
For this reason
This refers to what Paul has just said about living for Christ instead of living for self.
regard anyone
"judge anyone" or "think about anyone"
the flesh
This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]
2 Corinthians 5:17
he is a new creation
Paul speaks of the person who believes in Christ as if that person were a new person that God had created. Alternate

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translation: "he is a new person"

The old things have passed away

Here "the old things" refers to the things that characterized a person before he trusted in Christ.

See

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

2 Corinthians 5:18

All these things are from God

"God has done all these things." This refers to what Paul has just said in the previous verse about new things replacing old things.

the ministry of reconciliation

This can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the ministry of reconciling people to him"

2 Corinthians 5:19

That is, in Christ

"This means that in Christ"

in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself

Here the word "world" refers to people in the world. Alternate translation: "in Christ, God is reconciling mankind to himself"

He is entrusting to us the message of reconciliation

God has given Paul the responsibility to spread the message that God is reconciling people to himself.

the message of reconciliation

"the message about reconciliation"

2 Corinthians 5:20

we are appointed as representatives of Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has appointed us as Christ's representatives"

representatives of Christ

"those who speak for Christ"

Be reconciled to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let God reconcile you to himself"

2 Corinthians 5:21

General Information:

The words "us" and "we" refer to Paul and his readers and so are inclusive.

He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us

"Christ new no sin, but God made him to become sin for us"

knew no sin

"never sinned"

to become sin for us

The word "sin" is a metonym for the sacrifice that is offered so that God will forgive sin. Alternate translation: "to become the sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"

us, so that

"us. He did this so that"

so that we might become the righteousness of God in him

The phrase "the righteousness of God" refers to the righteousness that God requires and that comes from God. Alternate translation: "so that through Christ we might have the righteousness that God requires"

Chapter 6

2 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 2 and 16-18, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Servants

Paul refers to Christians as servants of God. God calls Christians to serve him in all circumstances. Paul describes some of the difficult circumstances in which he and his companions served God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Contrasts

Paul uses four pairs of contrasts: righteousness versus lawlessness, light versus darkness, Christ versus Satan, and the temple of God versus idols. These contrasts show a difference between Christians and non-Christians. (See: righteous and light and darkness)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions to teach his readers. All of these questions make essentially the same point: Christians should not intimately fellowship with those who live in sin. Paul repeats these questions for emphasis. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Links:

2 Corinthians 6:1

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2 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul summarizes how working together for God is supposed to be.

Working together with him

Paul is implying that he and Timothy are working with God. Alternate translation: "Working together with God"

we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain

"we beg you to make use of the grace that you have received from God"

2 Corinthians 6:2

General Information:

In this verse, Paul quotes a portion from the prophet Isaiah.

For he says

"For God says." This introduces a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. Alternate translation: "For God says in scripture"

Look

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

2 Corinthians 6:3

We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone

Paul speaks of anything that would prevent a person from trusting in Christ as if it were a physical object over which that person trips and falls. Alternate translation: "We do not want to do anything that will prevent people from believing our message"

we do not wish our ministry to be discredited

The word "discredited" refers to people speaking badly about Paul's ministry, and working against the message he proclaims. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we do not want anyone to be able to speak badly about our ministry"

2 Corinthians 6:4

General Information:

When Paul uses "we" here, he is referring to himself and Timothy.

in every way we commend ourselves as God's servants

Possible meanings are 1) "Because we are God's servants we recommend ourselves to you in every way" or 2) "in every way we show that we are God's servants"

in every way

This tells how they commend themselves. Alternate translation: "in everything we do"

in much endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship

Paul mentions various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:5

in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labor, in sleepless nights, in hunger

Paul continues to mention various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:6

in purity ... in sincere love

Paul lists several moral virtues that they maintained in difficult situations, commending themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:7

in the word of truth

"by speaking God's message about truth" or "by speaking God's true message"

in the power of God

"by showing God's power to people"

with the armor of righteousness for the right hand and the left

Paul speaks of their righteousness as if it were weapons that they use to fight spiritual battles.

the armor of righteousness

"righteousness as our armor" or "righteousness as our weapons"

for the right hand and the left

Possible meanings are 1) that there is a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other or 2) that they are completely equipped for battle, able to fend off attacks from any direction.

2 Corinthians 6:8

regarded as deceivers

"people regard us as deceivers" or "people say that we are liars"

and yet truthful

You may need to fill in the words left out of the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "but we are truthful"

2 Corinthians 6:9

as if we were unknown, yet we are well known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people did not know us, and yet people know us well"

as if we were being punished for our actions, yet we are not killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people were punishing us for our actions, yet they have not killed us"

2 Corinthians 6:10

General Information:

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2 Corinthians 6:11

spoken the whole truth to you

"spoken honestly to you"

our heart is wide open

Paul speaks of his great affection for the Corinthians as having a heart that is open. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "we love you very much"

2 Corinthians 6:12

You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own hearts

Paul speaks of the Corinthians' lack of love for him as if their hearts were squeezed into a tight space. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions.

You are not restrained by us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We have not restrained you" or "We have not given you any reason to stop loving us"

you are restrained in your own hearts

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your own hearts are restraining you" or "you have stopped loving us for your own reasons"

2 Corinthians 6:13

open yourselves wide also

Paul urges the Corinthians to love him as he has loved them. Alternate translation: "love us back" or "love us much as we have loved you"

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2 Corinthians 6:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to be separated from idols and live clean lives for God.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Only be yoked together with believers"

be yoked together with unbelievers

Paul speaks of working together toward a common purpose as if it were two animals tied together to pull a plow or cart. Alternate translation: "team up with" or "have a close relationship with"

For what association does righteousness have with lawlessness?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "For righteousness can have no association with lawlessness."

For what fellowship does light have with darkness?

Paul asks this question to emphasize that light and darkness cannot coexist since light dispels darkness. The words "light" and "darkness" refer to the moral and spiritual qualities of believers and unbelievers. Alternate translation: "Light can have no fellowship with darkness."

2 Corinthians 6:15

What agreement can Christ have with Belial?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between Christ and Belial."

Belial

This is another name for the devil.

Or what share does a believer have together with an unbeliever?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "A believer shares nothing in common with an unbeliever."

2 Corinthians 6:16

General Information:

Paul paraphrases portions from several Old Testament prophets: Moses, Zechariah, Amos, and possibly others.

And what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols."

we are the temple of the living God

Paul refers to all Christians as forming a temple for God to dwell in. Alternate translation: "we are like a temple where the living God dwells"

I will dwell among them and walk among them.

This is an Old Testament quotation that speaks of God being with the people in two different ways. The words "dwell among" speak of living where others live, while the words "walk among" speak of being with them as they go about their lives. Alternate translation: "I will be with them and help them"

2 Corinthians 6:17

General Information:

Paul quotes portions from the Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel.

be set apart

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "set yourselves apart" or "allow me to set you apart"

Touch no unclean thing

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Touch only things that are clean" or "Stay away from things that are unclean"

2 Corinthians 6:18

General Information:

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Chapter 7

2 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In verses 2-4, Paul finishes his defense. He then writes about Titus's return and the comfort it brought.

Special concepts in this chapter

Clean and unclean

Christians are "clean" in the sense that God has cleansed them from sin. They do not need to be concerned with being clean according to the law of Moses. Ungodly living can still make a Christian unclean. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Sadness and sorrow

The words "sad" and "sorrow" in this chapter indicate that the Corinthians were upset to the point of repenting. (See: repent)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Original situation

This chapter discusses in detail a previous situation. We can figure out some aspects of this situation from the information in this chapter. But it is best not to include this type of implicit information in a translation.

Links:

2 Corinthians 7:1 Notes

2 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the Corinthians to be separated from sin and to seek holiness purposefully.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Beloved
"You whom I love" or "Dear friends"
let us cleanse ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit
Here Paul is saying to stay away from any form of sin that would affect one's relationship with God.
of all defilement of flesh and spirit
"of all things that defile our body and spirit" or "of all things in our body and spirit that make us unacceptable to God"
Let us perfect holiness
"Let us do all we can to be perfectly holy"
in the fear of God
"out of deep respect for God" or "because we fear God"
2 Corinthians 7:2
Connecting Statement:
Having already warned the people of Corinth about other leaders who were striving to get these Corinthian believers to follow them, Paul reminds the people of the way he feels about them.
Make room for us
This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 6:11]
2 Corinthians 7:3
It is not to condemn you that I say this
"I do not say this to accuse you of having done wrong." The word "this" refers to what Paul just said about not having wronged anyone.
you are in our hearts
Paul speaks of his and his associates' great love for the Corinthians as if they held them in their hearts. Alternate translation: "you are very dear to us"
for us to die together and to live together
This means that Paul and his associates will continue to love the Corinthians no matter what happens. Alternate translation: "whether we live or whether we die"
for us to die
"us" includes the Corinthian believers.
2 Corinthians 7:4
great is my boast about you
"I boast much about you" or "I am very proud of you"
I am filled with comfort
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You fill me with comfort"
I overflow with joy
Paul speaks of joy as if it is a liquid that fills him until he overflows. Alternate translation: "I am extremely joyful"
even in all our tribulation
"even though we suffer greatly"
2 Corinthians 7:5
When we came to Macedonia
Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy but not to the Corinthians or Titus.
our bodies had no rest
The word "body" often refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "we had no rest" or "we were very tired"
we were troubled in every way
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we experienced trouble in every way"
by conflicts on the outside and fears on the inside
Possible meanings for "outside" are 1) "outside of our bodies" or 2) "outside of the church." The word "inside" refers to their inward emotions. Alternate translation: "by conflicts with other people and by fears within ourselves"
2 Corinthians 7:6
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
2 Corinthians 7:7
by the comfort that Titus had received from you
Paul received comfort from knowing that the Corinthians had comforted Titus. Alternate translation: "by learning about the comfort that Titus had received from you"
2 Corinthians 7:8
General Information:
This refers to Paul's previous letter to these Corinthian believers where he rebuked them for their acceptance of a believer's sexual immorality with his father's wife.
Connecting Statement:
Paul praises them for their godly sorrow, their zeal to do right, and the joy that it brought him and Titus.
when I saw that my letter
"when I learned that my letter"
2 Corinthians 7:9
not because you were sorrowful
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not because what I said in my letter made you sorrowful"
sorrowful ... sorrow ... sorrow
or "distressed ... distress ... distress"
so you suffered no loss because of us
"so you suffered no loss because we rebuked you." This means that although the letter caused them sorrow, they eventually benefited from the letter because it led them to repentance. Alternate translation: "so that we did not harm you in any way"
2 Corinthians 7:10
For godly sorrow brings about repentance that accomplishes salvation
The word "repentance" may be repeated to clarify its relationship to what precedes it and what follows it. "For godly sorrow produces repentance, and repentance leads to salvation"
without regret
Possible meanings are 1) Paul has no regret that he caused them sorrow because that sorrow led to their repentance and salvation or 2) the Corinthians will not regret experiencing sorrow because it led to their repentance and salvation.
Worldly sorrow, however, brings about death
This kind of sorrow leads to death instead of salvation because it does not produce repentance. Alternate translation: "Worldly sorrow, however, leads to spiritual death"
2 Corinthians 7:11
See what great diligence
"Look and see for yourselves what great diligence"
How great was the determination in you to prove you were innocent.
Here the word "How" makes this statement an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Your determination to prove you were innocent was very great!"
your indignation

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"your anger"
that justice should be done
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that someone should carry out justice"
2 Corinthians 7:12
the wrongdoer
"the one who did wrong"
your earnestness toward us should be made known to you in the sight of God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you would know in the sight of God your earnestness toward us"
earnestness
sincere, serious desire for what is good
in the sight of God
This represents God's presence. See how you translated this in [2 Corinthians 4:2]
2 Corinthians 7:13
It is by this that we are encouraged
Here the word "this" refers to the way the Corinthians responded to Paul's previous letter, as he described in the previous verse. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what encourages us"
his spirit was refreshed by all of you
Here the word "spirit" refers to a person's temperament and disposition. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all of you refreshed his spirit" or "all of you made him stop worrying"
2 Corinthians 7:14
For if I boasted to him about you
"For although I boasted to him about you"
I was not put to shame
"you did not disappoint me"
our boasting about you to Titus proved to be true
"you proved that our boasting about you to Titus was true"
2 Corinthians 7:15
the obedience of all of you
This noun "obedience" can be stated with a verb, "obey." Alternate translation: "how all of you obeyed"
you welcomed him with fear and trembling
Here "fear" and "trembling" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of fear. Alternate translation: "you welcomed him with great reverence"
with fear and trembling
Possible meanings are 1) "with great reverence for God" or 2) "with great reverence for Titus."
2 Corinthians 7:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 8

2 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8 and 9 begin a new section. Paul writes about how churches in Greece helped needy believers in Jerusalem. Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 15.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gift to the church in Jerusalem

The church in Corinth started preparing to give money to the poor believers in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia also had given generously. Paul sends Titus and two other believers to Corinth to encourage the Corinthians to give generously. Paul and the others will carry the money to Jerusalem. They want people to know it is being done honestly.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. These words in verse 2 are a paradox: "the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity." In verse 3 Paul explains how their poverty produced riches. Paul also uses riches and poverty in other paradoxes. (2 Corinthians 8:2)

Links:

2 Corinthians 8:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 8:1
Connecting Statement:
Having explained his changed plans and his ministry direction, Paul talks about giving.
the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God has given to the churches of Macedonia"
2 Corinthians 8:2
the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity
Paul speaks of "joy" and "poverty" as if they were living things that can produce generosity. Alternate translation: "because of the people's great joy and extreme poverty, they have become very generous"
the abundance of their joy
Paul speaks of joy as if it were a physical object that could increase in size or quantity.
extremity of their poverty ... riches of generosity

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Though the churches of Macedonia have suffered testings of affliction and poverty, by God's grace they have been able to collect money for the believers in Jerusalem.

great riches of generosity

"a very great generosity." The words "great riches" emphasize the greatness of their generosity.

2 Corinthians 8:3

they gave

This refers to the churches in Macedonia.

of their own free will

"voluntarily"

2 Corinthians 8:4

this service to God's holy people

Paul is referring to providing money to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "this ministry of providing for the believers in Jerusalem"

2 Corinthians 8:5

This did not happen as we had hoped

The Macedonians did even more than Paul and those with him had hoped for. Alternate translation: "This did not happen merely as we had thought it might" or "But even more than we had expected"

2 Corinthians 8:6

who had already begun this task

Paul is referring to the collection of money from the Corinthians for the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "who had encouraged your giving in the first place"

to complete among you this act of grace

Titus was to help the Corinthians to complete the collection of money. Alternate translation: "to encourage you to finish collecting and giving your generous gift"

2 Corinthians 8:7

make sure that you excel in this act of grace

Here "this act of grace" refers the gift that the Corinthians were to give. Alternate translation: "make sure that you are very generous in your giving"

2 Corinthians 8:8

by comparing it to the eagerness of other people

Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to give generously by comparing their generosity with the generosity of the Macedonian churches.

2 Corinthians 8:9

the grace of our Lord

In this context, the word "grace" emphasizes the generosity with which Jesus had blessed the Corinthians.

Even though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor

Paul speaks of Jesus before his incarnation as being rich, and of his becoming human as becoming poor.

through his poverty you might become rich

Paul speaks of the Corinthians becoming spiritually rich as a result of Jesus becoming human.

2 Corinthians 8:10

In this matter

This refers to their collecting money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "With regard to the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:11

there was an eagerness and desire to do it

This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "you were eager and desired to do it"

bring it to completion

"complete it" or "finish it"

2 Corinthians 8:12

a good and acceptable thing

Here the words "good" and "acceptable" share similar meanings and emphasize the goodness of the thing. Alternate translation: "a very good thing"

It must be based on what a person has

"Giving must be based on what a person has"

2 Corinthians 8:13

For this is not to cause relief for others and tribulation for you

The word "this" refers to collecting money for the believers in Jerusalem. The abstract nouns "relief" and "tribulation" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "We are not asking you to give money to relieve others and make yourselves suffer"

but for fairness

"but so that there should be equality" or "but so that there might be equality between others and you." Paul is explaining why he is asking the Corinthians to give money to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:14

This is also so that their abundance may supply your need

Since the Corinthians are acting in the present time, it is implied that the believers in Jerusalem will also help them at some time in the future. Alternate translation: "This is also so that in the future their abundance may supply your need"

2 Corinthians 8:15

as it is written

Here Paul quotes from Exodus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as Moses wrote"

did not have any lack

"had all he needed"

2 Corinthians 8:16

who put into Titus' heart the same earnest care that I have for you

Here the word "heart" refers to the emotions. This means that God caused Titus to love them. Alternate translation: "who made Titus care for you as much as I do"

same earnest care

"the same enthusiasm" or "same deep concern"

2 Corinthians 8:17

For he not only accepted our appeal

Paul is referring to his asking Titus to return to Corinth and complete the collection. Alternate translation: "For he not only agreed to our request that he help you with the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:18

with him

"with Titus"

the brother who is praised among all of the churches

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brother whom believers among all of the churches praise"

2 Corinthians 8:19

Not only this

"Not only do believers among all of the churches praise him"

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he also was chosen by the churches
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches also chose him"
our traveling companion with this act of grace
"to travel with us as we carry out this act of generosity."
This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem.
which is being administered by us
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "which we are taking care of"
for the glory of the Lord himself and our good will
You may need to fill in the ideas missing in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "so that people will praise the Lord and so that they will see how eager we are to help"
2 Corinthians 8:20
about this act of generosity that we are carrying out
This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem. The abstract noun "generosity" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "concerning the way we are handling this generous gift"
2 Corinthians 8:21
We take care to do what is good, not only before the Lord, but also before people.
"We are careful to do not only what the Lord thinks is good but also what people think is good"
before the Lord ... before people
"in the Lord's opinion ... in people's opinion"
2 Corinthians 8:22
with them
The word "them" refers to Titus and the previously mentioned brother.
2 Corinthians 8:23
he is my partner and fellow worker for you
"he is my partner, who works with me to help you"
As for our brothers
This refers to the two other men who will accompany Titus.
they are messengers from the churches
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches have sent them as their messengers"
They are a glory to Christ
This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "They will cause people to see Christ's glory" or "They will cause people to honor Christ"
2 Corinthians 8:24
General Information:
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Chapter 9

2 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 9, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses three agricultural metaphors. He uses them to teach about giving to needy believers. The metaphors help Paul explain that God will reward those who give generously. Paul does not say how or when God will reward them. (See: and reward)

Links:

2 Corinthians 9:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 9:1
General Information:
When Paul refers to Achaia, he is talking about a Roman province located in southern Greece where Corinth is located.
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues on the subject of giving. He wants to make sure that the collection of their offering for the needy believers in Jerusalem takes place before he comes so that it does not seem as though he takes advantage of them. He talks about how giving blesses the giver and glorifies God.
the service for God's holy people
This refers to the collection of money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the ministry for the believers in Jerusalem"
2 Corinthians 9:2
Achaia has been getting ready
Here the word "Achaia" refers to the people who live in this province, and specifically to the people of the church in Corinth. Alternate translation: "the people of Achaia have been preparing"
2 Corinthians 9:3
the brothers
This refers to Titus and the two men who accompany him.
our boasting about you may not be futile
Paul does not want others to think that the things that he had boasted about the Corinthians were false.
2 Corinthians 9:4
find you unprepared
"find you unprepared to give"
2 Corinthians 9:5
the brothers to come to you
From Paul's perspective, the brothers are going. Alternate translation: "the brothers to go to you"
not as something extorted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not as something that we have extorted from you" or "not as something that you gave us because we forced you to give it to us"

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2 Corinthians 9:6

the one who sows ... reap a blessing

Paul uses the image of a farmer sowing seeds to describe the results of giving. As a farmer's harvest is based on how much he sows, so will God's blessings be little or much, based on how generously the Corinthians give.

2 Corinthians 9:7

give as he has planned in his heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "give as he has determined"

not reluctantly or under compulsion

This can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "not because he feels guilty or because someone is forcing him to give"

for God loves a cheerful giver

God wants people to give gladly to help provide for fellow believers.

2 Corinthians 9:8

God is able to make all grace overflow for you

Grace is spoken of as if it were a physical object of which a person can have more than he can use. As a person gives financially to other believers, God also gives to the giver everything he needs. Alternate translation: "God is able to give you many things" or "God is able to give you very much"

grace

This refers here to the physical things a Christian needs, not to the need for God to save him from his sins.

so that you may multiply every good deed

"so that you may be able to do more and more good deeds"

2 Corinthians 9:9

It is as it is written

"This is just as it is written." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is just as the writer wrote"

2 Corinthians 9:10

He who supplies

"God who supplies"

bread for food

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

will also supply and multiply your seed for sowing

Paul speaks of the Corinthians' possessions as if they were seeds and of giving to others as if they were sowing seeds. Alternate translation: "will also supply and multiply your possessions so that you can sow them by giving them to others"

He will increase the harvest of your righteousness

Paul compares the benefits that the Corinthians will receive from their generosity to that of a harvest. Alternate translation: "God will bless you even more for your righteousness"

the harvest of your righteousness

"the harvest that comes from your righteous actions." Here the word "righteousness" refers to the righteous actions of the Corinthians in giving their resources to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will be enriched

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will enrich you"

This will bring about thanksgiving to God through us

The word this refers to the Corinthian's generosity. Alternate translation: "Because of your generosity, those who receive the gifts we bring them will thank God" or "When we give your gifts to those who need them, they will give thanks to God"

2 Corinthians 9:12

For carrying out this service

Here the word "service" refers to Paul and his companions bringing the contribution to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "For our carrying out this service for the believers in Jerusalem"

but it also is overflowing into many acts of thanksgiving to God

Paul speaks of the Corinthian believers' act of service as if it were a liquid of which there is more than a container can hold. Alternate translation: "It also causes people to do many deeds for which people will thank God"

2 Corinthians 9:13

Because of your being tested and proved by this service

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Because this service has tested and proven you"

you will also glorify God by obedience ... by the generosity of your contribution to them and to everyone

Paul says that the Corinthians will glorify God both by being faithful to Jesus and by giving generously to other believers who have need.

the generosity of your contribution

The abstract nouns "generosity" and "contribution" can be stated respectively as an adverb and a verb. Alternate translation: "what you have contributed generously" (

contribution

This word refers here to a gift that is part of a larger gift that many people are giving.

2 Corinthians 9:14

General Information:

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2 Corinthians 9:15

for his inexpressible gift

"for his gift, which words cannot describe." Possible meanings are 1) that this gift refers to "the very great grace" that God has given to the Corinthians, which has led them to be so generous or 2) that this gift refers to Jesus Christ, whom God gave to all believers.

Chapter 10

2 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 17.

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In this chapter, Paul returns to defending his authority. He also compares the way he speaks and the way he writes.

Special concepts in this chapter

Boasting

"Boasting" is often thought of as bragging, which is not good. But in this letter "boasting" means confidently exulting or rejoicing.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

In verses 3-6, Paul uses many metaphors from war. He probably uses them as part of a larger metaphor about Christians being spiritually at war.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

"Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Links:

2 Corinthians 10:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul shifts the subject from giving to affirming his authority to teach as he does.

by the humility and gentleness of Christ

The word "humility" and "gentleness" are abstract nouns, and can be expressed in another way. Alternate translation: "by Christ, who is humble and gentle"

2 Corinthians 10:2

we are walking

The word "walking" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. "we are acting"

according to the flesh

The word "flesh" is a metonym for the mortal body, which in turn is a metaphor for the person himself. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 10:3

we walk in the flesh

Here "walk" is an metaphor for "live" and "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "we live our lives in physical bodies"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

we do not make war

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

make war according to the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) the word "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "fight against our enemies using physical weapons" or 2) the word "flesh" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "make war in sinful ways"

2 Corinthians 10:4

the weapons we fight with ... bring misleading arguments to nothing

Paul speaks of godly wisdom that shows human wisdom to be false as if it were a weapon with which he is destroying an enemy stronghold. Alternate translation: "the weapons we fight with ... show people that what our enemies say is completely wrong"

we fight

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

are not fleshly

Possible meanings are 1) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for merely physical. Alternate translation: "are not physical" or 2) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "are not sinful" or "do not enable us to do wrong"

2 Corinthians 10:5

every high thing that rises up

Paul is still speaking with the metaphor of a war, as if "the knowledge of God" were an army and "every high thing" were a wall that people had made to keep the army out. Alternate translation: "every false argument that proud people think of to protect themselves"

every high thing

"everything that proud people do"

rises up against the knowledge of God

Paul speaks of arguments as if they were a wall standing high against an army. The words "rises up" mean "stands tall," not that the "high thing" is floating up into the air. Alternate translation: "people use so they will not have to know who God is"

We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ

Paul speaks of people's thoughts as if they were enemy soldiers whom he captures in battle. Alternate translation: "We show how all the false ideas those people have are wrong and teach the people to obey Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:6

punish every act of disobedience

The words "act of disobedience" are a metonym for the people who commit those acts. Alternate translation: "punish every one of you who disobeys us"

2 Corinthians 10:7

Look at what is clearly in front of you.

Possible meanings are 1) this is a command or 2) this is a statement, "You are looking only at what you can see with

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your eyes." Some think this is a rhetorical question that may also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Are you looking at what is clearly in front of you?" or "You seem unable to see what is clearly in front of you."

let him remind himself

"he needs to remember"

that just as he is Christ's, so also are we

"that we belong to Christ just as much as he does"

2 Corinthians 10:8

to build you up and not to destroy you

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. Alternate translation: "to help you become better followers of Christ and not to discourage you so you stop following him"

2 Corinthians 10:9

I am terrifying you

"I am trying to frighten you"

2 Corinthians 10:10

serious and powerful

"demanding and forceful"

his bodily presence is weak

"when he is here physically, he is not impressive"

2 Corinthians 10:11

Let such people be aware

"I want such people to be aware"

what we are in the words of our letters when we are absent is what we will be in our actions when we are there

"we will do the same things when we are there with you that we have written about in our letters while we have been away from you"

we ... our

All instances of these words refer to Paul's ministry team but not the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 10:12

We are not so bold as to group ourselves ... praise themselves

"Bold people would group themselves ... praise themselves, but we are not that bold, so we do not." Paul is using irony here: most people think of boldness as a good thing, but Paul is saying that those who have the boldness to praise themselves are doing wrong.

to group ourselves or compare ourselves with those

"to say we are as good as those"

they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with each other

Paul is saying much the same thing twice.

they measure themselves by one another

Paul is speaking of goodness as though it were something whose length people could measure. Alternate translation: "they look at each other and try to see who is better"

have no insight

"show everyone that they do not know anything"

2 Corinthians 10:13

General Information:

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules, those things over which he has authority as being within the borders or "limits" of his land, and those things not under his authority as being beyond the "limits."

will not boast beyond limits. Instead

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "will not boast about things over which we have no authority. Instead" or "will boast only about things over which we have authority. And"

within the limits of what God

"about things under the authority that God"

limits that reach even as far as you

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules. Alternate translation: "and you are within the border of our authority"

2 Corinthians 10:14

we are not overextending ourselves

"we are not doing more than we should." Possible meanings are 1) "we are not boasting more than we should" or 2) "we are not claiming to have more authority than we do."

2 Corinthians 10:15

We have not boasted beyond limits about the labors of others

This is an idiom. See how similar words were translated in [2 Corinthians 10:13]

our hope is that

"we hope that" or "we desire that" or "we trust that"

2 Corinthians 10:16

another's area

"an area God has assigned to someone else"

2 Corinthians 10:17

boast in the Lord

"boast about what the Lord has done"

2 Corinthians 10:18

recommends himself

This means that he provides enough evidence for each person who hears him to decide whether he is right or wrong. See how "recommend ourselves" is translated in 2 Corinthians 4:2.

who is approved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Lord approves"

but the one whom the Lord recommends

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but it is the one whom the Lord recommends who is approved"

Chapter 11

2 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul continues defending his authority.

Special concepts in this chapter

False teaching

The Corinthians were quick to accept false teachers who taught things about Jesus and the gospel that were different from what Paul taught and that were not true. Unlike these false teachers, Paul sacrificially served the Corinthians. (See:

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goodnews)

Light

Light is commonly used in the New Testament as a metaphor. Paul here uses light to indicate the revealing of God and his righteousness. Darkness describes sin. Sin seeks to remain hidden from God. (See: light, righteous and darkness and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul begins this chapter with an extended metaphor. He compares himself to a father who is giving his daughter, a pure virgin, as a bride to her bridegroom. Wedding practices change depending on the cultural background. But the idea of helping to present someone as a grown and holy child is explicitly pictured in this passage.

Irony

This chapter is full of irony. Paul is hoping to shame the Corinthian believers with his irony.

"You tolerate these things well enough!" Paul thinks that they should not tolerate the way the false apostles treated them. Paul does not think they are really apostles at all.

The statement, "For you gladly put up with fools. You are wise yourselves!" means that the Corinthian believers think they were very wise but Paul does not agree.

"I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that." Paul is speaking about behavior he thinks is very wrong in order to avoid it. He is speaking as if he thinks he is wrong for not doing it. He uses a rhetorical question also as irony.

"Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?"

Rhetorical questions

In refuting the false apostles, who claim to be superior, Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions. Each question is coupled with an answer: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were out of my mind.) I am more."

He also uses a series of rhetorical questions to empathize with his converts: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?"

"Are they servants of Christ?"

This is sarcasm, a special type of irony used to mock or insult. Paul does not believe these false teachers actually serve Christ, only that they pretend to do so.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 30 is a paradox: "If I must boast, I will boast about what shows my weaknesses." Paul does not explain why he would boast in his weakness until 2 Corinthians 12:9. (2 Corinthians 11:30)

Links:

2 Corinthians 11:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to affirm his apostleship.

put up with me in some foolishness

"allow me to act like a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:2

jealous ... jealousy

These words speak of a good, strong desire that the Corinthians be faithful to Christ, and that no one should persuade them to leave him.

I promised you in marriage to one husband. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ

Paul speaks of his care for the Corinthian believers as if he had promised another man that he would prepare his daughter to marry him and he is most concerned that he be able to keep his promise to the man. Alternate translation: "I was like a father who promised to present his daughter to one husband. I promised to keep you as a pure virgin so I could give you to Christ"

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts might be led astray, away from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ

"But I am afraid that somehow your thoughts might be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness"

your thoughts might be led astray, away from

Paul speaks of thoughts as if they were animals that people could lead along the wrong path. Alternate translation: "someone might cause you to believe lies and not keep"

2 Corinthians 11:4

For suppose that ... preached. Or suppose that ... received. Or suppose that ... received. You put

Paul lists three situations that are likely to happen or may have actually happened. These sentences can be combined into one sentence. Alternate translation: "For when ... preached, or when ... received, or when ... received, you put"

a different spirit than what you received. Or suppose that you receive a different gospel than the one you received

"a different spirit than the Holy Spirit, or a different gospel than you received from us"

put up with these things

"deal with these things." See how these words were

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translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

2 Corinthians 11:5

those so-called super-apostles

Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important then people say there are. Alternate translation: "those teachers whom some think are better than anyone else"

2 Corinthians 11:6

I am not untrained in knowledge

This negative phrase emphasizes the positive truth that he is trained in knowledge. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I am certainly trained in knowledge" or "I am trained to know what they know"

2 Corinthians 11:7

Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?

Paul is beginning to claim that he treated the Corinthians well. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement, if necessary. Alternate translation: "I think we agree that I did not sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted"

freely preached the gospel of God to you

"preached the gospel of God to you without expecting anything from you in return"

2 Corinthians 11:8

I robbed other churches

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul received money from churches who were not obligated to give to him. Alternate translation: "In a way, I robbed other churches" or "It was as if I robbed other churches"

I could serve you

The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I could serve you at no cost"

2 Corinthians 11:9

In everything I have kept myself from being a burden to you

"I have never in any way been a financial burden to you."

Paul speaks of someone for whom one has to spend money as if they were heavy items that people have to carry. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I have done all I can to make sure you do not have to spend money so that I can be with you"

the brothers who came

These "brothers" were probably all male.

I will continue to do that

"I never will be a burden to you"

2 Corinthians 11:10

As the truth of Christ is in me, this

Paul is emphasizing that because his readers know that he tells the truth about Christ, they can know that he is telling the truth here. "As surely as you know that I truly know and proclaim the truth about Christ, you can know that what I am about to say is true. This"

this boasting of mine will not be silenced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will be able to make me stop boasting and stay silent"

this boasting of mine

This refers to what Paul spoke about starting in (2 Corinthians 11:7).

parts of Achaia

"regions of Achaia." The word "parts" speaks of areas of land, not political divisions.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Why? Because I do not love you?

Paul uses rhetorical questions to emphasize love for the Corinthians. These questions can be combined or made into a statement. Alternate translation: "Is it because I do not love you that I do not want to be a burden to you?" or "I will continue to keep you from paying for my needs because this shows others that I love you"

God knows

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "God knows I love you"

2 Corinthians 11:12

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to affirm his apostleship, he talks about false apostles.

so that I may cut off the opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be found to be like us in the things they boast about

Paul speaks of a false claim that his enemies state as if it were something that he can cut off. Alternate translation: "so that they have no reason to boast that they are doing the same work that we are doing"

to be found to be like us

"to appear to be like us" or "to appear to be doing the same work we are doing"

us in the things they boast about

"us, as they are boasting that they are"

2 Corinthians 11:13

For such people

"I do what I do because people like them"

deceitful workers

"dishonest workers"

disguise themselves as apostles

"are not apostles, but they try to make themselves look like apostles"

2 Corinthians 11:14

this is no surprise

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles"

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light

"Satan is not an angel of light, but he tries to make himself look like an angel of light"

an angel of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for righteousness. Alternate translation: "an angel of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:15

It is no great surprise if

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles"

his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness

"his servants are not servants of righteousness, but they try to make themselves look like servants of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:16

receive me as a fool so I may boast a little

"receive me as you would receive a fool: let me talk, and consider my boasting the words of a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:17

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

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2 Corinthians 11:18

many people boast according to the flesh

These people "boast" in the bad sense of claiming to be better people than they really are.

according to the flesh

Here the metonym "flesh" refers to man in his sinful nature and his achievements. Alternate translation: "about their own human achievements"

I will also boast

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically. See how you translated "boasting" in [2 Corinthians 1:12]

2 Corinthians 11:19

put up with fools

"accept fools." See how a similar phrase was translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

You are wise yourselves!

Paul is shaming the Corinthians by using irony. Alternate translation: "You think you are wise, but you are not!"

2 Corinthians 11:20

enslaves you

Paul uses exaggeration when he speaks of someone forcing others to obey rules as if he were forcing them to be slaves. Alternate translation: "makes you follow rules he has thought of"

he devours you

Paul speaks of the super-apostles' taking people's material resources as if they were eating the people themselves. Alternate translation: "he takes all your property"

takes advantage of you

A person takes advantage of another person by knowing things that the other person does not and using that knowledge to help himself and harm the other person.

2 Corinthians 11:21

I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that

"I shamefully admit that we were not bold enough to treat you like that." Paul is using irony to tell the Corinthians that it was not because he was weak that he treated them well. Alternate translation: "I am not ashamed to say that we had the power to harm you, but we treated you well"

Yet if anyone is bold ... I too will be bold

"Whatever anyone boasts about ... I will dare to boast about it also." Paul's boldness here is the boldness to boast.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Are they Hebrews? ... Are they Israelites? ... Are they descendants of Abraham?

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They want you to think they are important and to believe what they say because they are Hebrews and Israelites and descendants of Abraham. Well, so am I."

2 Corinthians 11:23

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to confirm his apostleship, he states specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were insane.) I am more

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They say they are servants of Christ—I speak as though I were insane—but I am more"

as though I were insane

"as though I were unable to think well"

I am more

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "I am more a servant of Christ than they are"

in harder labor

"I have worked harder than they have"

in more prisons

"I have been in prison more often"

in beatings beyond measure, in facing

This is an idiom, and is exaggerated to emphasize that he had been beaten many, many times. Alternate translation: "I have been beaten very many times, and I have faced" or "I have been beaten too many times to bother counting, and I have faced"

in facing many deadly dangers

"and I have almost died many times"

2 Corinthians 11:24

forty lashes minus one

This was a common expression for being whipped 39 times. In Jewish law the most they were allowed to whip a person at one time was forty lashes. So they commonly whipped a person thirty-nine times so that they would not be guilty of whipping someone too many times if they accidentally counted wrong.

2 Corinthians 11:25

I was beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people beat me with wooden rods"

I was stoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people threw stones at me until they thought I was dead"

I have spent a night and a day on the open sea

Paul was referring to floating in the water after the ship he was on sank.

2 Corinthians 11:26

in danger from false brothers

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "and in danger from people who claimed to be brothers in Christ, but who betrayed us"

2 Corinthians 11:27

I have served in labor

The words "I have served" have been added to shorten the sentence that begins in 2 Corinthians 11:24. You can end 2 Corinthians 11:26 with a comma and begin this verse with the words "in labor."

labor and toil

This hendiadys emphasizes how hard Paul worked. Alternate translation: "extremely hard work"

nakedness

Here Paul exaggerates to show his need of clothing. Alternate translation: "without enough clothing to keep me

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

warm"

2 Corinthians 11:28

there is the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches

Here Paul's concern for the churches is spoken of as if it were a heavy object weighing him down. Alternate translation: "I am so concerned everyday for all the churches that I feel like I have a heavy object weighing me down"

2 Corinthians 11:29

Who is weak, and I am not weak?

The word "weak" may refer to a spiritual condition or to a physical condition. No one is sure what Paul is speaking of, so it is best to use the same word here. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone is weak, I feel that weakness also." or "I am weak whenever anyone else is weak."

Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?

Paul uses this question to express his anger when a fellow believer is caused to sin. Here his anger is spoken of as a burning inside him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone causes a brother to sin, I am angry."

has been caused to stumble

Paul speaks of sin as if it were tripping over something and then falling. Alternate translation: "has been led to sin" or "has thought that God would permit him to sin because of something that someone else did"

I do not burn

Paul speaks of being angry about sin as if he had a fire inside his body. Alternate translation: "I am not angry about it"

2 Corinthians 11:30

what shows my weaknesses

"what shows how weak I am"

2 Corinthians 11:31

I am not lying

Paul is using litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am telling the absolute truth"

2 Corinthians 11:32

the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city

"the governor whom King Aretas had appointed had told men to guard the city"

to arrest me

"so that they might catch and arrest me"

2 Corinthians 11:33

I was lowered in a basket

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some people put me in a basket and lowered me to the ground"

from his hands

Paul uses the governor's hands as metonymy for the governor. Alternate translation: "from the governor"

Chapter 12

2 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues defending his authority in this chapter.

When Paul was with the Corinthians, he proved himself to be an apostle by his powerful deeds. He had not ever taken anything from them. Now that he is coming for the third time, he will still not take anything. He hopes that when he visits, he will not need to be harsh with them. (See: apostle)

Special concepts in this chapter

Paul's vision

Paul now defends his authority by telling about a wonderful vision of heaven. Although he speaks in the third person in verses 2-5, verse 7 indicates that he was the person who experienced the vision. It was so great a vision that God gave him a physical handicap to keep him humble. (See: heaven)

Third heaven

Many scholars believe the "third" heaven is the dwelling place of God. This is because Scripture also uses "heaven" to refer to the sky (the "first" heaven) and the universe (the "second" heaven).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions as he defends himself against his enemies who accused him: "For how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that I was not a burden to you?" "Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same way? Did we not walk in the same steps?" and "Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you?"

Sarcasm

Paul uses sarcasm, a special type of irony, when he reminds them how he had helped them at no cost. He says, "Forgive me for this wrong!" He also uses regular irony when he says: "But, since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit." He uses it to introduce his defense against this accusation by showing how impossible it was to be true.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 5 is a paradox: "I will not boast, except about my weaknesses." Most people do not boast about being weak. This sentence in verse 10 is also a paradox: "For whenever I am weak, then I am strong." In verse 9, Paul explains why both of these statements are true.

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(2 Corinthians 12:5)

Links:

2 Corinthians 12:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

In defending the apostleship that God gave him, Paul continues to state specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

even if it is unprofitable

"even if boasting is does not do any good"

I will go on to

"I will continue talking, but now about"

visions and revelations from the Lord

Possible meanings are 1) Paul uses the words "visions" and "revelations" to mean the same thing in hendiadys for emphasis. Alternate translation: "things that the Lord has allowed only me to see" or 2) Paul is speaking of two different things. Alternate translation: "secret things that the Lord has let me see with my eyes and other secrets that he has told me about"

2 Corinthians 12:2

I know a man in Christ

Paul is actually speaking of himself as if he were speaking of someone else, but this should be translated literally if possible.

whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know

Paul continues to describe himself as if this happened to another person. "I do not know if this man was in his physical body or in his spiritual body"

the third heaven

This refers to the dwelling place of God rather than the sky or outer space (the planets, stars, and the universe).

2 Corinthians 12:3

General Information:

Paul continues to speak of himself as though he were speaking of someone else.

2 Corinthians 12:4

was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words

This continues Paul's account of what happened to "this man"

caught up

suddenly and forcefully held and taken

paradise

Possible meanings are 1) heaven or 2) the third heaven or 3) a special place in heaven.

inexpressible words

Possible meanings of "inexpressible" are that 1) Paul means something other than "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, and so people are unable to communicate the ideas expressed in the words or 2) Paul means the same thing as "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, emphasizing that God does not permit people to speak the words.

2 Corinthians 12:5

of such a person

"of that person"

I will not boast, except about my weaknesses

This double negative emphasizes that Paul will boast only about his weaknesses. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will boast only of my weaknesses"

2 Corinthians 12:6

no one will think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me

"no one will give me more credit than what he sees in me or hears from me"

2 Corinthians 12:7

General Information:

This verse reveals that Paul was speaking about himself beginning in 2 Corinthians 12:2.

Connecting Statement:

As Paul defends his apostleship, he tells of the weakness that God gave him to keep him humble.

because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations

"because those revelations were so much greater than anything anyone else had ever seen"

a thorn in the flesh was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave me a thorn in the flesh" or "God allowed me to have a thorn in the flesh"

a thorn in the flesh

Here Paul's physical problems are compared to a thorn piercing his flesh. Alternate translation: "an affliction" or "a physical problem"

a messenger from Satan

"a servant of Satan"

2 Corinthians 12:8

Three times

Paul put these words at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that he had prayed many times about his "thorn" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Lord about this

"Lord about this thorn in the flesh," or "Lord about this affliction"

2 Corinthians 12:9

My grace is enough for you

"I will be kind to you, and that is all you need"

for power is made perfect in weakness

"for my power works best when you are weak"

the power of Christ might reside on me

Paul speaks of Christ's power as if it were a tent built over him. Possible meanings are 1) "people might see that I have the power of Christ" or 2) "I might truly have the power of Christ."

2 Corinthians 12:10

I am content for Christ's sake in weaknesses ... situations

Possible meanings are 1) "I am content in weakness ... situations if these things come because I belong to Christ" or 2) "I am content in weakness ... if these things cause more people to know Christ."

in weaknesses

"when I am weak"

in insults

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"when people try to make me angry by saying that I am a bad person"

in troubles

"when I am suffering"

distressing situations

"when there is trouble"

For whenever I am weak, then I am strong

Paul is saying that when he is no longer strong enough to do what needs to be done, Christ, who is more powerful than Paul could ever be, will work through Paul to do what needs to be done. However, it would be best to translate these words literally, if your language allows.

2 Corinthians 12:11

Connecting Statement:

To strengthen them, Paul reminds the believers in Corinth of the true signs of an apostle and of his humility while before them.

I have become a fool

"I am acting like a fool"

You forced me to this

"You forced me to talk this way"

I should have been praised by you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it is praise that you should have given me"

praised

"commended"

For I was not at all inferior to

By using the negative form, Paul is saying strongly that those Corinthians who think that he is inferior are wrong. Alternate translation: "For I am just as good as"

super-apostles

Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important then people say they are. See how this is translated in [2 Corinthians 11:5]

2 Corinthians 12:12

The true signs of an apostle were performed

This can be stated in active form, with emphasis on the "signs." Alternate translation: "It is the true signs of an apostle that I performed"

signs ... signs

Use the same word both times.

with all perseverance

"with as much perseverance as we had" or "with great perseverance"

signs and wonders and miracles

These are the "true signs of an apostle" that Paul performed "with complete perseverance."

2 Corinthians 12:13

how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that ... you?

Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians are wrong to accuse him of wanting to do them harm. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I treated you the same way I treated all the other churches, except that ... you."

I was not a burden to you

"I did not ask you for money or other things I needed"

Forgive me for this wrong!

Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians. Both he and they know that he has done them no wrong, but they have been treating him as though he has wronged them.

this wrong

not asking them for money and other things he needed

2 Corinthians 12:14

I want you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "What I want is that you love and accept me"

children should not save up for the parents

Young children are not responsible for saving money or other goods to give to their healthy parents.

2 Corinthians 12:15

I will most gladly spend and be spent

Paul speaks of his work and his physical life as if they were money that he or God could spend. Alternate translation: "I will gladly do any work and gladly allow God to permit people to kill me"

for your souls

The word "souls" is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "for you" or "so you will live well"

If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If I love you so much, you should not love me so little." or "If I love you so much, you should love me more than you do."

more

It is not clear what it is that Paul's love is "more" than. It is probably best to use "very much" or a "so much" that can be compared to "so little" later in the sentence.

2 Corinthians 12:16

But since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians who think he lied to them even if he did not ask them for money. Alternate translation: "But others think I was deceptive and used trickery"

2 Corinthians 12:17

Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent to you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one that I sent to you has taken advantage of you!"

2 Corinthians 12:18

Did Titus take advantage of you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Titus did not take advantage of you."

Did we not walk in the same spirit?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road. Possible meanings of "spirit" are 1) Paul and his companions acted rightly with the Corinthians, as had Titus. Alternate translation: "We all had the same attitude and acted the same way" Or 2) Paul, his companions, and Titus all obeyed the Holy Spirit as they served the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "We all lived in obedience to the same Spirit" This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Did we not walk in the same steps?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road. Both

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Paul and the Corinthians know the answer to the question is yes. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We all did things the same way."

2 Corinthians 12:19

Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you?

Paul uses this question to acknowledge something that the people may have been thinking. He does this so that he can assure them that it is not true. Alternate translation: "Perhaps you think that all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you."

in the sight of God

This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers are aware that God is watching them while they teach the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness" or "in the presence of God"

and all for your strengthening

The reason Paul and his coworkers speak in Christ is so that the Corinthians might be strenthened. Paul speaks of knowing how to obey God and desiring to obey him as if it were physical growth. Alternate translation: "and we do all this in order to strengthen you" or "and we do all this so that you may know God and obey him better"

2 Corinthians 12:20

I may not find you as I wish

"I may not like what I find" or "I may not like what I see you doing"

you might not find me as you wish

"you might not like what you see in me"

there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder

The abstract nouns "quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder" can be translated using verbs. Possible meanings are 1) "some of you will be arguing with us, jealous of us, suddenly becoming very angry with us, trying to take our places as leaders, speaking falsely about us, telling about our private lives, being proud, and opposing us as we try to lead you" or 2) "some of you will be arguing with each other, jealous of each other, suddenly becoming very angry with each other, quarreling with each other over who will be the leader, speaking falsely about each other, telling about each other's private lives, being proud, and opposing those whom God has chosen to lead you"

2 Corinthians 12:21

I might be grieved by many of those who have sinned before now and who did not repent ... that they practiced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will grieve because many of you have sinned before now and have not repented ... that you have practiced"

did not repent of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lustful indulgence

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying almost the same thing three times for emphasis. Alternate translation: "did not stop commiting the sexual sins that they practiced" or 2) Paul is speaking of three different sins.

of the uncleanness

The abstract noun uncleanness can be translated as "things that do not please God." Alternate translation: "of secretly thinking about and desiring things that do not please God"

of the ... sexual immorality

The abstract noun "immorality" can be translated as "immoral deeds." Alternate translation: "of doing sexually immoral deeds"

of the ... lustful indulgence

The abstract noun "indulgence" can be translated using a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "of ... doing things that satisfy immoral sexual desire"

Chapter 13

2 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul finishes defending his authority. He then concludes the letter with a final greeting and blessing.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation

Paul instructs the Corinthians as he prepares to visit them. He is hoping to avoid needing to discipline anyone in the church so he can visit them joyfully. (See: disciple)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Power and weakness

Paul repeatedly uses the contrasting words "power" and "weakness" in this chapter. The translator should use words that are understood to be opposites of each other.

"Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves."

Scholars are divided over what these sentences mean. Some scholars say that Christians are to test themselves to see whether their actions align with their Christian faith. The context favors this understanding. Others say these sentences mean that Christians should look at their actions and question whether they are genuinely saved. (See: faith and save)

Links:

2 Corinthians 13:1 Notes

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2 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul establishes that Christ is speaking through him and that Paul is wanting to restore them, encourage them, and unify them.

Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three

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witnesses

Here a "matter" is an accusation and "mouth" is a metonym for the testimony a person gives through his mouth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Believe that someone has done something wrong only after two or three people have given the same testimony"

2 Corinthians 13:2

all the rest

"all you other people"

2 Corinthians 13:3

General Information:

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2 Corinthians 13:4

he was crucified

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "they crucified him"

but we will live with him by the power of God

God gives us the power and ability to live life in and with him.

2 Corinthians 13:5

in you

Possible meanings are 1) living inside each individual or 2) "among you," part of and the most important member of the group.

you have failed the test

"you have examined and tested yourself and found that you are not in the faith and Jesus Christ is not in you"

2 Corinthians 13:6

I hope that

"I desire that" or "I trust that"

2 Corinthians 13:7

that you may not do any wrong

"that you will not sin at all" or "that you will not refuse to listen to us when we correct you." Paul is emphasizing the opposite with his statement. Alternate translation: "that you will do everything right"

to have passed the test

"to be great teachers and live the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:8

we are not able to do anything against the truth

"we are not able to keep people from learning the truth"

truth, but only for the truth

"truth; everything we do will enable people to learn the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:9

may be made complete

"may become spiritually mature"

2 Corinthians 13:10

so that I may build you up, and not tear you down

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 10:8]

2 Corinthians 13:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Corinthian believers.

Work for restoration

"Work toward maturity"

think alike

"agree with one another" or "live in harmony with one another"

2 Corinthians 13:12

with a holy kiss

"with Christian love"

God's holy people

"those whom God has set apart for himself"

2 Corinthians 13:13

General Information:

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Introduction to Galatians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Galatians

Paul declares his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ; he says that he is surprised by the false teachings that the Christians in Galatia have accepted from other people (1:1-10). Paul says that people are saved by trusting in Christ alone, not by keeping the law (1:11-2:21). God puts people right with himself only when they trust in Christ; the example of Abraham; the curse which the law brings (and not a means of salvation); slavery and freedom compared and illustrated by Hagar and Sarah (3:1-4:31). When people are joined to Christ, they become free from having to keep the law of Moses. They are also free to live as the Holy Spirit guides them. They are free to refuse the demands of sin. They are free to bear each other's burdens (5:1-6:10). Paul warns the Christians not to trust in being circumcised and in keeping the law of Moses. Instead, they must trust in Christ (6:11-18).

Who wrote the Book of Galatians?

Paul from the city of Tarsus was the author. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he began to trust in Jesus Christ, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

It is uncertain when Paul wrote this letter and where he was when he wrote it. Some scholars think Paul was in the city of Ephesus and wrote this letter after the second time he traveled to tell people about Jesus. Other scholars think Paul was in the city of Antioch in Syria and wrote the letter soon after the first time he traveled.

What is the Book of Galatians about?

Paul wrote this letter to both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in the region of Galatia. He wanted to write against the false teachers who said that Christians need to follow the law of Moses. Paul defended the gospel by explaining that a person is saved by believing in Jesus Christ. People are saved as result of God being kind and not as a result of people

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doing good works. No person can perfectly obey the law. Any attempt to please God by obeying the law of Moses will only result in God condemning them. (See: goodnews, save, faith and lawofmoses and works)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Galatians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What does it mean to "live like Jews" (2:14)?

To "live like Jews" means to obey the law of Moses, even though one trusts in Christ. The people among the early Christians who taught that this was necessary were called "Judaizers."

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How did Paul use the terms "law" and "grace" in the Book of Galatians?

These terms are used in a unique way in Galatians. There is an important teaching in Galatians about Christian living. Under the law of Moses, righteous or holy living required a person to obey a set of rules and regulations. As Christians, holy living is now motivated by grace. This means that Christians have freedom in Christ and are not required to obey a specific set of rules. Instead, Christians are to live a holy life because they are thankful that God has been so kind to them. This is called "the law of Christ." (See: righteous and holy)

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6, 10. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” See, for example, "when we seek for God to justify us in Christ" (2:17), where Paul spoke of being justified by means of Christ. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

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

"Foolish Galatians! Who has put a spell on you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified"

Chapter 1

Galatians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul started this letter differently than his other letters. He adds that he was "not an apostle from men nor by human agency, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ones." Paul probably included these words because false teachers were opposing him and trying to undermine his authority.

Special concepts in this chapter

Heresy

God eternally saves people only through the true, biblical gospel. God condemns any other version of the gospel. Paul asks God to curse those who teach a false gospel. They might not be saved. They should be treated as non-Christians. (See: save, eternity, goodnews and condemn and curse)

Paul's qualifications

Some people in the early church were teaching that Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. To refute this teaching, in verses 13-16 Paul explains how he was formerly a zealous Jew. But God still needed to save him and show him the true gospel. As a Jew, and the apostle to Gentile people, Paul was uniquely qualified to address this issue. (See: lawofmoses)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are turning so quickly to a different gospel"

The Book of Galatians is one of Paul's earliest letters in Scripture. It shows that heresies troubled even the early church.

Links:

Galatians 1:1 Notes Galatians intro

Galatians 1:1

General Information:

Paul, an apostle, writes this letter to the churches in the area of Galatia. Unless noted otherwise, all instances of "you" and "your" in this letter refer to the Galatians and are plural.

who raised him

"who caused him to live again"

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Galatians 1:2

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women, since all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

Galatians 1:3

General Information:

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Galatians 1:4

for our sins

"Sins" is a metonym the punishment for sin. Alternate translation: "to take the punishment we deserved because of our sins"

that he might deliver us from this present evil age

Here "this ... age" represents the powers at work in the age. Alternate translation: "that he might bring us to a place of safety from the evil powers at work in the world today"

our God and Father

This refers to "God our Father." He is our God and our Father.

Galatians 1:5

General Information:

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Galatians 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his reason for writing this letter: he reminds them to continue to understand the gospel.

I am amazed

"I am surprised" or "I am shocked." Paul was disappointed that they were doing this.

you are turning away so quickly from him

Here "turning away ... from him" is a metaphor for started to doubt or no longer trust God. Alternate translation: "you are so quickly starting to doubt him"

him who called you

"God, who called you"

called

Here this means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to serve him, and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

by the grace of Christ

"because of Christ's grace" or "because of Christ's gracious sacrifice"

you are turning to a different gospel

Here "turning to" is a metaphor that means to start to believe something. Alternate translation: "you are instead starting to believe a different gospel"

Galatians 1:7

some men

"some people"

Galatians 1:8

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim ... let him be cursed

Paul said this to show how strongly he felt about anyone who might proclaim a gospel other than the one he had proclaimed. If anyone would do that, that person should be cursed. Alternate translation: "But even if we or an angel from heaven were to proclaim ... let him be cursed"

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim

The word "even" shows that Paul did not believe that they or an angel from heaven would ever proclaim a different gospel. But he includes himself and angels in his statement to emphasize how wrong it would be for anyone to proclaim a different gospel.

other than the one

"different from the gospel" or "different from the message"

let him be cursed

"God should punish that person forever." If your language has a common way of calling a curse down on someone, you should use that.

Galatians 1:9

General Information:

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Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Am I seeking to please men?

These rhetorical questions expect the answer "no." Alternate translation: "I do not seek the favor of men, but instead I seek the favor of God. I am not seeking to please men."

If I am still trying to please men, I am not a servant of Christ

Both the "if" phrase and the "then" phrase are contrary to fact. "I am not still trying to please men; I am a servant of Christ" or "If I were still trying to please men, then I would not be a servant of Christ"

Galatians 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he did not learn the gospel from others; he learned it from Jesus Christ.

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

is not man's gospel

By using this phrase, Paul was not trying to say that Jesus Christ is not himself human. Because Christ is both man and God, however, he is not a sinful human being. Paul is writing about where the gospel came from; it did not come from sinful human beings, but it came from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12

it was by revelation of Jesus Christ to me

Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus Christ himself revealed the gospel to me" or 2) "God made me know the gospel when he showed me who Jesus Christ was."

Galatians 1:13

former life

"behavior at one time" or "prior life" or "earlier life"

Galatians 1:14

I advanced

This metaphor pictures Paul as being ahead of other Jews his age in their goal to be perfect Jews.

those who were my own age

"the Jewish people who are the same age as I am"

my fathers

"my ancestors"

Galatians 1:15

and who called me through his grace

Possible meanings of "through his grace" are 1) this tells why God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called

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me to serve him because he is gracious" or 2) this tells how God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called me by means of his grace."
Galatians 1:16
to reveal his Son in me
Possible meanings are 1) "to allow me to know his Son" or 2) "to show the world through me that Jesus is God's Son."
Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
preach him
"proclaim that he is God's Son" or "preach the good news about God's Son"
consult with flesh and blood
This is an expression that means talking with other people. Alternate translation: "ask people to help me understand the message"
Galatians 1:17
go up to Jerusalem
"go to Jerusalem." Jerusalem was in a region of high hills, making it necessary to climb many hills in order to get there, and so it was common to describe travel to Jerusalem as "going up to Jerusalem."
Galatians 1:18
General Information:
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Galatians 1:19
I saw none of the other apostles except James
This double negative emphasizes that James was the only apostle whom Paul saw. Alternate translation: "I saw only one of the other apostles, and that was James" or "the only other apostle I saw was James"
Galatians 1:20
before God
Paul wants the Galatians to understand that Paul is completely serious and that he knows that God hears what he says and will judge him if he does not tell the truth.
In what I write to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying
Paul uses litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am not lying to you in the messages I write to you" or "in the things I write to you I am telling you the truth"
Galatians 1:21
the regions of Syria and Cilicia
"the parts of the world called Syria and Cilicia"
Galatians 1:22
I was still not known by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ
"No one in the churches of Judea that are in Christ knew what I looked like" or "None of the people in the churches of Judea that are in Christ had ever met me"
Galatians 1:23
They only heard it being said
"They only knew what they heard others saying about me"
Galatians 1:24
General Information:
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Chapter 2

Galatians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues to defend the true gospel. This began in Galatians 1:11.

Special concepts in this chapter

Circumcised and uncircumcised

The law of Moses required Jewish males to be circumcised. The Jews called Gentiles "the uncircumcised."

Slavery and freedom

Paul introduces these ideas in Galatians 2:4. He uses the metaphor of slavery for people who are obligated to obey the law of Moses. He uses the metaphor of freedom, or liberty, for people who are not obligated to obey the law of Moses because they trust in Jesus Christ to make them righteous.

The false brothers

When Paul says that false brothers wanted to make the believers slaves, he is referring to Jews who claimed to be Christians and who wanted to convince Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

The hypocrisy of Cephas

Jews normally did not eat with Gentiles because Gentiles did not obey the law of Moses. Cephas knew that Gentile Christians are not obligated to obey the law of Moses, and because of this, he knew that it was permissible to eat with them. However, when some men came saying that Gentile Christians are obligated to obey the law, Cephas stopped eating with the Gentiles Christians, as if he, too, believed that they need to obey the law of Moses. Paul rebuked Cephas for treating the Gentile Christians like that.

Links:

Galatians 2:1 Notes

Galatians 2:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to give the history of how he learned the gospel from God, not the apostles.
went up
"traveled." Jerusalem is located in hilly country. The Jews also viewed Jerusalem as the place on earth that is closest to heaven, so Paul may have been speaking figuratively, or it may be that it was reflecting the difficult, uphill, journey to get to Jerusalem.

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Galatians 2:2
those who seemed to be important
"the most important leaders among the believers"
I was not running—or had not run—in vain
Paul uses running as a metaphor for work. Alternate translation: "I was doing, or had done, profitable work"
in vain
"for no benefit" or "for nothing"
Galatians 2:3
to be circumcised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to have someone circumcise him"
Galatians 2:4
The false brothers came in secretly
"People who pretended to be Christians came into the church," or "People who pretended to be Christians came among us"
spy on the liberty
secretly watch people to see how they live in liberty
liberty
freedom
They desired
"These spies desired" or "These false brothers wanted"
to enslave us
"to make us slaves to the law." Paul is speaking about being forced to follow the Jewish rituals that the law commanded. He is speaking about this as if it were slavery. The most important ritual was circumcision. Alternate translation: "to force us to obey the law"
Galatians 2:5
yield in submission
"submit" or "listen"
Galatians 2:6
added nothing to me
The word "me" here represents what Paul was teaching. Alternate translation: "added nothing to what I teach" or "did not tell me to add anything to what I teach"
Galatians 2:7
On the contrary
"Instead" or "Rather"
I had been entrusted ... Peter had been entrusted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God trusted me ... God trusted Peter"
had been entrusted with the gospel to those
"had been given the responsibility of preaching the gospel to those"
Galatians 2:8
General Information:
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Galatians 2:9
who had a reputation as pillars
A pillar is a post that supports a building. This is a metaphor meaning important leaders. Alternate translation: "who were known to be important leaders" or "who were known to be important leaders of the church"
recognized the grace that had been given to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "recognized the grace that God had given to me"
the grace that had been given to me
The abstract noun "grace" can be translated with the phrase "be kind." Alternate translation: "that God had been kind to me"
gave ... the right hand of fellowship
Grasping and shaking the right hand was a symbol of fellowship. Alternate translation: "welcomed ... as fellow workers" or "welcomed ... with honor"
Galatians 2:10
remember the poor
You may need to make explicit what about the poor he was to remember. Alternate translation: "remember to take care of the needs of the poor"
Galatians 2:11
I opposed him to his face
The words "to his face" are a metonym for "where he could see and hear me." Alternate translation: "I confronted him in person" or "I challenged his actions in person"
Galatians 2:12
Before
in relation to time
he stopped
"he stopped eating with them"
He was afraid of those who were demanding circumcision
The reason Cephas was afraid can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would judge that he was doing something wrong" or "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would blame him for doing something wrong"
those who were demanding circumcision
Jews who had become Christians, but who demanded that those who believe in Christ live according to Jewish customs
kept away from
"stayed away from" or "avoided"
Galatians 2:13
this hypocrisy
Paul calls Peter's staying away from the Gentiles "this hypocrisy" because Peter was pretending to be like those Jews who say that Gentile Christians have to be circumcised.
Even Barnabas was led astray with them by their hypocrisy
Here to be "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Alternate translation: "Even Barnabas was persuaded to be a hypocrite because of them"
Galatians 2:14
their behavior was not following the truth of the gospel
"they were not living according to the truth of the gospel"
how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?
This rhetorical question is a rebuke and can be translated as a statement. The word "you" is singular and refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "you are wrong to force the Gentiles to live like Jews."
force
Possible meanings are 1) force by using words or 2) persuade.
Galatians 2:15
Connecting Statement:

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Paul tells the believers that Jews who know the law, as well as Gentiles who do not know the law, are saved only by faith in Christ and not by keeping the law.

not Gentile sinners

"not those whom the Jews call Gentile sinners"

Galatians 2:16

we

This probably refers to Paul and others but not to the Galatians, who were primarily Gentiles.

no flesh

The word "flesh" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "no person"

Galatians 2:17

while we seek to be justified in Christ

The phrase "justified in Christ" means justified because we are united with Christ and justified by means of Christ.

we too were found to be sinners

The words "were found to be" are an idiom that emphasizes that "we are" certainly sinners. Alternate translation: "we see that we also certainly are sinners"

Absolutely not!

"Of course, that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question "Does Christ become a servant of sin?" You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.

Galatians 2:18

General Information:

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Galatians 2:19

General Information:

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Galatians 2:20

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Galatians 2:21

I do not set aside the grace of God

"I do not reject the grace of God" or "I do not consider God's grace to be worthless"

the grace of God

Paul is speaking of God's kindness to us. Christ died for us so that we can be justified.

if righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing

Paul uses this statement to argue that righteousness cannot be gained through the law. If it could be then there was no need for Christ to die to give us righteousness, because we could gain it ourselves by obeying the law.

if righteousness could be gained through the law

"if people could become righteous by obeying the law"

then Christ died for nothing

"then Christ would have accomplished nothing by dying"

Chapter 3

Galatians 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Equality in Christ

All Christians are equally united to Christ. Ancestry, gender, and status do not matter. All are equal with each other. All are equal in the eyes of God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to convince the Galatians of their sin. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. "Flesh" is used in this chapter to contrast with that which is spiritual. (See: flesh)

"Those of faith are children of Abraham"

Scholars are divided on what this means. Some believe Christians inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham, so Christians replace the physical descendants of Israel. Others believe Christians spiritually follow Abraham, but they do not inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham. In light of Paul's other teachings and the context here, Paul is probably writing about the Jewish and Gentile Christians sharing the same faith as Abraham did.

Links:

Galatians 3:1 Notes

Galatians 3:1

General Information:

Paul is rebuking the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers in Galatia that God gave them his Spirit when they believed the gospel, not because they obeyed his law.

Who has put a spell on you?

Paul is using irony and a rhetorical question to say that the Galatians are acting as though someone has put a spell on them. He does not really believe that someone has put a spell on them. Alternate translation: "You behave as if someone has put a spell on you!"

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put a spell on you

"done magic on you" or "done witchcraft on you"

It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified

Paul speaks of his clear teaching of Jesus being crucified as if he had put on public display a picture of Jesus being crucified. And he speaks of the Galatians having heard his teaching as if they had seen the picture. Alternate translation: "You yourselves heard the clear teaching about Jesus being crucified"

Galatians 3:2

This is the only thing I want to learn from you

This continues the irony from verse 1. Paul knows the answers to the rhetorical questions he is about to ask.

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Translate this rhetorical question as a question if you can, because the reader will be expecting a question here. Also, be sure that the reader knows that the answer to the question is "by the hearing of faith," not "by doing what the law says." Alternate translation: "You received the Spirit, not by doing what the law says, but by the hearing of faith."

the hearing of faith

"believing what you heard"

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish?

This rhetorical question shows that Paul is surprised and even angry that the Galatians are foolish. Alternate translation: "You are very foolish!"

by the flesh

The word "flesh" is a metonym for effort. Alternate translation: "by your own effort" or "by your own work"

Galatians 3:4

Have you suffered so many things for nothing—if indeed it was for nothing?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the Galatians for behaving as though their faith in Christ and their suffering for it were for nothing. Alternate translation: "You have suffered so many things: Do not let it be for nothing!" or "You suffered so many things from those who opposed your faith in Christ. If you now think that righteousness comes by obeying the law, then your suffering was for nothing!"

Have you suffered so many things

The Galatians had believed that God makes people righteous because they trust in Jesus Christ, not because they obey the law. Because of this, they suffered many things from those who opposed their faith in Christ.

for nothing

"uselessly" or "without benefit to you"

Galatians 3:5

Does he ... do so by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Paul asks another rhetorical question to remind the Galatians how people receive the Spirit. Alternate translation: "He ... does not do it by the works of the law; he does it by hearing with faith."

by the works of the law

This represents people doing the works that the law requires. Alternate translation: "because you do what the law tells us to do"

by the hearing of faith

Your language may require that what the people heard and whom they trusted be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because you heard the message and had faith in Jesus" or "because you listened to the message and trusted in Jesus"

Galatians 3:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that even Abraham received righteousness by faith and not by the law.

it was credited to him as righteousness

God saw Abraham's faith in God, so then God considered Abraham righteous.

Galatians 3:7

those of faith

"those who have faith." The meaning of the noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "those who believe"

the children of Abraham

This represents people whom God views as he viewed Abraham. Alternate translation: "righteous in the same way that Abraham was righteous"

Galatians 3:8

The scripture, foreseeing ... faith, preached the gospel

Because God's promise to Abraham was written in the scripture before Christ fulfilled the promise, the scripture is like someone who knows the future before it happens and who preaches the gospel. Alternate translation: "In the scripture, God showed before it happened ... faith, and he presented the gospel"

In you

The word "you" refers to Abraham. Ultimately God would bless the nations through one of Abraham's descendants. Alternate translation: "Because of you" or "Through you"

all the nations

"all the people-groups in the world." God was showing that his plan of salvation was not only for the Jewish people, but for both Jews and non-Jews.

Galatians 3:9

the man of faith

Possible meanings are 1) Abraham was the man who believed and trusted in God or 2) Abraham was faithful to God.

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on ... the law are under a curse

Being under a curse represents being cursed. Here it refers to being eternally punished. "Those who rely on ... the law are cursed" or "God will eternally punish those who rely on ... the law"

the works of the law

"what the law says we must do"

Galatians 3:11

Now it is clear

What is clear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "The scriptures are clear" or "The scriptures teach clearly"

no one is justified before God by the law

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God justifies no one by the law"

no one is justified before God by the law

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Paul is correcting their belief that if they obeyed the law, God would justify them. Alternate translation: "no one is justified before God by obeying the law" or "God does not justify anyone for their obedience to the law"

the righteous will live by faith

The nominal adjective "righteous" refers to righteous people. Alternate translation: "righteous people will live by faith"

Galatians 3:12

must live by them

Possible meanings are 1) "must obey them all" or 2) "will be judged by his ability to do what the law demands."

Galatians 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds these believers again that keeping the law could not save a person and that the law did not add a new condition to the promise by faith given to Abraham.

from the curse of the law

The noun "curse" can be expressed with the verb "curse." Alternate translation: "from being cursed because of the law" or "from being cursed for not obeying the law"

from the curse of the law ... becoming a curse for us ... Cursed is everyone

The word "curse" here is a metonym for God condemning the person whom he has cursed. Alternate translation: "from us having God condemn us because we broke the law ... having God condemn him instead of us ... God condemns everyone"

hangs on a tree

Paul expected his audience to understand that he was referring to Jesus hanging on the cross.

Galatians 3:14

so that the blessing of Abraham might come

"and because Christ became a curse for us, the blessing of Abraham will come"

so that by faith we might receive

Possible meanings are 1) this is because Christ became a curse for us. Alternate translation: "and because Christ became a curse for us, we will receive by faith" or 2) this is because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "and because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus, we will receive by faith"

we might receive the promise

The word "we" includes the people who would read the letter and so is inclusive.

Galatians 3:15

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

in human terms

"as a person" or "of things most people understand"

Galatians 3:16

Now

This word shows that Paul has stated a general principle and is now beginning to introduce a specific case.

referring to many

"referring to many descendants"

to your descendant

The word "your" is singular and refers to a specific person, who is a particular descendant of Abraham

Galatians 3:17

The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God

In some languages it might be strange to speak of a law coming or setting aside a covenant. It might be clearer to make explicit who gave the law. Alternate translation: "When God gave the law 430 years later, he did not set aside the covenant that he had previously established"

set aside

"cancel"

430 years

"four hundred and thirty years"

God, to nullify the promise

"God; that is, it does not nullify the promise"

nullify the promise

"to make the promise worthless" or "to make things as if the promise had never been made"

Galatians 3:18

For if the inheritance comes by the law, then it no longer comes by promise

Paul uses this argument to show that the inheritance does not come by obeying the law but by believing God's promise. Alternate translation: "If people could receive the inheritance by obeying the law, then it would no longer be true that people receive the inheritance by believing God's promise"

the inheritance

Paul speaks of what God has promised to give to believers as if it were an inheritance of property and wealth from a family member. Aternate translation: "the gift"

Galatians 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers in Galatia why God gave the law.

What, then, was the purpose of the law?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to introduce the next topic he wants to discuss. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the purpose of the law is." or "Let me tell you why God gave the law."

It was added

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God added it" or "God added the law"

The law was ordained through angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God ordained the law through angels" or "God gave the law through angels"

by the hand of an intermediary

The words "by the hand of" are a metonym for the intermediary himself. An intermediary represents one person to another. Paul was probably talking about Moses, who represented God to the people of Israel. Alternate translation "by an intermediary" or "by his representative, Moses"

Galatians 3:20

Now an intermediary implies more than one person

An intermediary represents one person to another. Alternate translation: “Now if we say that there was an intermediary, that means that there must have been more than one person.”

intermediary

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representative

But God is one

Paul uses this statement to contrast the law and the promise. Paul seems to be saying that the promise is superior to the law since God used an intermediary to give the law, but he did not use an intermediary when he made the promise. “God is one” is an important statement from the Old Testament, so it would be best to translate it as Paul wrote it. If this does not make sense in your language, you could translate it as "God is one God."

Galatians 3:21

against the promises

"opposed to the promises" or "in conflict with the promises"

if a law had been given that could give life

This can be stated in active form, and the abstract noun "life" can be translated with the verb "live." Alternate translation: "if God had given a law that enabled those who kept it to live"

righteousness would certainly have come by the law

"we could have become righteous by obeying that law"

Galatians 3:22

the scripture imprisoned everything under sin

The idea of being imprisoned under sin represents being controlled by sin. Possible meanings are 1) “the scripture caused everyone to be controlled by sin” or 2) “the scripture says that everyone is controlled by sin.”

the promise by faith in Jesus Christ

The word “promise” represents what God promised. Alternate translation: “what God promised to those who have faith in Christ”

Galatians 3:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds those in Galatia that believers are free in God's family, not slaves under the law.

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law held us captive and we were in prison" or "the law held us captive in prison"

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

The way the law controlled us is spoken of as if the law were a prison guard holding us as captives. Alternate translation: "the law controlled us like a prison guard"

until faith should be revealed

This can be stated in active form, and who this faith is in can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "until God would reveal that he justifies those who have faith in Christ" or "until God would reveal that he justifies those who trust in Christ"

Galatians 3:24

guardian

More than simply "one who gives oversight to a child," this was usually a slave who was responsible for enforcing rules and behaviors given by the parent and would report to the parent on the child's actions.

until Christ came

"until the time when Christ came"

so that we might be justified

Before Christ came, God had planned to justify us. When Christ came, he carried out his plan to justify us. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would declare us to be righteous"

Galatians 3:25

General Information:

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Galatians 3:26

General Information:

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Galatians 3:27

For as many of you who were baptized into Christ

"For all of you who were baptized into Christ"

have clothed yourselves with Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor meaning that they have been united to Christ. Alternate translation: "have become united with Christ" or "belong to Christ" or 2) this is a metaphor meaning that they have become like Christ. Alternate translation: "have become like Christ"

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female

"God sees no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female"

Galatians 3:29

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Chapter 4

Galatians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 27, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sonship

Sonship is a complex issue. Scholars have many views on Israel's sonship. Paul uses sonship to teach how being under the law differs from being free in Christ. Not all of Abraham's physical descendants inherited God's promises to him. Only his descendants through Isaac and Jacob inherited the promises. And God only adopts into his family those who follow Abraham spiritually through faith. They are children of God with an inheritance. Paul calls them "children of promise." (See: inherit, promise, spirit and faith and adoption)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Abba, Father

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"Abba" is an Aramaic word. In ancient Israel, people used it to informally refer to their fathers. Paul "transliterates" its sounds by writing them with Greek letters.

Links:

Galatians 4:1

Galatians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the Galatian believers that Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and that he changed them from being slaves into being sons.

no different from

"the same as"

Galatians 4:2

guardians

people with legal responsibility for children

managers

people whom others trust to control what is valuable, in this case children

Galatians 4:3

General Information:

The word "we" here refers to all Christians, including Paul's readers.

when we were children

Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "when we were like children"

we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world

Here "enslaved" is a metaphor for being unable to stop one's self from doing something. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the elemental principles of the world controlled us" or "we had to obey the elemental principles of the world as if we were slaves"

the elemental principles of the world

These words could refer to 1) the laws or moral principles of the world, or 2) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth.

Galatians 4:4

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Galatians 4:5

redeem

Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave as a picture of Jesus paying for his people's sins by dying on the cross.

Galatians 4:6

you are sons

Paul uses the word for male children here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries out, "Abba, Father."

By crying out "Abba, Father" the Spirit assures us that we are God's children and he loves us.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts

The heart is metonym for the part of a person that thinks and feels. Alternate translation: "God has sent his Son's Spirit to show us how to think and act"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who cries

The Spirit is the one who cries.

Abba, Father

This is the way a young child would address his father in Paul's home language, but not in the language of the Galatian readers. To keep the sense of a foreign language, translate this as a word that sounds as much like "Abba" as your language allows.

Galatians 4:7

you are no longer a slave, but a son

Paul uses the word for male child here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

you are no longer a slave ... you are also an heir

Paul is addressing his readers as though they are one person, so "you" here is singular.

heir

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Galatians 4:8

General Information:

Paul continues to rebuke the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that they are again trying to live under God's laws rather than living by faith.

those who are

"those things that are" or "those spirits who are"

Galatians 4:9

you are known by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows you"

how is it that you are turning back to ... principles?

Here "turning back to" is a metaphor for starting to pay attention to something again. This is the first of two rhetorical questions. Alternate translation: "you should not start paying attention to ... principles." or "you should not be concerned with ... principles."

elemental principles

See how you translated this phrase in Galatians 4:3.

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the people for behaving in a way that would make them like slaves. Alternate translation: "It seems that you want to be slaves again." or "You behave as though you wanted to be like slaves again."

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Here being "enslaved" is a metaphor for being obligated to

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obey certain rules or customs. Alternate translation: "Do you want to have to obey rules again like a slave has to obey his master?" or "It seems that you want to be controlled all over again!"
Galatians 4:10
You observe days and new moons and seasons and years
Paul is speaking of their being careful to celebrate certain times, thinking that doing that will make them right with God. Alternate translation: "You carefully celebrate days and new moons and seasons and years"
Galatians 4:11
may have been for nothing
"may have been useless" or "has not had any effect"
Galatians 4:12
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds the Galatian believers how kindly they treated him when he was with them, and he encourages them to continue to trust him while he is not there with them.
beg
Here this means to ask or urge strongly. This is not the word used to ask for money or food or physical objects.
brothers
See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.
You did me no wrong
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You treated me well" or "You treated me as you should have"
Galatians 4:13
disease of the flesh
"physical disease" or "disease of the body"
Galatians 4:14
and though my physical condition put you to the test
"and though it was difficult for you to see me so physically ill"
my physical condition
Paul was speaking about a health problem that he had. We do not know what the problem was.
despise
hate very much
Galatians 4:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Galatians 4:16
General Information:
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Galatians 4:17
to win you over
"to convince you to join them"
to shut you out
"to shut you out from us" or "to make you stop being loyal to us"
zealous for them
"zealous to do what they tell you to do"
Galatians 4:18
General Information:
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Galatians 4:19
Connecting Statement:
Paul tells believers that grace and law cannot work together.
My little children
This is a metaphor for disciples or followers. Alternate translation: "You who are disciples because of me"
I am suffering the pains of childbirth for you until Christ is formed in you
Paul uses childbirth as a metaphor for his concern about the Galatians. Alternate translation: "I am in pain as though I were a woman having to give birth to you, and I will continue to be in pain until Christ truly controls you"
Galatians 4:20
change my tone
Paul wishes he could sound happy instead of sounding angry or confused. Alternate Translation: "change the way I sound" or "change the way I am speaking to you" or "speak to you differently"
Galatians 4:21
Tell me, you ... law, do you not listen to the law?
Paul is introducing what he will say next. Alternate translation: "I want to tell you something, you ... law; you need to learn what the law really says." or "Let me tell you who ... law what the law really says."
Galatians 4:22
General Information:
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Galatians 4:23
General Information:
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Galatians 4:24
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins a story to illustrate a truth—that law and grace cannot exist together.
These things may be interpreted as an allegory
"This story of the two sons is like a picture of what I will tell you now"
as an allegory
An "allegory" is a story in which the people and things in it represent other things. In Paul's allegory, the two women referred to in Galatians 4:22 represent two covenants.
women represent
"women are a picture of"
Mount Sinai
"Mount Sinai" here is a synecdoche for the law that Moses gave to the Israelites there. Alternate translation: "Mount Sinai, where Moses gave the law to Israel"
she bears children into slavery
Paul treats the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "the people under this covenant are like slaves who have to obey the law"
Galatians 4:25
she represents
"she is a picture of"
she is in slavery with her children
Hagar is a slave and her children are slaves with her. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, like Hagar, is a slave, and her children are slaves with her"
Galatians 4:26
is free

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"is not bound" or "is not a slave"
Galatians 4:27
Rejoice
be happy
you barren one ... you who are not suffering
Here "you" refers to the barren woman and is singular.
Galatians 4:28
brothers
See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.
children of promise
Possible meanings are that the Galatians have become God's children 1) by believing God's promise or 2) because God worked miracles to fulfill his promises to Abraham, first by giving Abraham a son and then by making the Galatians children of Abraham and thus sons of God.
Galatians 4:29
according to the flesh
This refers to Abraham's becoming Ishmael's father by taking Hagar as a wife. Alternate translation: "by means of human action" or "because of what people did"
according to the Spirit
"because of something the Spirit did"
Galatians 4:30
General Information:
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Galatians 4:31
brothers
See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.
of a slave girl, but of the free woman
The words "we are children" are understood from the previous phrase. This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "of a slave girl. Rather, we are children of the free woman"

Chapter 5

Galatians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues writing about the law of Moses as if it were something that traps or enslaves a person. (See: lawofmoses)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fruit of the Spirit

The phrase "the fruit of the Spirit" is not plural, even though it begins a list of several things. Translators should keep the singular form if possible. (See: fruit)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Illustrations

Paul uses several metaphors in this chapter to illustrate his points and help explain complicated issues.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you no longer experience grace."

Some scholars think Paul teaches that being circumcised causes a person to lose their salvation. Other scholars think Paul means that obeying the law to try to get right with God will keep a person from being saved by grace. (See: grace)

Links:

Galatians 5:1 Notes

Galatians 5:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul applies the allegory in the previous chapter by reminding the believers to use their liberty in Christ because all the law is fulfilled in loving neighbors as ourselves.
For freedom Christ has set us free
"It is so that we can be free that Christ has set us free." It is implied that Christ sets believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "Christ has set us free from the old covenant so that we might be free" or "Christ has set us free so that we might live as free poeple"
Stand firm
Standing firm here represents being determined not to change. How they are not to change can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Do not give in to the arguments of people who teach something else" or "Be determined to stay free"
do not again be subject to a yoke of slavery
Here being under control of a yoke of slavery represents being obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: "do not live like one who is under the control of a yoke of slavery to the law"
Galatians 5:2
if you let yourselves be circumcised
Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for Judaism. Alternate translation: "if you turn to the Jewish religion"
Galatians 5:3
I testify
"I declare" or "I serve as a witness"
to every man who lets himself be circumcised
Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for being Jewish. Alternate translation: "to every person who has become a Jew"
he is obligated to obey
"he must obey"
Galatians 5:4
You are cut off from Christ

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Here "cut off" is a metaphor for separation from Christ. Alternate translation: "You have ended your relationship with Christ" or "You are no longer united with Christ"

you who would be justified by the law

Paul is speaking ironically here. He actually teaches that no one can be justified by trying to do the deeds required by the law. Alternate translation: "all you who think you can be justified by doing the deeds required by the law" or "you who want to be justified by the law"

you no longer experience grace

Who that grace comes from can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "God will not be gracious to you"

Galatians 5:5

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and those who oppose the circumcision of Christians. He is probably including the Galatians.

For through the Spirit

"This is because through the Spirit"

by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) "we are waiting by faith for the hope of righteousness" or 2) "we are waiting for the hope of righteousness that comes by faith."

we eagerly wait

"We wait with excitement" or "we wait with great desire"

for the hope of righteousness

They confidently expect that God will make them righteous. Alternate translation: "for the righteousness that we hope for" or "for the righteousness that we confidently expect to receive"

Galatians 5:6

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision

These are metonymy for being a Jew or a non-Jew. Alternate translation: "neither being a Jew nor not being a Jew"

neither ... has value, but only faith working through love

"neither ... has value; rather, God is concerned with our faith in him, which we show by loving others"

has value

"has meaning" or "gives value to a person" or "makes God think a person is important"

Galatians 5:7

You were running

"You were practicing what Jesus taught"

Galatians 5:8

This persuasion does not come from him who calls you

"The one who persuades you to do that is not God, the one who calls you"

him who calls you

What he calls them to can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the one who calls you to be his people"

persuasion

To persuade someone is to get that person to change what he believes and so to act differently.

Galatians 5:9

A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is teaching something false can harm the entire Christian community.

Galatians 5:10

you will think nothing different

"you will not believe anything different from what I am telling you"

The one who is troubling you will suffer the judgment

"God will punish the one who is troubling you"

is troubling you

"is causing you to be uncertain about what is truth" or "stirs up trouble among you"

whoever he is

Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not know the names of the people who are telling the Galatians that they need to obey the law of Moses or 2) Paul does not want the Galatians to care about whether those who "confuse" them are rich or poor or great or small or religious or not religious.

Galatians 5:11

Brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to show the evidence that he is not proclaiming circumcision. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Brothers, you can see that I am not proclaiming circumcision because I am still being persecuted."

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

if I still proclaim circumcision

"if I still proclaim that men have to be circumcised"

why am I still being persecuted?

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "why are the Jews still persecuting me?" (See:

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul is describing a situation that has not happened as evidence that he does not preach circumcision. Since the stumbling block of the cross has not been removed, that is evidence that Paul does not preach circumcision.

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul had just said that he was still being persecuted. Here he implies that if the offense of the cross were removed, the Jews would have no reason to persecute him. The relationship between the two sentences can be made clearer by making this implied information explicit. Alternate translation: "If I am still preaching circumcision, then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed, and there is no reason for the Jews to persecute me"

In that case

"If I were still proclaiming circumcision" or "If I were still saying that people need to be circumcised"

the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

This can be expressed without the passive form. Alternate translation: "the cross would no longer be a stumbling block" or "the cross would no longer cause people to stumble"

the stumbling block of the cross

Here the words "stumbling block" are a metaphor for something that angers or offends some people and leads them to reject the truth. In this case, teaching that people are saved by "the cross" offends those who believe a person

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is saved by obeying the law. These people "stumble" when they reject the teaching about the cross.

the cross

Here "the cross" is a metonym for the teaching that because Jesus Christ died on the cross and is alive again, God saves people who believe in Christ. People do not have to be circumcised or become Jews. Alternate translation: "the message about the cross"

Galatians 5:12

cut themselves off

Possible meanings are 1) literal, to cut off their male organs so as to become eunuchs or 2) metaphorical, completely withdraw from the Christian community.

Galatians 5:13

For

Paul is giving the reason for his words in Galatians 5:12.

you were called to freedom

This can be expressed in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has called you to freedom"

you were called to freedom

It is implied that Christ has set believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "You were called to freedom from the old covenant" or "Christ has chosen you to not be obligated to the old covenant"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

an opportunity for the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people's sinful nature. The relationship between the opportunity and the sinful nature can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "an opportunity for you to behave according to your sinful nature"

Galatians 5:14

the whole law is fulfilled in one word

The word "word" here is a metonym for a commandment. Possible meanings are 1) "you can state the whole law in just one commandment, which is this" or 2) "by obeying one commandment, you obey all the commandments, and that one commandment is this."

You must love your neighbor as yourself

The words "you," "your," and "yourself" are all singular.

Galatians 5:15

General Information:

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Galatians 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the Spirit gives control over sin.

walk by the Spirit

Walking is a metaphor for living. Alternate translation: "conduct your life in the power of the Holy Spirit" or "live your life in dependence on the Spirit"

you will not carry out the desires of the flesh

"you will not do what your sinful nature desires" or "you will not do the sinful things that you, a sinner, want to do"

the desires of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature and is spoken of as if it were a person and wanted to sin. Alternate translation: "what you want to do because of your sinful nature" or "the things you want to do because you are sinful"

Galatians 5:17

General Information:

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Galatians 5:18

not under the law

"not obligated to obey the law of Moses"

Galatians 5:19

the works of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature. The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person who does things. The abstract noun "works" can be translated with the verb "does." Alternate translation: "the things the sinful nature does" or "the things people do because of their sinful nature" or "the things people do because they are sinful"

Galatians 5:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 5:21

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Galatians 5:22

the fruit of the Spirit is love ... faith

Here "fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "what the Spirit produces is love ... faith" or "the Spirit produces in God's people love ... faith"

Galatians 5:23

gentleness ... self-control

The list of characteristics described as "the fruit of the Spirit," which begins in the previous verse with the words "love, joy, peace," ends here. The word "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Galatians 5:24

have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

Paul speaks of the sinful nature of Christians who have refused to live by it as if it were a person and they have killed it on a cross. Alternate translation: "refuse to live according the sinful nature with its passions and desires, as if they killed it on a cross"

the flesh with its passions and desires

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature. The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person that had passions and desires. Alternate translation: "their sinful nature and the things they strongly want to do because of it"

passions and desires

If your language does not have different words for "passions" and "desires," you can treat this as a hendiadys or doublet that simply emphasizes the idea of desires that are wrong, that harm the one who desires and if fulfilled would harm other people.

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit

"Since God's Spirit has caused us to be alive"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

walk by the Spirit
"Walk" here is a metaphor for living every day. Alternate translation: "allow the Holy Spirit to guide us so we do things that please and honor God"

Galatians 5:26
Let us
"We should"

Chapter 6

Galatians 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes Paul's letter. His final words address some issues that do not seem to be connected to the rest of his letter.

Brothers

Paul writes the words in this chapter to Christians. He calls them "brothers." This refers to Paul's Christian brothers and not his Jewish brothers.

Special concepts in this chapter

New Creation

People who are born again are a new creation in Christ. Christians have been given new life in Christ. They have a new nature in them after they come to faith in Christ. To Paul, this is more significant than a person's ancestry. (See: bornagain and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is contrasted with "spirit." In this chapter, flesh is also used to refer to the physical body. (See: flesh and sin and spirit)

Links:

Galatians 6:1 Notes

Galatians 6:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul teaches believers how they should treat other believers and how God rewards.
Brothers
See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.
if someone
"if anyone among you"
if someone is caught in any trespass
Possible meanings are 1) someone else found that person in the act. Alternate translation: "if someone is discovered in an act of sin" or 2) that person committed the sin without intending to do evil. Alternate translation: "if someone gave in and sinned"
you who are spiritual
"those of you who are guided by the Spirit" or "you who are living in the guidance of the Spirit"
restore him
"correct the person who sinned" or "exhort the person who sinned to return to a correct relationship with God"
in a spirit of gentleness
Possible meanings are 1) that the Spirit is directing the one who is offering correction or 2) "with an attitude of gentleness" or "in a kind way."
Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.
These words treat the Galatians as though they are all one person to emphasize that he is talking to each of them. Alternate translation: "Be concerned about yourselves ... tempted." or "I say to each one of you, 'Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.'"
so you also may not be tempted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that nothing will tempt you also to sin"

Galatians 6:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 6:3
For if
"Because if." The words that follow tell why the Galatians should 1) "carry one other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) or 2) be careful that they themselves are not tempted (Galatians 6:1) or 3) "not become conceited" (Galatians 5:26).
he is something
"he is someone important" or "he is better than others"
he is nothing
"he is not important" or "he is not better than others"

Galatians 6:4
Each one should
"Each person must"

Galatians 6:5
each one will carry his own burden
"each person will be judged by his own work only" or "each person will be responsible for his own work only"
each one will
"each person will"

Galatians 6:6
The one
"The person"
the word
"the message," everything God has said or commanded

Galatians 6:7
for whatever a man plants, that he will also reap
Planting represents doing things that end in some kind of result, and gathering in represents experiencing the results

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of what one has done. Alternate translation: "for just as a farmer gathers in the fruit of whatever kind of seeds he plants, so everyone experiences the results of whatever he does"

whatever a man plants

Paul is not specifying males here. Alternate translation: "whatever a person plants" or "whatever someone plants"

Galatians 6:8

plants seed to his own flesh

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing sinful actions because of his sinful nature. Alternate translation: "plants seed according to what he wants because of his sinful nature" or "does the things he wants to do because of his sinful nature"

will reap destruction

God punishing the person is spoken of as if the person were harvesting a crop. Alternate translation: "will receive punishment for what he did"

plants seed to the Spirit

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing good actions because he is listening to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "does the things God's Spirit loves"

from the Spirit will reap eternal life

"will receive eternal life as a reward from God's Spirit"

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good

"We should continue to do good"

doing good

doing good to others for their well-being

for at the right time

"for in due time" or "because at the time God has chosen"

Galatians 6:10

So then

"As a result of this" or "Because of this"

especially to those

"most of all to those" or "in particular to those"

those who belong to the household of faith

"those who are members of God's family through faith in Christ"

Galatians 6:11

Connecting Statement:

As Paul closes this letter, he gives one more reminder that the law does not save and that the Galatians should remember the cross of Christ.

large letters

This can mean that Paul wants to emphasize 1) the statements that follow or 2) that this letter came from him.

with my own hand

Possible meanings are 1) Paul probably had a helper who wrote most of this letter as Paul told him what to write, but Paul himself wrote this last part of the letter or 2) Paul wrote the whole letter himself.

Galatians 6:12

make a good impression

"cause others to think well of them" or "cause others to think that they are good people"

in the flesh

"with visible evidence" or "by their own efforts"

to compel

"to force" or "to strongly influence"

only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ

"so that the Jews will not persecute them for claiming that the cross of Christ alone is what saves people"

the cross of Christ

These words are a metonym for faith that Christ died on the cross so God would forgive his people's sins. Alternate translation: "believing that God forgives his people's sins because Jesus died on the cross"

Galatians 6:13

so that they may boast about your flesh

"so that they may be proud that they have added you to the people who try to keep the law"

Galatians 6:14

But may I never boast except in the cross

"I do not ever want to boast in anything other than the cross" or "May I boast only in the cross"

the world has been crucified to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I think of the world as already dead" or "I treat the world like a criminal God has killed on a cross"

I to the world

The words "have been crucified" are understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "and I have been crucified to the world"

I to the world

Possible meanings are 1) "the world thinks of me as already dead" or 2) "the world treats me like a criminal that God has killed on the cross"

the world

Possible meanings are 1) the people of the world, those who care nothing for God or 2) the things that those who care nothing for God think are important.

Galatians 6:15

neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision

"neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is important to God"

a new creation

Possible meanings are 1) a new believer in Jesus Christ or 2) the new life of a believer.

Galatians 6:16

walk according to this standard

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for living life, and a standard is something against which people measure other things. Alternate translation: "live this way"

peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God

Possible meanings are 1) that believers in general are the Israel of God or 2) "may peace and mercy be upon Gentile believers and upon the Israel of God" or 3) "may peace be upon those who follow the rule, and may mercy be upon even the Israel of God."

Galatians 6:17

From now on

This can also mean "Lastly" or "As I end this letter."

let no one trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is commanding the Galatians not to trouble him, "I am commanding you this: do not

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trouble me," or 2) Paul is telling the Galatians that he is commanding all people not to trouble him, "I am commanding everyone this: do not trouble me," or 3) Paul is expressing a desire, "I do not want anyone to trouble me."

trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) "speak of these matters to me" or 2) "cause me hardship" or "give me hard work."

for I carry on my body the marks of Jesus

These marks were scars from people who beat and whipped Paul because they did not like him teaching about Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the scars on my body show that I serve Jesus"

Galatians 6:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

The word "your" here refers to the Galatians and so is plural. The words "your spirit" are a synecdoche and represent the people themselves. Alternate translation: "May our Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

Introduction to Ephesians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Ephesians

Greeting and prayer for the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:1-23) Sin and salvation (2:1-10) Unity and peace (2:11-22) Mystery of Christ in you, made known (3:1-13) Prayer for riches of his glory to make them strong (3:14-21) Unity of the Spirit, building up the Body of Christ (4:1-16) New life (4:17-32) Imitators of God (5:1-21) Wives and husbands; children and parents; slaves and masters (5:22-6:9) Armor of God (6:10-20) Final greeting (6:21-24)

Who wrote the Book of Ephesians?

Paul wrote Ephesians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

The Apostle Paul helped start the church in Ephesus on one of his trips. He also lived in Ephesus for a year and a half and helped the believers there. Paul probably wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Ephesians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus to explain God's love for them in Christ Jesus. He described the blessings that God was giving them because they were now united with Christ. He explained that all believers are united together, whether Jew or Gentile. Paul also wanted to encourage them to live in a way that pleases God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Ephesians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus" or "A Letter to the Christians in Ephesus."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the "hidden truth" in the Book of Ephesians?

The expression translated in the ULB as "hidden truth" or "hidden" occurs six times. By it Paul always meant something that God had to reveal to human beings because they could not know it on their own. It always referred to something about how God planned to save mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to cause peace between himself and mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to unite Jews and Gentiles through Christ. Gentiles are now able to benefit from the promises of Christ as equals with the Jews.

What did Paul say about salvation and righteous living?

Paul said much about salvation and righteous living in this letter and in many of his letters. He said that God has been very kind and saved Christians because they believe in Jesus. Therefore, after they become Christians, they should live in a righteous way to show that they have faith in Christ. (See: righteous)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers who may read this letter. The three exceptions to this are: 5:14, 6:2, and 6:3.

What did Paul mean by the "new self" or the "new man"?

When Paul spoke of the "new self" or the "new man," he meant the new nature that a believer receives from the Holy Spirit. This new nature was created in God's image (See: 4:24). The phrase "new man" is also used for God causing peace between Jews and Gentiles. God brought them together as one people that belong to him (See: 2:15).

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20; 2:6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22; 3:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 21; 4:1, 17, 21, 32; 5:8, 18, 19; 6:1, 10, 18, 21. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend

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with God.
These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

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

"in Ephesus" (1:1). Some early manuscripts do not include this expression, but it is probably in the original letter. The ULB, UDB, and many modern versions include it. "because we are members of his body" (5:30). Most modern versions, including the ULB, read in this way. Some older translations read, "because we are members of his body and of his bones." Translators might decide to choose the second reading if other versions in their area have it that way. If translators choose the second reading, they should put the additional words inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they are probably not original to the Book of Ephesians.

Chapter 1

Ephesians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"
Paul structures part of this chapter like a prayer of praise to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is teaching the church in Ephesus. He also tells the Ephesians how he is praying for them.

Special concepts in this chapter

Predestination
Many scholars believe this chapter teaches on a subject known as "predestination." This is related to the biblical concept of "predestine." Some scholars take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen some people to eternally save. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter. (See: predestine)

Links:

Ephesians 1:1 Notes Ephesians intro

Ephesians 1:1
General Information:
Paul names himself as the writer of this letter to the believers at the church at Ephesus. Except where noted, all instances of "you" and "your" refers to the Ephesian believers as well as all believers and so are plural.
Paul, an apostle ... to God's holy people in Ephesus
Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: "I, Paul, an apostle ... write this letter to you, God's holy people Ephesus"
who are faithful in Christ Jesus
"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.
Ephesians 1:2
Grace to you and peace
This is a common greeting and blessing that Paul often uses in his letters.
Ephesians 1:3
General Information:
In this book, unless otherwise stated, the words "us" and "we" refer to Paul and the believers in Ephesus, as well as all believers.
Connecting Statement:
Paul opens his letter by talking about the believers' position and their safety before God.
May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised
This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "Let us praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"
who has blessed us
"for God has blessed us"
every spiritual blessing
"every blessing coming from the Spirit of God"
in the heavenly places
"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is.
in Christ
Possible meanings 1) the phrase "in Christ" refers to what Christ has done. Alternate translation: "through Christ" or "through what Christ has done" or 2) "in Christ" is a metaphor referring to our close relationship with Christ. Alternate translation: "by uniting us with Christ" or "because we are united with Christ"
Ephesians 1:4
from the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "from the time he created the world"
holy and blameless
Paul uses two similar words to emphasize moral goodness.
Ephesians 1:5
God predestined us for adoption

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The word "us" refers to Paul, the Ephesian church, and all believers in Christ. Alternate translation: "God planned long ago to adopt us"

God predestined us

"God chose us ahead of time" or "God chose us long ago"

for adoption as sons

Here "adoption" refers to becoming part of God's family. Here the word "sons" refers to males and females. Alternate translation: "to be adopted as his children"

through Jesus Christ

God brought believers into his family by the work of Jesus Christ.

his will

"God's will"

Ephesians 1:6

General Information:

The words "his" and "he" refer to God.

he has freely given us in the One he loves

"he has kindly given to us by means of the One he loves"

the One he loves

"the One he loves, Jesus Christ" or "his Son, whom he loves"

Ephesians 1:7

riches of his grace

Paul speaks of God's grace as if it were material wealth. Alternate translation: "greatness of God's grace" or "abundance of God's grace"

Ephesians 1:8

He multiplied this grace to us

"He gave us this great amount of grace" or "He was extremely kind to us"

with all wisdom and understanding

Possible meanings are 1) "because he has all wisdom and understanding" 2) "so that we might have great wisdom and understanding"

Ephesians 1:9

according to what pleased him

Possible meanings are 1) "because he wanted to make it known to us" or 2) "which was what he wanted."

which he demonstrated in Christ

"he demonstrated this purpose in Christ"

in Christ

"by means of Christ"

Ephesians 1:10

with a view to a plan

A new sentence can be started here. If you start a new sentence here, you will need to end 1:9 with a period instead of a comma. Alternate translation: "He did this with a view to a plan" or "He did this, thinking about a plan"

for the fullness of time

"for when the time is right" or "for the time that he has appointed"

Ephesians 1:11

we were given an inheritance, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave us an inheritance, having predestined us according to his plan. For he works"

Ephesians 1:12

so that we, who are the first to hope in Christ

The pronoun "we" refer to Paul and the other Jewish believers, not to the Ephesian believers.

the first to hope in Christ

"the first people to hope in Christ." They confidently expected that Christ would fulfill God's promises. Alternate translation: "the first to trust in Christ"

so that we, ... Christ, would be for the praise of his glory.

Possible meanings are 1) other people would praise God because of the grace he had shown the believers (Ephesians 1:6). Alternate translation: "we, ... Christ, would live in a way that brings glory to God." or "people would praise God because of the glorious grace he showed us who ... Christ." Or 2) believers would praise God for his glory. Alternate translation: "so that we, ... Christ, would praise him for his glory as long as we live."

Ephesians 1:13

General Information:

Paul has been speaking in the previous two verses about himself and the other Jewish believers, but now he begins speaking about the Ephesian believers.

the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth" or 2) "the true message."

were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

Wax was placed on a letter and stamped with a symbol representing the person who wrote the letter. Paul uses this custom as a picture to show how God has used the Holy Spirit to assure us that we belong to him. Alternate translation: "God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit that he promised"

Ephesians 1:14

the guarantee of our inheritance

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the guarantee that we will receive what God has promised"

the redemption of the possession

The abstract nouns "redemption" and "possession" can be translated using the verbs "redeem" and "possess," respectively. Possible meanings of "possession" are 1) God possesses. Alternate translation: "God redeems us as his own people" Or 2) Christians possess. Alternate translation: "we take possession of our inheritance"

Ephesians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul prays for the Ephesian believers and praises God for the power that believers have through Christ.

Ephesians 1:16

I have not stopped thanking God

Paul uses "not stopped" to emphasize that he continues to thank God. Alternate translation: "I continue to thank God"

Ephesians 1:17

a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him

"spiritual wisdom to understand his revelation"

Ephesians 1:18

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "eyes of your heart" is a metaphor for one's ability to gain understanding. Alternate translation: "that you may gain

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understanding and be enlightened"

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

This may be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation: that God may enlighten your heart" or "that God may enlighten your understanding"

may be enlightened

"may be made to see"

the hope to which he has called you

Here "the hope" refers to what God wants us to confidently expect. Alternate translation: "what he has called you to confidently expect" or "what he has called you to confidently wait for"

to which he has called you

to which he has invited you

the riches of his glorious inheritance among all God's holy people

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the riches of all the glorious things he has promised to give to all God's holy people"

all God's holy people

"all those whom he has set apart for himself" or "all those who belong completely to him"

Ephesians 1:19

the incomparable greatness of his power

God's power is far beyond all other power.

toward us who believe

"for us who believe"

the working of the strength of his might

"the strength of his might that is at work for us"

the strength of his might

"his mighty strength" or "his very great strength"

Ephesians 1:20

raised him

"made him alive again"

when he raised him from the dead

Here "the dead" is a nominal adjective that means all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them means to become alive again. Alternate translation: "when he brought him back to life" or " when he caused him to be alive again"

seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places

The person who sits "at the right hand" of a king sits at his right side and rules with all the authority of the king at whose right hand or side he sits. This is a metonym of location that represents the authority that the person in that location possesses. Alternate translation: "gave him all authority to rule from heaven"

seated him at his right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "seated him in the place of honor and authority beside him"

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how you translated this in Ephesians 1:3.

Ephesians 1:21

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion

Rulers, authorities, dominions, and powers are different terms for the ranks of supernatural beings, both angelic and demonic. Alternate translation: "far above all types of supernatural beings"

every name that is named

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "every name that man gives" or 2) "every name that God gives"

name

Possible meanings are 1) title or 2) position of authority.

in this age

"at this time"

in the age to come

"in the future"

Ephesians 1:22

subjected all things under Christ's feet

Here "feet" represents Christ's lordship, authority, and power. Alternate translation: "put all things under Christ's power" or "made all things subject to Christ"

head over all things

Here "head" refers to the leader or the one who is in charge. Alternate translation: "ruler over all things"

Ephesians 1:23

The church is his body

Just as with a human body, the head

his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all

Possible meanings are 1) the body is the fullness of Christ. This means Christ fills or gives to the church everything that he has to give, and Christ also fills all things in every way or 2) "the fullness" refers back to "him," that is, Christ in 1:22, and "him" in 1:23 refers to God the Father. This means the full deity of the Father dwells within Christ, and the Father fills all things in every way or 3) the body is the completion of Christ. This means that Christ as the "head" is completed by the church, which is "his body," and Christ fills all things in every way.

Chapter 2

Ephesians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on a Christian's life before coming to believe in Jesus. Paul then uses this information to explain how a person's former way of living is distinct from a Christian's new identity "in Christ." (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

One body

Paul teaches about the church in this chapter. The church is made of two different groups of people (Jews and Gentiles). They are now one group or "body." The church is also known as the body of Christ. Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ.

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Important figures of speech in this chapter

"Dead in trespasses and sins"

Paul teaches that those who are not Christians are "dead" in their sin. Sin binds or enslaves them. This makes them spiritually "dead." Paul writes that God makes Christians alive in Christ.

Descriptions of worldly living

Paul uses many different ways to describe how non-Christians act. They "lived according to the ways of this world" and are "living according to the ruler of the authorities of the air," "fulfilling the evil desires of our sinful nature," and "carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is the gift of God"

Some scholars believe "it" here refers to being saved. Other scholars believe that it is faith that is the gift of God. Because of how the Greek tenses agree, "it" here more likely refers to all of being saved by God's grace through faith.

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. The phrase "Gentiles in the flesh" indicates the Ephesians once lived without any concern for God. "Flesh" is also used in this verse to refer to the physical part of man. (See: flesh)

Links:

Ephesians 2:1 Notes

Ephesians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers of their past and the way they now are before God.

you were dead in your trespasses and sins

This speaks of sinful people being unable to obey God as if they were people who were physically dead.

in your trespasses and sins

The words "trespasses" and "sins" have similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize the greatness of the people's sin. They can also be translated using the verbs "trespass" and "sin," respectively. Alternate translation: "because you had trespassed and sinned"

Ephesians 2:2

in which you once walked

The word "walked" is a metaphor for the way they lived their lives. To say that they "walked in" their trespasses and sins [Ephesians 2:1]

according to the ways of this world

The apostles also used "world" to refer to the selfish behaviors and corrupt values of the people living in this world. Alternate translation: "according to the values of people living in the world" or "following the principles of this present world"

according to the ruler of the authorities of the air

"doing what the ruler of the authorities of the air wants them to do." These words expand upon "according to the age of this world." The "ruler of the authorities of the air" is the devil or Satan.

the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience

These words expand upon "the ruler of the authorities of the air." This is another way of speaking of the devil or Satan.

the sons of disobedience

Ephesians 2:3

the desires of the flesh and of the mind

The words "flesh" and "mind" represent the entire person.

flesh

This word is a metonym for the body, which is made of flesh. Alternate translation: "body"

children of wrath

people with whom God is angry

Ephesians 2:4

God is rich in mercy

"God is abundant in mercy" or "God is very kind to us"

because of his great love with which he loved us

"because of his great love for us" or "because he loves us very much"

Ephesians 2:5

by grace you have been saved

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God saved us because of his great kindness toward us"

Ephesians 2:6

God raised us up together with Christ

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Possible meanings are 1) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, God has already given Paul and the believers in Ephesus new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "God has given us new life because we belong to Christ" or 2) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, the believers in Ephesus can know that after they die they will live with Christ, and Paul can speak of the believers living again as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "We can be sure that God will give us life as he has caused Christ to come alive again"

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.

in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 2:7

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in the ages to come
"in the future"
Ephesians 2:8
For by grace you have been saved through faith
God's kindness to us is the reason he made it possible for us to be saved from judgment if we simply trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "God saved you by grace because of your faith in him"
this did not
The word "this" refers back to "by grace you have been saved by faith."
Ephesians 2:9
not from works, so that no one may boast
You may want to start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Salvation does not come from works, so that no one may boast" or "God does not save a person because of what that person does, so no one can boast and say that he earned his salvation"
Ephesians 2:10
in Christ Jesus
"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.
we would walk in them
Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Here "in them" refers to the "good deeds." Alternate translation: "we would always and continually do those good deeds"
Ephesians 2:11
Connecting Statement:
Paul reminds these believers that God has now made Gentiles and Jews into one body through Christ and his cross.
Gentiles in the flesh
This refers to people who were not born Jewish.
uncircumcision
Non-Jewish people were not circumcised as babies and thus the Jews considered them people who do not follow any of God's laws. Alternate translation: "uncircumcised pagans"
circumcision
This was another term for Jewish people because all male infants were circumcised. Alternate translation: "circumcised people"
what is called the "circumcision" in the flesh made by human hands
Possible meanings are 1) "Jews, who are circumcised by humans" or 2) "Jews, who circumcise the physical body."
by what is called
This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "by what people call" or "by those whom people call"
Ephesians 2:12
separated from Christ
"not knowing Christ" or "not belonging to Christ"
foreigners to citizenship in Israel
"foreigners, not citizens of Israel"
strangers to the covenants of the promise
Paul speaks to the Gentile believers as if they had been foreigners, kept out of the land of God's covenant and promise. Alternate translation: "not belonging to those with whom God made the covenants of the promise"
having no hope
They had no reason to confidently expect anything good to happen. Specifically, they had no hope that God would save them and give them eternal life with him. Alternate translation: "not hoping in God" or "not confidently waiting for eternal life with God"
Ephesians 2:13
But now in Christ Jesus
Paul is marking a contrast between the Ephesians before they believed in Christ and after they believed in Christ.
you who once were far away from God have been brought near by the blood of Christ
Not belonging to God due to sin is spoken of as being far away from God. Belonging to God because of the blood of Christ is spoken of as being brought near to God. Alternate translation: "you who once did not belong to God now belong to God because of the blood of Christ"
by the blood of Christ
The blood of Christ is a metonym for his death. Alternate translation: "by Christ's death" or "when Christ died for us"
Ephesians 2:14
he himself is our peace
The word "himself" here emphasizes that Jesus alone is the reason that Jews and Gentiles can worship God as one peaceful community. Alternate translation: "he is the one who enables us to live in peace with each other"
our peace
The word "our" refers to Paul and his readers and so is inclusive.
he made us both one
"he made the Jews and Gentiles one"
By his flesh
The words "his flesh," his physical body, are a metonym for his body dying. Alternate translation: "By the death of his body on the cross" or "By dying on the cross" or "By his actions as a mortal man"
he broke down the dividing wall of hostility
Paul is speaking of Jews and Gentiles being hostile to each other and unable to worship God together as if they were on different sides of a wall. Because Jesus died, Gentiles as well as Jews can now worship God. Alternate translation: "he made it possible for Jews and Gentiles not to be hostile to each other anymore"
Ephesians 2:15
He set aside the law with its commands and ordinances
Jesus's blood satisfied the law of Moses so that both the Jews and Gentiles can live at peace in God.
one new man
a single new people, the people of redeemed humanity
in himself
It is union with Christ that makes reconciliation possible between Jews and Gentiles.
Ephesians 2:16
Christ reconciles both peoples
"Christ brings the Jews and the Gentiles together in peace"
through the cross
The cross here represents Christ's death on the cross.

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Alternate translation: "by means of Christ's death on the cross"

putting to death the hostility

Stopping their hostility is spoken of as if he killed their hostility. By dying on the cross Jesus eliminated the reason for Jews and Gentiles to be hostile toward each other. Neither are now required to live according to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "stopping them from hating one another"

Ephesians 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesian believers that present Gentile believers are also now made one with the Jewish apostles and prophets; they are a temple for God in the Spirit.

proclaimed the good news of peace

"proclaimed the good news that tells that God and people can be at peace with each other" or "proclaimed the good news that is itself the way that people can be at peace with each other"

you who were far away

This refers to the Gentiles or non-Jews.

those who were near

This refers to the Jews.

Ephesians 2:18

For through Jesus we both have access

Here "we both" refers the believing Jews

in one Spirit

All believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are given the right to enter into the presence of God the Father by the same Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19

you Gentiles ... the household of God

Paul is using a metaphor to tell his Gentile readers that though God formerly did not consider them part of his people, God now considers them part of his people.

foreigners and strangers ... fellow citizens ... and members of the household

The words "foreigners" and "strangers" mean almost the same thing, so "strangers and foreigners" may be a doublet. However, Paul is contrasting "foreigners and strangers" with "fellow citizens ... and members." The word "citizens" refers to having political rights, so here "foreigners" probably refers to people living in a country not their own and having no political rights. The word "members" refers to being part of a family, so "strangers" probably refers to people who are not part of a family.

Ephesians 2:20

You have been built on the foundation

Paul speaks of God's people as if they were a building. Christ is the cornerstone, the apostles are the foundation, and the believers are the structure.

You have been built

This can be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation: "God has built you"

Ephesians 2:21

the whole building fits together and grows as a holy temple

Paul continues to speak of Christ's family as if it were a building. In the same way a builder fits stones together while building, so Christ is fitting us together.

In him ... in the Lord

"In Christ ... in the Lord Jesus" These metaphors express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 2:22

in him

"in Christ" This metaphor expresses the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

you also are being built together as a dwelling place for God in the Spirit

This describes how believers are being put together to become a place where God will permanently live through the power of the Holy Spirit.

you also are being built together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is also building you together"

Chapter 3

Ephesians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"

Paul structures part of this chapter as a prayer to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is both praying for and instructing the church in Ephesus.

Special concepts in this chapter

Mystery

Paul refers to the church as a "mystery." The role of the church in the plans of God was once not known. But God has now revealed it. Part of this mystery involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God.

Links:

Ephesians 3:1 Notes

Ephesians 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

Paul started a sentence, but he did not finish it.

For this reason

This refers to what Paul was speaking about in chapter 2.

Alternate translation: "Because of God's grace to you Gentiles" or "Because God has made you Gentiles members of his household"

the prisoner of Christ Jesus

Paul was in prison because people did not like him

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preaching about Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "the prisoner for Christ Jesus" or "the prisoner for preaching about Christ Jesus"

Ephesians 3:2

the stewardship of the grace of God that was given to me for you

"the responsibility that God gave me to bring his grace to you"

Ephesians 3:3

The mystery was made known to me by revelation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I learned about the mystery by revelation" or "God revealed the mystery to me"

The mystery

The mystery is God's plan, which God had not clearly told people about earlier. Alternate translation: "God's secret plan" or "The hidden truth"

as I have written briefly

Paul refers to another letter he had written to these people.

Ephesians 3:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 3:5

In other generations this mystery was not made known to the sons of men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make this truth known to people in the past"

But now it has been revealed by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now the Spirit has revealed it" or "But now the Spirit has made it known"

his holy apostles and prophets

"the apostles and prophets whom God set apart to do this work"

Ephesians 3:6

the Gentiles are fellow heirs ... through the gospel

This is the hidden truth Paul began to explain in the previous verse. The Gentiles who receive Christ also receive the same things as the Jewish believers.

fellow members of the body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

through the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow sharers in the promise or 2) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of the body and fellow sharers in the promise.

Ephesians 3:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 3:8

unsearchable

unable to be completely known

riches of Christ

Paul speaks of the truth about Christ and the blessings he brings as if they were material wealth.

Ephesians 3:9

the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things

This can be stated in active form. "God, who created all things, kept this plan hidden for long ages in the past"

Ephesians 3:10

This plan was made known through the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made this plan known by means of the church"

rulers and authorities

These words share similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize that every spiritual being will know God's wisdom. See how you translated similar words in [Ephesians 1:21]

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.

the many-sided nature of the wisdom of God

God's great and complex wisdom is spoken of as if it were an object with many sides. Alternate translation: "the great and complex wisdom of God"

Ephesians 3:11

according to the eternal plan

"in keeping with the eternal plan" or "consistent with the eternal plan"

Ephesians 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul praises God in his sufferings and prays for these Ephesian believers.

we have boldness

"we are without fear" or "we have courage"

access with confidence

It may be helpful to state explicitly that this access is into God's presence. Alternate translation: "access into God's presence with confidence" or "freedom to enter into God's presence with confidence"

confidence

"certainty" or "assurance"

Ephesians 3:13

for you, which is your glory

Here "your glory" is a metonym for the pride they should feel or will feel in the future kingdom. The Christians in Ephesus should be proud of what Paul is suffering in prison. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "for you. This is for your benefit" or "for you. You should be proud of this"

Ephesians 3:14

For this reason

You may need to make explicit what the reason is. Alternate translation: "Because God has done all this for you"

I bend my knees to the Father

Bowed knees are a picture of the whole person in an attitude of prayer. Alternate translation: "I bow down in prayer to the Father" or "I humbly pray to the Father"

Ephesians 3:15

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named

The act of naming here probably also represents the act of creating. Alternate translation: "who created and named every family in heaven and on earth"

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Ephesians 3:16

I pray that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power

"I pray that God, because he is so great and powerful, would allow you to become strong with his power." This is the first item for which Paul bends his knees and prays.

would grant

"would give" or "would cause"

in your inner person

Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "in your heart" or "in your soul"

Ephesians 3:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues the prayer he began in Ephesians 3:14.

I pray that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and that you may be rooted and founded in his love

This is the second item which Paul prays that God will "grant" the Ephesians "according to the riches of his glory." The first is that they would "be strengthened" (Ephesians 3:16).

that Christ may live in your hearts through faith

Here "heart" represents a person's inner being, and "through" expresses the means by which Christ lives within the believer. Christ lives in the hearts of believers because God graciously allows them to have faith. Alternate translation: "that Christ may live within you because you trust in him"

you may be rooted and founded in his love

Paul speaks of their faith as if it were a tree that has deep roots or a house built on a solid foundation. Alternate translation: "that you will be like a firmly rooted tree and a building built on stone because of his love"

Ephesians 3:18

that you might be able to understand

This is the first item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17).

all God's holy people

"all believers in Christ" or "all the saints"

the width, the length, the height, and the depth

Possible meanings are 1) these words describe the greatness of God's wisdom, Alternate translation: "how very wise God is" or 2) these word describe the intensity of Christ's love for us. Alternate translation: "how much Christ loves us"

Ephesians 3:19

to know the love of Christ, which goes beyond knowledge

This is the second item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17).

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

This is the third item for which Paul bends his knees and prays (Ephesians 3:14). The first is that they would "be strengthened" (Ephesians 3:16), and the second is that they "can understand" (Ephesians 3:18).

Ephesians 3:20

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" in this book continue to include Paul and all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul concludes his prayer with a blessing.

Now to him who

"Now to God, who"

to do far beyond all that we ask or think

"to do much more than all that we ask or think" or "to do things that are much greater than all that we ask him for or think about"

Ephesians 3:21

General Information:

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Chapter 4

Ephesians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 8, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. These spiritual gifts were foundational to developing the church. Paul lists here only some of the spiritual gifts. (See: faith)

Unity

Paul considers it very important that the church is united. This is a major theme of this chapter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Old man and new man

The term "old man" probably refers to the sinful nature with which a person is born. The "new man" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ.

Links:

Ephesians 4:1 Notes

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Ephesians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Because of what Paul has been writing to the Ephesians, he tells them how they should live their lives as believers and again emphasizes that believers are to agree with each other.

as the prisoner for the Lord

"as someone who is in prison because of his choice to serve the Lord"

walk worthily of the calling

Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life.

Ephesians 4:2

to live with great humility and gentleness and patience

"to always be very humble, gentle, and patient"

Ephesians 4:3

to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

Here Paul speaks of "peace" as if it were a bond that ties people together. This is a metaphor for being united with other people by living peacefully with them. Alternate translation: "to live peacefully with one another and remain united, as the Spirit made possible"

Ephesians 4:4

one body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

one Spirit

"one Holy Spirit"

you were called in one hope of your calling

Here the word "call" means "invite" or "choose." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God invited you to one hope when he invited you" or "God chose you to hope for one thing when he chose you"

one hope

Here the word "hope" refers to the thing to hope for. Alternate translation: "one thing to hope for" or "one thing to confidently wait for"

Ephesians 4:5

General Information:

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Ephesians 4:6

Father of all ... over all ... through all ... and in all

The word "all" here means "everything."

Ephesians 4:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds believers of the gifts that Christ gives believers to use in the church, which is the whole body of believers.

To each one of us grace has been given

This can be stated using an active form. Alternate translation: "God has given grace to each one of us" or "God gave a spiritual gift to each believer"

grace has been given

Here grace refers to a spiritual gift or ability. Alternate translation: "a spiritual gift has been given" or "ability has been given"

according to the measure of the gift of Christ

Here "the gift of Christ" refers to a gift that Christ has given. Alternate translation: "according to the amount that Christ has given us"

Ephesians 4:8

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. King David wrote this psalm.

When he ascended on high

"When he went up to the very high place"

Ephesians 4:9

he ascended

"he went up"

he also descended

"he also came down"

into the lower regions of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the lower regions are a part of the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lowest place on earth" or 2) "the lower regions" is another way of referring to the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lower regions, the earth"

Ephesians 4:10

that he might fill all things

"so that he might be present everywhere in his power"

fill

"complete" or "satisfy"

Ephesians 4:11

General Information:

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Ephesians 4:12

to equip God's holy people

"to prepare the people he has set apart" or "to provide the believers with what they need"

for the work of service

"so they can serve others"

for the building up of the body of Christ

Paul is speaking of people who grow spiritually as if they were doing exercises to increase the strength of their physical bodies.

building up

"improvement" or "strengthening"

body of Christ

The "body of Christ" refers to all of the individual members of Christ's Church.

Ephesians 4:13

reach the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God

The believers need to know Jesus as the Son of God if they are to be united in faith and mature as believers.

reach the unity of faith

"become equally strong in faith" or "become united together in faith"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

become mature

"become mature believers"

mature

"fully developed" or "grown up" or "complete"

Ephesians 4:14

be children

Paul refers to believers who have not grown spiritually as if they were children who have had very little experience in life. Alternate translation: "be like children"

tossed back and forth ... carried away by every wind of doctrine

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This speaks of a believer who has not become mature and follows wrong teaching as if that believer were a boat that the wind is blowing in different directions on the water.

by the trickery of people in their deceitful schemes

"by crafty people who trick believers with clever lies"

Ephesians 4:15

into him who is the head

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

Ephesians 4:16

Christ builds the whole body ... makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

by every supporting ligament

A "ligament" is a strong band that connects bones or holds organs in place in the body.

Ephesians 4:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesians what they should no longer do now that they as believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, I say and insist on this in the Lord

"Because what I have just said, I will say something more to strongly encourage you because we all belong to the Lord"

that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life, especially whether he does right or does wrong. Alternate translation: "stop living the way the Gentiles live, with their worthless thoughts"

Ephesians 4:18

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God

Here "darkened in their understanding" is a metaphor that means not to be able to understand the truth. And "alienated from the life of God" is a metaphor that means to not have the life that God gives. Alternate translation: "They do not understand what is true, and they do not have the life that God gives to people"

because of the ignorance that is in them

"because they refuse to learn what is true"

because of the hardness of their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. The phrase "hardness of their hearts" is a metaphor that means "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "because they are stubborn" or "because they refuse to listen to God"

Ephesians 4:19

have committed themselves to sensuality

Paul speaks of these people as if they were objects that they themselves were giving to other people, and he speaks of the way they want to satisfy their physical desires as if it were the person to whom they give themselves. Alternate translation: "only want to satisfy their physical desires"

they practice every kind of uncleanness with greed

"they are continually practicing every kind of uncleanness"

uncleanness

This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 4:20

But that is not how you learned about Christ

The word "that" refers to the way the Gentiles live, as described in Ephesians 4:17-19. This emphasizes that what the believers learned about Christ was the opposite of that. Alternate translation: "But what you learned about Christ was not like that"

Ephesians 4:21

I assume that you have heard ... and that you were taught

Paul knows that the Ephesians have heard and been taught.

you were taught in him

Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus's people have taught you" or 2) "someone has taught you because you are Jesus's people."

as the truth is in Jesus

"as everything about Jesus is true"

Ephesians 4:22

to put off what belongs to your former manner of life

Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living according to your former manner of life"

to put off the old man

Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living as your former self did"

old man

The "old man" refers to the "old nature" or "former self."

that is corrupt because of its deceitful desires

Paul speaks of the sinful human nature as if it were a dead body falling apart in its grave.

Ephesians 4:23

to be renewed in the spirit of your minds

This may be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "to allow God to change your attitudes and thoughts" or "to allow God to give you new attitudes and thoughts"

Ephesians 4:24

in true righteousness and holiness

"truly righteous and holy"

Ephesians 4:25

get rid of lies

"stop telling lies"

we are members of one another

"we belong to one another" or "we are members of God's family"

Ephesians 4:26

Be angry and do not sin

"You may get angry, but do not sin" or "If you become angry, do not sin"

Do not let the sun go down on your anger

The sun going down represents nightfall or the end of the day. Alternate translation: "You must stop being angry before night comes" or "Do not let the sun set while you are still angry with someone"

Ephesians 4:27

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Do not give an opportunity to the devil
"Do not give the devil an opportunity to lead you into sin"
Ephesians 4:28
General Information:
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Ephesians 4:29
harmful talk
This refers to speech that is cruel or rude.
for the edification of those
"for encouraging those" or "for strengthening those"
give grace to the hearers
"help those who hear you"
Ephesians 4:30
do not grieve
"do not distress" or "do not upset"
for it is by him that you were sealed for the day of redemption
The Holy Spirit assures believers that God will redeem them. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were a mark that God puts on believers to show that he owns them. Alternate translation: "for he is the seal that assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or "for he is the one who assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or
the day of redemption
Here redemption is a metaphor for causing people to no longer be affected by sin. The idea in the noun "redemption" can be expressed with a phrase. Alternate translation: "the day when God will redeem his people" or "the day when God will free his people from sin"
Ephesians 4:31
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes his instructions on what believers should not do and ends with what they must do.
Put away all bitterness, rage, anger
"Put away" here is a metaphor for not continuing to have certain attitudes or behaviors. Alternate translation: "You must not allow these things to be part of your life: bitterness, rage, anger"
rage
intense anger
Ephesians 4:32
Be kind
"Instead, be kind"
tenderhearted
"gentle and compassionate towards others"

Chapter 5

Ephesians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 14.

Special concepts in this chapter

Darkness and Light

In this chapter Paul teaches how God's people should live. He uses the image of darkness to represent sin and the image of light to represent righteousness.

Christ and his church as a model for marriage

Paul teaches husbands and wives to relate to each other as Christ and the church relate to each other.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Wives, submit to your husbands

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Links:

Ephesians 5:1 Notes

Ephesians 5:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to tell the believers how they should and should not live as God's children.
Therefore be imitators of God
"Therefore you should do what God does." Therefore refers back to Ephesians 4:32 which tells why believers should imitate God, because Christ forgave believers.
as beloved children
God desires us to imitate or follow him since we are his children. Alternate translation: "as dearly loved children imitate their fathers" or "because you are his children and he loves you dearly"
Ephesians 5:2
walk in love
Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life. Alternate translation: "live a life of love" or "always love each other"
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God
"like a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God"
Ephesians 5:3
But sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or of greed must not even be named among you
"Do not do anything that would let anyone think that you

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are are guilty of sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or greed"

any kind of uncleanness

"any moral uncleanness"

uncleanness

This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 5:4

Instead there should be thanksgiving

"Instead you should thank God"

Ephesians 5:5

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Ephesians 5:6

empty words

words that have no truth to them

Ephesians 5:7

General Information:

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Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness

Just as one cannot see in the dark, so people who love to sin lack spiritual understanding.

but now you are light in the Lord

Just as one can see in the light, so people whom God has saved understand how to please God.

Walk as children of light

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "Live as people who understand what the Lord wants them to do"

Ephesians 5:9

the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "the result of living in the light is good work, right living, and truthful behavior"

Ephesians 5:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:11

Do not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness

Paul speaks of the useless, sinful things that unbelievers do as if they are evil deeds people do in the dark so no one will see them. Alternate translation: "Do not do useless, sinful things with unbelievers"

unfruitful works

actions that do nothing good, useful, or profitable. Paul is comparing evil actions to an unhealthy tree that produces nothing good.

expose them

Speaking against the works of darkness is spoken of as bringing them out into the light so that people can see them. Alternate translation: "bring them out into the light" or "uncover them" or "show and tell people how wrong these actions are"

Ephesians 5:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:13

when anything is exposed by the light

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the light shines on something"

Ephesians 5:14

General Information:

It is unknown if this quotation is a combination of quotations from the prophet Isaiah or a quotation from a hymn sung by the believers.

anything that becomes visible is light

"people can clearly see everything that comes into the light." Paul makes this general statement in order to imply that God's Word shows people's actions to be good or bad. The Bible often speaks of God's truth as if it were light that could reveal the character of something.

Awake, you sleeper, and arise from the dead

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is addressing unbelievers who need to wake up from being dead spiritually just as a person who has died must come alive again in order to respond, or 2) Paul is addressing the Ephesian believers and using death as a metaphor for their spiritual weakness.

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To arise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

you sleeper ... shine on you

These instances of "you" refer to the "sleeper" and are singular.

Christ will shine on you

Christ will enable an unbeliever to understand how evil his deeds are and how Christ will forgive him and give him new life, just as light shows what actually is there that darkness hid.

Ephesians 5:15

Look carefully how you walk—not as unwise but as wise

Wise people can identify sin, so they guard themselves from it and flee from it. Alternate translation: "Therefore you must be careful to live as a wise person rather than a foolish person"

Ephesians 5:16

Redeem the time

Using time wisely is spoken of as if it were redeeming the time. Alternate translation: "Do the best things you can with your time" or "Use time wisely" or "Put time to its best use"

because the days are evil

The word "days" is a metonym for what people do during those days. Alternate translation: "because the people around you are doing all kinds of evil things"

Ephesians 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his instructions on how all believers should live.

And do not get drunk with wine

"You should not get drunk from drinking wine"

Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit

"Instead, you should be controlled with the Holy Spirit"

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Ephesians 5:19
psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is using these words as a merism for "all sorts of songs to praise God" or 2) Paul is listing specific forms of music.
psalms
These are probably songs from the Old Testament book of Psalms that Christians sang.
hymns
These are songs of praise and worship that may have been written specifically for Christians to sing.
spiritual songs
Possible meanings are 1) these are songs that Holy Spirit inspires a person to sing right at that moment or 2) "spiritual songs" and "hymns" are doublets and mean basically the same thing.
with all your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or inner being. The phrase "with all your heart" means to do something with enthusiasm. Alternate translation: "with all of your being" or "enthusiastically"
Ephesians 5:20
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
"because you belong to our Lord Jesus Christ" or "as people who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ"
Ephesians 5:21
General Information:
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Ephesians 5:22
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to one another (Ephesians 5:21). He starts with instructions to wives and husbands on how they should act toward each other.
Ephesians 5:23
the head of the wife ... the head of the church
The word "head" represents the leader.
Ephesians 5:24
Christ, so also wives to their husbands
"Christ, so also must wives be subject to their husbands" or "Christ. In the same way, wives also must be subject to their husbands"
Ephesians 5:25
love your wives
"unselfishly serve your wives"
gave himself up
"allowed people to kill him"
for her
Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation: "for us"
Ephesians 5:26
sanctify her ... cleansed her
Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation: "sanctified us ... cleansed us"
having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word
Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to God making Christ's people clean by God's word and through water baptism in Christ or 2) Paul speaks of God making us spiritually clean from our sins by the message as if God were making our bodies clean by washing them with water.
Ephesians 5:27
without stain or wrinkle
Paul speaks of the church as though it were a garment that is clean and in good condition. He uses the same idea in two ways to emphasize the church's purity.
holy and blameless
The word "blameless" means basically the same thing as "holy." Paul uses the two together to emphasize the church's purity.
Ephesians 5:28
as their own bodies
That people love their own bodies may be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "as husbands love their own bodies"
Ephesians 5:29
his own flesh
The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body that is made of flesh. Alternate translation: "his own body"
but nourishes
"but feeds"
Ephesians 5:30
we are members of his body
Here Paul speaks of the close union of believers with Christ as if they were part of his own body, for which he would naturally care.
Ephesians 5:31
General Information:
The quotation is from the writings of Moses in the Old Testament. The words "his" and "himself" refer to a male believer who marries.
Ephesians 5:32
General Information:
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Ephesians 5:33
General Information:
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Chapter 6

Ephesians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches about working to please God whether as a slave or as a master. What Paul teaches here about slavery would have been surprising. In his time, masters were not expected to treat their slaves with respect and not threaten them.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

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Armor of God
This extended metaphor describes how Christians can protect themselves when spiritually attacked.

Links:

Ephesians 6:1 Notes

Ephesians 6:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to each other. He gives instructions to children, fathers, workers, and masters.
Children, obey your parents in the Lord
"Children, as followers of the Lord, obey your parents" or "Children, it is your duty as Christians to obey your parents"
Ephesians 6:2
General Information:
Here Paul quotes Moses. Moses was talking to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so "your" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.
Ephesians 6:3
General Information:
Here Paul continues quoting Moses. Moses was talking to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so "you" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.
Ephesians 6:4
do not provoke your children to anger
"do not make your children angry" or "do not cause your children to be angry"
raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord
The abstract nouns "discipline" and "instruction" can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "teach them to become adults by making sure that they know and do what the Lord wants them to do"
Ephesians 6:5
be obedient to
"obey." This is a command.
your masters according to the flesh
The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the physical world. Alternate translation: "your human masters" or "your masters in this world"
deep respect and trembling
The phrase "deep respect and trembling" uses two similar ideas to emphasize the importance of slaves honoring their masters.
and trembling
Here "trembling" is an exaggeration used to emphasize how important it is that slaves obey their masters. Alternate translation: "and fear" or "as though you were shaking with fear"
in the honesty of your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or intentions. Alternate translation: "with honesty" or "with sincerity"
Ephesians 6:6
as slaves of Christ
Serve your earthly master as though your earthly master were Christ himself.
from your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "intentions."
Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "enthusiastically"
Ephesians 6:7
Serve with all your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "inner being."
Alternate translation: "Serve with all of your being" or "Be completely dedicated when you serve"
Ephesians 6:8
General Information:
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Ephesians 6:9
treat your slaves in the same way
"you also must treat your slaves well" or "just as slaves must do good to their masters, you also must do good to your slaves" (Ephesians 6:5)
You know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven
"You know that Christ is the Master of both slaves and their masters, and that he is in heaven"
there is no partiality with him
"he judges everyone the same way"
Ephesians 6:10
Connecting Statement:
Paul gives instructions to make believers strong in this battle we live for God.
the strength of his might
"his great power." See how "the strength of his power" is translated near the end of Ephesians 1:21.
Ephesians 6:11
Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against
the scheming plans of the devil
Christians should use all the resources God gives to stand firmly against the devil just as a soldier puts on armor to protect himself from enemy attacks.
the scheming plans
"the tricky plans"
Ephesians 6:12
flesh and blood
This expression refers to people, not spirits who do not have human bodies.
against the powers over this present darkness
Here it is implied that "the powers" refers to powerful spiritual beings. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for things that are evil. Alternate translation: "against the powerful spiritual beings that rule over people during this present evil time"
Ephesians 6:13
Therefore put on the whole armor of God
Christians should use the protective resources God gives them in fighting the devil in the same way a soldier puts on armor to protect himself against his enemies.
so that you may be able to stand ... to stand firm
The words "stand" and "stand firm" represent successfully resisting or fighting something. Alternate translation: "so that you may be able to resist evil ... to remain strong"
in the evil day

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Here the word "day" can refer to any short period of time, even a period longer than a day. Alternate translation: "at the evil time" or "when people do evil deeds"

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm

Successfully resist or fight against something. You may need to make explicit what it is that the readers are to resist. See how you translated these words in [Ephesians 6:13]

the belt of truth

Truth holds everything together for a believer just as a belt holds the clothing of a soldier together.

truth ... righteousness

We are to know the truth and act in ways that please God.

the breastplate of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) the gift of righteousness covers a believer's heart just as a breastplate protects the chest of a soldier or 2) our living as God wants us gives us a clear conscience that protects our hearts the way a breastplate protects a soldier's chest.

Ephesians 6:15

and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace

Just as a soldier wears shoes to give him solid footing, the believer must have solid knowledge of the gospel of peace in order to be ready to proclaim it.

Ephesians 6:16

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith

The believer must use the faith that God gives for protection when the devil attacks just as a soldier uses a shield to protect him from enemy attacks.

the flaming arrows of the evil one

The attacks of the devil against a believer are like flaming arrows shot at a soldier by an enemy.

Ephesians 6:17

take the helmet of salvation

Salvation given by God protects the believer's mind just as a helmet protects the head of a soldier.

the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

The writer speaks of God's instructions to his people as if they were a sword that his people could use to fight an enemy,

Ephesians 6:18

With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit

"Pray at all times in the Spirit as you pray and make specific requests"

To this end

"For this reason" or "Keeping this in mind." This refers to the attitude of taking God's armor.

be watching with all perseverance as you offer prayers for all God's holy people

"be watching, and even when it is difficult, keep praying for all the believers "

Ephesians 6:19

Connecting Statement:

In his closing, Paul asks them to pray for his boldness in telling the gospel while he is in prison and says he is sending Tychicus to comfort the Corinthians (6:21).

that a message might be given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God might give me the word" or "God might give me the message"

when I open my mouth. Pray that I might make known with boldness

"when I speak. Pray that I boldly explain"

open my mouth

This is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "speak"

Ephesians 6:20

It is for the gospel that I am an ambassador who is kept in chains

The words "in chains" are a metonym for being in prison. Alternate translation: "I am now in prison because I am a representative of the gospel"

so that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak

The word "pray" is understood from verse 19. Alternate translation: "so pray that whenever I teach the gospel, I will speak it as boldly as I should" or "pray that I may speak the gospel as boldly as I should"

Ephesians 6:21

Tychicus

Tychicus was one of several men who served with Paul.

the beloved brother

"my beloved brother"

make everything known

"will tell you everything about me"

Ephesians 6:22

so that he may encourage your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. Alternate translation: "so that he may encourage you"

Ephesians 6:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Ephesian believers with a blessing of peace and grace on all believers who love Christ.

Ephesians 6:24

General Information:

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Introduction to Philippians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of the Philippians

Greeting, thanksgiving and prayer (1:1-11) Paul's report on his ministry (1:12-26) Instructions To be steadfast (1:27-30) To be united (2:1-2) To be humble (2:3-11) To work out our salvation with God working in you (2:12-13) To be innocent and light (2:14-18) Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30) Warning about false teachers (3:1-4:1) Personal instruction (4:2-5) Rejoice and do not be anxious (4:4-6) Final remarks Values (4:8-9) Contentment (4:10-20) Final Greetings (4:21-23)

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Who wrote the Book Philippians?

Paul wrote Philippians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Philippians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Philippi, a city in Macedonia. He wrote it to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him. He wanted to tell them about how he was doing in prison and to encourage them to rejoice even if they are suffering. He also wrote to them about a man named Epaphroditus. He was the one who brought the gift to Paul. While visiting Paul, Epaphroditus became ill. So, Paul decided to send him back to Philippi. Paul encouraged the believers in Philippi to welcome and to be kind to Epaphroditus when he returns.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Philippians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Philippi," or "A Letter to the Christians in Philippi."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Philippi like?

Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, founded Philippi in the region of Macedonia. This meant that the citizens of Philippi were also considered citizens of Rome. The people of Philippi were proud of being citizens of Rome. But Paul told the believers that they are citizens of heaven (3:20).

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers in Philippi. The exception to this is 4:3.

Who were the "enemies of the cross of Christ" (3:18) in this letter?

The "enemies of the cross of Christ" were probably people who called themselves believers but did not obey God's commands. They thought that freedom in Christ meant that believers could do whatever they desired and God would not punish them (3:19).

Why were the words "joy" and "rejoice" frequently used in this letter?

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:1, 8, 13, 14, 26, 27; 2:1, 5, 19, 24, 29; 3:1, 3, 9, 14; 4:1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 19, 21. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.
These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

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

Some versions have "Amen" at the end of the final verse in the letter (4:23). The ULB, UDB, and other many modern versions do not. If "Amen" is included, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it is probably not original to the Book of Philippians.

Chapter 1

Philippians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul includes a prayer in the beginning of this letter. At that time, religious leaders sometimes began informal letters with a prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

The day of Christ

This probably refers to the day when Christ returns. Paul often connected the return of Christ with motivating godly living. (See: godly)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This statement in verse 21 is a paradox: "to

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die is gain." In verse 23 Paul explains why this is true. (Philippians 1:21)

Links:

Philippians 1:1 Notes Philippians intro

Philippians 1:1

General Information:

Paul and Timothy wrote this letter to the church at Philippi. Because Paul writes later in the letter saying "I," it is generally assumed that he is the author and that Timothy, who is with him, writes as Paul speaks. All instances of "you" and "your" in the letter refer to the believers in the Philippian church and are plural. The word "our" probably refers to all believers in Christ, including Paul, Timothy, and the Philippian believers.

Paul and Timothy ... and deacons

If your language has a particular way of introducing the authors of a letter, use it here.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus

"Paul and Timothy, who are servants of Christ Jesus"

all God's holy people in Christ Jesus

This refers to those whom God chose to belong to him by being united to Christ. Alternate translation: "all God's people in Christ Jesus" or "all those who belong to God because they are united with Christ"

the overseers and deacons

"the leaders of the church"

Philippians 1:2

General Information:

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Philippians 1:3

every time I remember you

Here "remember you" means when Paul thinks about the Philippians while he is praying. Alternate translation: "every time I think of you"

Philippians 1:4

General Information:

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Philippians 1:5

because of your partnership in the gospel

Paul is expressing thanks to God that the Philippians have joined him in teaching people the gospel. He may have been referring to them praying for him and sending money so that he could travel and tell others. Alternate translation: "because you are helping me proclaim the gospel"

Philippians 1:6

I am confident

"I am sure"

he who began ... you

"God, who began ... you,"

Philippians 1:7

It is proper for me

"It is right for me" or "It is good for me"

I have you in my heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. This idiom expresses strong affection. Alternate translation: "I love you very much"

have been my partners in grace

"have been partakers of grace with me" or "have shared in grace with me"

Philippians 1:8

God is my witness,

"God knows" or "God understands"

with the compassion of Christ Jesus

The abstract noun "compassion" can be translated with the verb "love." Alternate translation: "and I love you as Christ Jesus dearly loves us all"

Philippians 1:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul prays for the believers in Philippi and talks about the joy there is in suffering for the Lord.

may abound

Paul speaks of love as if it were objects that people could obtain more of. Alternate translation: "may increase"

in knowledge and all understanding

Here "understanding" refers to understanding about God. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "as you learn and understand more about what pleases God"

Philippians 1:10

approve

This refers to examining things and taking only those that are good. Alternate translation: "test and choose"

what is excellent

"what is most pleasing to God"

sincere and blameless

The words "sincere" and "blameless" mean basically the same thing. Paul combines them to emphasize moral purity. Alternate translation: "completely blameless"

Philippians 1:11

filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ

Being filled with something is a metaphor that represents being characterized by it or by habitually doing it. Possible meanings of "fruit of righteousness" are that 1) it is a metaphor that represents righteous behavior. Alternate translation: "habitually doing what is righteous because Jesus Christ enables you" or 2) it is a metaphor that represents good deeds as a result of being righteous. Alternate translation: "habitually doing good works because Jesus makes you righteous"

to the glory and praise of God

Possible meanings are 1) "Then other people will see how you honor God" or 2) "Then people will praise and give honor to God because of the good things they see you do." These alternate translations would require a new sentence.

Philippians 1:12

General Information:

Paul says that two things have happened because of "the progress of the gospel": many people inside and outside the palace have found out why he is in prison, and other Christians are no longer afraid to proclaim the good news.

Now I want

Here the word "Now" is used to mark a new part of the letter.

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brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women, because all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father.
what has happened to me
Paul is talking about his time in prison. Alternate translation: "what I suffered because I was put into prison for preaching about Jesus"
has really served to advance the gospel
"has caused more people to hear the gospel"
Philippians 1:13
my chains in Christ came to light
"Chains in Christ" here is a metonym for being in prison for the sake of Christ. "Came to light" is a metaphor for "became known." Alternate translation: "It became known that I am in prison for the sake of Christ"
my chains in Christ came to light throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the palace guards and many other people in Rome know that I am in chains for the sake of Christ"
my chains in Christ
Here Paul uses the preposition "in" to mean "for the sake of." Alternate translation: "my chains for the sake of Christ" or "my chains because I teach people about Christ"
my chains
Here the word "chains" is a metonym for imprisonment. Alternate translation: "my imprisonment"
palace guard
This was a group of soldiers that helped protect the Roman emperor.
Philippians 1:14
Most of the brothers have far more confidence in the Lord
Some modern translations read, "Most of the brothers in the Lord have far more confidence."
fearlessly speak the word
"fearlessly speak God's message"
Philippians 1:15
Some indeed even proclaim Christ
"Some people preach the good news about Christ"
out of envy and strife
"because they do not want people listening to me, and they want to cause trouble"
and also others out of good will
"but other people do it because they are kind and they want to help"
Philippians 1:16
The latter
"Those who proclaim Christ out of good will"
I am put here for the defense of the gospel
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God chose me to defend the gospel" or 2) "I am in prison because I defend the gospel."
for the defense of the gospel
"to teach everyone that the message of Jesus is true"
Philippians 1:17
But the former
"But the others" or "But the ones who proclaim Christ out of envy and strife"
while I am in chains
Here the phrase "in chains" is a metonym for imprisonment. Alternate translation: "while I am imprisoned" or "while I am in prison"
Philippians 1:18
What then?
Paul uses this question to tell how he feels about the situation he wrote about in [Philippians 15-17]
Only that in every way—whether from false motives or from true—Christ is proclaimed
"As long as people preach about Christ, it does not matter if they do it for good reasons or for bad reasons"
in this I rejoice
"I am happy because people are preaching about Jesus"
I will rejoice
"I will celebrate" or "I will be glad"
Philippians 1:19
this will result in my deliverance
"because people proclaim Christ, God will deliver me"
in my deliverance
"Deliverance" here is an abstract noun that refers to one person bringing another person to a safe place. You may have to specify that it is God whom Paul expects to deliver him. Alternate translation: "in my being brought to a safe place" or "in God bringing me to a safe place"
through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ
"because you are praying and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is helping me"
Spirit of Jesus Christ
"Holy Spirit"
Philippians 1:20
It is my eager expectation and hope
Here the word "expectation" and the phrase "hope" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how strong his expectation is. Alternate translation: "I eagerly and confidently hope"
with all boldness
You may need to state explicitly the missing clause in this elliptical sentence, that Paul will act boldly. You may also need to translate the abstract noun "boldness" as a clause. Alternate translation: "because I act with all boldness" or "after I have acted boldly"
Christ will be exalted in my body
The phrase "in my body" is a metonym for what happens to Paul's body. This includes what he does if he lives and what others may do to him, even if they kill him. This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "I will honor Christ no matter what happens to my body" or 2) "people will praise Christ no matter what I do or what others do to me"
whether by life or by death
"whether I live or die" or "if I go on living or if I die"
Philippians 1:21
For to me
These words are emphatic. They indicate that this is Paul's personal experience.
to live is Christ
Here pleasing and serving Christ is spoken of as Paul's only purpose for living. Alternate translation: "to go on living is

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an opportunity to please Christ"

to die is gain

Here death is spoken of as "gain." Possible meanings for "gain" are 1) Paul's death will help spread the message of the gospel or 2) Paul will be in a better situation.

Philippians 1:22

But if I am to live in the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body, and "living in the flesh" is a metonym for being alive. Alternate translation: "But if I am to remain alive in my body" or "But if I continue to live"

that means fruitful labor for me

The words "fruitful labor" here refer to work that has good results. Alternate translation: "that means I will be able to do work that produces good results"

Yet which to choose?

"But which should I choose?"

Philippians 1:23

For I am hard pressed between the two

Paul speaks of how hard it is for him to choose between living and dying as if two heavy objects, like rocks or logs, were pushing on him from opposite sides at the same time. Your language might prefer the objects to pull rather than push. Alternate translation: "I am under tension. I do not know if I should choose to live or to die"

My desire is to depart and be with Christ

Paul uses a euphemism here to show that he is not afraid of dying. Alternate translation: "I would like to die because I would go to be with Christ"

Philippians 1:24

General Information:

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Philippians 1:25

Being convinced of this

"Since I am sure that it is better for you that I stay alive"

I know that I will remain

"I know that I will continue to live" or "I know that I will keep on living"

Philippians 1:26

so that in me

"so that because of me" or "so that because of what I do"

Philippians 1:27

that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

The phrases "standing firm in one spirit" and "with one mind striving together" share similar meanings and emphasize the importance of unity.

with one mind striving together

"striving together with one mind." Agreeing with one another is spoken of as having one mind. Alternate translation: "agreeing with one another and striving together"

striving together

"working hard together"

for the faith of the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) "to spread the faith that is based on the gospel" or 2) "to believe and live as the gospel teaches us"

Philippians 1:28

Do not be frightened in any respect

This is a command to the Philippian believers. If your language has a plural command form, use it here.

This is a sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation—and this from God

"Your courage will show them that God will destroy them. It will also show you that God will save you"

and this from God

"and this is from God." Possible meanings are the word "this" refers to 1) the believers' courage or 2) the sign or 3) destruction and salvation.

Philippians 1:29

General Information:

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Philippians 1:30

having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now you hear in me

"suffering in the same way that you saw me suffer, and that you hear I am still suffering"

Chapter 2

Philippians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations, like the ULB, set apart the lines of verses 6-11. These verses describe the example of Christ. They teach important truths about the person of Jesus.

Special concepts in this chapter

Practical instructions

In this chapter Paul gives many practical instructions to the church in Philippi.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"If there is any"

This appears to be a type of statement that expresses something that may or may not be true. However, in this chapter it expresses something that is true. The translator may also translate this phrase as "Since there is."

Links:

Philippians 2:1 Notes

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Philippians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul advises the believers to have unity and humility and reminds them of Christ's example.

If there is any encouragement in Christ

"If Christ has encouraged you" or "If you are encouraged because of Christ"

if there is any comfort provided by love

The phrase "by love" probably refers to Christ's love for the Philippians. Alternate translation: "if his love has given you any comfort" or "if his love for you has comforted you in any way"

if there is any fellowship in the Spirit

"if you have fellowship with the Spirit"

if there are any tender mercies and compassions

"if you have experienced many of God's acts of tender mercy and compassion"

Philippians 2:2

make my joy full

Paul speaks here of joy as if it were a container that can be filled. Alternate translation: "cause me to rejoice greatly"

Philippians 2:3

Do nothing out of ambition or empty conceit

"Do not serve yourselves or think of yourselves as better than others"

ambition

"selfish ambition"

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others

"Do not care only about what you need and desire, but also about what others need and desire"

Philippians 2:5

Have this mind in yourselves which also was in Christ Jesus

"Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" or "Think about one another the way Christ Jesus thought of people"

Philippians 2:6

he existed in the form of God

"everything that is true of God was true of him"

did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to

Here "equality" refers to "equal status" or "equal honor." Holding onto equality with God represents demanding that he continue to be honored as God is honored. Christ did not do that. Though he did not cease to be God, he ceased to act as God. Alternate translation: "did not think that he had to have the same status as God"

Philippians 2:7

he emptied himself

Paul speaks of Christ as if he were a container in order to say that Christ refused to act with his divine powers during his ministry on earth.

he was born in the likeness of men

"he was born a human being" or "he became a human being"

Philippians 2:8

became obedient to the point of death

Paul speaks of death here in a figurative way. The translator can understand "to the point of death" either as a metaphor of location

death, even death on a cross

“death, that is, death on a cross” or “death—more specifically, death on a cross”

Philippians 2:9

the name that is above every name

Here "name" is a metonym that refers to rank or honor. Alternate translation: "the rank that is above any other rank" or "the honor that is above any other honor"

above every name

The name is more important, more to be praised than any other name.

Philippians 2:10

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow

Here "knee" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Bowing, or kneeling, is a symbolic act of worship. Alternate translation: "at the name of Jesus everyone will bow to worship him")

under the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the place where people go when they die or 2) the place where demons dwell.

Philippians 2:11

every tongue

Here "tongue" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "every person" or "every being"

to the glory of God the Father

Here the word "to" expresses result: "with the result that they will praise God the Father"

Philippians 2:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the Philippian believers and shows them how to live the Christian life before others and reminds them of his example.

my beloved

"my dear fellow believers"

in my presence

"when I am there with you"

in my absence

"when I am not there with you"

work out your own salvation

To "work out" one's salvation means to work in a way that is appropriate to one's salvation or to work in a way that shows one's salvation. The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with a phrase about God saving people. Alternate translation: "work in a way that is appropriate because you have been saved" or "work hard to do the good things that show that God has saved you"

salvation with fear and trembling

Paul uses the words "fear" and "trembling" together to show the attitude of reverence that people should have for God. Alternate translation: "salvation, trembling with fear" or "salvation with deep reverence"

Philippians 2:13

both to will and to work for his good pleasure

"so that you will want to do what pleases him and will be able to do what pleases him"

Philippians 2:14

General Information:

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Philippians 2:15

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

blameless and pure
The words "blameless" and "pure" are very similar in meaning and are used together to strenghten the idea. Alternate translation: "completely innocent"
in the middle of a crooked and depraved generation
The words "crooked" and "depraved" are used together to emphasize that the people are very sinful. Alternate translation: "among very sinful people"
in which you shine as lights in the world
Shining as lights in the world represents living in a good and righteous way so that people in the world can see that God is good and true. Alternate translation: "among whom your righteous lives are like lights in the world"
Philippians 2:16
Hold on to the word of life
"Hold on to" here means "firmly believe." Alternate translation: "Continue to firmly believe the word of life"
the word of life
"the message that brings life" or "the message that shows how to live the way God wants you to"
on the day of Christ
This refers to when Jesus comes back to set up his kingdom and rule over the earth. Alternate translation: "when Christ returns"
I did not run in vain or labor in vain
The phrases "run in vain" and "labor in vain" here mean the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how hard he has worked to help people believe in Christ. Alternate translation: "I did not work so hard for nothing"
run
The scriptures often use the image of walking to represent conducting one's life. Running is living life intensely.
Philippians 2:17
But even if I am being poured out as an offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all
Paul speaks of his death as if he were a drink offering which is poured upon the animal sacrifice to honor God. What Paul means is that he would gladly die for the Philippians if that would make them more pleasing to God. Alternate translation: "But, even if the Romans kill me and it is as if my blood pours out as an offering, I will be glad and rejoice with you all if my death will make your faith and obedience more pleasing to God"
Philippians 2:18
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Philippians 2:19
Connecting Statement:
Paul tells the Philippian believers about his plan to send Timothy soon and that they should treat Epaphroditus as special.
But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon
Paul wanted to send Timothy to them, but he would do so only if the Lord Jesus wanted him to do that. Alternate translation: "But I plan to send Timothy to you soon, as long as that is what the Lord Jesus wants me to" or "But if it is the will of the Lord Jesus, I expect to send Timothy to you soon"
Philippians 2:20
For I have no one else like him, who
"No one else here loves you as much as he does: he"
Philippians 2:21
For they all
Here the word "they" refers to a group of people Paul does not feel he can trust to send to Philippi. Paul is expressing his displeasure with those who should have been able to go but are not going because Paul does not trust them to fulfill their mission.
Philippians 2:22
as a son with his father, so he served with me
Fathers and sons love each other and work together. Timothy was not really Paul's son, but he worked with Paul as a son works with his father.
in the gospel
Here "the gospel" stands for the activity of telling people about Jesus. Alternate translation: "in telling people about the gospel"
Philippians 2:23
I hope to send him as soon as I see how things will go with me
Paul wanted to send Timothy soon, but he would wait until he saw how things would go with himself. He would send Timothy immediately after that. Alternate translation: "I hope to send him immediately after I see how things will go with me"
I hope to send him
"I plan to send him" or "I expect to send him"
I see how things will go with me
"I find out what happens concerning me" or "I learn what will happen to me"
Philippians 2:24
I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon
"I am sure, if it is the Lord's will, that I will also come soon"
Philippians 2:25
Epaphroditus
This is the name of a man sent by the Philippian church to minister to Paul in prison.
fellow worker and fellow soldier
Here Paul is speaking of Epaphroditus as if he were a soldier. He means that Epaphroditus is trained and is dedicated to serving God, no matter how great the hardship he must suffer. Alternate translation: "fellow believer who works and struggles along with us"
your messenger and servant for my needs
"who brings your messages to me and helps me when I am in need"
Philippians 2:26
he was very distressed, and he longed to be with you all
"he was very worried and wanted to be with you all"
Philippians 2:27
sorrow upon sorrow
The cause of the sorrow can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the sorrow of losing him added to the sorrow I already have from being in prison"
Philippians 2:28
I can have less sorrow
"I will not be as sad as I have been"
Philippians 2:29
welcome him

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The word "him" refers to Epaphroditus. Alternate translation: "gladly receive Epaphroditus"

in the Lord with all joy

"as a fellow believer in the Lord with all joy" or "with the great joy we have because the Lord Jesus loves us"

Philippians 2:30

he came near death

"he almost died." Paul speaks of dying as if death were a place that people could go to.

so that he could bring to completion what was lacking in your service to me

The meanings of the abstract nouns "completion" and "service" can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "so that he could complete what you could not do in serving me"

Chapter 3

Philippians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In verses 4-8, Paul lists how he qualifies for being considered a righteous Jew. In every way, Paul was an exemplary Jew. But he contrasts this with the greatness of knowing Jesus. (See: righteous)

Special concepts in this chapter

Dogs

The people of the ancient Near East used dogs as an image to refer to people in a negative way. Not all cultures use the term "dogs" in this way.

Resurrected Bodies

We know very little about what people will be like in heaven. Paul teaches here that Christians will have some kind of glorious body and will be free from sin. (See: heaven and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Prize

Paul uses an extended illustration to describe the Christian life. The goal of the Christian life is attempting to grow to be like Christ until a person dies. We can never achieve this goal perfectly, but we must strive for it.

Links:

Philippians 3:1 Notes

Philippians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

In order to warn his fellow believers about Jews who would try to get them to follow the old laws, Paul gives his own testimony about when he persecuted believers.

Finally, my brothers

"Now moving along, my brothers" or "Concerning other matters, my brothers"

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

rejoice in the Lord

"be happy because of all the Lord has done"

For me to write these same things again to you is no trouble for me

"It is no trouble for me to write these things again to you"

and it keeps you safe

Here "it" refers to Paul's writing the same things twice. Alternate translation: "doing this keeps you safe because these teachings will protect you from those who teach what is not true"

Philippians 3:2

General Information:

Paul begins to warn the Philippians against people who say that Christians have to obey the Jewish ceremonial law. Obedience to this law is symbolized by the synecdoche of circumcision.

Watch out for

"Beware of" or "Be on guard against"

the dogs ... those evil workers ... the mutilation

These are three different ways of describing the same group of false teachers. Paul is using strong expressions to show how he feel about these Jewish teachers who claim to be Christians.

dogs

The word "dogs" was used by the Jews to refer to those who were not Jews. They were considered unclean. Paul speaks of the false teachers as though they were dogs, to insult them. If you have a different animal in your culture that is considered unclean or whose name is used as an insult, you could use this animal instead.

the mutilation

This exaggeration plays on the idea of circumcision. Paul speaks of those who wanted to trim off the foreskin as if they were totally mutilating the body. The action of mutilation is a metonym for the people who would perform the action. Alternate translation: "those who mutilate the body"

Philippians 3:3

General Information:

Paul continues warning the Philippians against people who say that Christians have to obey the Jewish ceremonial law. Obedience to this law is symbolized by the synecdoche of circumcision.

For it is we who are

Paul uses "we" to refer to himself and all true believers in Christ, including the Philippian believers.

the circumcision

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Paul uses this phrase to refer to believers in Christ who are not physically circumcised but are spiritually circumcised, which means they have received the Holy Spirit through faith. Alternate translation: "the truly circumcised ones" or "truly God's people"

have no confidence in the flesh

Here "flesh" is a metonym for anything concerning one's body, such as his ancestry, whether or not he has been circumcised, and what he does. To have no confidence in the flesh means to understand that those things cannot make a person right with God. Alternate translation: "do not trust in anything about ourselves to make us right with God"

Philippians 3:4

Even so, I myself could have confidence in the flesh. If anyone thinks he has confidence in the flesh, I could have even more

Here Paul describes a situation that could be true but is not. Here "flesh" is a metonym for anything concerning one's body, such as one's ancestry, whether or not one has been circumcised, and what one does. To have confidence in the flesh means to believe that those things can make a person right with God. See how you translated a similar phrase in 3:3. Alternate translation: "However, I could trust in something about myself to make me right with God. If anyone thinks he can trust in anything about himself, I could trust in myself even more"

I myself

Paul uses "myself" for emphasis. Alternate translation: "certainly I"

Philippians 3:5

I was circumcised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A priest circumcised me"

on the eighth day

"seven days after I was born"

a Hebrew of Hebrews

Possible meanings are 1) "a Hebrew son with Hebrew parents" or 2) "the purest Hebrew."

with regard to the law, a Pharisee

The Pharisees were committed to obeying all of the law. Being a Pharisee showed that Paul was committed to obeying all of the law. Alternate translation: "as a Pharisee, I was committed to obeying all of the law"

Philippians 3:6

As for zeal, I persecuted the church

Paul's zeal was his enthusiasm for honoring God. He believed that by persecuting the church he proved how zealous he was for God. Alternate translation: "I had so much zeal for God that I persecuted the church" or "Because I wanted so much to honor God, I persecuted the church"

I persecuted the church

"I attacked Christians"

as for righteousness under the law, I was blameless

"Righteousness under the law" refers to being righteous by obeying the law. Paul obeyed the law so carefully that he believed that no one could find any part of it that he disobeyed. Alternate translation: "I was so righteous by obeying the law that I was blameless"

Philippians 3:7

whatever things were a profit for me

Paul is referring here to the praise he received for being an eager Pharisee. He speaks of this praise as if he had viewed it in the past as a businessman's profit. Alternate translation: "anything that other Jews praised me for"

profit ... loss

These are common business terms. If many people in your culture do not understand formal business terms, you could translate these terms as "things that made my life better" and "things that made my life worse."

I have considered them as loss

Paul speaks of that praise as if he were now viewing it as a business loss instead of a profit. In other words, Paul says that all his religious acts of righteousness are worthless before Christ.

Philippians 3:8

In fact

"Really" or "Truly"

now I count

The word "now" emphasizes how Paul has changed since he quit being a Pharisee and became a believer in Christ. Alternate translation: "now that I have trusted in Christ, I count"

I count all things to be loss

Paul is continuing the business metaphor from [Philippians 3:7]

because of the surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord

"because knowing Christ Jesus my Lord is worth so much more"

so that I may gain Christ

"so that I may have only Christ"

Philippians 3:9

be found in him

The phrase "be found" is an idiom that emphasizes the idea of "be." Alternate translation: "be truly united with Christ"

not having a righteousness of my own from the law

Paul knows that he cannot become righteous by obeying the law.

but that which is through faith in Christ

The word "that" refers to righteousness. Paul knows that he can become righteous only by believing in Christ. Alternate translation: "but having the righteousness that comes by believing in Christ"

Philippians 3:10

the power of his resurrection

"his power that gives us life"

the fellowship of his sufferings

"what it is like to suffer as he suffered" or "what it is like to participate in suffering with him"

becoming like him in his death

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants to be like Christ by dying as Christ died or 2) Paul wants his desire to sin to become as dead as Jesus was before he was raised.

Philippians 3:11

so somehow I may experience the resurrection from the dead

The word "somehow" means Paul does not know what is going to happen to him in this life, but whatever happens, it

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will result in eternal life. Alternate translation: "so that no matter what happens to me now, I will come back to life after I die"

Philippians 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul urges the believers at Philippi to follow his present example because of heaven and the new bodies that wait for believers. He speaks of how he works as hard as he can to be like Christ, knowing that God will allow him to live forever in heaven, as if he were a runner racing for the finish line.

obtained these things

These include knowing Christ, knowing the power of his resurrection, sharing in Christ's suffering, and being united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Philippians 3:8-11).

or am already perfect

"so I am not yet perfect" or "so I am not yet mature"

but I press on

"but I keep trying"

to take hold of that for which I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus

Receiving spiritual things from Christ is spoken of as if Paul could grasp them with his hands, and Jesus choosing Paul to belong to him is spoken of as if Jesus grasped Paul with his hands. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "to receive these things for which Jesus claimed me as his own"

Philippians 3:13

Brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

I myself have yet taken hold of it

Receiving spiritual things from Christ is spoken of as if Paul could grasp them with his hands. Alternate translation: "all these things belong to me yet"

Forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what is ahead,

Like a runner in a race is no longer concerned about the part of the race that is completed but only focuses on what is ahead, Paul speaks of setting aside his religious works of righteousness and only focusing on the race of life that Christ has set before him to complete. Alternate translation: "I do not care what I have done in the past; I only work as hard as I can on what is ahead."

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal with a view to the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of the way he does all he can to serve Christ and live in obedience to him as if he were a racer running as fast as he can to win a race. Alternate translation: "I do all I can to be like Christ, like a runner racing to the finish line, so that I may belong to him, and God may call me to himself after I die"

the upward call

Possible meanings are that Paul speaks of living eternally with God as if God were to call Paul to ascend 1) to heaven as Jesus did or 2) the steps to the podium where winners of races received prizes, as a metaphor for meeting God face to face and receiving eternal life.

Philippians 3:15

All of us who are mature, let us think this way

Paul wants his fellow believers to have the same desires he listed in Philippians 3:8-11. Alternate translation: "I encourage all of us believers who are strong in the faith to think the same way"

God will also reveal that to you

"God will also make it clear to you" or "God will make sure you know it"

Philippians 3:16

General Information:

Paul uses "we" to include the Philippian believers.

Nevertheless, let us live up to what we have already attained.

"However, let us keep living by the same standard we have achieved."

Nevertheless

"No matter what else is true"

Philippians 3:17

Be imitators of me

"Do what I do" or "Live as I live"

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

those who are walking by the example that you have in us

"those who already are living as we live" or "those who already are doing what we do"

Philippians 3:18

Many are walking ... as enemies of the cross of Christ

These words are Paul's main thought for this verse.

Many are walking

A person's behavior is spoken of as if that person were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "Many are living" or "Many are conducting their lives"

those about whom I have often told you, and now I am telling you with tears

Paul interrupts his main thought with these words that describe the "many." You can move them to the beginning or end of the verse if you need to.

I have often told you

"I have told you many times"

am telling you with tears

"am telling you with great sadness"

as enemies of the cross of Christ

Here "the cross of Christ" refers to Christ's suffering and death. The enemies are those who say they believe in Jesus but are not willing to suffer or die like Jesus did. Alternate translation: "in a way that shows they are actually against Jesus, who was willing to suffer and die on a cross"

Philippians 3:19

Their end is destruction

"Someday God will destroy them." The last thing that happens to them is that God will destroy them.

their god is their stomach

Here "stomach" refers to a person's desires for physical pleasure. Calling it their god means that they want these pleasures more than they want to obey God. Alternate translation: "they desire food and other physical pleasures more than they desire to obey God"

their glory is in their shame

Here "shame" stands for the actions that the people should be ashamed about but are not. Alternate translation: "they are proud of the things that should cause them shame"

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They think about earthly things
Here "earthly" refers to everything that gives physical pleasure and does not honor God. Alternate translation: "All they think about is what will please themselves rather than what will please God"
Philippians 3:20
General Information:
By Paul's use of "our" and "we" here, he includes himself and the believers in Philippi.
our citizenship is in heaven
Possible meanings are 1) "we are citizens of heaven" or 2) "our homeland is heaven" or 3) "our true home is heaven."
Philippians 3:21
He will transform our lowly bodies
"He will change our weak, earthly bodies"
into bodies formed like his glorious body
"into bodies like his glorious body"
body, formed by the might of his power to subject all things to himself
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "body. He will change our bodies with the same power he uses to control all things"

Chapter 4

Philippians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"My joy and my crown"
Paul had helped the Philippians become spiritually mature. As a result, Paul rejoiced and God honored him and his work. He considered discipling other Christians and encouraging them to grow spiritually as important to Christian living. (See: spirit and disciple)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Euodia and Syntyche
Apparently these two women disagreed with each other. Paul was encouraging them to agree.

Links:

Philippians 4:1 Notes

Philippians 4:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues with some specific instructions to the believers in Philippi on unity and then gives instructions to help them live for the Lord.
Therefore, my beloved brothers whom I long for
"So, my fellow believers whom I love and greatly desire to see"
brothers
See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.
my joy and crown
Paul uses the word "joy" to mean that the Philippian church is the cause of his happiness. A "crown" was made of leaves, and a man wore it on his head as a sign of honor after he won an important game. Here the word "crown" means the Philippian church brought honor to Paul before God. Alternate translation: "You give me joy because you have believed in Jesus, and you are my reward and honor for my work"
in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved friends
"continue living for the Lord in the way that I have taught you, dear friends"
Philippians 4:2
I am pleading with Euodia, and I am pleading with Syntyche
These are women who were believers and helped Paul in the church at Philippi. Alternate translation: "I beg Euodia, and I beg Syntyche"
be of the same mind in the Lord
The phrase "be of the same mind" means to have the same attitude or opinion. Alternate translation: "agree with each other because you both believe in the same Lord"
Philippians 4:3
General Information:
When Paul says, "my true companion," the word "you" is singular. Paul does not say the name of the person. He calls him that to show he worked with Paul to spread the gospel.
Yes, I ask you, my true companion
Here "you" refers to the "true fellow worker" and is singular.
true companion
This metaphor is from farming, where two animals would be bound to the same yoke, and so they work together. Alternate translation: "fellow worker"
along with Clement
Clement was a man who was a believer and worker in the church at Philippi.
whose names are in the Book of Life
"whose names God has written in the Book of Life"
Philippians 4:4
Rejoice in the Lord
"Be happy because of all the Lord has done." See how you translated this in Philippians 3:1.
Philippians 4:5
The Lord is near
Possible meanings are 1) The Lord Jesus is near to the believers in spirit or 2) the day the Lord Jesus will return to the earth is near.
Philippians 4:6
in everything by prayer and earnest appeal with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God
"whatever happens to you, ask God for everything you need with prayer and thanks"
Philippians 4:7
the peace of God
"the peace that God gives"
which surpasses all understanding

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"which is more than we can understand"

will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ

This presents God's peace as a soldier who protects our hearts and thoughts from worrying. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "will be like a soldier and guard your emotions and thoughts in Christ" or "will protect you in Christ and will keep you from worrying about the troubles of this life"

your thoughts

The word translated "thoughts" can also be translated "minds," referring to the part of the person that thinks.

Philippians 4:8

Finally

As Paul ends his letter, he gives a summary of how believers should live to have peace with God.

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

whatever things are lovely

"whatever things are pleasing"

whatever things are of good report

"whatever thing people admire" or "whatever things people respect"

if there is anything excellent

"if they are morally good"

if there is anything to be praised

"and if they are things that people praise"

Philippians 4:9

that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me

"that I have taught and shown you"

Philippians 4:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to thank the Philippians for a gift that they have sent him.

Philippians 4:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to explain that he is thanking them for this gift simply because he is grateful, not because he needs them to give him anything more.

to be content

"to be satisfied" or "to be happy"

in all circumstances

"no matter what my situation is"

Philippians 4:12

I know what it is to be poor ... to have plenty

Paul knows how to live happily having either no possessions or many possessions.

how to be well fed or to be hungry, and how to have an abundance or to be in need

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize that he has learned how to be content in any situation.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me

"I can do all things because Christ gives me strength"

Philippians 4:14

in my difficulties

Paul speaks of his hardships as if they were a place that he is in. Alternate translation: "when things became difficult"

Philippians 4:15

the beginning of the gospel

Paul uses the word "gospel" here to mean his preaching of the gospel. Alternate translation: "as I began to preach the gospel"

no church supported me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone

This double negative emphasizes that the Philippians were unique. Alternate translation: "the only church that supported me in the matter of giving and receiving was you" or "you were the only church that sent me money or helped me"

Philippians 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 4:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues explaining that he is thanking the Philippians for their gift to him simply because he is grateful, not because he needs them to give him anything more (see Philippians 3:11).

It is not that I seek the gift

Paul is explaining that his reason for writing about gifts is not that he hopes that they will give him more gifts. Alternate translation: "My reason for writing this is not that I want you to give me more"

I seek the fruit that increases to your credit

Paul explains his reason for writing about gifts. Here "fruit that increases to you credit" is a metaphor for either 1) more good deeds that can be recorded for the Philippians. Alternate translation: "Rather I want God to recognize the increasing good deeds that you do" or 2) more blessings for the good things that the Philippians do. Alternate translation: "Rather I want God to bless you more because of the good deeds that you do"

Philippians 4:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes thanking the Philippians for their gift (see Philippians 3:11) and assures them that God will take care of them.

I have received everything in full

Possible meanings are 1) Paul has received everything that the Philippians sent or 2) Paul is using humor to continue the business metaphor from Philippians 3:8 and saying that this part of the letter is a receipt for commercial goods that Epaphroditus delivered.

even more

"even more than necessary"

They are a sweet-smelling aroma, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God

Paul speaks of the gift from the Philippian church as if it were a sacrifice offered to God on an altar. Paul implies that the church's gift is very pleasing to God, like the sacrifices that the priests burned, which had a smell that pleased God. Alternate translation: "I assure you these gifts are very pleasing to God, like an acceptable sacrifice"

Philippians 4:19

will meet all your needs

This phrase translates the same word that is translated "have been well supplied" in verse 18. It is an idiom

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meaning "will provide everything you need"

according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus

"from his glorious riches that he gives through Christ Jesus"

Philippians 4:20

Now to our God

The word "Now" marks the closing prayer and the end of this section of the letter.

Philippians 4:21

The brothers

This refers to those people who were either ministering with or to Paul.

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

all God's holy people

Some versions translate this as "every holy person" or "every saint."

Philippians 4:22

All God's holy people

Some versions translate this as "All the believers" or "All of the saints."

especially those of Caesar's household

This refers to servants who worked in Caesar's palace.

"especially the fellow believers who work in the palace of Caesar"

Philippians 4:23

with your spirit

Paul refers to the believers by using the word "spirit," which is the part of a person that can relate to God.

Alternate translation: "with you"

Introduction to Colossians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Colossians

Greeting, thanksgiving, and prayer (1:1-12) The person and work of Christ Deliverance and redemption (1:13-14) Christ: the Image of the invisible God, and the One who is over all creation (1:15-17) Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Church trusts in him (1:18-2:7)
Tests of faithfulness Warnings against false teachers (2:8-19) True godliness is not rigid rules and unbending traditions (2:20-23)
Teaching and living Life in Christ (3:1-4) Old and new life (3:5-17) Christian family (3:18-4:1)
Christian behavior (4:2-6) Closing and greetings Paul thanks Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9) Paul sends greetings from his associates (4:10-14) Paul gives directions to Archippus and the Christians in Laodicea (4:15-17) Paul's personal greeting (4:18)

Who wrote the Book of Colossians?

Paul wrote the Book of Colossians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Colossians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the Asia Minor city of Colossae. The main purpose of this letter was to defend the gospel against false teachers. He did this by praising Jesus as the image of God, sustainer of all things, and head of the church. Paul wanted them to understand that only Christ is needed for God to accept them.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Colossians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae," or "A Letter to the Christians in Colossae."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What were the religious issues that the church in Colossae struggled with?

In the church in Colossae, there were false teachers. Their exact teaching is unknown. But they probably taught their followers to worship angels and to obey strict rules about religious ceremonies. They probably also taught that a male must be circumcised and that believers should eat only certain types of food. Paul said these false teachings came from the minds of men and not from God.

How did Paul use the imagery of heaven and earth?

In this letter, Paul twice speaks of things in heaven as "things above." He distinguishes it from the earth, which other parts of Scripture speak of as being "below." The purpose of this imagery was to teach Christians to live in a way that honors God, who lives in heaven above. Paul is not teaching that the earth or the physical world is evil. (See: evil)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Colossians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In Colossians, these words usually indicate a simple reference to Christians without

implying any particular role filled by them. So Colossians in the ULB uses "believers" or "those who believe in him." (See: 1:2, 12, 26)

Was Jesus created or is he eternal?

Jesus was not a created being but has always existed as God. Jesus also became a human being. There is potential for confusion in Colossians 1:15 where it says Jesus "is the firstborn of all creation." This statement means that Jesus is dominant over all of creation. It does not mean that he was the first thing God created. Translators should be careful not to imply that Jesus is a created being.

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

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

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"May grace be to you, and peace from God our Father" (1:2). Some older versions have a longer reading: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." "Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf" (1:7). Some older translations read "for you": "Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, a faithful servant of Christ for you." "the Father, who has made you able to have a share in the inheritance of the believers in light" (1:12). Some older translations read, "the Father, who has qualified us for a share in the inheritance in light." "In his Son we have redemption" (1:14). Some older translations read, "In his Son we have redemption through his blood." "and forgave us all of our trespasses" (2:13). Some older translations read: "and forgave you all of your trespasses." "When Christ appears, who is your life" (3:4). Some older translations read, "When Christ appears, who is our life." "It is for these things that the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience" (3:6). The ULB and many other modern translations read this way. However, some modern and older translations read, "It is for these things that the wrath of God is coming." "I sent him to you for this, that you might know the matters about us" (4:8). Some older translations read, "I sent him to you for this, that he might know the matters about you."

Chapter 1

Colossians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

As in a typical letter, Paul begins his letter in verses 1-2 by introducing Timothy and himself to the Christians in Colossae. Paul writes much of this chapter around two subjects: who Christ is, and what Christ has done for the Christian.

Special concepts in this chapter

Secret truth

Paul refers to a "secret truth" in this chapter. The role of the church in the plans of God was once unknown. But God has now revealed it. Part of this involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God. (See: reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Images for Christian living

Paul uses many different images to describe Christian living. In this chapter, he uses the images of "walking" and "bearing fruit." (See: fruit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Verse 24 is a paradox: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you." People do not usually rejoice when they suffer. But in verses 25-29 Paul explains why his suffering is good. (Colossians 1:24)

Links:

Colossians 1:1 Notes Colossians intro

Colossians 1:1

General Information:

Though this letter is from Paul and Timothy to the Colossian believers, later in the letter Paul makes it clear that he is the writer. Most likely Timothy was with him and wrote the words down as Paul spoke. Throughout this letter

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the words "we," "our," and "ours" include the Colossians unless noted otherwise. The words "you," "your," and "yours" refer to the Colossian believers and so are plural unless noted otherwise.

an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God

"whom God chose to be an apostle of Christ Jesus"

Colossians 1:2

General Information:

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Colossians 1:3

We give ... our Lord ... we always

These words do not include the Colossians.

Colossians 1:4

We have heard

Paul is excluding his audience.

your faith in Christ Jesus

"your belief in Christ Jesus"

Colossians 1:5

because of the hope reserved for you in heaven

Here "hope" stands for what the believer can confidently expect, that is, the things that God has promised to do for all believers. These things are spoken of as if they were physical objects that God was keeping in heaven for the believers to possess later. Alternate translation: "because of what you hope for that is reserved for you in heaven" or "because you are confident that God, who is in heaven, will do the many good things that he has promised you"

the word of truth, the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth, the gospel" or 2) "the true message, the gospel."

Colossians 1:6

this gospel is bearing fruit and is growing

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "This gospel is having good results, more and more" or "This gospel is having increasing results"

in all the world

This is a generalization referring to the part of the world that they knew about. Alternate translation: "throughout the world"

the grace of God in truth

"the true grace of God"

Colossians 1:7

our beloved ... our behalf

The word "our" does not include the Colossians.

gospel as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who

"gospel. It is exactly what you learned from Epaphras, who is our beloved fellow servant and who" or "gospel. It is exactly what Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, taught you. He"

Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf

Here "on our behalf" means that Epaphras was doing work for Christ that Paul himself would have done if he were not in prison.

Epaphras

the man who preached the gospel to the people in Colossae

Colossians 1:8

to us

The word "us" does not include the Colossians.

your love in the Spirit

Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were a place in which the believers were located. Alternate translation: "how the Holy Spirit has enabled you to love believers"

Colossians 1:9

Connecting Statement:

Because the Spirit has enabled them to love others, Paul prays for them and tells them here how he prays for them.

Because of this love

"Because the Holy Spirit has enabled you to love other believers"

we heard ... we have not stopped ... We pray

The word "we" does not include the Colossians.

from the day we heard this

"from the day Epaphras told us these things"

that you will be filled with the knowledge of his will

Paul speaks of the Colossian believers as though they were containers. Alternate translation: "that God will fill you with what you need to know so that you can do his will"

in all wisdom and spiritual understanding

"so that the Holy Spirit will make you wise and able to understand what God wants you to do"

Colossians 1:10

that you will walk in a manner that is worthy of the Lord and that pleases him

Walking here signifies behavior in life. Alternate translation: "that you will live as God expects you to and so please him"

by bearing fruit in every good work and growing

Paul is speaking of the Colossian believers as if they were trees or plants that grow and bear fruit. Alternate translation: "by making sure that all of your good works please God and people and growing"

growing in the knowledge of God

"always getting to know God better" or "always learning more about God"

Colossians 1:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 1:12

made you able to have a share

"allowed you to share"

made you able

Here Paul is focusing on his readers as receivers of God's blessings. But he does not mean that he himself has no share in those blessings.

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

in light

This idea is opposite to the idea of the dominion of darkness in the next verse. Alternate translation: "in the glory of his presence"

Colossians 1:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the ways in which Christ is excellent.

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He has rescued us
"God has rescued us"
the dominion of darkness
"Darkness" here is a metaphor for evil. Alternate translation: "the evil forces that controlled us"
his beloved Son
"Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
Colossians 1:14
General Information:
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Colossians 1:15
He is the image of the invisible God
"His Son is the image of the invisible God." Here "image" does not mean a representation of something that is visible. Instead, "image" here means that by knowing the Son, we learn what God the Father is like.
the firstborn of all creation
The expression "firstborn" does not refer to when Jesus was born. Instead, it refers to his position as the eternal Son of God the Father. In this sense, "firstborn" is a metaphor meaning "most important." Jesus is the most important and the unique Son of God. Alternate translation: "God's Son, the most important one over all creation"
of all creation
The noun "creation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "over all that God created"
Colossians 1:16
For in him all things were created
Here "him" refers to the Son. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For in him God created all things"
all things were created through him and for him
Here "him" refers to the Son. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God created all things through him and for him"
Colossians 1:17
He himself is before all things
"It is he who existed before all things"
in him all things hold together
Paul is speaking here of the Son controlling all things as if he were physically holding them together. "he holds everything together"
Colossians 1:18
He is the head
"Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the head"
He is the head of the body, the church
Paul speaks of Jesus's position over the church as if he were the head on the human body. As the head rules the body, so does Jesus rule the church.
the beginning
"the originating authority." He is the first chief or founder.
firstborn from among the dead
Jesus is the first person to die and come back to life, never to die again.
Colossians 1:19
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Colossians 1:20
the Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
through the blood of his cross
"by means of the blood Jesus shed on the cross"
the blood of his cross
Here "blood" stands for the death of Christ on the cross.
whether things on earth or things in heaven
This phrase explains what "all things" means. Some languages might prefer to put it closer to "all things."
Colossians 1:21
Connecting Statement:
Paul makes it clear that God has now revealed that Christ exchanges the sin of Gentile believers for his holiness.
At one time you also
"There was a time when you Colossian believers also"
were alienated
were no longer living in loving relationship with God
Colossians 1:22
blameless, and above accusation
Paul uses two concepts, "blameless" and "above accusation," that mean almost the same thing to emphasize the idea of perfection. Alternate translation: "holy and perfect"
before him
This expression of location stands for "in God's view" or "in God's mind"
Colossians 1:23
not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you heard
To be moved away from the hope of the gospel is a metaphor meaning to stop hoping in what God promised in the gospel. Alternate translation: "continuing in the hope of the gospel that you heard" or "continuing to hope in the promises of God that you heard about in the gospel"
not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you heard
The hope of the gospel is the confident expectation that God will do what the gospel teaches he will do. Alternate translation: "continuing to confidently expect what is promised in the gospel"
which was proclaimed
This can be translated with an active phrase. Alternate translation: "which believers proclaimed"
to every person created under heaven
God created everyone. The phrase "under heaven" is a metonym for in the world. Alternate translation: "to every person in the world"
the gospel of which I, Paul, became a servant
Paul was a servant of God. Alternate translation: "the gospel that I, Paul, serve God by proclaiming"
Colossians 1:24
I fill up in my flesh what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ
Paul speaks about the suffering that he continues to experience. He may be acknowledging here that there is much suffering that he and all other Christians must endure before Christ comes again, and that Christ in a spiritual sense joins with them in experiencing these hardships. Paul certainly does not mean that Christ's sufferings alone were not enough to provide salvation for the believers.
I fill up in my flesh
Paul speaks of his body as if it were a container that could

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hold suffering.

for the sake of his body, which is the church

Paul often speaks of the church, the group of all Christian believers, as if it were Christ's body.

Colossians 1:25

to fulfill the word of God

This means to bring about the purpose of God's gospel message, which is that it be preached and believed. "Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "to be obedient to what God has instructed"

Colossians 1:26

This is the mystery that was hidden

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is the mystery that God had hidden"

for ages and for generations

The words "ages" and "generations" refer to the time period from the creation of the world until the time when the gospel was preached.

now has been revealed to God's holy people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "now God has revealed it to his holy people"

Colossians 1:27

the riches of the glory of this mystery

Paul speaks of the value of this mystery about God as if it were a treasure of material wealth. Alternate translation: "the greatness of the glory of this mystery"

which is Christ in you

The mystery that God has made known is "Christ in you." Paul speaks of believers as if they were containers in which Christ is present. This is one of his ways of expressing the union of the believers with Christ. Alternate translation: "which is that Christ is in you" or "which is that Christ is united to you"

the hope of glory

The fact that Christ is in believers gives believers hope that they will share in God's glory. Alternate translation: "so you can confidently expect to share in God's glory" or "so you can confidently wait for God's glory"

Colossians 1:28

We proclaim ... we may present

These instances of "we" include Paul and his companions but do not include the Colossians.

so that we may present every person

You may need to make explicit to whom they will present every person. Alternate translation: "so that we may present to God every person"

Colossians 1:29

General Information:

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Chapter 2

Colossians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Circumcision and baptism

In verses 11-12, Paul uses both the old covenant sign of circumcision and the new covenant sign of baptism to show how Christians are united with Christ and freed from sin.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that, while Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. Paul also uses "flesh" in this chapter to refer to the physical body.

Implicit information

Paul mentions several issues in this chapter that imply information about the context of the church in Colossae. It is best to allow the text to remain uncertain over the actual details.

Links:

Colossians 2:1 Notes

Colossians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to encourage the believers in Colossae and Laodicea to understand that Christ is God and that he lives in believers, so they should live in the same way they received him.

how great a struggle I have had for you

Paul has exerted much effort in developing their purity and their understanding of the gospel.

Laodicea

This was a city very close to Colossae where there was another church for which Paul was praying.

as many as have not seen my face in the flesh

Here "face in the flesh" represents the person as a whole. Alternate translation: "all those who have never seen me personally" or "all those whom I have never met face to face"

Colossians 2:2

so that their hearts

Paul includes the Colossians even though he uses a different pronoun. Alternate translation: "so that their hearts and yours"

brought together

This means brought together in a close relationship.

all the riches of full assurance of understanding

Paul speaks of a person who is completely sure that the good news is true as though that person were rich in physical things.

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the mystery of God
This is knowledge that can be revealed only by God.
that is, Christ
Jesus Christ is the mystery revealed by God.
Colossians 2:3
In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden
Only Christ can reveal God's true wisdom and knowledge. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ"
the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
Paul speaks of God's wisdom and knowledge as if they were material wealth. Alternate translation: "the very precious wisdom and knowledge"
wisdom and knowledge
These words mean basically the same thing here. Paul uses them together to emphasize that all spiritual understanding comes from Christ.
Colossians 2:4
trick
This means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, so he acts on that belief, and suffers harm as a result.
persuasive speech
speech that will make people change what they believe
Colossians 2:5
not with you in the flesh
The person's flesh, or physical body, is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: "not physically present with you"
I am with you in spirit
Being with someone in spirit is a metaphor for thinking continually about that person. Alternate translation: "I continually think about you"
good order
the proper way of doing things
the strength of your faith
"how nothing and no one can cause you to stop believing"
Colossians 2:6
walk in him
Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. The words "in him" refer to being in close relationship with Christ and so doing what pleases him. Alternate translation: "live your lives the way he wants you to" or "live so that people can see that you belong to him"
Colossians 2:7
Be rooted ... be built ... be established ... abound
These words explain what it means to "walk in him."
Be rooted in him
Paul speaks of a person with true faith in Christ as if that person were a tree growing in solid ground with deep roots.
be built on him
Paul speaks of a person with true faith in Christ as if that person were a building that has a strong foundation.
be established in faith
"trust in Jesus for everything"
just as you were taught
This is best stated without naming or otherwise calling attention to the teacher, who was Epaphras (Colossians 1:7). Alternate translation: "just as you learned" or "just as they taught you" or "just as he taught you"
abound in thanksgiving
Paul speaks of thanksgiving as if it were objects that a person could obtain more of. Alternate translation: "be very thankful to God"
Colossians 2:8
Connecting Statement:
Paul urges the believers to be careful not to turn to the words and rules of others because nothing can add to the fullness of God that believers have in Christ.
See that
"Make sure that"
captures you
Paul speaks of the way a person can believe false teachings
philosophy
religious doctrines and beliefs that are not from God's word but are based on man's thoughts about God and life
empty deceit
Paul speaks of false ideas that produce nothing and so are without value as though they are containers with nothing in them.
the tradition of men ... the elemental spirits of the world
The "tradition of men" may refer to Jewish traditions, while "the elemental spirits of the world" refers to pagan (Gentile) belief systems. Both of these are worthless.
the elemental spirits of the world
Possible meanings are 1) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth, or 2) the laws or moral principles of the world.
Colossians 2:9
in him all the fullness of God lives in bodily form
"God's total nature lives in physical form in Christ"
Colossians 2:10
You have been filled in him
Paul speaks of people as though they were containers into which God has placed Christ. Alternate translation: "You are made complete in Christ"
who is the head over every ruler and authority
Christ is the ruler over every other ruler
Colossians 2:11
In him you were also circumcised
Paul is speaking of those who belong to Christ as if they were inside Christ's body. This can also be made active. Alternate translation: "When you joined the church in baptism, God circumcised you"
a circumcision not done by humans
With this metaphor, Paul says that God has made Christian believers acceptable to himself in a way that reminded him of circumcision, the ceremony through which Hebrew male babies were added to the community of Israel.
Colossians 2:12
You were buried with him in baptism
Paul speaks of being baptized and joining the assembly of believers as if it were being buried with Christ. This can be made active. Alternate translation: "God buried you with Christ when you joined the church in baptism"
in him you were raised up

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With this metaphor, Paul speaks of the new spiritual life of believers that God made possible by making Christ come alive again. This can be made active. Alternate translation: "because you have joined yourself to Christ, God raised you up" or "in him God caused you to live again"

you were raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God raised you up" or "God caused you to live again"

Colossians 2:13

When you were dead

Paul speaks of unresponsiveness to God as if it were death. Alternate translation: "When you Colossian believers were unable to respond to God"

you were dead ... he made you alive

With this metaphor Paul speaks of coming into new spiritual life as if it were coming back to life physically.

dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh

You were dead on two accounts: 1) you were spiritually dead, living a life of sin against Christ and 2) you were not circumcised according to the law of Moses.

forgave us all of our trespasses

"he forgave us, both us Jews and you Gentiles, of all our trespasses"

Colossians 2:14

He blotted out the written record of debts that was hostile to us

Paul speaks of God forgiving our sins as if God were forgiving a debt that we owe him.

blotted out the written record

When someone blots out words, they cover the words with ink so that no one can read them.

that was hostile to us

"that was opposed to us"

Colossians 2:15

made a public spectacle of them

In Roman times, it was common practice for the Roman armies to have a victory parade when they returned home, displaying all the prisoners they had captured and goods they had obtained. God was victorious over the evil powers and authorities.

by the cross

Here "the cross" stands for Christ's death on the cross.

Colossians 2:16

in eating or in drinking

The law of Moses included what one could eat and drink. "for what you eat or what you drink"

about a festival or a new moon, or about Sabbath days

The law of Moses specified the days to celebrate, to worship, and to offer sacrifice. "for the way you celebrate festivals or new moons or the Sabbath"

Colossians 2:17

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance is Christ

A shadow shows the shape of an object, but it is not the object itself. In a similar way, the festivals, celebrations, and Sabbaths show us something about how God would save people, but those things do not save people. The savior is Christ. Alternate translation: "These are like a shadow of what would happen, but the reality is Christ" or "These are like a shadow of the savior who would come, but the savior is Christ"

Colossians 2:18

Let no one ... judge you out of your prize

Here Paul refers to false teachers as if they were corrupt judges at an athletic contest who would unjustly disqualify the believers from winning the prizes they deserve, and he speaks of Christ saving a person as if Christ were giving a prize to the winner of such a contest. Alternate translation: "Let no one ... disqualify you from winning a prize"

who wants humility

The word "humility" is a metonym for actions one does to make others think that one is humble. Alternate translation: "who wants you to do things to show that you are humble"

enters into the things he has seen

Here Paul speaks about people who claim to have dreams and visions from God and who talk proudly about them.

becomes puffed up for no reason by his fleshly thinking

Here Paul says that sinful ways of thinking make a person arrogant. Alternate translation: "puffs himself up for no reason by means of his fleshly thinking"

puffed up

Here a person who boasts is spoken of as if he were an object into which someone had blown air to make it larger than it should be.

his fleshly thinking

Here the idea of flesh stands for the sinful human nature. "the sinful thoughts he naturally thinks"

Colossians 2:19

He does not hold on to the head

A person not trusting in Christ is spoken of has if they do not hold firmly to the head. Christ is spoken of as if he were the head of a body. Alternate translation: "He does not firmly grasp Christ, who is like the head of a body" or "He does not cling to Christ, who is like the head of a body"

It is from the head that the whole body throughout its joints and ligaments is supplied and held together

Paul speaks of the church, which is ruled and empowered by Christ, as if it were a human body. Alternate translation: "It is from the head that God supplies the whole body throughout its joints and ligaments and holds it together"

Colossians 2:20

If you died together with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world

A believer is spiritually united with Christ. As Christ died, the believer has died to the elemntal spirits of the world. This is a metaphor for no longer responding to the elemenatry spirits of the world. The believer is no longer controlled by them.

the elemental spirits of the world

Possible meanings are 1) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth, or 2) the laws or moral principles of the world. See how you translated this in Colossians 2:8.

live as obligated to the world

"think you must obey the desires of the world"

the world

the thoughts, desires, and assumptions of the sinful majority of the world's people

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Colossians 2:21

"Do ... touch"?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words "why do you live as obligated to the world" in verse 20 ends here. Paul uses this question to rebuke the Colossians for following the false beliefs of the world. "you should not live as obligated to the world: 'Do ... touch'!"

"Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch"

Paul is quoting what other people have been telling the Colossians and using a rhetorical question to challenge them. Alternate translation: "why do you believe them when they say, 'Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch'?" or "you should not obey them when they say, 'Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch'"

Colossians 2:22

General Information:

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Colossians 2:23

These rules have the appearance of wisdom, with their self-made religion and humility and severe treatment of the body

"These rules seem wise to unbelieving people because they allow those who follow them to appear humble because they hurt their own bodies"

have no value against the indulgence of the flesh

"do not help you stop following your human desires"

Chapter 3

Colossians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The second part of this chapter parallels Ephesians 5 and 6.

Special concepts in this chapter

Old and new self

The old and new self mean the same as the old and new man. The term "old man" probably refers to the sinful nature with which a person is born. The "new man" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ. (See: sin and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Character

Many of the things Paul encourages his readers to pursue or avoid are not actions but character qualities. Because of this, they may be difficult to translate.

"The things above"

Where God dwells is often pictured as being located "above." Paul says to "seek the things above" and to "think about the things above." He is implying Christians should seek and think about heavenly and godly things.

Links:

Colossians 3:1 Notes

Colossians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul warns the believers that because they are one with Christ, they ought not do certain things.

If then

This is an idiom that means "because."

God has raised you with Christ

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Possible meanings are 1) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, God has already given the believers in Colossae new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "God has given you new life because you belong to Christ" or 2) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, the believers in Colossae can know that after they die they will live with Christ, and Paul can speak of the believers living again as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "you can be sure that God will give you life as he has caused Christ to come alive again"

things above

"things in heaven"

where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "where Christ is sitting in the place of honor beside God" or "where Christ is sitting in the place of honor at God's right side"

Colossians 3:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 3:3

For you have died

As Christ actually died, so God counts the Colossian believers as having died with Christ.

your life is hidden with Christ in God

Paul speaks of people's lives as if they were objects that can be hidden in containers and speaks of God as if he were a container. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "it is as though God has taken your life and concealed it with Christ in God's presence" or 2) "only God knows what your true life really is, and he will reveal it when he reveals Christ"

Colossians 3:4

Christ appears ... you will also appear

Another possible meaning is "Christ is revealed ... you will also be revealed," which can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals Christ ... he will also

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reveal you"

who is your life

Christ is the one who gives spiritual life to the believer.

Colossians 3:5

the members that are on earth

The word "members" here refers to parts of a person's nature. Being "on earth" or being worldly is a metaphor for being sinful. The rest of the verse is a list of sinful "members" or behaviors. Alternate translation: "the earthly parts of your nature" or "the parts of your nature that are worldly"

uncleanness

"impure behavior"

passion

"lust" or "extremely strong desires"

greed, which is idolatry

"greed, which is the same thing as idolatry" or "do not be greedy because that is the same as worshiping idols"

Colossians 3:6

wrath of God

God's anger against those who do evil as shown by what he does to punish them.

the sons of disobedience

This is an idiom that means they were characterized by disobedience. The abstract noun "disobedience" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "disobedient people" or "people who disobey him"

Colossians 3:7

It is in these things that you also once walked

Paul speaks of the way a person behaves as if it were a road or path a person walks on. Alternate translation: "These are the things you used to do"

when you lived in them

Possible meanings are 1) "when you practiced these things" or 2) "when you lived among the people who disobey God"

Colossians 3:8

evil intentions

"desire to do wicked deeds"

slander

speech used to hurt others by saying untrue things about them

obscene speech

words that do not belong in polite conversation

from your mouth

Here "mouth" is a metonym for talk. "in your talk"

Colossians 3:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell the believers how to live and reminds them that Christians should treat everyone according to the same standard.

you have taken off the old man with its practices

Here Paul is speaking of a Christian's rejecting his old sinful life as if it were an old garment that he takes off in order to put on a new garment. It was very common for Israelites such as Paul to speak of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing.

Colossians 3:10

and you have put on the new man

Here Paul is speaking of a Christian's rejecting his old sinful life as if it were an old garment that he takes off

the image

This refers to Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:11

there is no Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman

These terms are examples of the categories of people that Paul says do not matter for God. God sees every person alike, not by race, religion, nationality, or social status. Alternate translation: "race, religion, culture, and social status do not matter"

barbarian

a foreigner who does not know local customs

Scythian

This is someone from the land of Scythia, which was outside the Roman Empire. Greeks and Romans used this word for someone who grew up in a place where everyone did wicked things all the time.

Christ is all, and is in all

Nothing is excluded or left out of the rule of Christ. Alternate translation: "Christ is all important and lives in all his people"

Colossians 3:12

as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "as those whom God has chosen for himself, whom he desires to see live for him alone, and whom he loves"

put on a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience

The "heart" is a metaphor for feelings and attitudes. Here it is spoken of as if it had certain feelings and attitudes, and as if it were clothing to wear. Alternate translation: "have a merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient heart" or "be merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient"

Colossians 3:13

Bear with one another

"Be patient with one another" or "Accept each other even when you disappoint each other"

Be gracious to each other

"Treat others better than they deserve to have you to treat them"

has a complaint against

The abstract noun "complaint" can be stated as "complain." Alternate translation: "has a reason to complain against"

Colossians 3:14

have love, which is the bond of perfection

Here "bond of perfection" is a metaphor for something that causes perfect unity among people. Alternate translation: "love one another because doing so will unite you perfectly together.

Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts

Paul speaks of the peace that Christ gives as if it were a ruler. Possible meanings are 1) "Do everything so that you can have peaceful relationships with each other" or 2) "Allow God to give you peace in your heart"

in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "in your minds" or "inside of you"

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Colossians 3:16
Let the word of Christ live in you richly
Paul speaks of Christ's word as if it were a person capable of living inside other people. "Word of Christ" here is a metonym for the teachings of Christ. Alternate translation: "Be obedient to the instructions of Christ" or "Always trust Christ's promises"
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
"singing all sorts of songs to praise God." Some interpreters believe that "psalms," "hymns," and "spiritual songs" all refer to different psalms in the book of Psalms.
psalms
These are probably songs from the Old Testament book of Psalms that Christians sang.
with thankfulness in your hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "with thankfulness in your minds" or "being thankful"
Colossians 3:17
in word or in deed
"in speaking or in acting"
in the name of the Lord Jesus
Acting in the name of a person here is a metonym for acting to help other people think well of that person. Alternate translation: "to honor the Lord Jesus" or "so that others will know you belong to the Lord Jesus and will think well of him" or "as if the Lord Jesus himself were doing it"
through him
Possible meanings are 1) because he has done great deeds or 2) because he has made it possible for people to speak to God and so give him thanks.
Colossians 3:18
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins to give special instructions to wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters.
Wives, submit to
"Wives, obey"
it is appropriate
"it is proper" or "it is right"
Colossians 3:19
do not be bitter against
"do not be harsh with" or "do not be angry at"
Colossians 3:20
General Information:
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Colossians 3:21
do not provoke your children
"do not needlessly make your children angry"
Colossians 3:22
obey your masters according to the flesh
"obey your human masters"
things, not with eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with a sincere heart
"things. Do not obey only when your master is watching, as though you need only to please people, but be sincere"
with a sincere heart
"Heart" here is a metonym for a person's thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: "with all honest intentions" or "with sincerity"
Colossians 3:23
as to the Lord
"as you would work for the Lord"
Colossians 3:24
the reward of the inheritance
"the inheritance as your reward"
inheritance
Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.
Colossians 3:25
anyone who does unrighteousness will receive the penalty
The phrase "receive the penalty" means to be punished. Alternate translation: "anyone who does unrighteousness will be punished" or "God will punish anyone who does what is unrighteous"
who does unrighteousness
who actively does wrong of any kind
there is no partiality
The abstract noun "partiality" can be expressed with the verb "favor." To favor some people is to judge them by different standards so the result is better for them than for others who do the same actions. Alternate translation: "God does not favor anyone" or "God judges everyone by the same standard"

Chapter 4

Colossians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Colossians 4:1 appears to belong with the topics of Chapter 3 instead of Chapter 4.

Special concepts in this chapter

"In my own hand"

It was common in the ancient Near East for the author to speak and someone else to write down the words. Many of the New Testament letters were written this way. Paul wrote the final greeting himself.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Secret truth

Paul refers to a "secret truth" in this chapter. The role of the church in the plans of God was once unknown. But God has now revealed it. Part of this involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God. (See: reveal)

Links:

Colossians 4:1 Notes

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Colossians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

After speaking to masters, Paul ends his special instructions to the different kinds of believers in the church at Colossae.

right and fair

These words mean almost the same thing and are used to emphasize the things that are morally correct.

you also have a Master in heaven

Paul implies that God, as the Master in heaven, will give his servants what is right and fair. This could be blessing for the earthly master who treats his servants kindly or punishment for the earthly master who treats his servants unkindly. Alternate translation: "you also have a Master, who is God in heaven"

Colossians 4:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give instructions to believers on how to live and speak.

Continue steadfastly in prayer

"Keep praying faithfully" or "Keep praying consistently"

Colossians 4:3

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Paul and Timothy but not the Colossians.

God would open a door to us

Opening a door for someone is a metaphor for giving that person the opportunity to do something. Alternate translation: "God would provide opportunities for us"

open a door to us for the word

"make an opportunity for us to preach his message"

the mystery of Christ

This refers to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was not understood before Christ came.

for which also I have been in chains

Here "in chains" is a metonym for being in prison, though Paul probably also was physically attached to a chain. Paul was in chains because he told people about the mystery of Christ. Alternate translation: "It is for proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ that I am now in prison"

Colossians 4:4

Pray that I may make it clear

"Pray that I might be able to speak the message of Jesus Christ clearly"

Colossians 4:5

Walk in wisdom toward those outside

The idea of walking is often used for the idea of conducting one's life. Alternate translation: "Live in such a way that those who are not believers will see that you are wise"

redeem the time

To "redeem" something means to restore it to its rightful owner. Here time is spoken of as something that can be restored and used to serve God. Alternate translation: "do the best things you can with your time" or "put the time to its best use"

Colossians 4:6

Let your words always be with grace. Let them be seasoned with salt

Food with salt is a metaphor for words that teach others and that others enjoy hearing. Alternate translation: "Let your conversation always be gracious and attractive"

so that you may know how you should answer

"so that you may know how to answer questions from anyone about Jesus Christ" or "so that you may be able to treat every person well"

Colossians 4:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes with special instructions about certain people as well as greetings to and from individual believers.

all the things concerning me

"everything that has been happening to me"

fellow slave

"fellow servant." Though Paul is a free man, he sees himself as a servant of Christ and sees Tychicus as a fellow servant.

Colossians 4:8

about us

These words do not include the Colossians.

may encourage your hearts

The heart was thought to be the center of many emotions. Alternate translation: "may encourage you"

Colossians 4:9

General Information:

Onesimus was a slave of Philemon in Colossae. He had stolen money from Philemon and run away to Rome where he became a Christian through the ministry of Paul. Now Tychicus and Onesimus are the ones bringing Paul's letter to Colossae along with a letter from Paul to Philemon asking him to send Onesimus back to Paul.

the faithful and beloved brother

Paul calls Onesimus a fellow Christian and servant of Christ.

They will make known

"Tychicus and Onesimus will make known"

everything that has happened here

All that is taking place where Paul is currently living. Tradition says Paul was in Rome under house arrest or in prison at this time.

Colossians 4:10

Aristarchus

He was in prison with Paul in Ephesus when Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians.

if he comes

"if Mark comes"

Colossians 4:11

Jesus who is called Justus

This is a man who also worked with Paul.

These alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God

Paul uses "circumcision" here to refer to Jews because, under the Old Testament law, all male Jews had to be circumcised. Alternate translation: "These three men are the only Jewish believers working with me to proclaim God as king through Christ Jesus"

These alone of the circumcision

"These men—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus—alone of the circumcision"

Colossians 4:12

Epaphras

Epaphras was the man who had preached the good news to the people in Colossae (Colossians 1:7).

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one of you
"from your city" or "your fellow townsman"
a slave of Christ Jesus
"a committed disciple of Christ Jesus"
always strives for you in prayer
"earnestly prays for you"
you may stand complete and fully assured
"you may stand mature and confident"
Colossians 4:13
General Information:
Laodicea and Hierapolis were towns close to Colossae.
Colossians 4:14
Demas
This man was one of Paul's co-workers.
Colossians 4:15
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
in Laodicea
a city very close to Colossae where there was also a church
Nympha, and the church that is in her house
A woman named Nympha hosted a house church. Alternate translation: "Nympha and the group of believers that meets in her house"
Colossians 4:16
General Information:
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Colossians 4:17
Say to Archippus, "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord, that you should fulfill it
Paul reminds Archippus of the task God had given him and that he, Archippus, was under obligation to the Lord to fulfill it. The words "Look," "you have received," and "you should fulfill" all refer to Archippus and should be singular.
Colossians 4:18
Connecting Statement:
Paul closes his letter with a greeting written in his own handwriting.
Remember my chains
The word "chains" is a metaphor that Paul uses to indicate that he is in prison, but it is also likely that he was literally attached to a chain. Alternate translation: "Remember me and pray for me while I am in prison"
May grace be with you
Here "grace" stands for God, who shows grace or acts kindly to believers. Alternate translation: "I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ would continue to act graciously toward you all"

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Thessalonians

Greeting (1:1) Prayer of thanksgiving for the Thessalonian Christians (1:2-10) Paul's ministry in Thessalonica (2:1-16)
Paul's concerns for their spiritual growth Like a mother (2:7) Like a father (2:11)
Paul sends Timothy to the Thessalonians and Timothy reports back to Paul (3:1-13) Practical instructions Live to please God (4:1-12) Comfort regarding those who have died (4:12-18) Christ's return is a motive for godly living (5:1-11)
Closing blessings, thanks, and prayers (5:12-28)

Who wrote 1 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
Paul wrote this letter while staying in the city of Corinth. Of all Paul's letters that are in the Bible, many scholars think 1 Thessalonians was the first letter Paul wrote.

What is the Book of 1 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He wrote it after the Jews in the city forced him to leave. In this letter he said he considered his visit to them a success, even though he was forced to leave.
Paul responded to the news from Timothy about the Thessalonian believers. The believers there were being persecuted. He encouraged them to continue living in a way that pleased God. He also comforted them by explaining what happens to those who die before Christ returns.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 Thessalonians" or "First Thessalonians." They may instead prefer to choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The First Letter to the Christians in Thessalonica."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus's eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation, and there will be peace everywhere.

What happens to those who die before the return of Christ?

Paul made clear that those who die before Christ's return will come back to life and be with Jesus. They will not remain

dead forever. Paul wrote this to encourage the Thessalonians. For some of them worried that those who died would miss the great day when Jesus returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"May grace and peace be to you" (1:1). Some older translations read: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." "Instead, we were as gentle among you as a mother comforting her own children." (2:7) Other modern versions and older translations read, "Instead, we were like babies among you, as when a mother comforts her own children." "Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God" (3:2). Some other translations read: "Timothy, our brother and servant of God."

Chapter 1

1 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 1 formally introduces this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hardship

Other people persecuted the Christians in Thessalonica. But the Christians there handled it well.

Links:

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Notes 1 Thessalonians intro

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1 Thessalonians 1:1

General Information:

Paul identifies himself as the writer of the letter and greets the church at Thessalonica.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church

The UDB makes clear that it was Paul who wrote this letter.

May grace and peace be to you

The terms "grace" and "peace" are metonyms for the person who acts toward people in a kindly and peaceful manner. Alternate translation: "May God be kind to you and give you peace"

peace be to you

The word "you" refers to the Thessalonian believers.

1 Thessalonians 1:2

General Information:

In this letter the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.

We always give thanks to God

Here "always" suggests that when Paul prays to God, he consistently presents the Thessalonians to God in his prayers.

we mention you continually in our prayers

"we continually pray for you"

1 Thessalonians 1:3

your work of faith, labor of love, and patient endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

"what you have done because you have faith in God, the hard work you have done because you love others, and how you always continued to hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"

patient endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

The Thessalonians confidently expected that Jesus would do all that he promised to do. Alternate translation: "firmness of your trust in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "continual trust in our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give thanks for the believers at Thessalonica and praises them for their faith in God.

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

we know

The word "we" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

not in word only

"not only in what we said"

but also in power, in the Holy Spirit

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Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit gave Paul and his companions the ability to preach the gospel powerfully or 2) the Holy Spirit made the preaching of the gospel have a powerful effect among the Thessalonian believers or 3) the Holy Spirit demonstrated the truth of the gospel preaching by means of miracles, signs, and wonders.

power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance

The abstract noun "assurance" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "power and in the Holy Spirit, and God made you sure that it was true"

what kind of men

"how we conducted ourselves when"

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You became imitators

To "imitate" means to act like or to copy the behavior of another.

received the word

"welcomed the message" or "accepted what we had to say"

in much tribulation

"during a time of great suffering" or "in much persecution"

1 Thessalonians 1:7

Achaia

This is an ancient district in what is present-day Greece.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

the word of the Lord has rung out

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "the Lord's teachings have rung out"

has rung out

Here Paul speaks of the Christian witness produced by the Thessalonian believers as if it were a bell that was rung or a musical instrument that was being played.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves

Paul is referring to the churches that already existed in the surrounding regions, who have heard about the Thessalonian believers.

they themselves

Here "themselves" is used to emphasize those people who had heard about the Thessalonian believers.

what kind of reception we had among you

The abstract noun "reception" can be expressed as the verb "receive" or "welcome." Alternate translation: "how warmly you received us" or "how warmly you welcomed us"

you turned to God from the idols to serve the living and true God

Here "turned to ... from" is a metaphor that means to start being loyal to one person and stop being loyal to someone else. Alternate translation: "you stopped worshiping idols and started serving the living and true God"

1 Thessalonians 1:10

his Son

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

whom he raised from the dead

"whom God caused to live again so that he was no longer dead." The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

who rescues us

Here Paul includes the Thessalonian believers.

Chapter 2

1 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Christian witness

Paul values his "Christian witness" as evidence that the gospel is true. Paul says that being godly or holy bears witness to the non-Christian. Paul defends his character so that his witness is not affected. (See: testimony and godly and holy)

Links:

1 Thessalonians 2:1 Notes

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1 Thessalonians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to remind the Thessalonians of how he behaved when he was with them.

you yourselves

The words "you" and "yourselves" refer to the Thessalonian believers.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

our coming

The word "our" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.

was not useless

This can be expressed in a positive manner. Alternate translation: "was very worthwhile"

1 Thessalonians 2:2

previously suffered and were shamefully treated

"were mistreated and insulted"

in much struggling

"while struggling under great opposition"

1 Thessalonians 2:3

was not from error, nor from uncleanness, nor from deceit

"was truthful, pure, and honest"

uncleanness

Ritual uncleanness here is a metaphor for guilt from having committed sin.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

approved by God to be trusted

Paul was tested and proven trustworthy by God.

we speak

Paul is referring to preaching the gospel message.

who examines our hearts

The word "hearts" is a metonym for a person's desires and

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thoughts. Alternate translation: "who knows our desires and thoughts"
1 Thessalonians 2:5
General Information:
Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that his conduct was not based in flattery, greed, or self glory.
we never came with words of flattery
"we never spoke to you with false praise"
1 Thessalonians 2:6
Nor did we seek glory from people
"And we did not try to make people praise us"
1 Thessalonians 2:7
as a mother comforting her own children
Just as a mother gently comforts her children, so Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy spoke gently to the Thessalonian believers.
1 Thessalonians 2:8
In this way we had affection for you
"This is how we demonstrated our affection for you"
we had affection for you
"we loved you"
We were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives
Paul speaks of the gospel message and his life and the lives of those with him as if they were a physical object that one could share with others. Alternate translation: "We were pleased not only to tell you the gospel of God but also to spend time with you and to help you"
you had become very dear to us
"we cared for you deeply"
1 Thessalonians 2:9
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
our labor and toil
The words "labor" and "toil" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize how hard they worked. Alternate translation: "how hard we worked"
Night and day we were working so that we might not be a burden to any of you
"We worked hard to make our own living so you would not need to support us"
1 Thessalonians 2:10
holy, righteous, and blameless
Paul uses three words that describe their good behavior toward the Thessalonian believers.
1 Thessalonians 2:11
as a father with his own children
Paul compares how he encouraged the Thessalonians to a father gently teaching his children how to behave.
1 Thessalonians 2:12
exhorting you and comforting you and urging you
The words "exhorting," "comforting," and "urging" are used together to express how passionately Paul's group exhorted the Thessalonians. Alternate translation: "strongly exhorted you"
into his own kingdom and glory
The word "glory" describes the word "kingdom." Alternate translation: "into his own glorious kingdom"
to walk in a manner that is worthy of God
"Walk" here is an metaphor for "live." Alternate translation: "to live so that people will think well of God"
1 Thessalonians 2:13
General Information:
Paul continues to use "we" to refer to himself and his traveling companions and "you" to the Thessalonian believers.
we also thank God constantly
Paul often thanks God for their acceptance of the gospel message he shared with them.
not as the word of man
"Word of man" here is a synecdoche for "a message that comes simply from a man." Alternate translation: "not a message that is made up by a man"
the word of God
"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "the message that comes from God"
which is also at work in you who believe
Paul speaks of God's gospel message as if it were a person who was doing work. Alternate translation: "which those of you who believe are listening to and beginning to obey"
1 Thessalonians 2:14
brothers
Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
became imitators of the churches
"became like the churches." The Thessalonian believers endured persecutions similar to those of the Judean believers.
from your own countrymen
"from other Thessalonians"
1 Thessalonians 2:15
General Information:
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1 Thessalonians 2:16
They forbid us to speak
"They try to make us stop speaking"
they always fill up their sins
Paul speaks as though someone can fill a container with his sins as with liquid.
wrath will overtake them in the end
This refers to God finally judging and punishing people for their sins.
1 Thessalonians 2:17
brothers
This means fellow Christians, including both men and women.
in person not in heart
Here "heart" represents thoughts and emotions. Though Paul and those traveling with him were not present physically in Thessalonica, they continued to care and think about the believers there. Alternate translation: "in person, but we continued to think about you"
to see your faces
Here "face" represents the entire person. Alternate translation: "to see you" or "to be with you"
1 Thessalonians 2:18
General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 2:19

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

Paul uses rhetorical questions to emphasize the reasons he wants to come see the Thessalonian believers. Alternate translation: "For you are our hope, our joy, and our crown of pride in front our Lord Jesus at his coming."

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

The Thessalonians are the reason that Paul and his fellow workers have hope and joy. Here "hope" means "certain expectation." Paul is certain that his work among them will be succesful and that they will be with him at Christ's return. Alternate translation: "For what is the reason that we can be hopeful or joyful? What is our crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?" or "For you are the reason that we are hopeful and joyful. You are our crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming."

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

Here "crown" refers to a laurel wreath awarded to victorious athletes. Here it is a metaphor meaning that the Thessalonians are the the symbol that Paul's work was successful. Paul will be proud of them when they stand before Christ. Alternate translation: "For what is the reason we are hopeful and joyful. What is the reason that we can be proud of what we accomplished when we stand before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?" or "For you are the reason that we are hopeful and joyful. You are our reason for being proud of what we accomplished when we stand before our Lord Jesus at his coming."

1 Thessalonians 2:20

General Information:

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Chapter 3

1 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

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Links:

1 Thessalonians 3:1 Notes

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1 Thessalonians 3:1

we could no longer bear it

"we could no longer endure worrying about you"

good to be left behind at Athens alone

"good for Silvanus and me to stay behind in Athens"

it was good

"it was proper" or "it was reasonable"

Athens

Athens was a city in the the Roman province of Achaia [1 Thessalonians 1:7-8]

1 Thessalonians 3:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers he has sent Timothy to strengthen their faith.

our brother and fellow worker

These two expressions both describe Timothy.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

no one would be shaken

To be shaken is an idiom for being afraid. Alternate translation: "no one would be frightened away from trusting in Christ"

we have been appointed

Paul assumes that everyone knows that it was God who appointed them. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God has appointed us"

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Truly

This word marks that there is more to the truth than what has just been said. Alternate translation: "Moreover"

to suffer affliction

"to be mistreated by others"

1 Thessalonians 3:5

I could no longer endure it

Paul is describing his own emotions by using an idiom. Alternate translation: "I could not continue to wait patiently"

I sent

It is implied that Paul sent Timothy. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I sent Timothy"

our labor

"our hard work among you" or "our teaching among you"

in vain

"useless"

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells his readers what Timothy reported when he returned from visiting them.

came to us

The word "us" refers to Paul and Silvanus.

the good news of your faith

It is understood that this refers to faith in Christ. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "a good report of your faith"

you always have good memories

When they think of Paul, they always have good thoughts about him.

you long to see us

"you desire to see us"

1 Thessalonians 3:7

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

because of your faith

This refers to faith in Christ. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "because of your faith in Christ"

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in all our distress and affliction
The word "affliction" explains why they are in "distress." Alternate translation: "in all our distress caused by our afflictions"
1 Thessalonians 3:8
we live
This is an idiom that expresses living a satisfied life. Alternate translation: "we are very encouraged"
if you stand firm in the Lord
To "stand firm" is an idiom meaning to continue being faithful. Alternate translation: "if you continue to trust in the Lord"
1 Thessalonians 3:9
For what thanks can we give to God for you, for all the joy that we have before our God over you?
This rhetorical question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "We cannot thank God enough for what he has done for you! We greatly rejoice over you when we pray to our God!"
before our God
Paul speaks as if he and his companions were physically in God's presence. He is probably referring to the activity of praying.
1 Thessalonians 3:10
very hard
"fervently"
see your face
The word "face" refers to their whole person. Alternate translation: "visit you"
1 Thessalonians 3:11
May our God ... our Lord Jesus
Paul includes the Thessalonian believers with his ministry team.
May our God
"We pray that our God"
direct our way to you
Paul speaks as if he wants God to show him and his companions the route to take to visit the Thessalonian Christians. He means that he wants God to make it possible for them to do so.
direct our way to you
The word "our" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.
Father himself
Here "himself" refers back to "Father" for emphasis.
1 Thessalonians 3:12
increase and abound in love
Paul speaks of love as an object that one could obtain more of.
1 Thessalonians 3:13
strengthen your hearts so that they will be
Here "heart" is a metonym for one's beliefs and convictions. Alternate translation: "strenghten you so that you will be"
at the coming of our Lord Jesus
"when Jesus comes back to earth"
with all his holy people
"with all those who belong to him"

Chapter 4

1 Thessalonians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sexual immorality
Different cultures have different standards of sexual morality. These different cultural standards may make translating this passage difficult. Translators must also be aware of cultural taboos. These are topics considered improper to discuss.
Dying before the return of Christ
In the early church, people apparently wondered what would happen if a believer died before Christ returned. They may have worried whether those dying before Christ returned would be part of the kingdom of God. Paul answers that concern.
"Caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"
This passage refers to a time when Jesus calls to himself those who have believed in him. Scholars differ on whether or not this refers to Christ's final glorious return. (See: believe)

Links:

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Notes

1 Thessalonians 4:1
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
we earnestly appeal to you and exhort you
Paul uses "earnestly appeal to" and "exhort" to emphasize how strongly they exhort the believers. Alternate translation: "we strongly exhort you"
you received instructions from us
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we taught you"
you must walk
Here "walk" is an expression for the way one is to live. Alternate translation: "you ought to live"
1 Thessalonians 4:2
through the Lord Jesus
Paul speaks of his instructions as if they were given by Jesus himself.
1 Thessalonians 4:3
you avoid sexual immorality
"you stay away from sexually immoral acts"
1 Thessalonians 4:4
knows how to possess his own vessel

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Possible meanings are 1) "know how to live with his own wife" or 2) "know how to control his own body"
1 Thessalonians 4:5
in the passion of lust
"with wrongful sexual desire"
1 Thessalonians 4:6
no man
Here "man" refers to a man or a woman. "no one" or "no person"
transgress and wrong his brother
Possible meanings: 1) The words "transgress" and "wrong" are a doublet that emphasizes the idea of harming the brother. Alternate translation: "do very wrong things to his brother" 2) The word "transgress" refers to sinning against God, and "wrong his brother" refers to harming the brother. Alternate translation: "do what God had forbidden and wrong his brother"
the Lord is an avenger
This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the Lord will punish the one who transgressed and will defend the one who was wronged"
forewarned you and testified
"told you beforehand and strongly warned against"
1 Thessalonians 4:7
God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God called us to cleanness and holiness"
God did not call us
The word "us" refers to all believers.
1 Thessalonians 4:8
he who rejects this
"whoever disregards this teaching" or "whoever ignores this teaching"
rejects not people, but God
Paul stresses that this teaching is not from man, but from God.
1 Thessalonians 4:9
brotherly love
"love for fellow believers"
1 Thessalonians 4:10
you do this for all the brothers who are in all Macedonia
"you show love to the believers throughout Macedonia"
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
1 Thessalonians 4:11
to aspire
"to try to"
live quietly
Paul uses the word "quietly" as a metaphor to describe living at peace in one's community and not causing strife. Alternate translation: "live in a calm and orderly way"
take care of your own responsibilities
"do your own work" or "take care of the things that you are responsible for" or "do the things that you are responsible to do." This may also imply that we should not gossip and interfere in other people's concerns.
labor with your hands
This is a metaphor for living a productive life. Alternate translation: "work at your own jobs to earn what you need to live"
1 Thessalonians 4:12
walk properly
Here "walk" is a metaphor for "live" or "behave." Alternate translation: "behave properly"
properly
in a way that shows respect to others and earns their respect
before outsiders
Paul speaks of those who do not believe in Christ as if they are outside, in a place away from the believers. Alternate translation: "in the sight of those who do not believe in Christ"
1 Thessalonians 4:13
General Information:
Paul talks about believers who have died, those who are now alive, and those who will be alive when Christ returns.
We do not want you to be uninformed
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "We want you to be informed" or "We want you to know"
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
those who sleep
Here "sleep" is a euphemism for being dead. Alternate translation: "those who have died"
so that you do not grieve like the rest
"because we do not want you grieve like the rest"
grieve
mourn, be sad about something
like the rest, who do not have hope
Here "hope" means a certainty about the future. What those people do not have confidence about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "like people who do not have confidence in the future promise" or "like the people who are not sure that they will rise from the dead"
1 Thessalonians 4:14
if we believe
Here "we" refers to Paul and his audience.
rose again
"rose to live again"
those who have fallen asleep in him
Here "fallen asleep" is a polite way to refer to having died.
1 Thessalonians 4:15
by the word of the Lord
"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "by means of understanding the teachings of the Lord"
at the coming of the Lord
"when the Lord returns"
1 Thessalonians 4:16
the Lord himself will descend
"the Lord himself will come down"
the archangel
"the chief angel"
the dead in Christ will rise first
The "dead in Christ" are those believers who have passed away. Alternate translation: "those who believe in Jesus Christ, but who have already died, will rise first"
1 Thessalonians 4:17

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we who are alive
Here "we" refers to all believers who have not died.
with them
The word "them" refers to the dead believers who were made alive again.
be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air
"meet the Lord Jesus in the sky"
1 Thessalonians 4:18
General Information:
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Chapter 5

1 Thessalonians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul concludes his letter in a way that was typical of letters in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Day of the Lord

The exact time of the coming day of the Lord will be a surprise to the world. This is what the simile "like a thief in the night" means. Because of this, Christians are to live prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Quench the Spirit

To quench the Spirit is to ignore or work against the Holy Spirit's guidance and work.

Links:

1 Thessalonians 5:1 Notes

1 Thessalonians 5:1
General Information:
In this chapter the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.
Connecting Statement:
Paul continues talking about the day Jesus will come back.
concerning the times and seasons
This is a figurative expression which states the same idea twice. It refers to the time when the Lord Jesus will return. Alternate Translation: "the exact time that the Lord will return."
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
1 Thessalonians 5:2
perfectly well
"very well" or "accurately"
like a thief in the night
Just as one does not know which night a thief may come, we do not know when the day of the Lord will come. Alternate translation: "unexpectedly"
1 Thessalonians 5:3
When they say
"When the people say"
then sudden destruction
"then unexpected destruction"
like birth pains in a pregnant woman
Just as a pregnant woman's birth pains come suddenly and do not stop until the birth is complete, the destruction will come, and people will not escape.
1 Thessalonians 5:4
you, brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
are not in darkness
Paul speaks of evil and ignorance about God as if they were darkness. Alternate translation: "you are not unknowing, like people who live in the dark"
so that the day would overtake you like a thief
The Lord will come on a day when believers will not expect him to come, but that day will not "overtake" them—God will not destroy them on that day—because they will be ready for Jesus to return.
1 Thessalonians 5:5
For you are all sons of the light and sons of the day
Paul speaks of the truth as if it were light and day. Alternate translation: "For you know the truth, like people who live in the light, like people during the day"
We are not sons of the night or the darkness
Paul speaks of evil and ignorance about God as if they were darkness. Alternate translation: We are not unknowing, like people who live in the darkness, like people at night"
1 Thessalonians 5:6
let us not sleep as the rest do
Paul speaks of spiritual unawareness as if it were sleep. Alternate translation: "let us not be like others who are not aware that Jesus is coming back"
let us
The word "us" refers to all believers.
keep watch and be sober
Paul describes spiritual awareness as the opposite of sleep and drunkenness.
1 Thessalonians 5:7
For those who sleep do so at night
Just as when people sleep and do not know what is happening, so the people of this world do not know that Christ will return.
those who get drunk do so at night
Paul is stating that it is at night when people become drunk, so when people are unaware of Christ's return they do not live a self-controlled life.
1 Thessalonians 5:8
General Information:
In verses 8-10 the word "we" refers to all believers.
we belong to the day
Paul speaks of knowing the truth about God as belonging to the day. Alternate translation: "we know the truth" or "we have received the light of truth"

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we must stay sober

Paul compares being sober to exercising self-control. Alternate translation: "let us exercise self-control"

put on faith and love as a breastplate

As a soldier would put on a breastplate to protect his body, a believer who lives by faith and love will find protection. Alternate translation: "protect ourselves with faith and love" or "protect ourselves by trusting Christ and loving him"

the hope of salvation for our helmet

Here "hope of salvation" means a certainty that Jesus will save his people. Here "helmet" is a metaphor. As a helmet protects a soldier's head, assurance of salvation protects the believer. Alternate translation: "protect ourselves by being certain that Christ will save us"

1 Thessalonians 5:9

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:10

whether we are awake or asleep

These are polite ways of saying alive or dead. Alternate translation: "whether we are alive or dead"

1 Thessalonians 5:11

build each other up

Here "build" is a metaphor that means encourage. Alternate translation: "encourage each other"

1 Thessalonians 5:12

General Information:

Paul begins to give his final instructions to the church in Thessalonica.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow believers.

to acknowledge those who labor

"to esteem and appreciate those who are involved in leading"

who rule over you in the Lord

This refers to people God appointed to serve as leaders of the local group of believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

esteem them highly in love because of their work

Paul exhorts the believers to respect and love their church leaders.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:15

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:16

Rejoice always

Paul is exhorting the believers to maintain a spiritual attitude of rejoicing in all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing

Paul is exhorting the believers to be vigilant in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks

Paul is exhorting the believers to express thankfulness in all things.

In everything

In all circumstances

For this is the will of God

Paul is referring to the behavior he just mentioned as being God's will for the believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not quench the Spirit

"Do not stop the Holy Spirit from working among you"

1 Thessalonians 5:20

Do not despise prophecies

"Do not have contempt for prophecies" or "Do not hate anything the Holy Spirit tells someone"

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Test all things

"Make sure that all messages that seem to come from God truly come from him"

Hold firmly to what is good

Paul speaks of messages from the Holy Spirit as if they were objects that one could grasp in his hands.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:23

sanctify you completely

This refers to God making a person sinless and perfect in his sight.

May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless

Here the phrase "spirit, soul, and body" represents the whole person. If your language does not have three words for these parts you can state it as "your whole life" or "you." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God make your whole life without sin" or "May God keep you completely blameless"

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is he who calls you

"He is faithful who calls you"

the one who will also do it

"he will be helping you"

1 Thessalonians 5:25

General Information:

Paul gives his closing statements.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:27

I command you by the Lord to have this letter read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I urge you, as if the Lord were speaking to you, to have people read this letter" or "With the authority of the Lord, I direct you to read this letter"

1 Thessalonians 5:28

General Information:

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Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Thessalonians

Greetings and thanksgiving (1:1-3) Christians suffering from persecution They are worthy of the kingdom of God and of his promise of relief from trials (1:4-7) God will judge those who persecute Christians (1:8-12)
Some believers' misunderstanding about the second coming of Christ Christ's return has not yet happened (2:1-2)
Instruction about the events that will precede the return of Christ (2:3-12)
Paul's confidence that God will save the Thessalonian Christians His call to "stand firm" (2:13-15) His prayer that God will comfort them (2:16-17)
Paul requests that the Thessalonian believers pray for him (3:1-5) Paul give commands about idle believers (3:6-15)
Closing (3:16-17)

Who wrote 2 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
Paul wrote this letter while staying in the city of Corinth.

What is the Book of 2 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He encouraged the believers because they were being persecuted. He told them to continue living in a way that pleased God. And he wanted to teach them again about Christ's return.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Thessalonians" or "Second Thessalonians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The Second Letter to the Christians in Thessalonica."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus's eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation. And he will cause there to be peace everywhere. Paul also explained that a "man of lawlessness" will come before Christ's return. This person will obey Satan and cause many people to oppose God. But Jesus will destroy this person when he returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.
These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2:3). The ULB and most modern translations read this way. Older versions have, "and the man of sin is revealed." "For God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation" (2:13) The ULB and some other translations read this way. Other versions have, "For God chose you from the first for salvation."

Chapter 1

2 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1-2 formally introduce this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

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A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in verses 4-5: "We talk about your patience and faith in all your persecutions. We talk about the afflictions that you endure. This is a sign of God's righteous judgment." People would not normally think that believing in God while being persecuted is a sign of God's righteous judgment. But in verses 5-10, Paul explains how God will reward those who believe in him and how he will judge those who afflict them. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

Links:

2 Thessalonians 1:1 Notes

2 Thessalonians intro](../front/intro.md) | [>>

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2 Thessalonians 1:1

General Information:

Paul is the author of this letter, but he includes Silvanus and Timothy as senders of the letter. He begins by greeting the church at Thessalonica. The words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.

Silvanus

This is the Latin form of "Silas." He is the same person listed in the book of Acts as Paul's fellow traveler.

2 Thessalonians 1:2

Grace to you

Paul commonly uses this greeting in his letters.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

General Information:

Paul gives thanks for the believers in Thessalonica.

We should always give thanks to God

Paul uses "always" as a generalization meaning "often" or "regularly. The sentence emphasizes the greatness of what God is doing in the lives of the Thessalonian believers. Alternate translation: "We should often give thanks to God"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

the love each of you has for one another increases

"you sincerely love one another"

one another

Here "one another" means fellow Christians.

2 Thessalonians 1:4

we ourselves

Here "ourselves" is used to emphasize Paul's boasting.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider you worthy to be part of his kingdom"

2 Thessalonians 1:6

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues, he talks about God being just.

it is righteous for God

"God is right" or "God is just"

for God to return affliction to those who afflict you

Here "to return" is a metaphor that means to cause someone to experience the same thing they did to someone else. Alternate translation: "for God to afflict those who afflict you"

2 Thessalonians 1:7

and relief to you

These words continue the description of what God is right "to return" to people

relief to you

"for God to provide relief to you"

2 Thessalonians 1:8

in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who

"punishing with blazing fire those who do not know God and those who"

2 Thessalonians 1:9

General Information:

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2 Thessalonians 1:10

when he comes on that day

Here "that day" is the day when Jesus will return to the world.

to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at by all those who believed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that his holy people will glorify him and all those who believed will marvel at him" or "so that his people will glorify him and all those who believed will stand in awe of him"

2 Thessalonians 1:11

we also pray continually for you

Paul is emphasizing how often he prays for them. Alternate translation: "we also pray regularly for you" or "we continue to pray for you"

calling

Here "calling" refers to God appointing or choosing people to be his children and servants and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

fulfill every good purpose

"make you able to do good in every way that you desire"

2 Thessalonians 1:12

that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that you may glorify the name of our Lord Jesus"

and you in him

You may need to make explicit who will glorify the readers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and Jesus will glorify you"

according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

"because God and the Lord Jesus Christ have given grace to you"

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Chapter 2

2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Being gathered together to be with him"

This passage refers to a time when Jesus calls to himself those who have believed in him. Scholars differ on whether or not this refers to Christ's final glorious return. (See: believe)

Man of lawlessness

This is the same as "son of destruction" and "lawless one" in this chapter. Paul associates him with Satan, who is actively working in the world. (See: antichrist)

Sits in the temple of God

Paul could be referring to the Jerusalem temple that the Romans destroyed several years after he wrote this letter. Or he could be referring to a future physical temple, or to the church as the spiritual temple of God.

Links:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Notes

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2 Thessalonians 2:1

General Information:

Paul exhorts believers not to be deceived about the day Jesus will come back.

Now

The word "Now" marks a change of topic in Paul's instructions.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

2 Thessalonians 2:2

that you not be easily disturbed or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that no spirit or person easily disturb or trouble you, either by a message"

by a message, or by a letter that seems to be coming from us

"by spoken word or by written letter that pretends to be coming from us"

to the effect that

"saying that"

the day of the Lord

This refers to the time when Jesus will come back to the earth for all believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

General Information:

Paul teaches about the man of lawlessness.

it will not come

"the day of the Lord will not come"

the falling away

This refers to a future time when many people will turn away from God.

the man of lawlessness is revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals the man of lawlessness"

the son of destruction

Paul speaks of destruction as a person who bore a son whose goal is to totally destroy everything. Alternate translation: "the one who destroys everything he can"

2 Thessalonians 2:4

all that is called God or that is worshiped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that people consider to be God or everything that people worship"

exhibits himself as God

"shows himself as God"

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Do you not remember ... these things?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind them of his teaching when he was with them previously. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am sure you remember ... these things."

these things

This refers to the return of Jesus, the day of the Lord, and the man of lawlessness.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

what restrains him

"what holds him back" or "what keeps him from doing what he wants to do"

he will be revealed only at the right time

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal the man of lawlessness when the time is right"

2 Thessalonians 2:7

mystery of lawlessness

This refers to a sacred secret that only God knows.

who restrains him

To restrain someone is to hold him back or to keep him from doing what he wants to do.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Then the lawless one will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then God will allow the lawless one to show himself"

with the breath of his mouth

Here "breath" represents the power of God. Alternate translation: "by the power of his spoken word"

bring him to nothing by the revelation of his coming

When Jesus returns to earth and shows himself, he will defeat the lawless one.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

with all power, signs, and false wonders

"with all kinds of power, signs, and false wonders"

2 Thessalonians 2:10

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with every kind of evil that deceives those who are perishing
This man who is given power by Satan will deceive everyone who does not believe in Jesus.
who are perishing
Here "perishing" has the concept of everlasting or eternal destruction.
they refused to love the truth
This metaphor speaks of these people as if someone had offered them a physical object, like good food, and they had refused to accept or receive it. The abstract noun "love" can be translated as a verb.
2 Thessalonians 2:11
For this reason
"Because the people do not love the truth"
God is sending them a powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie
The powerful delusion is a metonym for the person who will delude the people. Alternate translation: "God is sending the man of lawlessness to delude them"
a powerful delusion
a lie that sounds so true that many people believe it
2 Thessalonians 2:12
they all may be condemned
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will judge all of them"
who did not believe the truth but instead took pleasure in unrighteousness
"who took pleasure in unrighteousness because they did not believe the truth" or "who enjoyed doing evil deeds because they did not believe the truth"
2 Thessalonians 2:13
General Information:
Paul gives thanks to God for the believers and encourages them.
Connecting Statement:
Paul now changes topics.
But
Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.
we should always give thanks
The word "always" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "we should continually give thanks"
we should
Here "we" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
brothers loved by the Lord
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the Lord loves you, brothers"
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
as the firstfruits to be saved through the sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth
Being among the first people to be saved is spoken of as if the Thessalonian believers were "firstfruits." This can also be stated to remove the abstract nouns "salvation," "sanctification," "belief," and "truth." Alternate translation: "to be among the first people who believe what is true, whom God has saved and set apart for himself by his Spirit"
2 Thessalonians 2:14
General Information:
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2 Thessalonians 2:15
So then, brothers, stand firm
Paul exhorts the believers to hold fast to their faith in Jesus.
hold tightly to the traditions
Here "traditions" refers to the truths of Christ that Paul and the other apostles taught. Paul speaks of them as if his readers could hold on to them with their hands. Alternate translation: "remember the traditions" or "believe the truths"
you were taught
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we have taught you"
whether by word or by our letter
"By word" here is a synecdoche for "by instructions" or "by teachings." You can make clear the implicit information. Alternate translation: "whether by what we taught you in person or by what we wrote to you in a letter"
2 Thessalonians 2:16
Connecting Statement:
Paul ends with a blessing from God.
Now
Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.
Lord Jesus Christ himself
Here "himself" gives additional emphasis to the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ."
may our Lord ... who loved us and gave us
The words "our" and "us" refer to all believers.
gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace
"caused us to have eternal comfort and good hope through grace"
eternal comfort
"comfort that never ends" or "unceasing encouragement"
good hope
Here "hope" means a "certain expectation." Alternate translation: "certainty that we will receive good things from him" or "confidence that we will good things from him"
through grace
"because of his kindness"
2 Thessalonians 2:17
comfort and strengthen your hearts in
Here "hearts" represents the seat of emotions. Alternate translation: "comfort you and strengthen you for"
every good work and word
"every good thing you do and say"

Chapter 3

2 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Idle and lazy persons

In Thessalonica, there apparently was a problem with people in the church who were able to work but refused to do so.

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What should you do if your brother sins?
In this chapter, Paul teaches that Christians need to live in a way that honors God. Christians should also encourage one another and hold each other accountable for what they do. The church is also responsible for encouraging believers to repent if they sin. (See: repent and sin)

Links:

2 Thessalonians 3:1 Notes

2 Thessalonians 3:1
General Information:
Paul asks the believers to pray for him and his companions.
Now
Paul uses the word "now" to mark a change in topic.
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
that the word of the Lord may rush and be glorified, as it also is with you
Paul speaks of God's word spreading as if it were running from place to place. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that more and more people will soon hear our message about our Lord Jesus and honor it, as happened with you"
2 Thessalonians 3:2
that we may be delivered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God may save us" or "that God may rescue us"
for not all have faith
"for many people do not believe in Jesus"
2 Thessalonians 3:3
the evil one
"Satan"
2 Thessalonians 3:4
We have confidence
"We have faith" or "We trust"
2 Thessalonians 3:5
direct your hearts to
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or mind. Alternate translation: "cause you to understand"
the love of God and to the endurance of Christ
Paul speaks of God's love and Christ's endurance as if they were destinations on a path. Alternate translation: "how much God loves you and how much Christ has endured for you"
2 Thessalonians 3:6
General Information:
Paul gives the believers some final instructions about working and not being idle.
Now
Paul uses this word to mark a change in topic.
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "as if our Lord Jesus Christ himself were speaking"
our Lord
Here "our" refers to all believers.
is idle
This person is not working hard, but is lazy. Alternate translation: "does not do what is right"
2 Thessalonians 3:7
to imitate us
"to act the way that my fellow workers and I act"
we were not idle
"we lived disciplined lives"
2 Thessalonians 3:8
anyone's bread
Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. Alternate translation: "anyone's food"
we worked night and day
"we worked during the night and during the day." Here "night" and "day" are a merism and they mean "all the time." Alternate translation: "we worked all the time"
in labor and toil
Paul emphasizes how hard his circumstances were. The words "difficult labor" imply that Paul and his companions did work that requires great effort. The word "hardship" implies they endured pain and suffering. Alternate translation: "in very difficult circumstances"
2 Thessalonians 3:9
We did this not because we have no authority, but we did this
Paul uses a double negative to correct a misunderstanding that his readers may have had. It can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Even though we have authority, we did this"
2 Thessalonians 3:10
The one who is unwilling to labor must not eat
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Only the one who is willing to work should eat" or "Only people who are willing to work should eat"
2 Thessalonians 3:11
you are idle
"live a lazy life"
but busybodies
Busybodies are people who interfere in the affairs of others without being asked to help.
2 Thessalonians 3:12
with quietness
"in a quiet, peaceful, and mild manner." Paul exhorts the meddlers to stop getting involved in other people's affairs.
eat their own bread
Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. See how "bread" is translated in [2 Thessalonians 3:8]
2 Thessalonians 3:13
But
Paul uses this word to contrast the lazy believers with the hardworking believers.
you, brothers

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The word "you" refers to all the Thessalonian believers.
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
2 Thessalonians 3:14
if anyone does not obey our word
"if anyone does not obey our instructions"
take note of him
Notice who he is. Alternate translation: "publicly identify that person"
2 Thessalonians 3:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
2 Thessalonians 3:16
General Information:
Paul makes closing remarks to the believers at Thessalonica.
may the Lord of peace himself give you
You can make explicit that this is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. Alternate translation: "I pray that the Lord of peace himself gives you"
the Lord of peace himself
Here "himself" emphasizes that the Lord will personally give peace to believers.
2 Thessalonians 3:17
I, Paul, write this with my own hand
Paul makes it clear that this letter is from him and is not a forgery.
2 Thessalonians 3:18
General Information:
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Introduction to 1 Timothy

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Timothy

Greetings (1:1,2) Paul and Timothy Warning about false teachers (1:3-11) Paul thankful for what Christ has done in his ministry (1:12-17) He calls Timothy to fight in this spiritual battle (1:18-20)
Prayer for all (2:1-8) Roles and responsibilities in the church (2:9-6:2)
Warnings Second warning about false teachers (6:3-5) Money (6:6-10)
Description of a man of God (6:11-16) Note to the wealthy people (6:17-19) Closing words to Timothy (6:20,21)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Timothy?

Paul wrote 1 Timothy. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
This book is the first letter Paul wrote to Timothy. Timothy was his disciple and close friend. Paul probably wrote it near the end of his life.

What is the Book of 1 Timothy about?

Paul had left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to help the believers there. Paul wrote this letter to instruct Timothy about various matters. The topics he addressed included church worship, qualifications for church leaders, and warnings against false teachers. This letter shows how Paul was training Timothy to be a leader among the churches.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 Timothy" or "First Timothy." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to Timothy."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is discipleship?

Discipleship is the process of encouraging people to live the way Jesus wants them to live, to be more like Christ. This letter gives many instructions about how a leader should train a less mature Christian. (See: disciple)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Timothy. The exception to this is 6:21.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.
These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

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What are the major textual issues in the text of the Book of 1 Timothy?

For the following verse, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"godliness is a way to get more money." Some older versions of the Bible read this way, "godliness is a way to get more money: withdraw from such things." (6:5)

Chapter 1

1 Timothy 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual children

In this chapter, Paul calls Timothy a "son" and his "child." Paul discipled Timothy as a Christian and a church leader. Paul may also have led him to believe in Christ. Therefore, Paul called Timothy his "son in the faith."

Genealogies

Genealogies are lists that record a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could normally become king. They also showed from what tribe and family they came. For example, priests came from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. Most important people had records of their genealogies.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Play on words

The phrase "the law is good if one uses it lawfully" (1 Timothy 1:8) is a play on words. The English words "law" and "lawfully" come from the same root, and they translate words that come from the same root in the original language, so it would be well to translate the clause so as to preserve this word play.

Links:

1 Timothy 1:1 Notes 1 Timothy intro

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1 Timothy 1:1

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise noted, the word "our" refers to Paul and Timothy

Paul, an apostle

"I, Paul, wrote this letter. I am an apostle." Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Immediately after introducing the writer, you may want to indicate to whom the letter was written, as in the UDB.

according to the commandment of

"by the command of" or "by the authority of"

God our Savior

"God who saves us"

Christ Jesus our hope

Here "our hope" refers to the person in whom we have confidence. Alternate translation: "Christ Jesus, who is the one in whom we have confidence" or "Christ Jesus, whom we trust"

1 Timothy 1:2

true son in the faith

Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though they were father and son. This shows Paul's sincere love and approval of Timothy. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considers him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is truly like a son to me"

Grace, mercy, and peace

"May grace, mercy, and peace be yours," or "May you experience kindness, mercy, and peace"

God the Father and

"God, who is our Father, and." Here "Father" is an important title for God.

Christ Jesus our Lord

"Christ Jesus, who is our Lord"

1 Timothy 1:3

General Information:

The word "you" in this letter is singular and refers to Timothy.

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to reject the wrong use of the law and instead to use good teaching from God.

As I urged you

"As I pleaded with you" or "As I asked you very strongly"

remain in Ephesus

"wait for me there in the city of Ephesus"

a different doctrine

The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "a different doctrine from what we teach"

1 Timothy 1:4

Neither should they pay attention

"And I also want you to command them not to pay attention"

to stories

These may have been stories about their ancestors.

endless genealogies

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With the word "endless" Paul uses exaggeration to emphasize that the genealogies are very long.

genealogies

the written or verbal record of a person's parents and ancestors

These promote arguments

"These make people angrily disagree." The people debated about stories and genealogies about which no one could know the truth for certain.

rather than the plan of God, which is by faith

Possible meanings are 1) "rather than helping people to understand God's plan to save us, which we learn by faith" or 2) "rather than helping us to do God's work, which we do by faith."

1 Timothy 1:5

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul explains the purpose of what he is commanding Timothy.

the commandment

Here this does not mean the Old Testament or the Ten Commandments but rather the instructions that Paul gives in 1 Timothy 1:3 and 1 Timothy 1:4.

is love

Possible meanings are 1) "is to love God" or 2) "is to love people."

from a pure heart

Here "pure" means the person does not have hidden motives to do wrong. Here "heart" refers to a person's mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "from a mind that is honest"

good conscience

"a conscience that chooses right instead wrong"

sincere faith

"genuine faith" or "a faith without hypocrisy"

1 Timothy 1:6

have gone astray from these things

Paul speaks of people who no longer try to "love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith"

turned to worthless talk

"begun to have useless discussions"

1 Timothy 1:7

teachers of the law

Here "law" refers to the law of Moses.

but they do not understand

"even though they do not understand" or "and yet they do not understand"

what they so confidently affirm

"what they so confidently state is true"

1 Timothy 1:8

we know that the law is good

"we understand that the law is useful" or "we understand that the law is beneficial"

if one uses it lawfully

"if a person uses it correctly" or "if a person uses it the way God intended"

1 Timothy 1:9

We know this

"Because we realize this" or "We also know this"

that law is not set in place for a righteous man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God did not set the law in place for the righteous man"

a righteous man

Here "man" includes both male and female. Alternate translation: "a righteous person" or "a good person"

1 Timothy 1:10

sexually immoral people

This refers to anyone who sleeps with someone to whom they are not married.

homosexuality

"sexual activity with other members of the same sex." The Greek word specifies males, but it probably is intended here to includes females as well.

those who kidnap people for slaves

"those who kidnap people to sell as slaves" or "those who take people to sell as slaves"

whatever else is opposed to truthful teaching

The Greek has "healthy" but that term is a figure for "truthful" here. It is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "whatever other things people do that we teach is wrong"

1 Timothy 1:11

the glorious gospel of the blessed God

"the gospel about the glory that belongs to the blessed God" or "the gospel of the glorious and blessed God"

with which I have been entrusted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which God has given me and made me responsible for"

1 Timothy 1:12

he considered me faithful

"he considered me trustworthy" or "he regarded me as reliable"

he appointed me to service

"he assigned me to serve him" or "he appointed me as his servant"

1 Timothy 1:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell how he acted in the past.

I was a blasphemer

"I was a person who spoke evil against Christ." Paul is referring to his character before he was a Christian.

a persecutor

"a person who persecuted those who believed in Christ"

a violent man

"a person who was cruel to other people" or "a person who believed I had the right to hurt others"

But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief

"But because I did not believe in Jesus, and I did not know what I was doing, I received mercy from Jesus"

I received mercy

"Jesus showed me mercy" or "Jesus had mercy on me"

1 Timothy 1:14

the grace of our Lord overflowed

Paul speaks of God's grace as if it were a liquid that could fill a container and spill out of the top when the container is full. Alternate translation: "God showed me much grace"

overflowed with the faith and the love that is in Christ Jesus

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This is the result of God showing much grace to Paul.
Alternate translation: "overflowed, which caused me to trust in Christ Jesus and love him"
that is in Christ Jesus
This speaks about Jesus as if he were a container that holds a liquid. Here "in Christ Jesus" refers to having a relationship with Jesus. Alternate translation: "that Christ Jesus enables me to give to God because I am united to him"
1 Timothy 1:15
This message is reliable
"This statement is true"
worthy of all acceptance
"we should receive it without any doubt" or "deserves for us to accept it with full confidence"
sinners, of whom I am chief
"sinners, of whom I am the chief sinner" or "sinners, of whom I am the worst." Paul is saying that he has sinned more than any other sinner, not that he has been the leader of a group of sinners.
1 Timothy 1:16
I was given mercy
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God showed me mercy" or "I obtained mercy from God"
the chief
"the chief sinner" or "the worst sinner." Paul is saying that he has sinned more than any other sinner, not that he has been the leader of a group of sinners. See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 1:15.
1 Timothy 1:17
Now ... Amen
The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul praises God.
the king of the ages
"the eternal king" or "the chief ruler forever"
Now to the king of the ages, the immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever
The abstract nouns "honor" and "glory" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "Now may people forever honor and glorify the king of the ages, who is immortal, invisible, and the only God"
1 Timothy 1:18
Connecting Statement:
Paul begins to encourage Timothy to trust God.
I am placing this command before you
Paul speaks of his instructions as if he could physically put them in front of Timothy. Alternate translation: "I am entrusting you with this command" or "This is what I am commanding you"
my child
Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though Paul is the father and Timothy is the child. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is truly like my child"
in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in agreement with what other believers prophesied about you"
fight the good fight
Paul speaks about Timothy working for the Lord as if he were a soldier fighting a battle. Alternate translation: "continue to work hard for the Lord"
1 Timothy 1:19
a good conscience
"a conscience that chooses right instead wrong." See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 1:5.
some have shipwrecked their faith
Paul speaks of these people's faith as if it were a ship that could be wrecked at sea. He means that they have ruined their faith and no longer believe in Jesus. You should use this or a similar metaphor if it will be understood in the project language.
1 Timothy 1:20
Hymenaeus ... Alexander
These are names of men.
whom I delivered over to Satan
Paul has cast the men out of the community, so Satan now has power over them and can harm them.
they may be taught
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God may teach them"

Chapter 2

1 Timothy 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Peace
Paul encourages Christians to pray for everyone. They should pray for rulers so that Christians can live peacefully, in a godly and dignified way.
Women in the church
Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings"
These terms overlap each other in what they mean. It is not necessary to view them as distinct categories.

Links:

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1 Timothy 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to pray for all people.

first of all

"most importantly" or "before anything else"

I urge that humble requests, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I urge all believers to make requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving to God"

I urge

"I plead" or "I ask"

1 Timothy 2:2

a peaceful and quiet life

Here "peaceful" and "quiet" mean the same thing. Paul wants all believers to be able to live calm lives without trouble from the authorities.

in all godliness and dignity

"that honors God and that other people will respect"

1 Timothy 2:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Timothy 2:4

He desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God desires to save all people and for them to come to the knowledge of the truth"

to come to the knowledge of the truth

Paul speaks of learning the truth about God as if it were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to know and accept what is true"

1 Timothy 2:5

one mediator for God and man

A mediator is a person who helps negotiate a peaceful settlement between two parties who disagree with each other. Here Jesus helps sinners enter into a peaceful relationship with God.

1 Timothy 2:6

gave himself

"died willingly"

as a ransom

"as a price of freedom" or "as a payment to obtain freedom"

as the testimony at the right time

It can be made explicit that this was the testimony that God wants to save all people. Alternate translation: "as the proof at the right time that God wants to save all people"

at the right time

This means that this was the time that God had chosen.

1 Timothy 2:7

For this purpose

"For this" or "For this reason"

I was appointed a herald and an apostle

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ appointed me to be a herald and an apostle" or "Christ made me a preacher and an apostle"

a herald

"an official messenger." A herald is an official messenger who is sent to bring news.

I am telling the truth, I am not lying

With these two comments Paul emphasizes that he is telling the truth when he says that he was appointed to be a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. Some translators may prefer to put these comments at the end of the verse.

in faith and truth

This probably refers to what Paul was to teach about. He may be using "faith" and truth" to express one idea. Alternate translation: "about the message of faith and truth" or "about the true faith"

1 Timothy 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his instructions on prayer and then gives some special instructions for women.

I want men in every place to pray and to lift up holy hands

Here "holy hands" is a metonym for a holy person. Alternate translation: "I want holy men in every place to lift up their hands and pray"

men in every place

"the males in all places" or "the males everywhere." Here the word "men" refers specifically to males.

lift up holy hands

It was a normal posture for people to raise their hands while praying.

1 Timothy 2:9

with modesty and self-control

Both of these words mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing that women should wear clothes that are appropriate and do not attract improper attention from men.

not with braided hair

During Paul's time, many Roman women braided their hair to make themselves attractive. Braiding is only one way a woman can give undue attention to her hair. If braided hair is unknown, it can be stated in a more general way. Alternate translation: "not having fancy hairstyles" or "not having elaborate hairstyles that attract attention"

pearls

These are beautiful and valuable white balls that people use as jewelry. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

1 Timothy 2:10

General Information:

Possible meanings of this verse are 1) the words "through good works" tell how the women Paul is talking about "proclaim godliness" or 2) those words tell how women are to "dress," a metaphor that refers to what people are to see and think about when they look at the women to whom Paul is writing. Alternate translation: "but with good works, as is proper for women who proclaim godliness"

who proclaim godliness through good works

"who want to show that they honor God by doing good deeds"

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1 Timothy 2:11
in silence
"in quietness"
and with all submission
"and submit to what is taught"
1 Timothy 2:12
I do not permit a woman
"I do not allow a woman"
1 Timothy 2:13
Adam was formed first
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Adam is the one God formed first" or "God created Adam first"
then Eve
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "and then God formed Eve" or "and then God created Eve"
1 Timothy 2:14
Adam was not deceived
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "And Adam was not the one whom the serpent deceived"
but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but it was the woman who disobeyed God when the serpent deceived her"
1 Timothy 2:15
she will be saved through bearing children
Here "she" refers to women in general. Possible meanings are 1) God will keep women physically safe as they give birth to children, or 2) God will save women from their sins through their role as child bearers.
she will be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save her" or "God will save women"
if they continue
"if they remain" or "if they continue living." Here "they" refers to women.
in faith and love and sanctification
The abstract nouns here can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "in trusting Jesus and loving others and living a holy life"
with self-control
Other possible meanings are 1) "with good judgment" or 2) "with modesty."

Chapter 3

1 Timothy 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

1 Timothy 3:16 was probably a song, poem, or creed the early church used to list important doctrines that believers all shared.

Special concepts in this chapter

Overseers and deacons

The church has used different titles for church leaders. Some titles include elder, pastor, and bishop. The word "overseer" reflects the meaning of the original language in verses 1-2. Paul writes about "deacons" in verses 8 and 12 as another kind of church leader.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Character qualities

This chapter lists several qualities that a man must have if he is to be an overseer or deacon in the church.

Links:

1 Timothy 3:1 Notes

1 Timothy 3:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul gives some special instructions on how the overseers of the church should act and be.
a good work
"an honorable task"
1 Timothy 3:2
husband of one wife
An overseer must have only one wife. It is unclear if this excludes men who have been previously widowed or divorced, or never married.
He must be moderate, sensible, orderly, and hospitable
"He must not do anything to excess, must be reasonable and behave well, and must be friendly to strangers"
1 Timothy 3:3
He must not be addicted to wine, not a brawler but instead gentle, peaceful
"He must neither drink too much alcohol nor like to fight and argue, but instead he must be gentle and peaceful"
a lover of money
"greedy for money"
1 Timothy 3:4
He should manage
"He should lead" or "He should take care of"
he should make sure his children obey and respect him in every way
Possible meanings are 1) the overseer's children should obey and show respect to their father or 2) the overseer's children should show respect to everyone or 3) the overseer should show respect to those in his household as he leads them.
1 Timothy 3:5
For if a man does not know how to manage
"For when a man cannot manage"
how will he care for a church of God?

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Paul uses a question to teach Timothy. Alternate translation: "he cannot take care of a church of God." or "he will not be able to lead a church of God."

a church of God

Here "church" refers to a local group of God's people. Alternate translation: "a group of God's people" or "the believers over whom he is in charge"

1 Timothy 3:6

He should not be a new convert

"He should not be a new believer" or "He must be a mature believer"

fall into condemnation as the devil

Paul speaks of a person being condemned for having done wrong as if he were falling into a hole. Alternate translation: "have God condemn him as he condemned the devil"

1 Timothy 3:7

those outside

"those outside of the church." Paul speaks of the church as though it were a place, and of unbelievers as though they were physically outside of it. Alternate translation: "those who are not Christians"

he does not fall into disgrace and the trap of the devil

Paul speaks of disgrace and the devil causing someone to sin as if they were a hole or a trap into which a person falls. Here "fall into" means to experience. Alternate translation: "nothing causes him shame before the unbelievers and so that the devil does not cause him to sin"

1 Timothy 3:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some special instructions on how the deacons of the church and their wives should act and be.

In the same way, deacons

"Deacons, like overseers,"

should be dignified, not double-talkers

Paul speaks about some people as if they were "double-talkers" who could say two things at once. He is talking about people who say one thing but mean something else. Alternate translation: "should act properly and mean what they say"

1 Timothy 3:9

They should keep the mystery of the faith with a clean conscience

"They must continue to believe, with a clean conscience, the true message God has revealed to us." This refers to a truth that had existed for some time but that God was showing to them at that moment. Paul speaks of true teaching about God as if it were an object that a person could keep with himself.

the mystery of the faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the truth of the faith that God revealed"

faith with a clean conscience

Paul speaks of a person's knowledge that he has done no wrong as if that knowledge or conscience were clean. Alternate translation: "faith, knowing they have tried their hardest to do what is right"

1 Timothy 3:10

They should also be approved first

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Other believers should approve of them first" or "They should prove themselves first"

be approved

This means other believers should evaluate those who want to be a deacon and determine if they are fit to serve in the church.

1 Timothy 3:11

In the same way, their wives

Possible meanings of "their wives" are 1) the wives of deacons or 2) female deacons or 3) women in general.

be dignified

"act properly" or "be worthy of respect"

should be dignified, not slanderers, but sober and faithful

"should be dignified; they should not speak evil about other people, and they should not do anything to excess; rather, they should be faithful"

sober

"moderate." See how you translated "moderate" in 1 Timothy 3:2.

1 Timothy 3:12

husbands of one wife

A man must have only one wife. It is unclear if this excludes men who have been previously widowed, divorced, or never married. See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 3:2.

manage well their children and household

"properly take care of and lead their children and others who live in their homes"

1 Timothy 3:13

For those

"For those deacons" or "For these church leaders"

acquire for themselves

"receive for themselves" or "gain for themselves"

a good standing

The implied meaning may be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "a good reputation among other believers"

great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) they will trust in Jesus with even more confidence or 2) they will speak confidently to other people about their faith in Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells Timothy the reason he wrote to him and then describes Christ's godliness.

I hope to come to you soon

Paul expected that his desire to visit them soon would happen. Alternate translation: "I expect to come to you soon"

1 Timothy 3:15

But if I delay

"But in case I cannot go there soon" or "But if something prevents me for being there soon"

so that you may know how to conduct yourself in the household of God

Paul speaks of the group of believers as if they were a family. Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring only to Timothy's behavior in the church. Or 2) Paul is referring to believers in general. Alternate translation: "so that you all may know how to conduct yourselves as members of God's family"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

household of God, which is the church of the living God
This phrase gives us information about "the household of God" rather than making a distinction between a household of God which is the church and one that is not the church. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "household of God. Those who belong to the family of God are the community of believers in the living God"
which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth
Paul speaks of the believers bearing witness to the truth about Christ as if they were a pillar and a base supporting a building. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "which is the church of the living God. And, by keeping and teaching God's truth, these members of the church support the truth just as a pillar and base support a building"
the living God
Here this expression may be speaking of God as the one who gives life to all, as in the UDB.
1 Timothy 3:16
We all agree
"No one can deny"
that the mystery of godliness is great
"that the truth that God has revealed is great"
He was revealed ... up in glory
This is most likely a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.
He was revealed
Some modern translations read, "God was revealed" or "God appeared." If Paul is quoting a song or poem, the word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. If he is not quoting, the word "he" could refer to either God or Jesus Christ.
in the flesh
Paul uses "flesh" here to mean a human being. Alternate translation: "as a true human being"
was vindicated by the Spirit
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit confirmed that he was who he said he was"
was seen by angels
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angels saw him"
was proclaimed among nations
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people in many nations told others about him"
was believed on in the world
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people in many parts of the world believed in him"
was taken up in glory
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God the Father took him up to heaven in glory"
in glory
This means he received power from God the Father and he is worthy of honor.

Chapter 4

1 Timothy 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

1 Timothy 4:1 is a prophecy. (See: prophet)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Later times
This is another way of referring to the last days. (See: lastday)

Links:

1 Timothy 4:1 Notes

1 Timothy 4:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul tells Timothy what the Spirit says will happen and encourages him in what he should teach.
Now
This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul starts to tell a new part of the teaching.
in later times
These words could refer to 1) a time after Paul dies or 2) a later time in Paul's own life.
leave the faith
Paul speaks of people ceasing to trust in Christ as if they were physically leaving a place or an object. Alternate translation: "stop trusting in Jesus"
and pay attention
"and give attention" or "because they are paying attention"
deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons
"spirits who trick people and the things that demons teach"
1 Timothy 4:2
by the hypocrisy of liars
This can be stated as a separate sentence if verse 1 is ended with a period. Alternate translation: "They will learn these things by the hypocrisy of liars" or "They will learn these things from hypocrital liars"
their own consciences having been seared
Possible meanings are 1) Paul is speaking of people who can no longer tell that they are doing wrong as if their minds were ruined. He speaks of their minds being ruined as if their minds were skin that someone had burned with a hot iron. Or 2) Paul is speaking of these people as if Satan had put a mark on them with a hot iron to indicate that they belong to him.
seared
touched with a hot object until it burns brown or black
1 Timothy 4:3
They will
"These people will"
forbid people to marry

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It is implied that they will forbid believers to marry. Alternate translation: "forbid believers to marry"

require them to abstain from foods

It is implied that they will forbid only certain foods. Alternate translation: "they will not allow people to eat certain foods"

1 Timothy 4:4

For every creation of God is good

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that God has created is good"

nothing received with thanksgiving is to be rejected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we should not refuse anything for which we give thanks to God" or "everything that we eat with thanksgiving is acceptable"

1 Timothy 4:5

it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer

Here "word of God" and "prayer" are used together to express one idea. The prayer is in agreement with the truth that God has revealed. Alternate translation: "it is dedicated for God's use by praying in agreement with his word"

it is sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we sanctify it" or "we have set it apart"

word of God

Here "word" refers to God's message or what he has revealed.

1 Timothy 4:6

If you place these things before the brothers

Paul speaks of his instructions as if they were objects that could be physically presented to the believers. Here, to place before means to instruct or to remind. Alternate translation: "If you help the believers remember these things"

these things

This refers to the teaching that started in 1 Timothy 3:16.

the brothers

This refers to all believers whether male or female.

you are being nourished by the words of faith and by the good teaching that you have followed

Paul speaks of God's word and its teaching as if it could physically feed Timothy and make him strong. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the words of faith and the good teaching that you have followed are causing you to trust more strongly in Christ"

words of faith

"words that cause people to believe"

1 Timothy 4:7

profane stories loved by old women

"ungodly stories and old wives' tales." "Profane" here refers to stories that purposely dishonor God. Translate "stories" as you did in 1 Timothy 1:4.

loved by old women

This is probably an expression that means "silly" or "absurd." Paul is not purposely insulting women in his reference to "old women." Instead, he and his audience knew that men die younger than women, so there are more women than men whose minds have become feeble due to old age.

train yourself in godliness

"train yourself to honor God" or "train yourself to act in ways that please God"

1 Timothy 4:8

bodily training

"physical exercise"

holds promise for this life

"is beneficial to this life"

1 Timothy 4:9

worthy of full acceptance

"worthy of your complete belief" or "worthy of your full trust"

1 Timothy 4:10

For it is for this

"This is the reason"

labor and struggle

The word "labor" here refers to working very hard, and "struggle" is a metaphor for dealing with difficulties and dangers.

For we hope in the living God ... believers

Paul and his fellow workers confidently expect that God will do all that he has promised to do. Alternate translation: "For we confidently expect that the living God... believers, will do what he promised to do" or "For we fully trust in the living God ... believers"

the living God

Possible meanings are 1) "the God who is alive," as opposed to idols, who are not alive, or 2) "God, who acts," as opposed to idols that do nothing, or 3) "God, who gives life to all living beings."

but especially of believers

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: "but he is especially the Savior of those people who believe"

1 Timothy 4:11

Instruct the people and teach these things

"Command and teach these things" or "Instruct and teach these things I just mentioned"

1 Timothy 4:12

Let no one despise your youth

"Do not let anyone consider you less important because you are young"

in speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity

Paul wanted Timothy to be an example in these things. Alternate translation: "by speaking and doing what is right, by loving others, and by being faithful and pure"

1 Timothy 4:13

attend to the reading, to the exhortation, and to the teaching

The words "reading," "exhortation," and "teaching" can be translated with verbal phrases. The implied information can also be supplied in translation Alternate translation: "continue reading the scripture to the people, exhorting the people, and teaching the people"

1 Timothy 4:14

Do not neglect the gift that is in you

Paul speaks of Timothy as if he were a container that could hold God's gifts. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Do not neglect your spiritual gift"

Do not neglect

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"Be sure to use"

which was given to you through prophecy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which you received when leaders of the church spoke God's word"

laying on of the hands of the elders

This was a ceremony in which the church leaders put their hands on Timothy and prayed that God would enable him to do the work he had commanded him to do.

1 Timothy 4:15

Care for these things. Be in them

Paul speaks of God's gifts to Timothy as if he could physically be in them. Alternate translation: "Do all these things and live according to them"

so that your progress may be evident to all people

Paul speaks of Timothy's increasing ability to serve God as if it were a physical object that others could look at. Alternate translation: "so other people will know that you are serving God better and better"

1 Timothy 4:16

Give careful attention to yourself and to the teaching

"Conduct yourself carefully and give attention to the teaching" or "Control your own behavior and give attention to the teaching"

Continue in these things

"Continue to do these things"

you will save yourself and those who listen to you

Possible meanings are 1) Timothy will save himself and those who hear him from God's judgment or 2) Timothy will save himself and those who hear him from the influence of false teachers.

Chapter 5

1 Timothy 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Honor and respect

Paul encourages younger Christians to honor and respect older Christians. Cultures honor and respect older people in different ways.

Widows

In the ancient Near East, it was important to care for widows, because they could not provide for themselves.

Links:

1 Timothy 5:1 Notes

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1 Timothy 5:1

General Information:

Paul was giving these commands to one person, Timothy. Languages that have different forms of "you" or different forms for commands would use the singular form here.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell Timothy how to treat the men, women, widows, and younger women in the church.

Do not rebuke an older man

"Do not speak harshly to an older man"

Instead, exhort him

"Instead, encourage him"

as if he were a father ... as brothers

Paul uses these similes to tell Timothy that he should treat fellow believers with sincere love and respect.

1 Timothy 5:2

older women ... younger women

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "exhort older women ... exhort younger women" or "encourage older women ... encourage younger women"

in all purity

"with pure thoughts and actions" or "in a holy way"

1 Timothy 5:3

Honor widows

"Respect and provide for widows"

the real widows

"widows with no one to provide for them"

1 Timothy 5:4

let them first learn

"first of all they should learn" or "let them make it a priority to learn"

in their own household

"to their own family" or "to those living in their homes"

Let them repay their parents

"Let them do good to their parents in return for the good things their parents have given them"

1 Timothy 5:5

But she who is a real widow, who is left all alone

"But one who is truly a widow, who has no family"

has set her hope in God

The widow confidently expected that God would do what he promised to do. Alternate translation: "confidently expects that God will do what he promised to do" or "fully trusts in God"

continues in offering earnest appeals and prayers

"continues to make requests and prayers"

offering earnest appeals and prayers

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how much these widows pray.

night and day

The words "night" and "day" are used together to mean "at all times." Alternate translation: "all the time"

1 Timothy 5:6

is dead

Paul speaks about people who do not seek to please God as if they were dead. Alternate translation: "is like a dead person; she does not respond to God"

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she lives
This refers to physical life.
1 Timothy 5:7
Instruct them in these things
"Teach them these things, too" or "Command them to do these things, too"
so that they may be blameless
"so that no one can find fault with them." Possible meanings of "they" are 1) "these widows and their families" or 2) "the believers." It might be best to leave the subject as "they."
1 Timothy 5:8
does not provide for his own relatives, especially for those of his own household
"does not help with his relatives' needs, especially for those family members living in his home"
he has denied the faith
"he has acted contrary to the truth we believe"
is worse than an unbeliever
"is worse than those who do not believe in Jesus." Paul means this person is worse than an unbeliever because even unbelievers take care of their relatives. Therefore, a believer should certainly take care of his relatives.
1 Timothy 5:9
be enrolled as a widow
There seems to have been a list, written or not, of widows. The church members met these women's needs for shelter, clothing, and food, and these women were expected to devote their lives to serving the Christian community.
who is not younger than sixty
As Paul will explain in 5:11-16, widows who were younger than 60 years old might get married again. Therefore the Christian community was to care only for widows who were older than 60.
a wife of one husband
Possible meanings are 1) she was always faithful to her husband or 2) she had not divorced her husband and then married another man.
1 Timothy 5:10
She must have a reputation for doing good deeds
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People must be able to tell others about her good deeds"
has been hospitable to strangers
"has welcomed strangers into her home"
has washed the feet of God's holy people
Washing the dirty feet of people who have been walking in the dirt and mud is one way of meeting other people's needs and making life more enjoyable for them. This probably means she did humble work in general. Alternate translation: "has done common work to help other believers"
God's holy people
Some versions translate this word as "the believers" or "saints." The essential idea is to refer to Christian believers.
has relieved the afflicted
Here "the afflicted" is a nominal adjective that can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "has helped those who are suffering"
has been devoted to every good work
"has given herself to doing all kinds of good deeds"
1 Timothy 5:11
But as for younger widows, refuse to enroll them in the list
"But do not include younger widows in the list." The list was of widows aged 60 years and older whom the Christian community would help.
For when they give in to bodily desires against Christ, they want to marry
"For when they prefer to fulfill their sensual desires and get married, they go against their promise to serve Christ as widows"
1 Timothy 5:12
set aside their first commitment
"do not keep their prior commitment" or "do not do what they promised before to do"
commitment
The commitment of the widows was their agreement to serve the Christian community for the rest of their lives if the community would supply the widows' needs.
1 Timothy 5:13
learn to be lazy
"get into the habit of doing nothing"
talk nonsense and are busybodies, saying things they should not say
These three phrases are probably three ways of speaking of the same activity. These people should not be looking into other people's private lives and telling about them to others who are no better off after hearing.
nonsense
words that do not help those who hear them
busybodies
people who look into other people's private lives for their own good and not for the good of the other people
1 Timothy 5:14
to manage the household
"to take care of everyone in her house"
the enemy
These words could refer to 1) Satan or 2) unbelievers who are hostile to Christians.
to slander us
Here "us" refers to the entire Christian community, including Timothy.
1 Timothy 5:15
turned aside after Satan
Paul speaks of living in faithfulness to Christ as if it were a path to be followed. This means the women stopped obeying Jesus and started obeying Satan. Alternate translation: "left the path of Christ to follow Satan" or "decided to obey Satan instead of Christ"
1 Timothy 5:16
any believing woman
"any Christian woman" or "any woman who believes in Christ"
has widows
"has widows among her relatives"
so that the church will not be burdened
Paul speaks of the community having to help more people than they are able as if they were carrying too much weight on their backs. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the church will not have more work to

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

do than they can" or "so that the Christian community will not have to help widows whose families could provide for them"

real widows

"those women who have no one to provide for them"

1 Timothy 5:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul again talks of how elders (overseers) should be treated and then gives Timothy some personal instructions.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All believers should think of the elders who are good leaders as worthy"

double honor

Possible meanings are 1) "respect and payment" or 2) "more respect than others receive"

those who labor with the word and in teaching

Paul speaks about the word as if it is an object that a person can work with. Alternate translation: "those who work hard preaching and those who teach God's word"

1 Timothy 5:18

For the scripture says

This is personification that means that this is what someone has written in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "For we read in the scriptures that"

You must not put a muzzle on an ox while it threshes the grain

Paul is using this quotation as a metaphor meaning that church leaders deserve to receive payment from the Christian community for their work.

muzzle

place a sleeve over an animal's snout and mouth to prevent it from eating

threshes the grain

An ox "threshes the grain" when it walks on or pulls a heavy object over the cut grain to separate the grain from the stalks. The ox was allowed to eat some of the grain as it worked.

is worthy of

"deserves"

1 Timothy 5:19

Do not receive an accusation

Paul speaks of accusations as if they were objects that could be physically accepted by people. Alternate translation: "Do not accept as true any accusation that someone speaks"

two or three

"at least two" or "two or more"

1 Timothy 5:20

sinners

This refers to anyone doing anything that disobeys or displeases God, even things that other people do not know about.

before all

"where everyone can see"

so that the rest may be afraid

"so that others will be afraid to sin"

1 Timothy 5:21

the chosen angels

This means the angels whom God and Jesus have chosen to serve them in a special way.

to keep these commands without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism

The words "partiality" and "favoritism" mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing that Timothy must judge honestly and be fair to everyone. Alternate translation: "to keep these rules without being partial or showing favor to anyone"

these commands

The phrase "these commands" could refer to 1) the rules Paul just told Timothy or 2) the rules Paul is about to tell Timothy.

1 Timothy 5:22

Place hands

The placing of hands was a ceremony in which one or more church leaders would place their hands on people and pray that God would enable those people to serve the church in a way that would please God. Timothy was to wait until the person had shown good character for a long time before officially setting that person apart to serve the Christian community.

Do not share in the sins of another person

Paul speaks of someone's sin as if it were an object that could be shared with others. Alternate translation: "do not join in another person's sin" or "do not participate when another person sins"

Do not share in the sins of another person

Possible meanings are 1) if Timothy chose someone who was guilty of sin to be a church worker, God would hold Timothy responsible for that person's sin or 2) Timothy should not commit sins he saw others committing.

1 Timothy 5:23

You should no longer drink water

It is implied that Timothy should not drink only water. Paul is telling Timothy to use wine as medicine. The water in that area often caused sickness.

for the stomach and your frequent sicknesses

"because of your stomach and your frequent sicknesses" or "to help your stomach and to stop your frequent illnesses"

1 Timothy 5:24

The sins of some people are openly known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The sins of some people are very obvious"

they go before them into judgment

"their sins go before those people into judgment." Paul speaks of sins as if they were moving. Possible meanings are 1) Their sins are so obvious that everyone will know they are guilty even before anyone testifies against them or 2) Their sins are evident, and God judges them now.

But some sins follow later

"But some sins follow people later." Paul speaks of sins as if they were moving. Possible meanings are 1) Timothy and the Christian community will not know about certain sins until later or 2) God will not judge some sins until the final judgment.

1 Timothy 5:25

some good works are openly known

"some good works are obvious"

good works

The works are considered "good" because they fit with

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God's character, purposes, and will.

but even the others cannot be hidden

Paul speaks of good works as if they were objects that someone cannot hide. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but people will later find out about even the good deeds that are not obvious"

Chapter 6

1 Timothy 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches about honoring, respecting, and diligently serving masters. Paul teaches all believers to be godly and content in every situation.

Links:

1 Timothy 6:1 Notes

1 Timothy 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some specific instructions to slaves and masters and then continues with instructions on living in a godly way.

Let all who are under the yoke as slaves

Paul speaks of people working as slaves as if they are oxen carrying a yoke. Alternate translation: "Let all who are working as slaves"

Let all who are

It is implied that Paul is speaking about believers. Alternate translation: "Let all who are believers"

the name of God and the teaching might not be blasphemed

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "the unbelievers might always speak respectfully about the name of God and the teaching"

the name of God

Here "name" refers to God's nature or character. Alternate translation: "the character of God" or "God"

the teaching

"the faith" or "the gospel"

1 Timothy 6:2

The slaves who have believing masters should not show them disrespect because they are brothers

Possible meanings are 1) it is because the believing masters are brothers that their slaves should not show them disrespect or 2) slaves should not think that because their masters are believers they can therefore show them disrespect.

they are brothers

Here "brothers" means "fellow believers."

those who receive the benefit

You may need to add the words omitted by the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "the masters whom the slaves help with their good work"

and beloved

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "and the slaves should love them" or 2) "whom God loves"

1 Timothy 6:3

the truthful words of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "truthful" is a figure of speech from the Greek word for "healthy."

truthful words

The word translated as "truthful" comes from the term "healthy" here, and it is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. See how you translated the word "healthy" in [1 Timothy 1:10]

1 Timothy 6:4

he is proud ... He has an unhealthy interest

Here "he" refers to anyone in general that teaches what is not correct. To make this clear, you can translate "he" as "they."

understands nothing

"understands nothing about God's truth"

He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments

Paul speaks of people who feel compelled to engage in useless arguments as if they were ill. Such people greatly desire to argue, and they do not really want to find a way to agree. Alternate translation: "All he wants to do is argue" or "He craves arguments"

controversies and arguments about words that result in envy

"controversies and arguments about words, and these controversies and arguments result in envy"

about words

"about the meanings of words"

strife

arguments, fights

insults

bad things that people falsely say about each other

evil suspicions

evil beliefs that innocent people have done something wrong or are planning on doing something wrong

1 Timothy 6:5

morally corrupt minds

"wicked minds"

They have lost the truth

Here the word "They" refers to anyone who teaches anything that does not agree with the teaching of Jesus. The phrase "have lost the truth" represents ignoring it or forgetting it. Alternate translation: "They have ignored the truth" or "They have forgotten the truth"

1 Timothy 6:6

Now

This marks a break in the teaching. Here Paul begins to contrast the kind of riches the wicked people seek through godliness (1 Timothy 6:5) and the true kind of gain people receive through godliness. Alternate translation: "Of course"

godliness with contentment is great gain

The words "godliness" and "contentment" are abstract

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nouns. Alternate translation: "it is great gain for people to do what is godly and to be content with what they have"

is great gain

"provides great benefits" or "does many good things for us"

1 Timothy 6:7

we brought nothing into the world

"we brought nothing into the world when we were born"

we can take nothing out of it

"we can take nothing out of the world when we die"

1 Timothy 6:8

let us

"we should"

1 Timothy 6:9

Now

This word marks a break in the teaching. Here Paul returns to the topic about those who think being godly will make them wealthy (1 Timothy 6:5).

to become wealthy fall into temptation, into a trap

Paul speaks about those who let the temptation of money cause them to sin as if they were animals that fall into holes that hunters use as traps. Alternate translation: "to become wealthy will encounter more temptation than they can resist, and they will be like an animal in a trap"

They fall into many foolish and harmful desires, and into whatever else sinks

Paul continues the trap metaphor and speaks of people who give in to their foolish and harmful desires and do evil as if they were animals who fall into a trap. Alternate translation: "They desire many foolish and harmful things and then do things that sink"

harmful desires

These are probably desires to do things that will harm those who do them as much as or more than they will harm other people.

into whatever else sinks people into ruin and destruction

Paul speaks about people who suffer because of their sins as if sin were a person who had put them under water or in mud. Alternate translation: "into other kinds of evil that ruin and destroy people"

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil

Paul speaks of the love of money as if it were the root of a plant whose fruit is all kinds of evil. Alternate translation: "This happens because loving money is a cause of all kinds of evil"

who desire it

"who desire money"

have been misled away from the faith

Paul speaks of wrong desires as if they were evil guides who intentionally guide people down the wrong path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "have let their desires lead them away from the truth" or "have stopped believing the truth"

have pierced themselves with much grief

Paul speaks about grief as if it were swords that people have used to stab themselves. Alternate translation: "have caused themselves to be very sorrowful"

1 Timothy 6:11

But you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Timothy.

man of God

"servant of God" or "person who belongs to God"

flee from these things

Paul speaks of these temptations and sins as if they were things that a person could physically run away from. Alternate translation: "completely avoid these things"

these things

Possible meanings of "these things" are 1) the "love of money" or 2) the different teachings, pride, arguments, and the love of money.

Pursue righteousness

"Run after righteousness" or "Chase righteousness." Paul speaks of righteousness and other good qualities as if they were things that a person could run after. This metaphor is the opposite of "flee from." It means to try your best to obtain something. Alternate translation: "Seek to gain" or "Do your best to act in"

1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith

Here Paul speaks about a person continuing in faith as if he were an athlete fighting to win a contest or a warrior fighting a battle. Alternate translation: "Try your hardest to obey Christ's teachings with as much energy as an athlete uses in a contest"

Take hold of the everlasting life

This continues the metaphor. Paul speaks about a person receiving eternal life as if he were a victorious athlete or warrior taking their prize. Alternate translation: "Take eternal life as your reward as a victorious athlete takes his prize"

to which you were called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to which God has called you"

you gave the good confession

"you confessed what is good" or "you confessed the truth"

before many witnesses

Paul expresses the idea of location in order to signal the idea of the people to whom Timothy was speaking. Alternate translation: "to many witnesses"

1 Timothy 6:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks of Christ's coming, gives specific instructions to the rich, and lastly closes with a special message to Timothy.

I give these orders to you

"This is what I command you"

before God, who gives life to all things

"in the presence of God, who causes all things to live." It is implied that Paul as asking God to be his witness. Alternate translation: "with God, who causes all things to live, as my witness"

and before Christ Jesus, who testified before Pontius Pilate

"in the presence of Christ Jesus, who spoke ... Pilate." It is implied that Paul is asking Jesus to be his witness. Alternate translation: "with Christ Jesus, who spoke ... Pilate, as my witness"

1 Timothy 6:14

without spot or blame

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The phrase "without spot" is a metaphor for being without moral fault. Possible meanings are 1) Jesus will not find fault with Timothy or blame him for doing wrong or 2) other people will not find fault with Timothy or blame him for doing wrong.

until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ

"until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again"

1 Timothy 6:15

God will reveal Christ's appearing

It is implied that God will reveal Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will reveal Jesus"

the blessed and only Sovereign

"the One worthy of praise who rules over the world"

1 Timothy 6:16

Only he has immortality

"Only he has the power to live forever"

dwells in inapproachable light

"dwells in a light so bright that no one can approach him"

1 Timothy 6:17

Instruct the rich in this world

Here "rich" is a nominal adjective. It can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Solemnly charge those who are rich in this world"

not to hope in riches, which are uncertain

Paul tells rich people not to confidently expect that their wealth will always provide what they need. Alternate translation: "not to confidently expect that they will always have what they need, because it is uncertain how long they may have their many possession"

they should hope in God

Paul tells rich people that they should confidently expect God to do what he has promised to do. Alternate translation: "they should confidently expect that God will do what he has promised to do" or "they should fully trust in God"

all the true riches

"all the things that will make us truly happy." The reference here may include physical objects, but it more likely refers to states like love, joy, and peace that people try to obtain by means of physical objects.

1 Timothy 6:18

be rich in good works

Paul speaks of spiritual blessings as if they were earthly wealth. Alternate translation: "serve and help others in many ways"

1 Timothy 6:19

they will store up for themselves a good foundation for what is to come

Here Paul speaks about the blessings that God gives in heaven as if they were riches that a person is storing away for later use. Also, the certainty of these blessings that people will never lose is spoken of as if it were the foundation of a building. Alternate translation: "it will be as though they were storing up for themselves many things that God will give them"

take hold of real life

This recalls the sports metaphor of 1 Timothy 6:12, where the prize is something that the winner can actually hold in his hands. Here the "prize" is "real" life.

1 Timothy 6:20

protect what was given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "faithfully proclaim the true message that Jesus has given to you"

Avoid the profane and empty talk

"Do not pay attention to the ungodly and useless talk"

of what is falsely called knowledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "of what some people falsely call knowledge"

1 Timothy 6:21

they have gone astray from the faith

Paul speaks of those who stop obeying Christ as if they were children or animals who have gone away from where they belong and are safe. Alternate translation: "they have stopped believing the truth"

May grace be with you

"May God give grace to all of you." The "you" is plural and refers to the whole Christian community.

Introduction to 2 Timothy

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Timothy

Paul greets Timothy and encourages him to endure hardship as he serves God (1:1-2:13). Paul gives general instructions to Timothy (2:14–26). Paul warns Timothy about future events and instructs him about how to carry out his service to God (3:1-4:8). Paul makes personal remarks (4:9-24).

Who wrote the Book of 2 Timothy?

Paul wrote 2 Timothy. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

This book is the second letter Paul wrote Timothy. Timothy was his disciple and close friend. Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome. Paul would die soon after writing this letter.

What is the Book of 2 Timothy about?

Paul had left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to help the believers there. Paul wrote this letter to instruct Timothy about various matter. The topics he addressed include warnings about false teachers and enduring difficult situations. This letter also shows how Paul was training Timothy to be a leader among the churches.

How should the title of this book be translated?

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Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Timothy" or "Second Timothy." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to Timothy" or "The Second Letter to Timothy."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the soldier imagery in 2 Timothy?

As Paul waited in prison, knowing he would die soon, he often spoke of himself as a soldier of Jesus Christ. Soldiers answer to their leaders. In the same way, Christians answer to Jesus. As "soldiers" of Christ, believers are to obey his commands, even if they die as a result.

What does it mean that God inspired Scripture?

God is the true author of Scripture. He inspired the human authors who wrote the books. That means God in some way caused the people to write what they wrote. This is why it is also referred to as God's word. This implies several things about the Bible. First, the Bible is free from error and can be trusted. Second, we can rely on God to protect the scripture from those who want to distort it or destroy it. Third, God's word should be translated into all the world's languages.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Here the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Timothy. The exception to this is 4:22.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What are the major textual issues in the text of the Book of 2 Timothy?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"Because of this, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher" (1:11). Some older translations read, "Because of this, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher to the Gentiles." "Warn them before God" (2:14). Some older translations read, "Warn them before the Lord."

Chapter 1

2 Timothy 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual children

Paul discipled Timothy as a Christian and a church leader. Paul may also have led him to believe in Christ. Therefore, Paul calls Timothy "beloved child." (See: disciple and spirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Persecution

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. Paul encourages Timothy to be willing to suffer for the gospel.

Links:

2 Timothy 1:1 Notes 2 Timothy intro

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2 Timothy 1:1

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise noted, the word "our" refers to Paul and Timothy

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Also, immediately after introducing the author, you may need to tell to whom the letter is written, as in the UDB.

through the will of God

"because of God's will" or "because God wanted it." Paul became an apostle because God wanted him to be an apostle and not because a human being chose him.

according to

Possible meanings are 1) "for the purpose of." This means that God appointed Paul to tell others about God's promise of life in Jesus or 2) "in keeping with." This means that just as God promises that Jesus gives life, he has made Paul an

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apostle.

of the life that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of "the life" as if it were an object inside of Jesus. This refers to the life people receive as a result of belonging to Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "of the life that we receive as a result of belonging to Christ Jesus"

2 Timothy 1:2

to Timothy

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the person who receives a letter. Also, immediately after introducing the author, you may need to tell to whom the letter is written.

beloved child

"dear child" or "child whom I love."" Here "child" is a term of great love and approval. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is like my beloved child"

Grace, mercy, and peace from

"May grace, mercy, and peace be yours from" or "May you experience kindness, mercy, and peace within from"

God the Father and

"God, who is our Father, and." This is an important title for God.

Christ Jesus our Lord

"Christ Jesus, who is our Lord"

2 Timothy 1:3

whom I serve from my forefathers

"whom I serve as my ancestors did"

with a clean conscience

Paul speaks of his conscience as if it could be physically clean. This means that a person does not feel guilty because he has always tried to do what was right. Alternate translation: "knowing I have tried my hardest to do what is right"

as I constantly remember you

"when I remember you continually" or "while I remember you all the time"

night and day

Here "night and day" are used together to mean "always." Alternate translation: "always" or "constantly"

2 Timothy 1:4

I long to see you

"I want very much to see you"

I may be filled with joy

Paul speaks of himself as if he were a container that someone could fill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I may be full of joy" or "I may have complete joy"

I remember your tears

Here "tears" represents crying. Alternate translation: "I remember how you cried for me"

2 Timothy 1:5

I have been reminded of your

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I also remember your" or "I also recall your"

your genuine faith

"your faith that is real" or "your faith that is sincere"

faith, which lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am convinced that it lives in you also

Paul is speaking of their faith as if it were something that is alive and lives in them. Paul means they have the same sort of faith. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "faith. Lois, your grandmother, and Eunice, your mother, first had genuine faith, and I am confident that you have genuine faith as well"

Lois ... Eunice

These are names of women.

2 Timothy 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to live in power, love, and discipline and not to be ashamed because of Paul's suffering in prison because of his (Paul's) faith in Christ.

This is the reason I am

"For this reason I am" or "Because of your sincere faith in Jesus, I am"

to rekindle the gift

Paul speaks about Timothy's need to start using his gift again as if he were restarting a fire. Alternate translation: "to start using again the gift"

the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands

"the gift of God that you received when I laid my hands on you." This refers to a ceremony in which Paul placed his hands on Timothy and prayed that God would enable him to do the work he had commanded him to do.

2 Timothy 1:7

God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and discipline

Possible meanings are 1) "spirit" refers to the "Holy Spirit." Alternate translation: "God's Holy Spirit does not cause us to be afraid. He causes us to have power and love and discipline" or 2) "spirit" refers to a characteristic. Alternate translation: "God does not cause us to be afraid but to have power and love and discipline"

discipline

Possible meanings are 1) the power to control ourselves or 2) the power to correct other people who are doing wrong.

2 Timothy 1:8

of the testimony

"of testifying" or "of telling others"

his prisoner

"a prisoner for his sake" or "a prisoner because I testify about the Lord"

share in suffering for the gospel

Paul speaks of suffering as if it were an object that could be shared or distributed among people. Alternate translation: "suffer with me for the gospel"

gospel according to the power of God

"gospel, allowing God to make you strong"

2 Timothy 1:9

with a holy calling

"with a calling that set us apart as his people" or "to be his holy people"

He did this

"He saved and called us"

not according to our works

"not because we did anything to deserve it"

but according to his own plan and grace

"but because he planned to show us kindness"

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in Christ Jesus
"through our relationship to Christ Jesus"
before times ever began
"before the world began" or "before time began"
2 Timothy 1:10
God's salvation has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus
Paul speaks of salvation as if it were an object that could uncovered and shown to people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has shown how he will save us by sending our Savior Christ Jesus"
who put an end to death
Paul speaks of death as if it were an independent process instead of the event of people dying. Alternate translation: "who destroyed death" or "who made it possible for people not to remain dead forever"
brought life and immortality to light through the gospel
Paul speaks of teaching about eternal life as if it were an object that could be brought from darkness into light so that people could see it. Alternate translation: "taught what life that never ends is by preaching the gospel"
2 Timothy 1:11
I was appointed a herald
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God chose me to be a herald"
a herald
a person who proclaims important or official messages
2 Timothy 1:12
For this cause
"Because I am an apostle"
I also suffer these things
Paul is referring to being a prisoner.
to keep that which I have entrusted to him
Paul is using a metaphor of a person leaving something with another person who is supposed to protect it until he gives it back to the first person. Possible meanings are 1) Paul is trusting Jesus to help him remain faithful, or 2) Paul is trusting that Jesus will ensure that people continue spreading the gospel message.
I am convinced
"I am certain" or "I know for sure"
that day
This refers to the day when God judges all people.
2 Timothy 1:13
Keep the example of the truthful words that you heard from me
"Keep teaching the correct ideas I have taught you" or "Use how I taught you as a pattern for what and how you should teach"
truthful words
The Greek word translated "truthful, is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"
with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus
"as you trust in Jesus Christ and love him"
2 Timothy 1:14
The good thing
This refers to the work of proclaiming the gospel correctly.
guard it
Timothy needs to be alert because people will oppose his work, try to make him stop, and distort what he says.
through the Holy Spirit
"with the power of the Holy Spirit"
2 Timothy 1:15
turned away from me
This is a metaphor that means they stopped helping Paul. They abandoned Paul because the authorities had thrown him into prison. Alternate translation: "have stopped helping me"
Phygelus and Hermogenes
These are names of men.
2 Timothy 1:16
Onesiphorus
This is the name of a man.
to the household
"to the family"
was not ashamed of my chain
Here "chain" is a metonym for being in prison. Onesiphorus was not ashamed that Paul was in prison but came to visit him frequently. Alternate translation: "was not ashamed that I was in prison"
2 Timothy 1:17
General Information:
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2 Timothy 1:18
May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from him
"May Onesiphorus receive mercy from the Lord" or "May the Lord show him mercy"
to find mercy from him
Paul speaks of mercy as if it were an object that could be found.
on that day
This refers to the day when God will judge all people.

Chapter 2

2 Timothy 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set words farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with verses 11-13. Paul may be quoting a poem or hymn in these verses.

Special concepts in this chapter

We will reign with him

Faithful Christians will reign with Christ in the future. (See: faithful)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Analogies

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In this chapter, Paul makes several analogies to teach about living as a Christian. He uses analogies of soldiers, athletes, and farmers. Later in the chapter, he uses the analogy of different kinds of containers in a house.

Links:

2 Timothy 2:1 Notes

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2 Timothy 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul pictures Timothy's Christian life as a soldier's life, as a farmer's life, and as an athlete's life.

my child

Here "child" is a term of great love and approval. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is like my child"

be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks about the motivation and determination that God's grace allows believers to have. Alternate translation: "let God use the grace he gave you through your relationship to Christ Jesus to make you strong"

2 Timothy 2:2

among many witnesses

"with many witnesses there to agree that what I said is true"

entrust them to faithful people

Paul speaks of his instructions to Timothy as if they were objects that Timothy could give to other people and trust them to use correctly. Alternate translation: "commit them" or "teach them"

2 Timothy 2:3

Suffer hardship with me

Possible meanings are 1) "Endure suffering as I do" or 2) "Share in my suffering"

as a good soldier of Christ Jesus

Paul compares suffering for Christ Jesus to the suffering that a good soldier endures.

2 Timothy 2:4

No soldier serves while entangled in the affairs of this life

"No soldier serves when he is involved in the everyday business of this life" or "When soldiers are serving, they do not get distracted by the ordinary things that people do." Christ's servants should not allow everyday life to keep them from working for Christ.

while entangled

Paul speaks of this distraction as if it were a net that tripped people up as they were walking.

his superior officer

"his leader" or "the one who commands him"

2 Timothy 2:5

as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes by the rules

Paul is implicitly speaking of Christ's servants as if they were athletes.

he is not crowned unless he competes by the rules

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will crown him as winner only if he competes by the rules"

he is not crowned

"he does not win the prize." Athletes in Paul's time were crowned with wreaths made from the leaves of plants when they won competitions.

competes by the rules

"competes according to the rules" or "strictly obeys the rules"

2 Timothy 2:6

It is necessary that the hard-working farmer receive his share of the crops first

This is the third metaphor Paul gives Timothy about working. The reader should understand that Christ's servants need to work hard.

2 Timothy 2:7

Think about what I am saying

Paul gave Timothy word pictures, but he did not completely explain their meanings. He expected Timothy to figure out what he was saying about Christ's servants.

in everything

"about everything"

2 Timothy 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives Timothy instructions on how to live for Christ, how to suffer for Christ, and how to teach others to live for Christ.

who was raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again" or "whom God raised from the dead"

according to my gospel message

Paul speaks of the gospel message as if it were especially his. He means that this is the gospel message that he proclaims. Alternate translation: "according to the gospel message that I preach"

2 Timothy 2:9

to the point of being bound with chains as a criminal

Here "being chained" represents being a prisoner. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to the point of wearing chains as a criminal in prison"

the word of God is not bound

Here "bound" speaks of what happens to a prisoner, and the phrase is a metaphor that means no one can stop God's message. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one can put the word of God in prison" or "no one can stop the word of God"

2 Timothy 2:10

for those who are chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the people whom God has chosen"

may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of salvation as if it were an object that could be physically grasped. Alternate translation: "will receive salvation from Christ Jesus"

with eternal glory

"and that they will be forever with him in the glorious place

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where he is"

2 Timothy 2:11

This is a trustworthy saying

"These are words you can trust"

If we have died with him, we will also live with him

This is most likely the beginning of a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry, you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.

died with him

Paul uses this expression to mean that people share in Christ's death when they trust in him, deny their own wants, and obey him.

2 Timothy 2:12

General Information:

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2 Timothy 2:13

if we are unfaithful ... he cannot deny himself

This is most likely the end of a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.

if we are unfaithful

"even if we fail God" or "even if we do not do what we believe God wants us to do"

he cannot deny himself

"he must always act according to his character" or "he cannot act in ways that are the opposite of his real character"

2 Timothy 2:14

General Information:

The word "them" may refer to "the teachers" or "the people of the church"

before God

Paul speaks of God's awareness of Paul as if he is in God's physical presence. This implies that God will be Timothy's witness. Alternate translation: "in God's presence" or "with God as your witness"

not to quarrel about words

Possible meanings are 1) "not to argue about foolish things that people say" or 2) "not to quarrel about what words mean"

it is of no value

"this does not benefit anyone"

2 Timothy 2:15

to present yourself to God as one approved, a laborer who has no reason to be ashamed

"to present yourself to God as a person who has proven to be worthy and has no cause for shame"

a laborer

Paul presents the idea of Timothy correctly explaining God's word as if he were a skilled workman. Alternate translation: "like a workman" or "like a worker"

accurately teaches the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "explains the message about the truth correctly" or 2) "explains the true message correctly."

2 Timothy 2:16

Avoid profane and empty talk

"Do not pay attention to ungodly and useless talk"

which leads to more and more godlessness

Paul speaks of this kind of talk as if it were something that could physically move to another location, and he speaks of godlessness as if it were that new location. Alternate translation: "which causes people to become more and more ungodly"

2 Timothy 2:17

Their talk will spread like cancer

Cancer quickly spreads in a person's body and destroys it. This is a metaphor that means what those people were saying would spread from person to person and harm the faith of those who heard it. Alternate translation: "What they say will spread like an infectious disease" or "Their talk will spread quickly and cause destruction like cancer"

Hymenaeus and Philetus

These are names of men.

2 Timothy 2:18

who have gone astray from the truth

Here "gone astray from the truth" is a metaphor for no longer believing or teaching what is true. Alternate translation: "who have started saying things that are not true"

the resurrection has already happened

"God has already raised dead believers to eternal life"

they destroy the faith of some

"they cause some people to stop believing"

2 Timothy 2:19

General Information:

Just as precious and common containers can be used for honorable ways in a wealthy house, any person who turns to God can be used by God in honorable ways in doing good works.

the firm foundation of God stands

Possible meanings are 1) "God's truth is like a firm foundation" or 2) "God has established his people like a building on a firm foundation" or 3) "God's faithfulness is like a firm foundation." In any case, Paul speaks of this idea as if it were a building's foundation laid in the ground.

this inscription

Possible meanings of "inscription" are 1) words written into stone with a chisel or 2) words impressed in wax by a king's ring.

who names the name of the Lord

"who calls on the name of the Lord." Here "name of the Lord" refers to the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "who calls on the Lord" or "who says he is a believer in Christ"

depart from unrighteousness

Paul speaks of unrighteousness as if it were a place from which one could leave. Alternate translation: "stop being evil" or "stop doing wrong things"

2 Timothy 2:20

containers of gold and silver ... containers of wood and clay

Here "containers" is a general word for bowls, plates, and pots, which people put food or drink into or on. If your language does not have a general word, use the word for "bowls" or "pots." Paul is using this as a metaphor to describe different types of people.

honorable use ... dishonorable

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Possible meanings are 1) "special occasions ... ordinary times" or 2) "the kinds of activities people do in public ... the kinds of activities people do in private."

2 Timothy 2:21

cleans himself from dishonorable use

Possible meanings are 1) "separates himself from dishonorable people" or 2) "makes himself pure." In any case, Paul speaks of this process as if it were a person washing himself.

he is an honorable container

Paul speaks about this person as if he were an honorable container. Alternate translation: "he is like the container that is useful for special occasions" or "he is like the container that is useful for activities good people do in public"

He is set apart, useful to the Master, and prepared for every good work

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Master sets him apart, and he is ready for the Master to use him for every good work"

He is set apart

He is not set apart physically or in the sense of location, but instead to fulfill a purpose. Some versions translate this "sanctified," but the text signals the essential idea of being set apart.

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee youthful lusts

Paul speaks about youthful lusts as if they were a dangerous person or animal that Timothy should run away from. Alternate translation: "Completely avoid youthful lusts" or "Absolutely refuse to do the wrong things that young people strongly desire to do"

Pursue righteousness

Here "Pursue" means the opposite of "Flee." Paul speaks of righteousness as if it were an object that Timothy should run towards because it will do him good. Alternate translation: "Try your best to obtain righteousness" or "Seek after righteousness"

with those

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants Timothy to join with other believers in pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace, or 2) Paul wants Timothy to be at peace and not argue with other believers.

those who call on the Lord

Here "call on the Lord" is an idiom that means to trust and worship the Lord. Alternate translation: "those who worship the Lord"

out of a clean heart

Here "clean" is a metaphor for something pure or sincere. And, "heart" here is a metonym for "thoughts" or "emotions." Alternate translation: "with a sincere mind" or "with sincerity"

2 Timothy 2:23

refuse foolish and ignorant questions

"refuse to answer foolish and ignorant questions." Paul means that the people who ask such questions are foolish and ignorant. Alternate translation: "refuse to answer the questions that foolish people who do not want to know the truth ask"

they give birth to quarrels

Paul speaks of ignorant questions as if they were women giving birth to children. Alternate translation: "they cause arguments"

2 Timothy 2:24

General Information:

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2 Timothy 2:25

correcting his opponents with gentleness

"gently correcting those who oppose him"

his opponents

"people who say that what he teaches is not true"

Perhaps God may give them repentance

Paul speaks of repentance as if it were an object that God could give people. Alternate translation: "God may give them the opportunity to repent"

for the knowledge of the truth

"so that they will know the truth"

2 Timothy 2:26

They may become sober again

Paul speaks of sinners learning to think correctly about God as if they were drunk people becoming sober again. Alternate translation: "They may think correctly again"

leave the devil's trap

Paul speaks of the devil's ability to convince Christians to sin as if it were a trap. Alternate translation: "stop doing what the devil wants"

after they have been captured by him for his will

Convincing Christians to sin is spoken of as if the devil had physically captured them and made them his slaves. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after he has deceived them into obeying his will"

Chapter 3

2 Timothy 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The "last days" could mean in the future just before Jesus returns. If so, Paul is prophesying in verses 1-9 and 13 about those days. The "last days" could also mean the Christian age, including Paul's time. If so, what Paul teaches about being persecuted applies to all Christians. (See: prophet and lastday)

Links:

2 Timothy 3:1 Notes

2 Timothy 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul lets Timothy know that in the future people will stop believing the truth, but he should continue trusting God's

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word even when he is persecuted.

In the last days

Possible meanings are 1) this is a time later than Paul's time. Alternate translation: "in the future just before Jesus returns" or 2) this refers to the Christian age, including Paul's time. Alternate translation: "during this period of time before the end"

difficult times

These will be days, months, or even years when Christians will endure suffering and danger.

2 Timothy 3:2

lovers of themselves

Here "lovers" refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member, a natural human love between friends or relatives. This is not the kind of love that comes from God. Alternate translation: "self-centered"

2 Timothy 3:3

without natural affection

"unloving even to their own families"

unable to reconcile

"unwilling to live peacefully with others"

not lovers of good

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "haters of good"

2 Timothy 3:4

reckless

doing things either without thinking about what bad things could happen or without even knowing that bad things could happen

prideful

thinking they are better than other people

2 Timothy 3:5

They will have a shape of godliness, but they will deny its power

Paul speaks of godliness, the habit of honoring God, as if it were a physical object that had a shape and had physical power. Alternate translation: "They will appear to honor God, but they way they act will show that they do not really believe in God's power"

have a shape of godliness

"appear to have godliness" or "appear to honor God"

Turn away from these people

"Turn away" here is a metaphor for avoiding someone. Alternate translation: "Avoid these people"

2 Timothy 3:6

enter into households and captivate

"enter into houses and greatly influence"

foolish women

"women who are spiritually weak." These women may be spiritually weak because they fail to work at becoming godly or because they are idle and have many sins.

who are loaded up with sins

Paul speaks of the attraction of sin as if sin were loaded on the backs of these women. Possible meanings are 1) "who sin often" or 2) "who feel terrible guilt because they continue to sin." The idea is that these men can easily influence these women because the women are unable to stop sinning.

are led away by various desires

Paul speaks about these various desires as if they could lead another person away. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they desire to sin in various ways rather than obey Christ"

2 Timothy 3:7

General Information:

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2 Timothy 3:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives an example of two false teachers from the time of Moses—men who are not mentioned in the Old Testament—and applies it to the way people will be. Paul encourages Timothy to follow his own example and stay in God's word.

Jannes and Jambres

These are names of men.

stood against

Paul speaks of those who argued against Moses as if they had stood against him. Alternate translation: "opposed"

stand against the truth

"oppose the gospel of Jesus"

They are men corrupt in mind

"Their minds are corrupt" or "They cannot think rightly"

and with regard to the faith they are rejected

Possible meanings are 1) here "the faith" represents the false teachers' personal faith in God. Alternate translation: "and they have shown that their faith is not sincere" or 2) here "the faith" represents the true Christian teachings about God. Alternate translation: "and, according to the true teachings of the Christian faith, God has rejected them"

2 Timothy 3:9

they will not advance very far

Paul uses an expression about physical movement to mean that the false teachers will not have much success among the believers. Alternate translation: "they will not have much success"

obvious to all

"easily seen by all" or "something everyone will see"

of those men

"of Jannes and Jambres"

2 Timothy 3:10

you have followed my teaching

Paul speaks of giving close attention to these things as if one were physically following them as they moved. Alternate translation: "you have observed my teaching" or "you have paid close attention to my teaching"

my teaching

"what I have taught you to do"

conduct

the way a person lives his life

longsuffering

one person being patient with those people who do things of which he does not approve

2 Timothy 3:11

Out of them all, the Lord rescued me

Paul speaks of God having stopped him from suffering these hardships and dangers as if God had carried him out of a physical location.

2 Timothy 3:12

to live in a godly manner in Christ Jesus

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"to live godly lives as followers of Jesus"

will be persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will certainly have to endure persecution"

2 Timothy 3:13

impostors

An imposter is a person who wants other people to think he is someone other, usually more important, than who he is.

will go from bad to worse

"will become even more evil"

leading others astray and being led astray

Here, to lead someone astray is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "deceiving and being deceived" or "teaching lies and believing lies"

2 Timothy 3:14

remain in the things that you have learned

Paul speaks of biblical instruction as if it were a place that Timothy could stay in. Alternate translation: "do not forget what you learned" or "continue doing what you have learned"

2 Timothy 3:15

the sacred writings. These are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of the message contained in the sacred writings as if it were the writings themselves and of those writings as if they were a person whose words could make a person wise. Alternate translation: "what is in the sacred writings. When you read the word of God, you can become wise so as to receive salvation from Christ Jesus by faith"

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture has been inspired by God

Some Bibles translate this as "All scripture is God-breathed." This means God produced the scripture through his Spirit by telling people what to write. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has spoken all scripture by his Spirit"

It is profitable

"It is useful" or "It is beneficial"

for conviction

"for pointing out errors"

for correction

"for fixing errors"

for training in righteousness

"for training people to be righteous"

2 Timothy 3:17

the man of God

This means any believer in God whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all believers"

may be competent, equipped

"may be completely prepared"

Chapter 4

2 Timothy 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I give this solemn command"

Paul begins to give personal instructions to Timothy.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crown

Scripture uses different kinds of crowns as images for different things. It appears Christ will award the crown in this chapter to believers as a reward for living rightly.

Links:

2 Timothy 4:1 Notes

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2 Timothy 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind Timothy to be faithful and that he, Paul, is ready to die.

this solemn command before God and Christ Jesus

"this solemn command in the presence of God and Christ Jesus." It is implied that God and Jesus will be Paul's witnesses. Alternate translation: "this solemn command, having as my witnesses God and Christ Jesus"

solemn command

"serious command"

the living and the dead

Here "the living" and "the dead" are used together to mean all people. Alternate translation: "all people who have ever lived"

the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for Christ's rule as king. Alternate translation: "the dead when he returns to rule as king"

2 Timothy 4:2

the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

when it is not

Here the word "convenient" is understood. Alternate translation: "when it is not convenient"

Reprove

tell someone he is guilty of doing wrong

exhort, with all patience and teaching

"exhort, and teach the people, and always be patient with them"

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when

"Because at some time in the future"

people

The context indicates that these will be people who are a part of the community of believers.

will not endure sound teaching

"will no longer want to listen to true teaching" or "will not

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want to listen to reliable teaching"

they will heap up for themselves teachers according to their own desires

Paul speaks of people obtaining many teachers as if they were putting them into a heap or pile. Alternate translation: "they will listen to many teachers who assure them that there is nothing wrong with their sinful desires"

who say what their itching ears want to hear

Paul speaks of people strongly wanting to hear something as if their ears itched and could only be satisfied if teachers taught them what they wanted to hear. Alternate translation: "who say only what they want so much to hear"

2 Timothy 4:4

They will turn their hearing away from the truth

Paul speaks about people no longer paying attention as if they were physically turning away so they cannot hear. Alternate translation: "They will no longer pay attention to the truth"

they will turn aside to myths

Paul speaks about people starting to pay attention to myths as if they were physically turning towards them to listen. Alternate translation: "they will pay attention to teachings that are not true"

2 Timothy 4:5

be sober-minded

Paul wants Timothy to think correctly about everything, and he speaks about him as if he wanted him to be sober, that is, not drunk with wine. Alternate translation: "think clearly"

the work of an evangelist

This means to tell people about who Jesus is, what he did for them, and how they are to live for him.

2 Timothy 4:6

I am already being poured out

Paul speaks of his readiness to die as if he were a cup of wine being poured out as a sacrifice to God.

The time of my departure has come

Here "departure" is a polite way of referring to death. Alternate translation: "Soon I will die and leave this world"

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight

Paul speaks of his hard work as if he had been an athlete competing for a prize. Alternate translation: "I have done my best"

I have finished the race

Paul speaks of his life of service to God as if he had been running a race on foot. Alternate translation: "I have completed what I needed to do"

I have kept the faith

Paul speaks of his trust in Christ and his obedience to God as if they were a valuable object that he kept in his possession. Possible meanings are 1) "I have been faithful in doing my ministry" or 2) "I have kept the teachings about what we believe from any error"

2 Timothy 4:8

The crown of righteousness has been reserved for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has reserved the crown of righteousness for me"

crown of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) the crown is the prize that God gives to people who have lived the right way or 2) the crown is a metaphor for righteousness. Just as the judge of a race gives a crown to the winner, when Paul finishes his life, God will declare that Paul is righteous.

crown

a wreath made of laurel tree leaves that was given to winners of athletic contests

on that day

"on the day when the Lord comes again" or "on the day when God judges people"

but also to all those who have loved his appearing

Paul speaks about this event as if it has already happened. It can be stated as a future event. Alternate translation: "but also he will give it to those who are eagerly waiting for him to return"

2 Timothy 4:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks of specific people and how they behaved, of God's work for and to him, and then closes with greetings to and from certain people.

come ... quickly

"come ... as soon as possible"

2 Timothy 4:10

Demas ... Crescens ... Titus

These are names of men.

He loves this present world

Here "world" refers to worldly things as opposed to the things of God. Possible meanings are 1) he loves the temporary comforts of this world or 2) he is afraid he will die if he remains with Paul.

Crescens went ... and Titus went

These two men had left Paul, but Paul is not saying that they also "love this present world" like Demas.

Dalmatia

This is the name of a land region.

2 Timothy 4:11

he is useful to me in the service

Possible meanings are 1) "he can help me in the ministry" or 2) "he can help me by serving me."

2 Timothy 4:12

General Information:

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2 Timothy 4:13

cloak

a heavy garment worn over clothes

Carpus

This is the name of a man.

the books

This refers to scrolls. A scroll was a type of book made of one long sheet of papyrus or leather. After writing on a scroll or reading it, people rolled it up using rods on the ends

especially the parchments

This may refer to a specific type of scroll. Alternate translation: "especially those made from animal skins"

2 Timothy 4:14

Alexander the coppersmith displayed

"Alexander, who works with metal, displayed"

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Alexander
This is the name of a man.
displayed many evil deeds against me
Paul speaks of doing evil deeds as if they were put on display. Alternate translation: "did many evil things to me"
The Lord will repay him according to his deeds
Paul speaks of punishment as if it were payment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish him for what he has done"
him ... his
Alexander
2 Timothy 4:15
him ... he
Alexander.
opposed our words
Here "words" refers to a message or teaching. Alternate translation: "opposed the message that we teach"
2 Timothy 4:16
At my first defense
"When I first appeared in court and explained my actions"
no one stood with me
"no one stayed with me and helped me"
May it not be counted against them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God not count it against them" or "I pray that God does not punish those believers for leaving me"
2 Timothy 4:17
the Lord stood by me
Paul is speaking as if the Lord had physically stood with him. Alternate translation: "the Lord helped me"
so that, through me, the proclamation of the message might be fully accomplished ... the Gentiles might hear
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that I was able to speak all of the Lord's message ... the Gentiles heard"
I was rescued out of the lion's mouth
Paul is speaking about danger as if he had been threatened by a lion. This danger could have been physical, spiritual, or both. Alternate translation: "I was rescued from great danger"
2 Timothy 4:18
General Information:
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2 Timothy 4:19
house of Onesiphorus
Here "house" stands for the people who live there. Alternate translation: "family of Onesiphorus"
Priscilla
This is the name of a woman.
Aquila
This is the name of a man.
Onesiphorus
This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in 2 Timothy 1:16.
2 Timothy 4:20
Erastus ... Trophimus
These are names of men.
Miletus
This is the name of a city to the south of Ephesus.
2 Timothy 4:21
Eubulus ... Pudens, Linus
These are all names of men.
Do your best to come
"Try hard to come"
before winter
"before the cold season"
greets you, also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers
This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "greets you. Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers also greet you"
Claudia
This is a female name.
all the brothers
Here "brothers" means all believers whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all the believers here"
2 Timothy 4:22
May the Lord be with your spirit
"I pray that the Lord makes your spirit strong." Here "you" is singular and refers to Timothy.
May grace be with you
"I pray that the Lord shows his grace to all of you there." Here "you" is plural and refers to all the believers there with Timothy.

Introduction to Titus

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Titus

Paul instructs Titus to appoint godly leaders (1:1-16) Paul instructs Titus to train people to live godly lives (2:1-3:11) Paul ends by sharing some of his plans and sending greetings to various believers (3:12-15)

Who wrote the Book of Titus?

Paul wrote the Book of Titus. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

What is the Book of Titus about?

Paul wrote this letter to Titus, his fellow worker, who was leading the churches on the island of Crete. Paul instructed him about selecting church leaders. Paul also described how the believers should behave towards each other. And he encouraged them all to live in a way that pleases God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

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Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Titus." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to Titus" or "A Letter to Titus."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

In what roles can people serve within the church?

There are some teachings in the Book of Titus about whether a woman or divorced man can serve in positions of leadership within the church. Scholars disagree about the meaning of these teachings. Further study on these issues may be necessary before translating this book.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Titus. The exception to this is 3:15.

What is the meaning of "God our Savior?"

This is a common phrase in this letter. Paul meant to make the readers think about how God forgave them in Christ for sinning against him. And by forgiving them he saved them from being punished when he judges all people. A similar phrase in this letter is "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Chapter 1

Titus 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-4. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

In verses 6-9, Paul lists several qualities that a man must have if he is to be an elder in the church. Paul gives a similar list in 1 Timothy 3.

Special concepts in this chapter

Elders

The church has used different titles for church leaders. Some titles include overseer, elder, pastor, and bishop.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Should, may, must

The ULB uses different words that indicate requirements or obligations. These verbs have different levels of force associated with them. The subtle differences may be difficult to translate. The UDB translates these verbs in a more general way.

Links:

Titus 1:1 Notes Titus intro

Titus 1:1

for the faith of

to strengthen the faith of

that agrees with godliness

"that is suitable for honoring God"

Titus 1:2

with the hope of everlasting life

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "with the confidence of receiving everlasting life"

before all the ages of time

"before time began"

Titus 1:3

At the right time

"At the proper time"

he revealed his word

Paul speaks of God's message as if it were an object that could be visibly shown to people. Alternate translation: "He caused people to understand his message"

with which I have been entrusted

This can be translated in active form, and what God trusted Paul to do can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "that he trusted me to deliver"

God our Savior

"God, who saves us"

Titus 1:4

a true son

Though Titus was not Paul's biological son, they share a common faith in Christ. Thus, in Christ, Paul considers Titus as his own son. Alternate translation: "you who are like a son to me"

our common faith

Paul expresses the same faith in Christ that they both share. Alternate translation: "the teachings that we both believe"

Grace and peace

This was a common greeting Paul used. You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "May you experience kindness and peace within"

Christ Jesus our Savior

"Christ Jesus who is our Savior"

Titus 1:5

For this purpose I left you in Crete, that you might set

"This is the reason I left you in Crete: I wanted you to set"

I left you in Crete

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"I told you to stay in Crete"

set in order things not yet complete

"finish arranging things that needed to be done"

ordain elders

"appoint elders" or "designate elders"

elders

In the early Christian churches, Christian elders gave spiritual leadership to the assemblies of believers.

Titus 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Having told Titus to ordain elders in every city on the island of Crete, Paul gives the requirements for elders.

An elder must be blameless, the husband

To be "blameless" is to be known as a person who does not do bad things. Alternate translation: "An elder must not have a bad reputation and must be the husband"

the husband of one wife

This means that he has only one wife, that is, he does not have any other wives or concubines. It may also imply that he does not commit adultery and that he has not divorced a previous wife. Alternate translation: "a man who has only one woman" or "a man who is faithful to his wife"

faithful children

Possible meanings are 1) children who believe in Jesus or 2) children who are trustworthy.

Titus 1:7

overseer

This is another name for the same position of spiritual leadership that Paul referred to as "elder" in 1:6.

a manager of the household of God

Paul speaks of the church as if it were God's household and the overseer as if he were a servant in charge of managing the household.

not addicted to wine

"not an alcoholic" or "not one who drinks much wine"

not a brawler

"not one who is violent" or "not one who likes to fight"

Titus 1:8

Instead

Paul is changing his argument from what an elder is not to be to what an elder is to be.

Titus 1:9

hold tightly to

Paul speaks of devotion to the Christian faith as if it were grasping the faith with one's hands. Alternate translation: "be devoted to" or "know well"

truthful teaching

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 1:10

Connecting Statement:

Because of those that would oppose God's word, Paul gives Titus reasons to preach God's word and warns him about false teachers.

rebellious people

These are rebellious people who oppose Paul's gospel message.

empty talkers and deceivers

This phrase describes the rebellious people mentioned in the previous phrase. Here "empty" is a metaphor for useless, and "empty talkers" are people who say useless or foolish things. Alternate translation: "people who say useless things and deceive others"

those of the circumcision

This refers to the Christian Jews who taught that men must be circumcised in order to follow Christ.

Titus 1:11

It is necessary to stop them

"They must be prevented from spreading their teachings" or "They must be stopped from influencing others by their words"

what they should not teach

These are things that are not proper to teach regarding Christ and the Law because they are not true.

for disgraceful profit

This refers to profit that people make by doing things that are not honorable.

are upsetting whole families

"are ruining whole families." The issue was that they were upsetting families by destroying their faith. This may have caused the members of the families to argue with one another.

Titus 1:12

One of their own prophets

"A prophet from Crete itself" or "A Cretan that they themselves consider to be a prophet"

Cretans are always liars

"Cretans lie all the time." This is an exaggeration that means that many Cretans lie often.

evil beasts

This metaphor compares the Cretans to dangerous wild animals.

Titus 1:13

Therefore, correct them severely

"You must use strong language that the Cretans will understand when you correct them"

so that they may be truthful in the faith

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 1:14

Jewish myths

This refers to the false teaching of the Jews.

turn away from the truth

Paul speaks of the truth as if it were an object that one could turn away from or avoid. Alternate translation: "reject the truth"

Titus 1:15

To those who are pure, all things are pure

"If people are pure on the inside, everything they do will be pure"

To those who are pure

"To those who are acceptable to God"

to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure

Paul speaks of sinners as if they were physically dirty.

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Alternate translation: "if people are morally defiled and do not believe, they cannot do anything pure"

Titus 1:16

they deny him by their actions

"how they live proves that they do not know him"

They are detestable

"They are disgusting"

Chapter 2

Titus 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Gender roles

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches slaves to faithfully serve their masters. He teaches all believers to be godly and live rightly in every situation.

Links:

Titus 2:1 Notes

Titus 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving Titus reasons to preach God's word, and explains how the older men, older women, young men, and slaves or servants should live as believers.

But you, speak what fits

Paul implies what is in contrast. Alternate translation: "But you, Titus, in contrast with the false teachers, be sure to say those things that fit"

truthful instruction

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 2:2

to be temperate

"to be sober-minded" or "to be self-controlled"

temperate, dignified, sensible

"temperate and dignified, to control their desires

and sound in faith, in love, and in perseverance

The word "sound" means to be firm and unwavering. The abstract nouns "faith," "love," and "perseverance" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "and they must firmly believe the true teachings about God, truly love others, and continually serve God even when things are difficult"

Titus 2:3

slanderers

This word refers to people who say bad things about other people whether they are true or not.

or being slaves to much wine

People who cannot control themselves and who drink too much wine are spoken of as if they were slaves to the wine. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and not drinking too much wine" or "and not addicted to wine"

Titus 2:4

General Information:

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Titus 2:5

so that God's word may not be spoken of as evil

"Word" here is a metonym for "message," which in turn is a metonym for God himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that no one insults God's word" or "so that no one insults God by saying bad things about his message"

Titus 2:6

In the same way, encourage

"Also be sure to encourage"

Titus 2:7

present yourself as

"show yourself to be"

an example of good works

"an example of one who does right and proper things"

Titus 2:8

a truthful message

The Greek word translated "truthful, is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 2:9

their masters

"their own masters"

in everything

"in every situation" or "always"

please them

"make their masters happy" or "satisfy their masters"

Titus 2:10

demonstrate all good faith

"show that they are worthy of their masters' trust"

in every way

"in everything they do"

they may bring credit to the teaching about God our Savior

"they may make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" or "they may cause people to understand that the teaching about God our Savior is good"

God our Savior

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"our God who saves us"

Titus 2:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Titus to look for Jesus's coming and remember his authority through Jesus.

the grace of God has appeared

Paul speaks of the grace of God as if it were a person who goes to other people.

Titus 2:12

trains us

Paul speaks of the grace of God

trains us to reject godlessness

"teaches us not to dishonor God"

worldly desires

"strong desires for the things of this world" or "strong desires for sinful pleasures"

in this age

"as we live in this world" or "during this time"

Titus 2:13

we look forward to receiving

"we eagerly wait to receive" or "we eagerly wait to welcome"

our blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ

Here "glory" represents Jesus himself, who will appear gloriously. Here "hope" means "confidently expectation." Alternate translation: "the good thing for which we confidently wait, that is, the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ"

Titus 2:14

gave himself for us

This refers to Jesus dying willingly. Alternate translation: "gave himself to die for us"

to redeem us from all lawlessness

Paul speaks of Jesus as if he were setting slaves free from their evil master.

a special people

A group of people that he treasures.

are eager

"have a strong desire"

Titus 2:15

give correction with all authority

This statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "correct with all authority those people who do not do these things"

Let no one

"Do not allow anyone to"

disregard you

This statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "refuse to listen to your words" or "refuse to respect you"

Chapter 3

Titus 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul gives Titus personal instructions in this chapter.

Verse 15 formally concludes this letter. This is a common way of ending a letter in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogies

Genealogies are lists that record a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could normally become king. They also showed from what tribe and family they came. For example, priests came from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron.

Links:

Titus 3:1 Notes

Titus 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving Titus instructions on how to teach the elders and people under his care in Crete.

Remind them to submit

"Tell our people again what they already know, to submit" or "Keep reminding them to submit"

submit to rulers and authorities, to obey them

"do as the political rulers and government authorities say by obeying them"

rulers and authorities

These words have similar meanings and are used together to include everyone who holds authority in the government.

be ready for every good work

"be ready to do good whenever there is opportunity"

Titus 3:2

to insult no one

"to speak evil of no one"

Titus 3:3

For once we ourselves

"This is because we ourselves were once"

once

"formerly" or "at some time" or "previously"

we ourselves

"even we" or "we also"

were thoughtless

"were foolish" or "were unwise"

We were led astray and enslaved by various desires and pleasures

Desires and pleasures are spoken of as if they were masters over people and had made those people into slaves by lying to them. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Various desires and pleasures had lied to us and so led us astray" or "We had allowed ourselves to believe the lie that various desires and pleasures could make us happy, and then we were unable to control our feelings or stop doing things we thought would give us pleasure"

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We lived in evil and envy
"We were always doing evil things and not wanting others to have good things"
We were detestable
"We caused others to hate us"
Titus 3:4
when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared
Paul speaks of God's kindness and love as if they were people that came into our sight.
Titus 3:5
by his mercy
"because he had mercy on us"
washing of new birth
Paul is probably speaking of God's forgiveness for sinners as if God were physically washing them. He is also speaking of sinners who become responsive to God as if they had been born again.
Titus 3:6
whom God richly poured on us
It is common for New Testament writers to speak of the Holy Spirit as a liquid that God can pour out in large amounts. Alternate translation: "whom God gave to us generously"
through our Savior Jesus Christ
"when Jesus saved us"
Titus 3:7
having been justified
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "since God has declared us to be without sin"
we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life
The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were heirs, inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "we might become like God's heirs, confidently waiting to inherit eternal life" or "we might have the confident expectation that God will cause us to live forever"
Titus 3:8
This message
This refers to God giving the believers the Holy Spirit through Jesus in Titus 3:7.
may be careful to engage themselves in good works
"may seek to do good works"
Titus 3:9
Connecting Statement:
Paul explains what Titus should avoid.
But avoid
"So avoid" or "Therefore, avoid"
foolish debates
"arguments concerning unimportant matters"
genealogies
This is the study of family kinship relationships.
strife
arguments or fights
the law
"the law of Moses"
Titus 3:10
Connecting Statement:
Paul explains how Titus should treat those who cause contention among the believers.
Reject anyone
"Have everyone stay away from anyone"
after one or two warnings
"after you have warned that person once or twice"
Titus 3:11
such a person
"a person like that"
has turned from the right way
Paul speaks of someone who has rejected the truth as if he had left the correct path on which he had been walking.
condemns himself
"brings judgment on himself"
Titus 3:12
Connecting Statement:
Paul closes the letter by telling Titus what to do after he appoints elders in Crete and by giving greetings from those with him.
When I send
"After I send"
Artemas ... Tychicus
These are men's names.
hurry and come
"come quickly"
spend the winter
"stay until winter has ended"
Titus 3:13
Zenas ... Apollos
These are men's names.
Titus 3:14
Connecting Statement:
Paul explains why it is important to provide for Zenas and Apollos.
Our people
Paul is referring to the believers in Crete.
that provide for urgent needs
"that help people who need important things immediately"
needs, and so not be unfruitful
Paul speaks of people doing good work as if they were trees bearing good fruit. This double negative means they should be fruitful or productive. Alternate translation: "needs; in this way they will be fruitful" or "needs, and so they will do good works"
Titus 3:15
General Information:
Paul ends his letter to Titus.
All those
"All the people"
those who love us in faith
Possible meanings are 1) "the believers who love us" or 2) "the believers who love us because we share the same belief."
Grace be with all of you
This was a common Christian greeting. Alternate translation: "May God's grace be with you" or "I ask that God will be gracious to all of you"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Introduction to Philemon

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Philemon

Paul greets Philemon (1:1-3) Paul makes requests of Philemon about Onesimus (1:4-21) Conclusion (1:22-25)

Who wrote the Book of Philemon?

Paul wrote Philemon. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul was in a prison when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of Philemon about?

Paul wrote this letter to a man named Philemon. Philemon was a Christian who lived in the city of Colossae. He owned a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus had run away from Philemon and possibly stole something from him as well. Onesimus went to Rome and visited Paul in prison.

Paul told Philemon that he was sending Onesimus back to him. Philemon had the right to execute Onesimus according to Roman law. But Paul said that Philemon should accept Onesimus back as a Christian brother. He even suggested that Philemon should allow Onesimus to come back to Paul and help him in prison.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Philemon." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to Philemon" or "The Letter Paul wrote to Philemon."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Does this letter approve of the practice of slavery?

Paul sent Onesimus back to his former master. But that did not mean Paul thought slavery was an acceptable practice. Instead, Paul was more concerned with people serving God in whatever situation they were in.

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word “in” can mean “because of,” “by means of,” “that agrees with,” “in submission to,” “in the manner of,” or “in regard to.” The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Philemon. The two exceptions to this are 1:22 and 1:25. There "you" refers to Philemon and the believers that met at his house.

Chapter 1

Philemon 1:1

General Information:

Three times Paul identifies himself as the author of this letter. Evidently Timothy was with him and probably wrote the words down as Paul said them. Paul greets others who meet for church at Philemon's house. All instances of "I," "me," and "my" refer to Paul. Philemon is the main person to whom this letter is written. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to him and are singular unless otherwise noted.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and the brother Timothy, to Philemon

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the authors of a letter. Alternate translation: "I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother, are writing this letter to Philemon"

a prisoner of Christ Jesus

"a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus." People who opposed Paul's preaching had punished him by putting him into prison.

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian.

our dear friend

The word "our" here refers to Paul and those with him but not to the reader.

and fellow worker

"who, like us, works to spread the gospel"

Philemon 1:2

our sister ... our fellow soldier

The word "our" here refers to Paul and those with him but not to the reader.

Apphia our sister

Here "sister" means she was a believer, and not a relative. Alternate translation: "Apphia our fellow believer" or "Apphia our spiritual sister"

Archippus our fellow soldier

Paul speaks here of Archippus as if they were both soldiers

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in an army. He means that Archippus works hard, as Paul himself works hard, to spread the gospel. Alternate translation: "Archippus our fellow spiritual warrior" or "Archippus, who also fights the spiritual battle with us"

Archippus

This is the name of a man in the church with Philemon.

Philemon 1:3

May grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace." This is a blessing.

God our Father

The word "our" here refers to Paul, those with him, and the reader.

our Father

This is an important title for God.

Philemon 1:4

General Information:

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Philemon 1:5

General Information:

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Philemon 1:6

the sharing of your faith may be effective

Possible meanings are 1) "the way you tell others what you believe may cause them to believe also" or 2) "the way you believe the same way we do will cause good things to happen."

be effective, so you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have

"have a good result, and you will completely understand all the good things we have"

in Christ

"because of Christ" or "because we are Christ's people"

Philemon 1:7

the hearts of God's holy people have been refreshed by you

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's emotions or inner being. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you have encouraged believers" or "you have helped the believers"

you, brother

"you, dear brother" or "you, dear friend." Paul called Philemon "brother" because they were both believers and he was emphasizing their friendship.

Philemon 1:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his plea and the reason for his letter.

all the boldness in Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "authority because of Christ" or 2) "courage because of Christ." Alternate translation: "courage because Christ has given me authority"

Philemon 1:9

yet because of love

Possible meanings: 1) "because I know that you love God's people" 2) "because you love me" or 3) "because I love you"

Philemon 1:10

General Information:

Onesimus is the name of a man. He was apparently Philemon's slave and had stolen something and run away.

my child Onesimus

"my son Onesimus." Paul speaks of the way he is friends with Onesimus as if it were the way a father and his son love each other. Onesimus was not Paul's actual son, but he received spiritual life when Paul taught him about Jesus, and Paul loved him. Alternate translation: "my spiritual son Onesimus"

Onesimus

The name "Onesimus" means "profitable" or "useful."

whom I have fathered in my chains

Here "fathered" is a metaphor that means Paul converted Onesimus to Christ. Alternate translation: "who became my spiritual son when I taught him about Christ and he received new life while I was in my chains" or "who became like a son to me while I was in my chains"

in my chains

Prisoners were often bound in chains. Paul was in prison when he taught Onesimus and was still in prison when he wrote this letter. Alternate translation: "while I have been in prison" or "while I was in prison"

Philemon 1:11

General Information:

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Philemon 1:12

I have sent him back to you

Paul was probably sending Onesimus with another believer who carried this letter.

who is my very heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. The phrase "who is my very heart" is a metaphor for someone whom the speaker loves dearly. Paul was saying this about Onesimus. Alternate translation: "whom I love dearly"

Philemon 1:13

so he could serve me for you

"so that, since you cannot be here, he might help me" or "so that he could help me in your place"

while I am in chains

Prisoners were often bound in chains. Paul was in prison when he taught Onesimus and was still in prison when he wrote this letter. Alternate translation: "while I am in prison"

for the sake of the gospel

Paul was in prison because he preached the gospel publicly. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because I preach the gospel"

Philemon 1:14

But I did not want to do anything without your consent

Paul states a double negative to mean the opposite. Alternate translation: "But I wanted to make sure that you approved of everything I did"

I did not want your good deed to be from necessity but from good will

"I did not want you to do this good deed because I commanded you to do it, but because you wanted to do it"

but from good will

"but because you freely chose to do the right thing"

Philemon 1:15

Perhaps for this he was separated from you for a time, so that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Perhaps the reason God took Onesimus away from you for

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

a time was so that"

for a time

"during this time"

Philemon 1:16

better than a slave

"more valuable than a slave"

a beloved brother

"a dear brother" or "a precious brother in Christ"

much more so to you

"he means even more to you"

in both the flesh

"both as a man." Paul is referring to Onesimus' being a trustworthy servant.

in the Lord

"as a brother in the Lord" or "because he belongs to the Lord"

Philemon 1:17

if you have me as a partner

"if you think of me as a fellow worker for Christ"

Philemon 1:18

charge that to me

"say that I am the one who owes you"

Philemon 1:19

I, Paul, write this with my own hand

"I, Paul, write this myself." Paul wrote this part with his own hand so that Philemon would know that the words were really from Paul. Paul really would pay him.

not to mention

"I do not need to remind you" or "You already know." Paul says he does not need to tell Philemon this, but then continues to tell him anyway. This emphasizes the truth of what Paul is telling him.

you owe me your own self

"you owe me your own life." Paul was implying that Philemon should not say that Onesimus or Paul owed him anything because Philemon owed Paul even more. The reason Philemon owed Paul his life can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "you owe me much because I saved your life" or "you owe me your own life because what I told you saved your life"

Philemon 1:20

refresh my heart in Christ

Here "refresh" is a metaphor for comfort or encourage. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's feelings, thoughts, or inner being. How Paul wanted Philemon to refresh his heart can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "encourage me in Christ" or "comfort me in Christ" or "refresh my heart in Christ by accepting Onesimus kindly"

Philemon 1:21

General Information:

Here the words "your" and "you" are singular and refer to Philemon.

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter and speaks a blessing on Philemon and the believers that meet for church in Philemon's house.

Confident about your obedience

"Because I am sure that you will do what I ask"

Philemon 1:22

At the same time

"Also"

prepare a guest room for me

"make a room in your house ready for me." Paul is addressing Philemon here, so the word "prepare" is singular.

for I hope that through your prayers I will be returned to you

Paul is confident that he will return to Philemon and the other Christians there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for I confidently expect that God will answer your prayers and send me back to you"

your ... you

These words are plural and refer to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the other Christians that meet in their home.

Philemon 1:23

Epaphras

This man is a fellow believer and prisoner with Paul.

my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus

"who is in prison with me because he serves Christ Jesus"

Philemon 1:24

So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers

"Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers, also greet you"

Mark ... Aristarchus ... Demas ... Luke

These are names of men.

my fellow workers

"the men who work with me" or "who all work with me."

Philemon 1:25

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

The word "your" here refers to Philemon and all who met in his house and so is plural. The words "your spirit" are a synecdoche and represent the people themselves. Alternate translation: "May our Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you"

Introduction to Hebrews

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Hebrews

Jesus is superior to God's prophets and angels (1:1-4:13) Jesus is superior to the priests who serve in the temple in Jerusalem (4:14-7:28) Jesus's ministry is superior to the old covenant that God made with his people (8:1-10:39) What faith is like (11:1-40) Encouragement to be faithful to God (12:1-29) Concluding encouragements and greetings (13:1-25)

Who wrote the Book of Hebrews?

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. Scholars have suggested several different people who could possibly be the author. Possible authors are Paul, Luke, and Barnabas. The date of writing is also not known. Most scholars think it was written before A.D. 70. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the writer of this letter spoke about Jerusalem as if it had not yet

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been destroyed.

What is the Book of Hebrews about?

In the Book of Hebrews, the author shows that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. The author did this in order to encourage the Jewish Christians and to explain that Jesus is better than anything that the old covenant had to offer. Jesus is the perfect High Priest. Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. Animal sacrifices became useless because Jesus's sacrifice was once and for all time. Therefore, Jesus is the one and only way for people to be accepted by God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Hebrews." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter to the Hebrews" or "A Letter to the Jewish Christians."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Can readers understand this book without knowing about the sacrifices and the work of the priests required in the Old Testament?

It would be very difficult for readers to understand this book without understanding these matters. Translators might consider explaining some of these Old Testament concepts in notes or in an introduction to this book.

How is the idea of blood used in the Book of Hebrews?

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:7]
Beginning in [Hebrews 9:19]

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Hebrews in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God views Christians as sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people." Sometimes the meaning indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:10; 13:24) Sometimes the meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "sanctify," "set apart," "dedicated to," or "reserved for." (See: 2:11: 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12)
The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

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

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"you crowned him with glory and honor" (2:7). Some older translations read, "you crowned him with glory and honor and you have put him over the works of your hands." "those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed" (4:2). Some older translations read, "those who heard it without joining faith to it." "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come" (9:11). Some modern versions and older translations read, "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that are to come." "on those who were prisoners" (10:34). Some older translations read, "of me in my chains." "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword" (11:37). Some older translations read, "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were killed with the sword." "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned" (12:20). Some older translations read, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned or shot with an arrow."

Chapter 1

Hebrews 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is more important to us than the angels are.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:5, 7-13, which is from the Old Testament.
"Our ancestors"
The writer wrote this letter to Christians who had grown up as Jews. This is why the letter is called "Hebrews."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions
The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of proving Jesus is better than the angels. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that God's Son is more important than any of the angels.

Poetry
Jewish teachers, like the Old Testament prophets, would put their most important teachings in the form of poetry so that the hearers would be able to learn and remember them.

Links:

Hebrews 1:1 Notes Hebrews intro

Hebrews 1:1
General Information:
Although this letter does not mention to whom it was sent, the author wrote particularly to Hebrews (Jews), who would have understood the many Old Testament references. This prologue provides the background for the whole book: the unsurpassing greatness of the Son, who is greater than all. The book begins by emphasizing that the Son is better than the prophets and the angels.
Hebrews 1:2
in these last days
"in these final days." This phrase refers to the time when Jesus began his ministry, extending until God establishes his complete rule in his creation.
through a Son
"Son" here is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
to be the heir of all things
The author speaks of the Son as if he will inherit wealth and property from his Father. Alternate translation: "to possess all things"
It is through him that God also made the universe
"It is through the Son that God also made all things"
Hebrews 1:3
the brightness of God's glory
"the light of his glory." God's glory is associated with a very bright light. The author is saying that the Son embodies that light and fully represents God's glory.
glory, the exact representation of his being
"glory, the image of God's being." The phrase "the exact representation of his being" is similar in meaning to "the brightness of God's glory." The Son embodies the character and essence of God and fully represents everything that God is. Alternate translation: "glory and is just like God" or "glory, and what is true about God is true about the Son"
the word of his power
"his powerful word." Here "word" refers to a message or command. Alternate translation: "his powerful command"
After he had made cleansing for sins
The abstract noun "cleansing" can be expressed as a verb: "making clean." Alternate translation: "After he had finished making us clean from sins" or "After he had finished purifying us from our sins"
he had made cleansing for sins
The author speaks of forgiving sins as if it were making a person clean. Alternate translation: "he had made it possible for God to forgive our sins"
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high
To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the Majesty on high"
the Majesty on high
Here "Majesty" refers to God. Alternate translation: "God Most High"
Hebrews 1:4
He has become
"The Son has become"
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than their name
Here "name" refers to honor and authority. Alternate translation: "as the honor and authority he has inherited is superior to their honor and authority"
he has inherited
The author speaks of receiving honor and authority from his father as if it were inheriting wealth and property from his father. Alternate translation: "he has received"
Hebrews 1:5
General Information:
The first prophetic quotation (You are my Son) comes from the Psalms. The prophet Samuel wrote the second one (I will be a Father to him). The words "You" and "he" refer to Jesus, and the words "I" and "me" refer to God the Father.
For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son ... a Son to me"?
This question emphasizes that God does not call any angel his Son. Alternate translation: "For God never said to any of the angels, 'You are my Son ... a Son to me.'"
You are my Son ... I have become your Father
These two phrases mean essentially the same thing.
Hebrews 1:6
General Information:
The quotation, "All God's angels ... him," comes from one of the books that Moses wrote.
the firstborn
This means Jesus. The author refers to him as the "firstborn" to emphasize the Son's importance and authority over everyone else. It does not imply that there was a time before Jesus existed or that God has other sons like Jesus. Alternate translation: "his honored Son, his only Son"
he says
"God says"
Hebrews 1:7
General Information:
The quotation, "He is the one who makes ... fire," is from the Psalms.
He is the one who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire
Possible meanings are 1) "God has made his angels to be spirits who serve him with power like flames of fire" or 2) God makes the wind and flames of fire his messengers and servants. In the original language the word for "angel" is the same as "messenger," and the word for "spirits" is the same as "wind." With either possible meaning, the point is that the angels serve the Son because he is superior.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Hebrews 1:8

General Information:

This scriptual quotation comes from the Psalms.

But to the Son he says

"But God says this to the Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Your throne, God, is forever and ever

The Son's throne represents his rule. Alternate translation: "You are God, and your reign will last forever and ever"

The scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom

Here "scepter" refers to the Son's rule. Alternate translation: "And you will rule over your kingdom with justice" or "And you will rule over the people of your kingdom justly"

Hebrews 1:9

has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions

Here "oil of joy" refers to the joy that the Son felt when God honored him. Alternate translation: "has honored you and made you more joyful than anyone else"

Hebrews 1:10

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

Connecting Statement:

The author continues explaining that Jesus is superior to the angels.

In the beginning

"Before anything existed"

you laid the earth's foundation

The author speaks of God creating the earth as if he built a building on a foundation. Alternate translation: "you created the earth"

The heavens are the work of your hands

Here "hands" refer to God's power and action. Alternate translation: "You made the heavens"

Hebrews 1:11

They will perish

"The heavens and earth will disappear" or "The heavens and earth will no longer exist"

wear out like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a piece of clothing that will get old and eventually become useless.

Hebrews 1:12

roll them up like a cloak

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a robe or another kind of outer garment.

they will be changed like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were clothing that could be exchanged for other clothing.

they will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will change them"

your years do not end

Periods of time are used to represent God's eternal existence. Alternate translation: "your life will never end"

Hebrews 1:13

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

But to which of the angels has God said at any time ... feet"?

The author uses a question to emphasize that God has never said this to an angel. Alternate translation: "But God has never said to an angel at any time ... feet.'"

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet

Christ's enemies are spoken of as if they will become an object on which a king rests his feet. This image represents defeat and dishonor for his enemies.

Hebrews 1:14

Are not all angels spirits ... inherit salvation?

The author uses this question to remind the readers that angels are not as powerful as Christ, but they have a different role. Alternate translation: "All angels are spirits who ... inherit salvation."

for those who will inherit salvation

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "for those whom God will save"

Chapter 2

Hebrews 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:6-8, 12-13, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Hebrews 2:1 Notes

Hebrews 2:1

Connecting Statement:

This is the first of five urgent warnings the author gives.

we must

Here "we" refers to the author and includes his audience.

so that we do not drift away from it

Possible meanings for this metaphor are 1) people who stop believing in God's word are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop

believing it" or 2) people who stop obeying God's words are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop obeying it"

Hebrews 2:2

For if the message that was spoken through the angels

The Jews believed that God spoke his law to Moses through angels. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For if the message that God spoke through the angels"

For if the message

The author is certain that these things are true. Alternate translation: "Because the message"

every transgression and disobedience receives just repayment

Here "transgression" and "disobedience" stand for the people who are guilty of these sins. Alternate translation: "every person who sins and disobeys will receive just repayment"

transgression and disobedience

These two words mean basically the same thing.

repayment

This is a general term, but you may need to make explicit that the "repayment" here is just punishment. Alternate translation: "punishment"

Hebrews 2:3

how then can we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

The author uses a question to emphasize that the people will certainly receive punishment if they refuse God's salvation through Christ. Alternate translation: "then God will certainly punish us if we do not pay attention to his message about how God will save us!"

ignore

"pay no attention to" or "consider unimportant"

This is salvation that was first announced by the Lord and confirmed to us by those who heard it

This can be stated in active form. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "The Lord himself first announced the message about how God will save us and then those who heard the message confirmed it to us"

Hebrews 2:4

according to his will

"in just the way he wanted to do it"

Hebrews 2:5

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that the earth will one day be under the rule of the Lord Jesus.

For it was not to the angels that God subjected

"For God did not make the angels rulers over"

the world to come

Here "world" refers to the people who live there. And "to come" means that this is the world in the next age after Christ returns. Alternate translation: "the people who will live in the new world"

Hebrews 2:6

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It continues on through verse 8.

What is man, that you are mindful of him?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the insignificance of humans and expresses surprise that God would pay attention to them. Alternate translation: "Humans are insignificant, and yet you are mindful of them!"

Or a son of man, that you care for him?

The idiom "son of man" refers to human beings. This rhetorical question means basically the same thing as the first question. It expresses surprise that God would care for humans, who are insignificant. Alternate translation: "Human beings are of little importance, and yet you care for them!"

Or a son of man

The verb may be supplied from the previous question. Alternate translation: "Or what is a son of man"

Hebrews 2:7

a little lower than the angels

The author speaks of people being less important than angels as if the people are standing in a position that is lower than the angels' position. Alternate translation: "less important than the angels"

made man ... crowned him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females. Alternate translation: "made humans ... crowned them"

you crowned him with glory and honor

The gifts of glory and honor are spoken of as if they were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "you have given them great glory and honor"

Hebrews 2:8

his feet ... to him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females. Alternate translation: "their feet ... to them"

You put everything in subjection under his feet

The author speaks of humans having control over everything as if they have stepped on everything with their feet. Alternate translation: "You have given them control over everything"

He did not leave anything not subjected to him

This double negative emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God made everything subject to him"

we do not yet see everything subjected to him

"we know that humans are not in control of everything yet"

Hebrews 2:9

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that Christ became lower than the angels when he came to earth to suffer death for forgiveness of sins, and that he became a merciful high priest to believers.

we see him

"we know there is one"

who was made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God made"

lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor

See how you translated these words in Hebrews 2:7.

he might taste death

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The experience of death is spoken of as if it were food that people can taste. Alternate translation: "he might experience death" or "he might die"

Hebrews 2:10

bring many sons to glory

The gift of glory is spoken of here as if it were a place to which people could be brought. Alternate translation: "save many sons"

many sons

Here this refers to believers in Christ, including males and females. Alternate translation: "many believers"

the founder of their salvation

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) the author speaks of Jesus as the one who establishes salvation, or makes it possible for God to save people. Alternate translation: "the one who makes their salvation possible" or 2) the word translated here as "founder" can mean "leader" and the writer speaks of salvation as if it were a destination and of Jesus as the person who goes before the people on the road and leads them to salvation. Alternate translation: "the one who leads people to salvation"

complete

Becoming mature and completely trained is spoken of as if a person were made complete, perhaps complete in all his body parts.

Hebrews 2:11

the one who sanctifies

"the one who makes others holy" or "the one who makes others pure from sin"

those who are sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom he makes holy" or "those whom he makes pure from sin"

have one source

Who that source is can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "have one source, God himself" or "have the same Father"

he is not ashamed

"Jesus is not ashamed"

is not ashamed to call them brothers

This litotes means that he will claim them as his brothers. Alternate translation: "is pleased to call them brothers"

brothers

Here this refers to all who have believed in Jesus, including both men and women.

Hebrews 2:12

General Information:

This prophetic quotation comes from a Psalm of King David.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers

Here "name" refers to the person's reputation and what they have done. Alternate translation: "I will proclaim to my brothers the great things you have done"

from inside the assembly

"when believers come together to worship God"

Hebrews 2:13

General Information:

The prophet Isaiah wrote these quotations.

And again,

"And a prophet wrote in another scripture passage what Christ said about God:"

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like my children"

Hebrews 2:14

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like his children"

share in flesh and blood

The phrase "flesh and blood" refers to people's human nature. Alternate translation: "are all human beings"

he shared in those things in the same way

"Jesus in the same way shared in flesh and blood" or "Jesus became human in the same way they did"

through death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "by dying"

has the power of death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "has the power to cause people to die"

Hebrews 2:15

This was so that he would free all those who through fear of death lived all their lives subject to slavery

The fear of death is spoken of as if it were making people live as slaves. Taking away someone's fear is spoken of as it were freeing that person from slavery. Alternate translation: "This was so he might free all people. For we lived like slaves because we were afraid of dying"

Hebrews 2:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 2:17

it was necessary for him

"it was necessary for Jesus"

like his brothers

Here "brothers" refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "like human beings"

he could make atonement for the sins of the people

Christ's death on the cross means that God can forgive sins. Alternate translation: "he could make it possible for God to forgive people's sins"

Hebrews 2:18

was tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Satan tempted him"

who are tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom Satan is tempting"

Chapter 3

Hebrews 3 General Notes

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Structure and formatting

This chapter is about how Jesus is better than Moses, the greatest Israelite in the Old Testament.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:7-11,15, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers
The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harden your hearts
A person who hardens his heart is a person who will not listen to or obey God.
Rhetorical questions
The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of warning his readers. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that they need to listen to God and obey him.

Links:

Hebrews 3:1 Notes

Hebrews 3:1
Connecting Statement:
This second warning is longer and more detailed and includes chapters 3 and 4. The writer begins by showing that Christ is better than his servant Moses.
holy brothers
Here "brothers" refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "holy brothers and sisters" or "my holy fellow believers"
you share in a heavenly calling
Here "heavenly" represents God. Alternate translation: "God has called us together"
the apostle and high priest
Here the word "apostle" means someone who has been sent. In this passage, it does not refer to any of the twelve apostles. Alternate translation: "the one whom God sent and is the high priest"
of our confession
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "confession" is expressed as the verb "confess." Alternate translation: "whom we confess" or "in whom we believe"
Hebrews 3:2
in all the house of God
The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "to all of God's people"
Hebrews 3:3
Jesus has been considered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has considered Jesus"
Hebrews 3:4
the one who built everything
God's acts of creating the world are spoken of as if they were the actions of building a house.
every house is built by someone
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "every house has someone who built it"
Hebrews 3:5
in God's entire house
The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:2]
house, bearing witness about the things
This phrase probably refers to all of Moses's work. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "house. Moses's life and work pointed to the things"
were to be spoken of in the future
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would speak about in the future"
Hebrews 3:6
Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
who is in charge of the house of God
This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "who rules over God's people"
We are his house
This speaks of God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "We are God's people"
if we hold firmly to our courage and the hope of which we boast
Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Here "courage" and "hope" are abstract nouns and can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "if we continue to be courageous and joyfully expect God to do what he has promised"
Hebrews 3:7
General Information:
This quotation comes from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.
Connecting Statement:
The warning here is a reminder that the Israelites' unbelief kept almost all of them from entering into the land that God had promised them.
if you hear his voice
God's "voice" represents him speaking. Alternate translation: "when you hear God speak"
Hebrews 3:8
do not harden your hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn. Alternate translation: "do not be stubborn" or "do not

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refuse to listen"

as in the rebellion, in the time of testing in the wilderness

Here "rebellion" and "testing" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "as when your ancestors rebelled against God and tested him in the wilderness"

Hebrews 3:9

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms.

your ancestors

Here "your" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.

by testing me

Here "me" refers to God.

Hebrews 3:10

forty years

"40 years"

I was angry

"I was greatly unhappy"

They have always gone astray in their hearts

Here "gone astray in their hearts" is a metaphor for not being loyal to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for minds or desires. Alternate translation: "They have always rejected me" or "They have always refused to obey me"

They have not known my ways

This speaks of a manner of conducting one's life as if it were a way or a path. Alternate translation: "They have not understood how I want them to conduct their lives"

Hebrews 3:11

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "I will never allow them to experience my blessings of rest"

Hebrews 3:12

brothers

Here this refers to fellow Christians, including males and females. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"

that none of you has an evil heart of unbelief, a heart that turns away from the living God

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents a person's mind or will. Refusing to believe and obey God is spoken of as if the heart did not believe and it physically turned away from God. Alternate translation: "that none of you refuses to believe the truth and stops obeying the living God"

the living God

"the true God who is really alive"

Hebrews 3:13

as long as it is called "today,"

"while there is still opportunity,"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the deceitfulness of sin will not harden any of you"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

Being stubborn is spoken of as being hard or having a hard heart. The hardness is a result of being deceived by sin. This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "deceitfulness" is expressed as the verb "deceive." Alternate translation: "no one among you will be deceived by sin and become stubborn" or "you do not sin, deceiving yourselves so that you become stubborn"

Hebrews 3:14

For we have become

Here "we" refers to both the writer and the readers.

if we firmly hold to our confidence in him

"if we continue to confidently trust in him"

from the beginning

"from when we first began to believe in him"

to the end

This is a polite way of referring to when a person dies. Alternate translation: "until we die"

Hebrews 3:15

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the same psalm that was also quoted in Hebrews 3:7.

it has been said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the writer wrote"

if you hear his voice

God's "voice" represents him speaking. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

as in the rebellion

Here "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 3:16

Who was it who heard God and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt through Moses?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed. Alternate translation: "All those who came out of Egypt with Moses heard God, yet they still rebelled."

Hebrews 3:17

With whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed. Alternate translation: "For forty years, God was angry with those who sinned, and he let them die in the wilderness."

forty years

"40 years"

Hebrews 3:18

To whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if it was not to those who disobeyed him?

The author uses this question to teach his readers. Alternate translation: "And it was to those who disobeyed that he swore they would not enter his rest."

they would not enter his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "they would not enter the place of rest" or "they would not experience his blessings of rest"

they

The word "they" refers to the disobedient Israelites.

Hebrews 3:19

General Information:

Here "we" refers to the author and readers.

because of unbelief

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The abstract noun "unbelief" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because they did not believe him"

Chapter 4

Hebrews 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter tells why Jesus is the greatest high priest.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:3-4, 7, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's rest

The word "rest" seems to refer to at least two things in this chapter. It refers to a place or time when God will allow his people to rest from their work (Hebrews 4:3), and it refers to God resting on the seventh day (Hebrews 4:4).

Links:

Hebrews 4:1 Notes

Hebrews 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Chapter 4 continues the warning to believers starting in Hebrews 3:7.

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true" or "Since God will certainly punish those who do not obey"

let us fear

This is probably a hyperbole that refers to being very careful. Alternate translation: "we must be very careful"

entering his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to enter the place of rest" or "to experience God's blessings of rest"

none of you may seem to have fallen short of it

God's promise is spoken of as if it were a place to which people were trying to go. Alternate translation: "none of you fail to enter into God's rest, which he promised to us" or "God allows you all to enter into his rest as he promised us"

Hebrews 4:2

For we were told the good news just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For we heard the good news just as they did"

as they were

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors who were alive during the time of Moses.

But that message did not benefit those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed

The author is talking about two groups of people, those who received God's covenant with faith, and those who heard it but did not believe. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "But that message benefited only those who believed and obeyed it"

unite

join

Hebrews 4:3

General Information:

Here the quotation, "As I swore ... rest," is from a psalm.

we who have believed

"we who believe"

we who have believed enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "we who have believed will enter the place of rest" or "we who have believed will experience God's blessings of rest"

just as he said

"just as God said"

As I swore in my wrath

"As I swore when I was very angry"

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "They will never experience my blessings of rest"

his works were finished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he finished creating" or "he finished his works of creation"

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "at the beginning of the world" or "from the time he created the world"

Hebrews 4:4

General Information:

The quotation, "God rested on ... works," is from Moses's writings.

the seventh day

The word "seventh" is the ordinal number for "seven."

Hebrews 4:5

General Information:

This quotation, "They will never enter ... rest," is from a psalm.

Hebrews 4:6

it remains for some to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God still allows some people to enter his place of rest" or "God still allows some people to

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experience his blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:7

General Information:

Here we find out that this quotation from the Psalms was written by David (Hebrews 3:7-8).

if you hear his voice

God's commands to Israel are spoken of as if he had given them in an audible voice. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

do not harden your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 4:8

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer warns believers not to disobey but to enter into the rest God offers. He reminds them that God's word will convict them and that they can come in prayer with the confidence that God will help them.

if Joshua had given them rest

A person causing someone to rest is spoken of as if the person were giving someone rest. Alternate translation: "if Joshua had been able to cause the people to rest" or "if the Israelites during the time of Joshua had experienced God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:9

General Information:

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Hebrews 4:10

he who enters into God's rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they are a place to enter. Alternate translation: "the person who enters into God's place of rest" or "the person who experiences God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:11

let us be eager to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were a place to enter. Alternate translation: "we should also do everything we can to rest with God where he is"

will fall into the kind of disobedience that they did

Disobedience is spoken of as if it were a hole that a person could physically fall into by accident. This passage can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disobedience" is expressed as the verb "disobey." Alternate translation: "will disobey in the same way as they did"

that they did

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors during the time of Moses.

Hebrews 4:12

the word of God is living ... It pierces ... is able

Here "word of God" refers to anything that God has communicated to humanity, whether through speech or through written messages. Alternate translation: "the words of God are living ... They pierce ... are able"

living and active

This speaks about God's word as if it were alive. It means when God speaks, it is powerful and effective.

sharper than any two-edged sword

A two-edged sword can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

two-edged sword

a sword with a blade that is sharp on both edges

It pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow

This continues speaking about God's word as if it were a sword. Here the sword is so sharp that it can cut through and divide parts of the human that are very difficult or even impossible to divide. This means that there is nothing inside us that we can hide from God.

soul and spirit

These are two different but closely related nonphysical parts of a human. The "soul" is what causes a person to be alive. The "spirit" is the part of a person that causes him to be able to know and believe in God.

joints and marrow

The "joint" is what holds two bones together. The "marrow" is the center part of the bone.

is able to discern

This speaks about God's word as if it were a person who could know something. Alternate translation: "exposes"

the thoughts and intentions of the heart

"Heart" here is a metonym for "inner self." Alternate translation: "what a person is thinking and intends to do"

Hebrews 4:13

No thing that has been created is hidden before God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Nothing that God has created can hide from him"

everything is bare and open

This speaks about all things as if they were a person standing bare, or a box that is open. Alternate translation: "everything is completely exposed"

bare and open

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that nothing is hidden from God.

to the eyes of the one to whom we must give an account

God is spoken of as if he had eyes. Alternate translation: "to God, who will judge how we have lived"

Hebrews 4:14

who has passed through the heavens

"who has entered where God is"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

let us firmly hold to our confession

The word "confession" is a metonym for what a person believes and confesses. This is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp firmly. Alternate translation: "let us continue to believe confidently in him, as we say that we do"

Hebrews 4:15

we do not have a high priest who cannot feel sympathy ... Rather, we have

This double negative is used to correct an incorrect idea that the reader might have, that the high priest cannot feel sympathy. Alternate translation: "we have a high priest who can feel sympathy ... Rather, we have"

who has in all ways been tempted as we are

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"who has endured temptation in every way that we have" or "whom the devil has tempted in every way that he tempts us"

he is without sin

"he did not sin"

Hebrews 4:16

to the throne of grace

"to God's throne, where there is grace." Here "throne" refers to God ruling as king. Alternate translation: "to where our gracious God is sitting on his throne"

we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need

Here "mercy" and "grace" are spoken of as if they were objects that can be given or can be found. Alternate translation: "God may be merciful and gracious and help us in time of need"

Chapter 5

Hebrews 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the teaching of the previous chapter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 5:5-6.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and solid food

The writer speaks of Christians who are only able to understand simple things about Jesus as if they were babies, who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food.

Links:

Hebrews 5:1 Notes

Hebrews 5:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer describes the sinfulness of the Old Testament priests, and then he shows that Christ has a better kind of priesthood, one not based on Aaron's priesthood but on the priesthood of Melchizedek.

chosen from among people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God chooses from among the people"

is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God appoints"

to act on the behalf of people

"to represent the people"

so that he may offer

The word "he" refers to a high priest.

Hebrews 5:2

He can deal gently

"The high priest can deal gently"

those ... who have been deceived

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those ... whom others have deceived" or "those ... who believe what is false"

who have been deceived

"who believe false things and so behave badly"

is subject to weakness

The high priest's own weakness is spoken of as if it were a another person who rules over him. Alternate translation: "is spiritually weak" or "is weak against sin"

weakness

the desire to sin

Hebrews 5:3

he also is required

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also requires him"

Hebrews 5:4

takes this honor

Honor is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp in his hands.

takes this honor

The "honor" or praise and respect that people gave to the high priest stand for his task.

he is called by God, just as Aaron was

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God calls him, just as he called Aaron"

Hebrews 5:5

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

the one speaking to him said

"God said to him"

You are my Son; today I have become your Father

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing. See how you translated them in [Hebrews 1:5]

Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

Hebrews 5:6

General Information:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This prophecy is from a Psalm of David.

he also says

To whom God is speaking can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he also says to Christ"

in another place

"in another place in the scriptures"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 5:7

During the days of his flesh

Here "the days" stands for a period of time. And, "flesh" stand for Jesus's earthly life. Alternate translation: "While he lived on earth"

prayers and requests

Both of these words mean basically the same thing.

the one able to save him from death

Possible meanings are 1) God was able to save Christ so that he would not die. Alternate translation: 'to save him from dying" or 2) God was able to save Christ after Christ's death by making him alive again. If possible, translate this in a way that allows both interpretations.

he was heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God heard him"

Hebrews 5:8

a Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Hebrews 5:9

He was made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made him perfect"

made perfect

Here this means being made mature, able to honor God in all aspects of life.

became, for everyone who obeys him, the cause of eternal salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "now he saves all who obey him and causes them to live forever"

Hebrews 5:10

He was designated by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God designated him" or "God appointed him"

as high priest after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "to be the sort of high priest that Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer begins his third warning. He warns these believers that they are still not mature and encourages them to learn God's word so they can understand right from wrong.

We have much to say

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I have much to say"

you have become dull in hearing

The ability to understand and obey is spoken of as if it were the ability to listen. And the ability to listen is spoken of as if it were a metal tool that becomes dull with use. Alternate translation: "you have trouble understanding it"

Hebrews 5:12

elementary principles of God's messages

Here "elementary principles" refers to the first things people should be able to understand. Alternate translation: "basic truths of God's messages" or "beginnning lessons of God's word"

You need milk

Truths about God that are easy to understand are spoken of as if they were milk, the only food that infants can take. Alternate translation: "You have become like babies and can drink only milk"

milk, not solid food

Truths about God that are difficult to understand are spoken of as if they were solid food, suitable for adults. Alternate translation: "milk instead of solid food that adults can eat"

Hebrews 5:13

takes milk

Here "takes" stands for "drinks." Alternate translation: "drinks milk"

because he is still a little child

Spiritual maturity is compared with the kind of food that a growing child eats. Solid food is not for a tiny baby, and that is a figure describing a young Christian who only learns simple truths; but later, more solid food is given to the little child, just as when a person matures he can learn about matters that are more difficult.

Hebrews 5:14

who because of their maturity have their understanding trained for distinguishing good from evil

People trained to understand something are spoken of as if their ability to understand had been trained. Alternate translation: "who are mature and can distinguish between good and evil"

Chapter 6

Hebrews 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Abrahamic Covenant

In the covenant that God made with Abraham, God promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. He also promised to protect Abraham's descendants and to give them land of their own. (See: covenant)

Links:

Hebrews 6:1 Notes

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Hebrews 6:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues with what immature Hebrew believers need to do to become mature Christians. He reminds them of the foundational teachings.

let us leave the beginning of the message of Christ and move forward to maturity

This speaks about the basic teachings as if they were the beginning of a journey and the mature teachings as if they were the end of a journey. Alternate translation: "let us stop only discussing what we first learned and start understanding more mature teachings as well"

Let us not lay again the foundation

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "Let us not repeat the basic teachings"

dead works

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the dead.

Hebrews 6:2

nor the foundation of teaching

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "nor the basic teachings"

laying on of hands

This practice was done to set someone apart for special service or position.

Hebrews 6:3

General Information:

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Hebrews 6:4

those who were once enlightened

Understanding is spoken of as if it were illumination. Alternate translation: "those who once understood the message about Christ"

who tasted the heavenly gift

Experiencing salvation is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who experienced God's saving power"

who were sharers of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, who comes to believers, is spoken of as if he were an object that people could share. Alternate translation: "who received the Holy Spirit"

Hebrews 6:5

who tasted God's good word

Learning God's message is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who learned about God's good message"

the powers of the age to come

This means the power of God when his kingdom is fully present in all the world. In this sense, "the powers" refer to God himself, who holds all power. Alternate translation: "how God will work powerfully in the future"

Hebrews 6:6

it is impossible to restore them again to repentance

"it is impossible to bring them back to repent again"

they crucify the Son of God for themselves again

When people turn away from God, it is as though they crucify Jesus again. Alternate translation: "it is like they crucify for themselves the very Son of God again"

Son of God

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

Hebrews 6:7

the land that drinks in the rain

Farmland that benefits from much rain is spoken of as if it were a person who drinks in the rainwater. Alternate translation: "the land that absorbs the rain"

that gives birth to the plants

Farmland that produces crops is spoken of as if it gives birth to them. Alternate translation: "that produces plants"

the land that receives a blessing from God

Rain and crops are seen as proof that God has helped the farmland. The farmland is spoken of as if it were a person who could receive God's blessing.

a blessing from God

Here "blessing" means help from God, not spoken words.

Hebrews 6:8

is near to a curse

This speaks of "curse" as if it were a place to which a person could draw near. Alternate translation: "is in danger of God cursing it"

Its end is in burning

The farmer will burn everything in the field.

Hebrews 6:9

we are convinced

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I am convinced" or "I am certain"

about better things concerning you

This means they are doing better than those who have rejected God, disobeyed him, and now can no longer repent so that God will forgive them (Hebrews 6:4-6). Alternate translation: "that you are doing better things than what I have mentioned"

things that concern salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "things that concern God saving you"

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unjust. He will not forget

This double negative can mean that God in his justice will remember what good things his people have done. Alternate translation: "For God is just. He will certainly remember"

for his name

God's "name" is a metonym that stands for God himself. Alternate translation: "for him"

Hebrews 6:11

We greatly desire

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I greatly desire"

diligence

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

careful, hard work
to the end
The implicit meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the end of your lives"
in order to make your hope certain
Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "in order to have complete certainty that you will receive what God has promised you"
Hebrews 6:12
imitators
An "imitator" is someone who copies the behavior of someone else.
inherit the promises
Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "receive what God promised them"
Hebrews 6:13
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Hebrews 6:14
He said
God said
Hebrews 6:15
what was promised
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God promised him"
Hebrews 6:16
General Information:
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Hebrews 6:17
to the heirs of the promise
The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "to those who would receive what he promised"
the unchangeable quality of his purpose
"that his purpose would never change" or "that he would always do what he said he would do"
Hebrews 6:18
we, who have fled for refuge
Believers, who trust in God for him to protect them, are spoken of as if they were running to a safe place. Alternate translation: "we, who have trusted him"
will have a strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us
The phrase "to hold firmly to the hope set before us" is a metaphor meaning to continue to hope in what God has promised to do. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "will continue to trust in God just has he encouraged us to do"
set before us
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has placed before us"
Hebrews 6:19
Connecting Statement:
Having finished his third warning and encouragement to the believers, the writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.
as a secure and reliable anchor for the soul
Just as an anchor keeps a boat from drifting in the water, Jesus keeps us secure in God's presence. Alternate translation: "that causes us to live securely in God's presence"
a secure and reliable anchor
Here the words "secure" and "reliable" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the complete reliability of the anchor. Alternate translation: "a completely reliable anchor"
hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain
Confidence is spoken of as if it were a person who could go into the most holy place of the temple.
the inner place
This was the most holy place in the temple. It was thought to be the place where God was most intensely present among his people. In this passage, this place stands for heaven and God's throne room.
Hebrews 6:20
after the order of Melchizedek
This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Chapter 7

Hebrews 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:17, 21, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Links:

Hebrews 7:1 Notes

Hebrews 7:1
Connecting Statement:
The writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Salem

This is the name of a city.

Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings

This is refers to when Abraham and his men went and defeated the armies of four kings in order to rescue his nephew, Lot, and his family.

Hebrews 7:2

It was to him

"It was to Melchizedek"

king of righteousness ... king of peace

"righteous king ... peaceful king"

Hebrews 7:3

He is without father, without mother, without ancestors, with neither beginning of days nor end of life

It is possible to think from this passage that Melchizedek was neither born nor did he die. However, it is likely that all the writer means is that the Scriptures provide no information about Melchizedek's ancestry, birth, or death.

Hebrews 7:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer states that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's priesthood and then reminds his readers that the priesthood of Aaron did not make anything perfect.

this man was

"Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 7:5

The descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office

The author says this because not all of Levi's sons became priests. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Levi who become priests"

from the people

"from the people of Israel"

from their brothers

Here "brothers" means they are all related to each other through Abraham. Alternate translation: "from their relatives"

Hebrews 7:6

whose descent was not traced from them

"who was not a descendant of Levi"

the one who had the promises

The things that God promised to do for Abraham are spoken of as if they were objects that he could possess. Alternate translation: the one to whom God had spoken his promises"

Hebrews 7:7

the lesser person is blessed by the greater person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the more important person blesses the less important person"

Hebrews 7:8

In this case ... in that case

These phrases are used to compare the Levite priests with Melchizedek. Your language may have a way to emphasize that the author is making a comparison.

is testified that he lives on

It is never explicitly written in scripture that Melchizedek dies. The author of Hebrews speaks of this absence of information about Melchizedek's death in scripture as if it were a positive statement that he is still alive. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "scripture shows that he lives on"

Hebrews 7:9

Levi, who received tithes, also paid tithes through Abraham

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:10

Levi was in the body of his ancestor

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the manner of Melchizedek, and not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron?

This question emphasizes that it was unexpected that priests come after the order of Melchizedek. Alternate translation: "no one would have needed another priest, one who was like Melchizedek and not like Aaron, to arise."

to arise

"to come" or "to appear"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not be after the manner of Aaron" or "who is not a priest like Aaron"

Hebrews 7:12

For when the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For when God changed the priesthood, he also had to change the law"

Hebrews 7:13

For the one

This refers to Jesus.

about whom these things are said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about whom I am speaking"

Hebrews 7:14

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

it is from Judah that our Lord was born

The words "our Lord" refer to Jesus.

from Judah

"from the tribe of Judah"

Hebrews 7:15

when another priest arises

"when another priest comes"

in the likeness of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"
Hebrews 7:16
This one became a priest
The words "This one" refer to the one who became priest in the likeness of Melchizedek.
not based on a law of physical requirement
He became priest, but it was not because he met the physical requrement.
a law of physical requirement
This physical requirement is that only the descendants of priests could become priests. Alternate translation: "a law of human descent" or "a law that required priests to be descendants of priests"
Hebrews 7:17
General Information:
This quote comes from a psalm of King David.
For scripture witnesses about him
This speaks about scripture as if it were a person who could witness about something. Alternate translation: "For God witnesses about him through the scriptures" or "For this is what was written about him in the scripture"
according to the order of Melchizedek
There were two groups of priests. One was made up of the descendants of Levi. The other was made up of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "according to the line of Melchizedek" or "according to the priesthood of Melchizedek"
Hebrews 7:18
Connecting Statement:
The writer gives the first of two statements that explain Hebrews 7:17.
has the former command been set aside
Here "set aside" is a metaphor for making something invalid. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has God made the commandment invalid"
Hebrews 7:19
Connecting Statement:
After a short statement that explains Hebrews 7:18, the writer gives the second of two statements that explain Hebrews 7:17.
the law made nothing perfect
The law is spoken of as if it were a person who could act. Alternate translation: "no one could become perfect by obeying the law"
a better hope is introduced
Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has introduced a better hope" or "God has given us reason for a more confident hope"
through which we come near to God
Worshiping God and having his favor are spoken of as coming near to him. Alternate translation: "and because of this hope we approach God" or "and because of this hope we worship God"
Hebrews 7:20
And it was not without an oath!
The word "it" refers to the act of God choosing Jesus to be the eternal priest. This can be stated in positive form, and it can be stated clearly who made the oath. Alternate translation: "And God did not choose this new priest without swearing an oath!" or "And God showed how important it was by swearing an oath!"
Hebrews 7:21
General Information:
This quote comes from the same psalm of David as Hebrews 7:17.
Hebrews 7:22
has given the guarantee of a better covenant
"has told us that we can be sure that there will be a better covenant"
Hebrews 7:23
Connecting Statement:
The writer then assures these Jewish believers that Christ has the better priesthood because he lives forever and the priests that descended from Aaron all die, stopping them from continuing to be priests.
Hebrews 7:24
he has a permanent priesthood
A priest's work is spoken of as if it were an object that the priest possesses. This can be worded to avoid the abstract noun. Alternate translation: "he is a priest permanently"
Hebrews 7:25
Therefore he
You can make explicit what "Therefore" implies. Alternate translation: "Because Christ is our high priest who lives forever, he"
those who approach God through him
"those who come to God because of what Jesus has done"
Hebrews 7:26
exalted above the heavens
"whom God has raised up to the highest heavens." The author speaks of possessing more honor and power than anyone else as if it were a position that is up above all things. Alternate translation: "whom God has given more honor and power than anyone else"
Hebrews 7:27
General Information:
Here the words "He," "his," and "himself" refer to Christ.
Hebrews 7:28
the law appoints as high priests men who have weaknesses
Here "the law" is a metonym for the men who appointed the high priests according to the law of Moses. The focus is not on the men who did this, but on the fact that they did this according to the law. Alternate translation: "according to the law, men appoint as high priests men who have weaknesses" or "for according to the law, men who have weaknesses are appointed as high priests"
men who have weaknesses
"men who are spiritually weak" or "men who are weak against sin"
the word of the oath, which came after the law, appointed a Son
The "word of the oath" represents God, who made the oath. Alternate translation: "God appointed a Son by his oath, which he made after he gave the law, a Son" or "after he had given the law, God swore an oath and appointed his Son"
Son

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This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who has been made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who has completely obeyed God and become mature"

Chapter 8

Hebrews 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes describing how and why Jesus is the most important high priest. Then he begins to speak about how the new covenant is better to the covenant God made with Moses. (See: covenant)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 8:8-12, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

New covenant

The author tells how Jesus has established a new covenant that is better than the covenant that God established with the Israelites. (See: covenant)

Links:

Hebrews 8:1 Notes

Hebrews 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer, having shown that Christ's priesthood is better than the earthly priesthood, shows that the earthly priesthood was a pattern of heavenly things. Christ has a superior ministry, a superior covenant.

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

we are saying

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Because the writer does not include his readers here, the word "we" is exclusive. Alternate translation: "I am saying" or "I am writing"

We have a high priest

The author is including the readers here, so the word "we" is inclusive.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 8:2

the true tabernacle that the Lord, not a man, set up

People built the earthly tabernacle out of animal skins fastened to a wooden framework, and they set it up in the manner of a tent. Here "true tabernacle" means the heavenly tabernacle that God created.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God appoints every priest"

Hebrews 8:4

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

according to the law

"as God requires in the law"

Hebrews 8:5

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things

The words "copy" and "shadow" have similar meanings and are metaphors meaning that something is not the real thing but it is similar to the real thing. These words emphasize that the priesthood and the earthly temple were images of Christ, the true high priest, and the heavenly temple. Alternate translation: "They serve what is a vague image of the heavenly things" or "They serve what is only similar to the heavenly things"

It is just as Moses was warned by God when he was

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is just as God warned Moses when Moses was"

was about to construct the tabernacle

Moses did not construct the tabernacle himself. He ordered the people to construct it. Alternate translation: "was about to command the people to construct the tabernacle"

See that

"Make sure that"

to the pattern

"to the design"

that was shown to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I showed you"

on the mountain

You can make explicit that "mountain" refers to Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: "on Mount Sinai"

Hebrews 8:6

Connecting Statement:

This section begins to show that the new covenant is better than the old covenant with Israel and Judah.

Christ has received

"God has given Christ"

mediator of a better covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist.

covenant, which is based on better promises

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "covenant. It was this covenant that God made based on better promises" or "covenant. God promised better things when he made this covenant"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Hebrews 8:7
first ... second
The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers. Alternate translation: "old covenant ... new covenant"
had been faultless
"had been perfect"
no occasion for a second would have been sought
The word "second" also describes a "covenant." Alternate translation: "no one would have sought a way to establish a second covenant" or "there would have been no reason to establish a second covenant"
Hebrews 8:8
General Information:
In this quotation the prophet Jeremiah foretold of a new covenant that God would make.
with the people
"with the people of Israel"
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
the house of Israel and with the house of Judah
The people of Israel and Judah are spoken of as if they were houses. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel and with the people of Judah"
Hebrews 8:9
I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt
This metaphor represents God's great love and concern. Alternate translation: "I led them out of Egypt like a father leads his young child"
Hebrews 8:10
General Information:
This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.
the house of Israel
The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a house. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel"
after those days
"after that time"
I will put my laws into their minds
God's requirements are spoken of as if they were objects that could be placed somewhere. People's ability to think is spoken of as if it were a place. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to understand my laws"
I will also write them on their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "write them on their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to obey the law. Alternate translation: "I will also put them in their hearts" or "I will enable them to obey my law"
I will be their God
"I will be the God they worship"
they will be my people
"they will be the people for whom I care"
Hebrews 8:11
General Information:
This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.
They will not teach each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord.'
This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "They will not need to teach their neighbors or brothers to know me"
citizen ... brother
Both of these refer to a fellow Israelite.
Know the Lord ... will all know me
"Know" here stands for acknowledge.
Hebrews 8:12
toward their evil deeds
This stands for the people who committed these evil deeds. Alternate translation: "to those who did evil deeds"
their sins I will not remember any longer
Here "remember" stands for "think about."
Hebrews 8:13
he declared the first covenant to be obsolete
"he declared that the first covenant was no longer useful"
what has become obsolete
"what is no longer useful"
obsolete
Something that is obsolete is no longer useful because people can now use something better.

Chapter 9

Hebrews 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is better than the tabernacle and all its laws and rules. This chapter will be difficult to understand if the first five books of the Old Testament have not yet been translated.

Special concepts in this chapter

Will

A will is a legal document that describes what will happen to a person's property after he dies.

Blood

In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Israelites to offer sacrifices so that he would forgive their sins. Before they could offer these sacrifices, they had to kill animals and then offer not only the animal's body but also its blood. Shedding blood is a metaphor for killing an animal or person. Jesus offered his life, his blood, as a sacrifice when he allowed men to kill him. The writer of the Book of Hebrews is saying in this chapter that this sacrifice is better than the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (See: and covenant)

Return of Christ

Jesus will return to finish the work that he began when he died so that God would forgive his people's sins. He will finish saving those people who are waiting for him. (See: save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

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First covenant
This refers to the covenant that God made with Moses. However, before he made this covenant, God had made a covenant with Abraham. But this was the first covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. You may decide to translate "the first covenant" as "the earlier covenant."

Links:

Hebrews 9:1

Hebrews 9:1
Connecting Statement:
The author begins a description of the place in which God's faithful people worshiped during the time of the old covenant. He is describing a "tabernacle," a place where people dwell, in which there are two sections, each of which he also calls a tabernacle.
General Information:
The writer makes clear to these Jewish believers that the laws and the tabernacle of the old covenant were only pictures of the better, new covenant.
Now
This word marks a new part of the teaching.
first covenant
See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.
had regulations
"had detailed instructions" or "had rules"
Hebrews 9:2
For
The author is continuing the discussion from Hebrews 8:7.
a tabernacle was prepared
A tabernacle was constructed and made ready for use. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites prepared a tabernacle"
tabernacle
Or "tent." This is perhaps a metaphor for a place in which the priests set the lampstand and other items.
The first room
"The first room." Some modern translations read the ellipsis as "The first room in the tabernacle" or "The first section of the tabernacle."
the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the presence
These objects are all accompanied by the definite article "the," because the author assumes that his readers already know about these things.
bread of the presence
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "presence" is expressed as the verb "display" or "present." Alternate translation: "bread on display before God" or "bread the priests presented to God"
Hebrews 9:3
Behind the second curtain
The first curtain was the outer wall of the tabernacle, so the "second curtain" was the curtain between the "holy place" and the "most holy place."
second
This is the ordinal word for the number two.
Hebrews 9:4
Inside it
"Inside the ark of the covenant"
Aaron's rod that budded
This was the rod Aaron had when God proved to the people of Israel that he had chosen Aaron as his priest by making Aaron's rod bud.
that budded
"from which leaves and flowers had grown"
tablets of the covenant
Here "tablets" are flat pieces of stone that had writing on them. This refers to the stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written.
Hebrews 9:5
glorious cherubim overshadowed the atonement lid
When the Israelites were making the ark of the covenant, God commanded them to carve two cherubim facing each other, with their wings touching, over the atonement lid of the ark of the covenant. Here they are spoken of as providing shade for the ark of the covenant. Alternate translation: "glorious cherubim covered the atonement lid with their wings"
cherubim
Here "cherubim" means figures of two cherubim.
which we cannot
Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "which I cannot"
Hebrews 9:6
After these things were prepared
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After the priests prepared these things"
Hebrews 9:7
not without blood that he offered
Another possible meaning is "not without blood, which he offered."
not without blood
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "always with blood"
blood
This is the blood of the bull and goat that the high priest had to sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.
Hebrews 9:8
the most holy place
Possible meanings are 1) the inner room of the tabernacle on earth or 2) God's presence in heaven.
the first tabernacle was still standing
Possible meanings are 1) "the outer room of the tabernacle was still standing" or 2) "the earthly tabernacle and the sacrificial system still existed."
Hebrews 9:9
This was an illustration
"This was a picture" or "This was a symbol"
for the present time
"for now"

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that are now being offered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the priests now offer"
are not able to perfect the worshiper's conscience
The writer speaks of a person's conscience as if it were an object that could be made better and better until it was without fault. A person's conscience is his knowledge of right and wrong. It is also his awareness of whether or not he has done wrong. If he knows he has done wrong, we say that he feels guilty. Alternate translation: "are not able to make the worshiper free from guilt"
the worshiper's conscience
The writer appears to refer to only one worshiper, but he means all those who go to worship God at the tabernacle.
Hebrews 9:10
until the time of the new order
"until God creates the new order"
new order
"new covenant"
Hebrews 9:11
Connecting Statement:
Having described the service of the tabernacle under God's law, the writer makes clear that Christ's service under the new covenant is better because it is sealed with his blood. It is better also because Christ has entered the true "tabernacle," that is, God's own presence in heaven, instead of entering, as other high priests, into the earthly tabernacle, which was only an imperfect copy.
good things
This does not refer to material things. It means the good things that God promised in his new covenant.
the greater and more perfect tabernacle
This refers to the heavenly tent or tabernacle, which is more important and more perfect than the earthly tabernacle.
that was not made by human hands
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that humans hands did not make"
human hands
Here "hands" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "humans"
Hebrews 9:12
most holy place
This means the most holy place in the heavenly tabernacle. It is most holy because God himself lives there.
Hebrews 9:13
sprinkling of a heifer's ashes on those who have been defiled
The priest would drop small amounts of the ashes on the people who were defiled.
for the cleansing of their flesh
Here "flesh" refers to the entire body. Alternate translation: "for the cleansing of their bodies"
Hebrews 9:14
how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
The author uses this question to emphasize that Christ's sacrifice was the most powerful. Alternate translation: "then certainly Christ's blood will cleanse our conscience even more from dead works to serve the living God! Because, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself unblemished to God."
the blood of Christ
The "blood" of Christ stands for his death.
unblemished
A small, unusual spot or defect on a person's body is a metaphor for a small sin or moral fault. Alternate translation: "without even the smallest fault"
cleanse our conscience
Here "conscience" refers to a person's feeling of guilt. Believers no longer have to feel guilty for the sins they have committed because Jesus sacrificed himself and has forgiven them.
cleanse
Here "cleanse" stands for the action of relieving our consciences from guilt for the sins we have committed.
dead works
Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the dead.
Hebrews 9:15
For this reason
"As a result" or "Because of this"
he is the mediator of a new covenant
A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated a similar phrase in Hebrews 8:6.
first covenant
See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.
to redeem those under the first covenant from their transgressions
"to take away the transgressions of those who were under the first covenant." The abstract noun "transgressions" can be translated using the verb "transgress." Possible meanings are 1) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the guilt of their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the guilt of those who were under the first covenant." Or 2) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the punishment for their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the punishment that those who were under the first covenant deserved because they had transgressed"
those who are called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has called" or "those whom God has chosen to be his children"
inheritance
Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.
Hebrews 9:16
will
a legal document in which a person states who should receive his possessions when he himself dies
the death of the person who made it must be proven
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone must prove that the person who made the will has died"
Hebrews 9:17

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
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Hebrews 9:18
So not even the first covenant was established without blood
This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "So God established even the first covenant with blood"
first covenant
See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.
blood
The death of animals sacrificed to God is spoken of as if it were nothing but blood. Alternate translation: "the death of animals sacrificed to God"
Hebrews 9:19
took the blood ... with water ... and sprinkled ... the scroll ... and all the people
The priest dipped the hyssop in the blood and the water and then shook the hyssop so drops of blood and water would fall on the scroll and on the people. Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. Here the scroll and the people's acceptability to God are renewed.
hyssop
a woody shrub with flowers in summer, used in ceremonial sprinkling
Hebrews 9:20
the blood of the covenant
Here "blood" refers to the death of the animals sacrificed to carry out the covenant's requirements. Alternate translation: "the blood that brings into effect the covenant"
Hebrews 9:21
he sprinkled
"Moses sprinkled"
sprinkled
Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]
all the containers used in the ministry
A container is an object that can hold things. Here it may refer to any kind of utensil or tool. Alternate translation: "all the utensils used in the ministry"
used in the ministry
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests used in their work"
blood
Here the animal "blood" represents the animal's death.
Hebrews 9:22
almost everything is cleansed with blood
Making something acceptable to God is spoken of as if it were cleansing that thing. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests use blood to cleanse almost everything"
Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness
Here "shedding of blood" refers to something dying as a sacrifice to God. This double negative can mean that all forgiveness comes through the shedding of blood. Alternate translation: "Forgiveness only comes when something dies as a sacrifice" or "God only forgives when something dies as a sacrifice"
forgiveness
You can state explicitly the implied meaning. Alternate translation: "forgiveness of the sins of the people"
Hebrews 9:23
the copies of the things in heaven should be cleansed with these animal sacrifices
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests should use these animal sacrifices to cleanse what are copies of things that are in heaven"
the heavenly things themselves had to be cleansed with much better sacrifices
That is, better than the sacrifices used to cleanse the earthly copies. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as for the heavenly things themselves, God had to cleanse them with much better sacrifices"
Hebrews 9:24
the most holy place made with hands, which
Here "with hands" means "by humans." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the most holy place, which humans made, and which"
of the true one
"of the true most holy place"
Hebrews 9:25
Connecting Statement:
The writer emphasizes that Christ (now in heaven interceding for us) had to die only once for sins and that he will return to earth a second time.
He did not go there
"He did not enter heaven"
year by year
"every year" or "each year"
with the blood of another
This means with the blood of an animal victim, not with his own blood.
Hebrews 9:26
If that had been the case
"If he had had to offer himself often"
since the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"
to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself
Doing away with sin represents having God forgive it. Alternate translation: "to cause God to forgive sins by sacrificing himself" or "to sacrifice himself so that God can forgive sin"
Hebrews 9:27
General Information:
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Hebrews 9:28
Christ was offered once
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ offered himself once"
to take away the sins
The act of making us innocent rather than guilty for our sins is spoken of as if our sins were physical objects that Christ could carry away from us. Alternate translation: "so

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

that God would forgive the sins"
the sins
Here "sins" mean the guilt that people have before God because of the sins they committed.

Chapter 10

Hebrews 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the writer finishes describing how Jesus's sacrifice was better than the sacrifices offered in the Temple. (See: lawofmoses)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 10:5-7, 15-17, 37-38, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's judgment and reward

Holy living is important for Christians. God will hold people accountable for how they lived their Christian lives. Even though there will not be eternal condemnation for Christians, ungodly actions do and will have consequences. In addition, faithful living will be rewarded. (See: holy, godly and faithful and reward)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"

The sacrifices themselves had no redeeming power. They were effective because they were a display of faith, which was credited to the person offering the sacrifice. It is ultimately the sacrifice of Jesus that "takes away sins." (See: redeem and faith)

"The covenant that I will make"

It is unclear whether this prophecy was being fulfilled as the author was writing or whether it was to occur later. The translator should try to avoid making a claim about the time this covenant begins. (See: prophet and covenant)

Links:

Hebrews 10:1 Notes

Hebrews 10:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer shows the weakness of the law and its sacrifices, why God gave the law, and the perfection of the new priesthood and Christ's sacrifice.

the law is only a shadow of the good things to come

This speaks about the law as if it were a shadow. The author means the law is not the good things that God had promised. It only hints at the good things that God is going to do.

not the real forms of those things themselves

"not the real things themselves"

year after year

"every year"

Hebrews 10:2

would the sacrifices not have ceased to be offered?

The author uses a question to state that the sacrifices were limited in their power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they would have ceased offering those sacrifices."

ceased to be

"stopped being"

the worshipers would have been cleansed one time and would

Here being cleansed represents no longer being guilty of sin. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sacrifices would have taken away the worshipers' sin once, and they would" or "God would have made the worshipers no longer guilty of sin once, and they would"

would no longer have any consciousness of sin

"would no longer think that they are guilty of sin" or "would know that they are no longer guilty of sin"

Hebrews 10:3

General Information:

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Hebrews 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that animal blood could sweep away as it flowed. Alternate translation: "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to cause God to forgive sins"

the blood of bulls and goats

Here "blood" refers to these animals dying as sacrifices to God.

Hebrews 10:5

General Information:

Christ's words when he was on earth were foretold in this quotation from a psalm of David.

you did not desire

Here "you" is singular and refers to God.

a body you have prepared

"you have made a body ready"

Hebrews 10:6

General Information:

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Hebrews 10:7

Then I said

Here "I" refers to Christ.

Hebrews 10:8

General Information:

Though changing the wording slightly, the author repeats

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these quotations from a psalm of David for emphasis.
sacrifices ... offerings
See how you translated these words in Hebrews 10:5.
whole burnt offerings ... sin offerings
See how you translated similar words in Hebrews 10:6.
that are offered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that priests offer"
Hebrews 10:9
See
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"
He takes away the first practice in order to establish the second practice
The abstract noun "practice" here refers to a way of atoning for sins. Stopping doing it is spoken of as if it were an object that could be taken away. Starting the second way of atoning for sins is spoken of as establishing that practice. Alternate translation: "He stops people atoning for sins the first way in order to atone for sins the second way"
first practice ... the second practice
The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers. Alternate translation: "old practice ... the new practice"
Hebrews 10:10
we have been sanctified
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sanctified us" or "God has dedicated us to himself"
through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
The abstract noun "offering" can be expressed with the verb "offer" or "sacrifice." Alternate translation: "because Jesus Christ offered his body as a sacrifice" or "because Jesus Christ sacrificed his body"
Hebrews 10:11
Day after day
"Day by day" or "Every day"
can never take away sins
This speaks of "sins" as if they are an object that a person can take away. Alternate translation: "can never cause God to forgive sins"
Hebrews 10:12
he sat down at the right hand of God
To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]
Hebrews 10:13
until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet
Christ's enemies being humiliated is spoken of as if they were made a place for him to rest his feet. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until God humiliates Christ's enemies and they become like a footstool for his feet"
Hebrews 10:14
those who are being sanctified
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God is sanctifying" or "those whom God has dedicated to himself"
Hebrews 10:15
General Information:
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Hebrews 10:16
General Information:
This is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.
with them
"with my people"
after those days
"when the time of the first covenant with my people has finished"
I will put my laws in their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "put my laws in their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to know his laws. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to know my laws"
I will write them on their minds
The phrase "write them on their minds" is a metaphor for causing people to remember his laws. Alternate translation: "I will cause them to remember my laws"
Hebrews 10:17
General Information:
This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.
Their sins and lawlessness I will remember no longer."
"I will no longer remember their sins and lawlessness.'" or "I will no longer think about their sins and lawlessness.'"
This is the second part of the Holy Spirit's testimony
Their sins and lawlessness
The words "sins" and "lawlessness" mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize how bad the sin is. Alternate translation: "The things they did that were forbidden and how they broke the law"
Hebrews 10:18
Now
This is used to draw attention to the important point that follows. It does not mean "at this moment."
where there is forgiveness for these
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "forgiveness" is expressed as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "when God has forgiven these things"
there is no longer any sacrifice for sin
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "sacrifice" is expressed as the verb "make offerings." Alternate translation: "people no longer need to make offerings for sin"
Hebrews 10:19
Connecting Statement:
Having made it clear that there is only one sacrifice for sin, the writer continues with the picture of the most holy place in the temple, where only the high priest could enter each year with the blood of the sacrifice for sins. He reminds the believers that they now worship God in his presence as if they were standing in the most holy place.
brothers
Here this means all believers in Christ, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"
the most holy place
This means the presence of God, not the most holy place in the old tabernacle.
by the blood of Jesus

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Here "blood of Jesus" refers to the death of Jesus.
Hebrews 10:20
living way
Possible meanings are 1) this new way to God that Jesus has provided results in believers living forever or 2) Jesus is alive, and he is the way believers enter into the presence of God.
through the curtain
The curtain in the earthly temple represents the separation between people and God's true presence.
by means of his flesh
Here "flesh" stands for the body of Jesus, and his body stands for his sacrificial death. Alternate translation: "by means of his death"
Hebrews 10:21
we have a great priest over the house of God
This must be translated in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus is this "great priest."
over the house
"in charge of the house"
the house of God
This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "all the people of God"
Hebrews 10:22
let us approach
Here "approach" stands for worshiping God, as a priest would go up to God's altar to sacrifice animals to him.
with true hearts
"with faithful hearts" or "with honest hearts." Here "hearts" stands for the genuine will and motivation of the believers. Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "sincerely"
in the full assurance of faith
"and with a confident faith" or "and trusting completely in Jesus"
having our hearts sprinkled clean
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if had he made our hearts clean with his blood"
hearts sprinkled clean
Here "hearts" is a metonym for the conscience, the awareness of right and wrong. Being made clean is a metaphor for being forgiven and being given the status of righteousness.
sprinkled
Sprinkling blood of a sacrifice was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]
having our bodies washed with pure water
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if he had washed our bodies in pure water"
our bodies washed with pure water
Possible meanings are 1) "bodies" is a metonym that represents peoples' entire beings, and "washed with pure water" is a metaphor representing Christ making a person spiritually pure or 2) this is literal and it refers to Christian baptism.
Hebrews 10:23
Let us also hold firmly to the hope we confess
Here "hold firmly" is a metaphor that refers to a person determining to do something and refusing to stop. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Let us be determined to continue confessing the things that we confidently expect from God"
Hebrews 10:24
General Information:
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Hebrews 10:25
Let us not abandon meeting together
You can make explicit that the people met to worship. Alternate translation: "Let us not stop coming together to worship"
as you see the day coming closer
A future time is spoken of as if it were an object coming closer to the speaker. Here "the day" refers to when Jesus will return. Alternate translation: "as you know that Christ will return soon"
Hebrews 10:26
Connecting Statement:
The writer now gives his fourth warning.
we deliberately go on sinning
"we know we are sinning but we do it again and again"
after we have received the knowledge of the truth
Knowledge of the truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be given by one person to another. Alternate translation: "after we have learned the truth"
the truth
The truth about God.
a sacrifice for sins no longer remains
No one is able to give a new sacrifice because Christ's sacrifice is the only one that works. Alternate translation: "no one can offer a sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"
a sacrifice for sins
Here "sacrifice for sins" stands for "an effective way to sacrifice animals to take away sins"
Hebrews 10:27
of judgment
Of God's judgment, that is, that God will judge.
a fury of fire that will consume God's enemies
God's fury is spoken of as if it were fire that would burn up his enemies.
Hebrews 10:28
of two or three witnesses
It is implied that this means "of at least two or three witness."
Hebrews 10:29
How much worse punishment do you think one deserves ... grace?
The author is emphasizing the greatness of the punishment for those who reject Christ. Alternate translation: "This was severe punishment. But the punishment will be even greater for anyone ... grace!"
who has trampled underfoot the Son of God
Someone who has disregarded Christ and scorned him is spoken of as if that person had walked on him. Alternate translation: "who has rejected the Son of God"
the Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

who has regarded the blood of the covenant as unholy
This shows how the person has trampled the Son of God. Alternate translation: "by regarding the blood of the covenant as unholy"
has regarded
or "has treated"
the blood of the covenant
Here "blood" stands for Christ's death, by which God established the new covenant.
the blood by which he was sanctified
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the blood by which God sanctified him"
the Spirit of grace
"the Spirit of God, who provides grace"
Hebrews 10:30
General Information:
The word "we" here refers to the writer and all believers. These two quotations come from the law that Moses gave in the Old Testament.
Vengeance belongs to me
Vengeance is spoken of as if it were an object that belongs to God, who has the right to do as he wishes with what he owns. God has the right to take vengeance on his enemies.
I will pay back
God taking vengeance is spoken of as if he were paying back the harmful things that someone has done to others.
Hebrews 10:31
to fall into the hands
Receiving God's full punishment is spoken of as if the person falls into God's hands. Here "hands" refers to God's power to judge. Alternate translation: "to receive the full punishment"
Hebrews 10:32
the former days
"the time in the past"
after you were enlightened
Learning the truth is spoken of as if God shined a light on the person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you learned the truth about Christ"
how you endured a great struggle in suffering
"how much suffering you had to endure"
Hebrews 10:33
Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People ridiculed you by insulting you and persecuting you in public"
you shared with those
"you joined those"
Hebrews 10:34
a better and everlasting possession
God's eternal blessings are spoken of as a "possession."
Hebrews 10:35
do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward
A person no longer having confidence is spoken of as if the person were to throw confidence away, like a person would discard something worthless. The abstract noun "confidence" can be translated with the adjective "confident" or the adverb "confidently." Alternate translation: "do not stop being confident, because you will receive a great reward for being confident" or "do not stop confidently trusting in God, who will reward you greatly"
Hebrews 10:36
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Hebrews 10:37
General Information:
This is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament.
For in a very little while
You can make this explicit. Alternate translation: "As God said in the scriptures, 'For in a very little while"
in a very little while
"very soon"
Hebrews 10:38
General Information:
Here the author quotes from the prophet Habakkuk. This directly follows the quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the previous verse.
My righteous one ... If he shrinks ... with him
These refer to any of God's people in general. Alternate translation: "My faithful people ... If any one of them shrinks ... with that person" or "My faithful people ... If they shrink ... with them"
My righteous ... my soul will
Here "My" and "my soul" refer to God.
my soul
The soul is a metonym for the whole being.
shrinks back
stops doing the good thing he is doing
Hebrews 10:39
who turn back to destruction
A person who loses courage and faith are spoken of as if he were stepping back in fear from something. And "destruction" is spoken of as if it were a destination. Alternate translation: "who stop trusting God, whom God will destroy"
who have faith and preserve their souls
Living eternally with God is spoken of as if it were preserving one's soul. Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "who have faith, which will result in our living with God forever"

Chapter 11

Hebrews 11 General Notes

Structure

The writer begins this chapter by telling what faith is. Then he gives many examples of people who had faith and how they lived.

Important concepts in this chapter

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Faith

In both the old and new covenants, God required faith. Some people with faith performed miracles and were very powerful. Other people with faith suffered greatly.

Links:

Hebrews 11:1 Notes

Hebrews 11:1

Connecting Statement:

The author tells three things about faith in this brief introduction.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here the author starts to explain the meaning of "faith."

faith is being sure of the things hoped for

Here "hope" refers to having the confident expectation that God will do what he promised to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "faith is being sure of the things we hope for" or "when we have faith, we are sure that we will receive from God the things we confidently wait for"

that are not seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we still have not seen" or "that still have not happened"

Hebrews 11:2

For because of this

"Because they were certain about events that had not happened"

the ancestors were approved for their faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God approved of our ancestors because they had faith"

the ancestors

The author is speaking to the Hebrews about Hebrew ancestors. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"

Hebrews 11:3

the universe was created by God's command

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God created the universe by commanding it to exist"

what is visible was not made out of things that were visible

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not create what we see out of things that were visible"

Hebrews 11:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer then gives many examples (mostly from Old Testament writings) of people who lived by faith even though they did not receive what God had promised while they lived on the earth.

he was attested to be righteous

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God declared him to be righteous" or "God declared that Abel was righteous"

Abel still speaks

Reading the scriptures and learning about Abel's faith is spoken of as if Abel himself were still speaking. Alternate translation: "we still learn from what Abel did"

Hebrews 11:5

It was by faith that Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was by faith that Enoch did not die because God took him"

see death

This speaks of death as if it were an object that people can see. It means to experience death. Alternate translation: "die"

before he was taken up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "before God took him"

it was testified that he had pleased God

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God said that Enoch had pleased him" or 2) "people said that Enoch pleased God."

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith

Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

without faith it is impossible to please him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "a person can please him only if he has faith"

that anyone coming to God

Wanting to worship God and belong to his people is spoken of as if the person is literally coming to God. Alternate translation: "that anyone who wants to belong to God"

he is a rewarder of those

"he rewards those"

those who seek him

Those who learn about God and make an effort to obey him are spoken of as if they were seeking to find him.

Hebrews 11:7

having been given a divine message

This can be stated in active form and in other terms. Alternate translation: "because God told him"

about things not yet seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about things no one had ever seen before" or "about events that had not happened yet"

the world

Here "world" refers to the world's human population. Alternate translation: "the people living in the world at that time"

became an heir of the righteousness

Noah is spoken of as if he were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "received from God the righteousness"

that is according to faith

"that God gives to those who have faith in him"

Hebrews 11:8

when he was called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when God called him"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

went out to the place
"left his home to go to the place"
that he was to receive as an inheritance
The land that God promised to give Abraham's descendants is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that Abraham was to receive. Alternate translation: "that God would give him"
He went out
"He left his home"
Hebrews 11:9
he lived in the land of promise as a foreigner
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "promise" is expressed as the verb "promised." Alternate translation: "he lived as a foreigner in the land God had promised to him"
fellow heirs
"heirs together." This speaks about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as if they were heirs that would receive an inheritance from their father.
Hebrews 11:10
the city with foundations
"the city that has foundations." Having foundations indicates that the city is permanent. Alternate translation: "the eternal city"
whose architect and builder is God
"which is designed and built by God" or "which God would design and build"
architect
a person who designs buildings and cities
Hebrews 11:11
General Information:
Many versions interpret this verse as referring to Sarah, and others interpret it as referring to Abraham.
It was by faith
The abstract noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) it was by Sarah's faith. Alternate translation: "It was because Sarah believed God ... she" or 2) it was by Abraham's faith. Alternate translation: "It was because Abraham believed God ... he"
Sarah herself was barren
Sarah was not able to have children.
she received ability to conceive
Possible meanings are 1) Sarah received the ability to conceive a child. Alternate translation "she became able to bear a child" or 2) Abraham received the ability to father a child. Alternate translation: "he became able to have a child"
even though she was too old
Possible meanings are that 1) Sarah was too old or 2) Abraham was too old.
since she considered as faithful the one who had given the promise
"because she believed God, who had given the promise, to be faithful." Possible meanings are 1) Sarah considered God to be faithful or 2) Abraham considered God to be faithful.
Hebrews 11:12
descendants as many as the stars in the sky and as countless as sand by the seashore
This simile means that Abraham had very many descendants.
as countless as sand by the seashore
This means that just as there are so many grains of sand on the seashore that no one can count them all, Abraham had so many descendants that no one can count them all.
Hebrews 11:13
without receiving the promises
This speaks of promises as if they are objects that a person receives. Alternate translation: "without receiving what God had promised them"
they saw and greeted them from far off
Future promised events are spoken of as if they were travelers arriving from far away. Seeing and greeting the promised events is a metaphor for believing and being glad that the events will happen. Alternate translation: "they believed and were glad about what God would do in the future"
they were foreigners and exiles on earth
Here "foreigners" and "exiles" mean basically the same thing. This emphasizes that this earth was not their true home. They were waiting for their true home that God would make for them.
Hebrews 11:14
a homeland
"a country for them to belong to"
Hebrews 11:15
General Information:
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Hebrews 11:16
heavenly one
"heavenly country" or "country in heaven"
God is not ashamed to be called their God
This can be expressed in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "God is happy to have them call him their God" or "God is proud to have them say that he is their God"
Hebrews 11:17
when he was tested
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when God tested him"
Hebrews 11:18
to whom it had been said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to whom God said"
that your descendants will be named
Here "named" means assigned or designated. This sentence can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I will designate your descendants"
Hebrews 11:19
God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead
"God was able to cause Isaac to live again"
to raise up ... the dead
In this verse, "to raise up" is to make alive again. The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld.
figuratively speaking
"in a manner of speaking." This means that what the author says next is not to be understood literally. God did not bring Isaac back from death literally. But because Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him, it was as if God brought him back from the dead.
it was from them
"it was from the dead"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

he received him back
"Abraham received Isaac back"
Hebrews 11:20
General Information:
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Hebrews 11:21
Jacob worshiped
"Jacob worshiped God"
Hebrews 11:22
when his end was near
Here "his end" is a polite way of referring to death. Alternate translation: "when he was about to die"
spoke of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt
"spoke of when the children of Israel would leave Egypt"
the children of Israel
"the Israelites" or "the descendants of Israel"
instructed them about his bones
Joseph died while in Egypt. He wanted his people to take his bones with them when they left Egypt so they could bury his bones in the land that God promised them.
Hebrews 11:23
Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses's parents hid him for three months after he was born"
Hebrews 11:24
had grown up
"had become an adult"
refused to be called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "refused to allow people to call him"
Hebrews 11:25
General Information:
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Hebrews 11:26
disgrace for the sake of Christ
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disgrace" is expressed as the verb "disrespect." Alternate translation: "being disrespected for the sake of Christ" or "the experience of people disrespecting him because he did what Christ would want"
he was looking ahead to his reward
Thinking about something that will happen in the future is spoken of as looking ahead to it. Alternate translation: "he was thinking about the reward he would receive"
Hebrews 11:27
he endured as if he were seeing the one who is invisible
Moses is spoken of as if he saw God, who is invisible.
the one who is invisible
"the one no one can see"
Hebrews 11:28
he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood
This was the first Passover. Moses kept it by obeying God's commands concerning the Passover and by commanding the people to obey them every year. Alternate translation: "he commanded the people to obey God's commands concerning the Passover and to sprinkle blood on their doors" or "he established the Passover and the sprinkling of blood"
the sprinkling of the blood
This refers to God's command to the Israelites to kill a lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts of every house where Israelites lived. This would prevent the destroyer from harming their firstborn sons. This was one of the Passover commands.
should not touch
Here "touch" refers to harming or to killing someone. Alternate translation: "would not harm" or "would not kill"
Hebrews 11:29
they passed through the Sea of Reeds
"the Israelites passed through the Sea of Reeds"
they were swallowed up
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the water swallowed up the Egyptians"
they were swallowed up
The water is spoken of as if it were an animal. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians drowned in the water"
Hebrews 11:30
they had been circled around for seven days
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites had marched around the walls for seven days"
seven days
"7 days"
Hebrews 11:31
had received the spies in peace
"had peacefully received the spies"
Hebrews 11:32
Connecting Statement:
The writer continues to speak of what God did for the ancestors of the people of Israel.
What more can I say?
The author uses a question to emphasize that there are many examples that he could have quoted. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "And there are many more examples."
the time will fail me
"I will not have enough time"
Barak
This is the name of a man.
Hebrews 11:33
It was through faith that they
Here "they" does not mean that each person listed in 11:32 did all the things the author is about to mention. The author means in general these are the kinds of things that those with faith were able to do. Alternate translation: "It was through faith that men like these"
they conquered kingdoms
Here "kingdoms" refers to the people who lived there. Alternate translation: "they defeated the people of foreign kingdoms"
committed righteousness
Possible meanings are 1) "did righteous deeds" or "did what was right" or 2) "judged others fairly" or "administered justice."
They stopped the mouths of lions
These words begin a list of some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "They kept lions from eating them"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Hebrews 11:34
quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword
These are some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "they kept fire from burning them, they kept their enemies from killing them"
were made strong when they were weak
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received strength from God when they were weak"
became mighty in battle, and defeated
"and they became mighty in battle and defeated"
Hebrews 11:35
Women received back their dead by resurrection
This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "resurrection." The word "dead" is a nominal adjective. It can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Women received back alive those who had died"
Others were tortured, not accepting release
It is implied that their enemies would have released them from prison under certain conditions. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others accepted torture rather than release from prison" or "Others allowed their enemies to torture them rather than doing what their enemies required of them in order to release them"
Others were tortured
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others allowed those who imprisoned them to torture them" or "Others endured terrible pain"
a better resurrection
Possible meanings are 1) these people will experience a better life in heaven than what they experienced in this world or 2) these people will have a better resurrection than those who did not have faith. Those with faith will live forever with God. Those without faith will live forever separated from God.
Hebrews 11:36
Others experienced mocking and whippings, and even chains and imprisonment
This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns are expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "People afflicted others by mocking and whipping them and even putting them in chains and imprisoning them"
Hebrews 11:37
They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword
These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People threw stones at others. People sawed others in two. People killed others with the sword"
went about
"went from place to place" or "lived all the time"
in sheepskins and goatskins
"wearing only the skins of sheep and goats"
They were destitute
"They had nothing" or "They were very poor"
Hebrews 11:38
The world was not worthy
Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "The people of this world were not worthy"
They were always wandering about
This was because they had no place to live.
in caves and holes in the ground
"some lived in caves or in holes in the ground"
Hebrews 11:39
Although all these people were approved by God because of their faith, they did not receive the promise
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God honored all these because of their faith, but they did not themselves receive what God had promised"
the promise
This expression stands for "what God had promised them."
Hebrews 11:40
so that without us, they would not be made perfect
This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "in order that God would perfect us and them together"

Chapter 12

Hebrews 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After telling of the value of discipline, the author begins a series of exhortations. (See; exhort)
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:5-6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Discipline
God wants his people to do what is right. When they do what is wrong, he needs to correct or punish them. He does this just as earthly fathers correct and punish children whom they love. (See: discipline)

Links:

Hebrews 12:1 Notes

Hebrews 12:1
General Information:
The words "we" and "us" refer to the author and his readers.
Connecting Statement:
Because of this great number of Old Testament believers, the author talks of the life of faith that believers should live.
we are surrounded by such a large cloud of witnesses
The writer speaks about the Old Testament believers as if they were a cloud that surrounds the present-day believers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"such a large cloud of witnesses surrounds us" or "there are so many examples of faithful people about whom we learn in the scriptures"

witnesses

Here "witnesses" refers to the Old Testament believers in chapter 11 who lived before the race of faith that believers now run.

let us lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin

Here "weight" and "easily entangling sin" are spoken of as if a person could take them off himself and put them down.

every weight

Attitudes or habits that keep believers from trusting and obeying God are spoken of as if they were loads that would make it difficult for a person to run while carrying.

easily entangling sin

Sin is spoken of as if it were a net or something else that can trip people up and make them fall. Alternate translation: "sin that makes obeying God difficult"

Let us run with perseverance the race that is placed before us

Following Jesus is spoken of as if it were running a race. Alternate translation: "Let us continue obeying what God has commanded us, just like a runner keeps going until the race is over"

Hebrews 12:2

the founder and perfecter of the faith

Jesus gives us faith and makes our faith perfect by causing us to reach our goal. Alternate translation: "creator and finisher of our faith" or "the one who enables us to have faith from beginning to end"

For the joy that was placed before him

The joy that Jesus would experience is spoken of as if God the Father had placed it before him as a goal to reach.

despised its shame

This means he was not concerned about the shame of dying on a cross.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 12:3

General Information:

The word "your" is plural and here refers to the readers.

become weary and lose heart

Here "heart" represents a person's thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "become tired and discouraged"

Hebrews 12:4

Connecting Statement:

The author of Hebrews has been comparing the Christian life to a race.

You have not yet resisted or struggled against sin

Here "sin" is spoken of as if it were a person whom someone fights in a battle. Alternate translation: "You have not yet had to endure attacks of sinners"

to the point of blood

Resisting opposition so much that one dies for it is spoken of as if one reached a certain place where he would die.

of blood

Here "blood" refers to death. Alternate translation: "of death"

Hebrews 12:5

the encouragement that instructs you

Old Testament scripture is spoken of as if it were a person who could encourage others. Alternate translation: "what God has instructed you in the scriptures to encourage you"

as sons ... My son

The word translated "sons" and "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters. However, as stated by the UDB and some English versions, the author is directing his words to both males and females.

My son ... corrected by him

Here the author is quoting from the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, which was the words of Solomon to his male children.

do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, nor grow weary

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "take it very seriously when the Lord disciplines you, and do not grow weary"

nor grow weary

"and do not become discouraged"

you are corrected by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he corrects you"

Hebrews 12:6

every son he receives

The word translated "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters.

Hebrews 12:7

Endure suffering as discipline

"Understand that during suffering God teaches us discipline"

God deals with you as with sons

The readers are God's sons, and so God deals with them the way a father properly deals with sons.

sons ... son

All occurrences of these words may be stated to include males and females. Alternate translation: "children ... child"

what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

The author makes the point throught this question that every good father disciplines his children. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "every father disciplines his children!"

Hebrews 12:8

But if you are without discipline, which all people share in

You can restate the abstract noun "discipline" as the verb "disciplining." Alternate translation: "So if you have not experienced God disciplining you like he disciplines all his children"

then you are illegitimate and not his sons

Those whom God does not discipline are spoken of as if they are sons born to a man and a woman who are not married each other.

Hebrews 12:9

How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

The author uses an exclamation to emphasize that we should obey God the Father. This can be expressed as a

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

statement. Alternate translation: "Therefore even more so, we should obey the Father of spirits and live."
the Father of spirits
This idiom contrasts with "fathers in the flesh." Alternate translation: "our spiritual Father" or "our Father in heaven"
and live
"so that we will live"
Hebrews 12:10
so that we can share in his holiness
This metaphor speaks of "holiness" as if it were an object that can be shared among people. Alternate translation: "so that we may become holy, as God is holy"
Hebrews 12:11
No discipline at the time seems to give joy, but to give sorrow
"At the time, it seems that no discipline brings joy; rather, discipline always brings sorrow"
it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness
"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "it produces the peaceful result of righteousness" or "it produces righteousness, which results in peace"
who have been trained by it
"who have been trained by discipline." The discipline or correction done by the Lord is spoken of as if it were the Lord himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has trained by disciplining them"
Hebrews 12:12
strengthen your hands that hang down and your weak knees.
Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1]
Hebrews 12:13
Make straight paths for your feet
Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1]
straight paths
Living so as to honor and please God is spoken of as if it were a straight path to follow.
what is lame will not be sprained
In this metaphor of running a race, "lame" represents another person in the race who is hurt and wants to quit. This, in turn, represent the Christians themselves. Alternate translation: "whoever is weak and wants to quit will not sprain his ankle"
will not be sprained
Someone who stops obeying God is spoken of as if he injured his foot or ankle on a path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not sprain his ankle"
rather be healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "instead become strong" or "instead God will heal him"
Hebrews 12:14
Pursue peace with everyone
Here the abstract noun "peace" is spoken of as if it were something that a person must chase after and can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: "Try to live peacefully with everyone"
and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord
This can be expressed as a positive encouragement. Alternate translation: "and work hard to be holy, because only holy people will see the Lord"
and holiness
You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "and pursue holiness"
Hebrews 12:15
no one lacks God's grace
"no one receives God's grace and then lets go of it" or "no one rejects God's grace after first trusting in him"
that no root of bitterness grows up to cause trouble, so that many do not become defiled by it
Hateful or resentful attitudes are spoken of as if they were a plant bitter to the taste. Alternate translation: "that no one becomes like a bitter root, which when it grows causes trouble and harms many people"
Hebrews 12:16
General Information:
The man Esau, who was told about in the writings of Moses, refers to Isaac's first son and Jacob's brother.
Hebrews 12:17
he was rejected
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his father, Isaac, refused to bless him"
because he found no opportunity for repentance
The abstract noun "repentance" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because it was not possible for him to repent" or "because it was not possible for him to change his decision"
even though he sought it with tears
Here "he" refers to Esau.
Hebrews 12:18
General Information:
Here "you" and refers to the Hebrew believers to whom the author wrote.
Connecting Statement:
The author gives a contrast between what believers in Moses's time had while living under the law and what present day believers have after coming to Jesus under the new covenant. He illustrates the experience of the Israelites by describing how God appeared to them at Mount Sinai.
For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched
The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "For you have not come, as the people of Israel came, to a mountain that can be touched"
that can be touched
This means that believers in Christ have not come to a physical mountain like Mount Sinai that a person can touch or see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that a person can touch" or "that people can perceive with their senses"
Hebrews 12:19
You have not come to a trumpet blast
"You have not come to a place where there is the loud sound of a trumpet"
nor to a voice that speaks words whose hearers begged that not another word be spoken to them
Here "voice" refers to someone speaking. The phrase "be spoken" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "or where God was speaking in such a way that those who

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

heard him begged him not to speak another word to them"
Hebrews 12:20
General Information:
The quotation comes from the writings of Moses.
For they could not endure
"For the Israelites could not endure"
what was commanded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God commanded"
it must be stoned
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you must stone it"
Hebrews 12:21
General Information:
God reveals in this passage in Hebrews that Moses said he shook at seeing the mountain.
Hebrews 12:22
Mount Zion
The writer speaks of Mount Zion, the temple mount in Jerusalem, as if it were heaven itself, the residence of God.
tens of thousands of angels
"an uncountable number of angels"
Hebrews 12:23
the firstborn
This speaks of believers in Christ as if they were firstborn sons. This emphasizes their special place and privilege as God's people.
who have been registered in heaven
"whose names are written in heaven." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose names God has written in heaven"
who have been made perfect
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has made perfect"
Hebrews 12:24
General Information:
The man Abel was the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Cain, also their son, murdered Abel.
the mediator of a new covenant
A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated this phrase in Hebrews 9:15.
the sprinkled blood that speaks better than Abel's blood
The blood of Jesus and the blood of Abel are spoken of as if they were people calling out. Alternate translation: "the sprinkled blood of Jesus that says better things than the blood of Abel"
the sprinkled blood
Here "blood" stands for Jesus's death, as Abel's blood stands for his death.
Hebrews 12:25
General Information:
The word "you" continues to refer to believers. The word "we" continues to refer to the writer and the readers who are believers.
Connecting Statement:
Having contrasted the Israelites' experience at Mount Sinai with the believers' experience after Christ died, the writer reminds believers that they have the same God who warns them today. This is the fifth main warning given to believers.
you do not refuse the one who is speaking
"you pay attention to the one who is speaking"
if they did not escape
The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "if the people of Israel did not escape judgment"
the one who warned them on earth
Possible meanings are 1) "Moses, who warned them here on earth" or 2) "God, who warned them at Mount Sinai"
if we turn away from the one who is warning
Disobeying God is spoken of as if it were changing direction and walking away from him. Alternate translation: "if we disobey the one who is warning"
Hebrews 12:26
General Information:
This quotation is from the prophet Haggai in the Old Testament.
his voice shook the earth
"when God spoke, the sound of his voice caused the earth to shake"
shook ... shake
Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to Hebrews 12:18-21 and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God.
Hebrews 12:27
General Information:
Here the quotation from the prophet Haggai is repeated from the previous verse.
mean the removal of those things that can be shaken, that is, of the things
The abstract noun "removal" can be translated with the verb "remove." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "mean that God will remove the things that he can shake, that is, the things"
shaken
Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to Hebrews 12:18-21](./18.md) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God. See how you translated "shook" and "shake" in [Hebrews 12:26.
that have been created
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has created"
the things that cannot be shaken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that do not shake" or "the things that cannot shake"
that cannot be shaken
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that do not shake"
Hebrews 12:28
receiving a kingdom
You can add the words "because we are" to make clear the logical connection between this statement and the next statement. Alternate translation: "because we are receiving a kingdom" or "because God is making us members of his

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

kingdom"
let us be thankful
"let us give thanks"
with reverence and awe
The words "reverence" and "awe" share similar meanings and emphasize the greatness of reverence due to God.
Alternate translation: "with great respect and dread"
Hebrews 12:29
our God is a consuming fire
God is spoken of here as if he were a fire that can burn up anything.

Chapter 13

Hebrews 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes the list of exhortations he began in chapter 12. Then he asks the readers to pray for him and ends the letter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hospitality

God wants his people to invite other people to come to their homes to eat food and even to sleep. His people should do this even if they do not know well the people they are inviting. In the Old Testament, Abraham and his nephew Lot both showed hospitality to people they did not know. Abraham served a costly meal to them, and then Lot invited them to sleep in his house. They learned later that those people were actually angels.

Links:

Hebrews 13:1 Notes

Hebrews 13:1
Connecting Statement:
In this closing section, the author gives specific instructions to believers on how they are supposed to live.
Let brotherly love continue
"Continue to show your love for other believers as you would for a member of your family"
Hebrews 13:2
Do not forget
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Be sure to remember"
hospitality for strangers
"to welcome and show kindness to strangers"
Hebrews 13:3
as if you were bound with them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if you were tied up along with them" or "as if you were in prison with them"
who are mistreated
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom others are mistreating" or "who are suffering"
since you yourselves also are in the body
Possible meanings are 1) because you are human and can suffer likewise, or 2) as if you too were being mistreated.
Hebrews 13:4
Let marriage be held in honor by all
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone should hold marriage in honor"
let the marriage bed be kept pure
This refers to the act of sexual union as if it were the bed on which that act takes place. Alternate translation: "Let husbands and wives honor their marriage relationship to one another and engage in sexual activity with other people"
Hebrews 13:5
Let your conduct be free from the love of money
Here "conduct" refers to a person's character or the way he lives, and "free from the love of money" refers to not greatly desiring to have more money. A person who loves money is not content with the amount of money he has. Alternate translation: "Let your conduct not be affected by the love of money" or "Do not greatly wish to have more money"
Be content
"Be satisfied"
Hebrews 13:6
The Lord is my helper ... do to me
This is a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.
I will not be afraid. What can a man do to me?
The author uses a question to emphasize that he does not fear people because God is helping him. Here "man" means any person in general. Alternate translation: "I will not fear what any person can do to me!"
Hebrews 13:7
spoke God's word to you
"told you what God has said"
the result of their conduct
"the outcome of the way they behave"
Imitate their faith
Here the trust in God and the way of life led by these leaders are spoken of as "their faith." Alternate translation: "Trust and obey God in the same way they do"
Hebrews 13:8
is the same yesterday, today, and forever
Here "yesterday" means all times in the past. Alternate translation: "is the same in the past, the present, and in the future forever"
Hebrews 13:9
Do not be carried away by various strange teachings

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Being persuaded by various teachings is spoken of as if a person were being carried away by a force. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let others persuade you to believe their various strange teachings"

various strange teachings

"many, different teachings that are not the good news we told you"

it is good that the heart should be strengthened by grace, not by foods that do not help those who walk by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we become stronger when we think of how God has been kind to us, but we do not become stronger by obeying rules about food"

the heart should be strengthened

Here "heart" is a metonym for the "inner being." Alternate translation: "we should be strengthened inwardly"

foods

Here "foods" stands for rules about food.

those who walk by them

Living is spoken of as if it were walking. Alternate translation: "those who live by them" or "those who regulate their lives by them"

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar from which

Here, "altar" is a metaphor. The Christians did not literally have an altar, nor did they offer animal sacrifices. The author means that Christians have a relationship with God that the Jews who work in the tabernacle do not know about. Alternate translation: "We have an altar, so to speak, from which" or "What we have is like an altar from which"

Hebrews 13:11

General Information:

This verse refers to animal sacrifices made by believers in God in Old Testament times, which covered their sins temporarily until the death of Christ came about.

the blood of the animals killed for sins is brought by the high priest into the holy place

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the high priest brings into the holy place the blood of the animals that the priests killed for sins"

while their bodies are burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "while the priests burn the animals' bodies"

outside the camp

"away from where the people live"

Hebrews 13:12

Connecting Statement:

There is a comparison here between Jesus's sacrifice and the tabernacle sacrifices of the Old Testament.

So

"In the same way" or "Because the bodies of the sacrifices were burned outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:11)

outside the city gate

This stands for "outside the city."

Hebrews 13:13

Let us therefore go to him outside the camp

Obeying Jesus is spoken of as if a person were leaving the camp to go out where Jesus is.

bearing the disgrace he endured

Reproach is spoken of as if it were an object that has to be carried in one's hands or on one's back. Alternate translation: "while allowing others to treat us with disgust just like people insulted him"

Hebrews 13:14

looking for

"waiting for"

the one that is to come

"for the city that will come" or "the permananent city that will come"

Hebrews 13:15

sacrifices of praise

Praise is spoken of as if it were incense or sacrifices of animals.

praise that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name

Praise is spoken of as if it were fruit produced by the lips of people. Alternate translation: "praise that is produced by the lips of those who acknowledge his name"

lips that acknowledge his name

Here "lips" represents people who speak. Alternate translation: "the lips of those who acknowledge his name" or "those who acknowledge his name"

his name

A person's name represents that person. Alternate translation: "him"

Hebrews 13:16

Let us not forget doing good and sharing

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Let us always remember to do good and share our goods with one another"

with such sacrifices

Doing good and helping others is spoken of as if they were sacrifices on an altar.

Hebrews 13:17

keep watch over your souls

The believers' souls, that is, the believers' spiritual well-being, are spoken of as if they were objects or animals that guards could keep watch over.

not with groaning

Here "groaning" stands for sadness or grief.

Hebrews 13:18

Pray for us

Here "us" refers to the author and his companions, but not to the readers.

we are convinced that we have a good conscience

Here "good" stands for being free from guilt. Alternate translation: "we are certain that we have no guilt"

Hebrews 13:19

that I will be returned to you sooner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God will return me to you sooner" or "that God will quickly remove the things that stop my coming to you"

Hebrews 13:20

Connecting Statement:

The author closes with a blessing and greetings.

Now

This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author praises God and gives a final prayer for his readers.

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brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus

"raised the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, to life"

from the dead

"from among all those who have died." The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of causing that person to become alive again.

the great shepherd of the sheep

Christ in his role of leader and protector of those who believe in him is spoken of as if he were a shepherd of sheep.

by the blood of the eternal covenant

Here "blood" stands for the death of Jesus, which is the basis for the covenant that will last forever between God and all believers in Christ.

Hebrews 13:21

equip you with everything good to do his will

"give you every good thing you need in order to do his will" or "make you capable of doing every good thing according to his will"

working in us

The word "us" refers to the author and the readers.

to whom be the glory forever

"whom all people will praise forever"

Hebrews 13:22

Now

This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author gives his final comments to his audience.

brothers

This refers to all the believers to whom he is writing, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

to bear with the word of encouragement that I have briefly written to you

"to patiently consider what I have just briefly written to encourage you"

the word of encouragement

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the encouraging message"

Hebrews 13:23

has been set free

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "is no longer in prison"

Hebrews 13:24

Those from Italy greet you

Possible meanings are 1) the author is not in Italy, but there is a group of believers with him who have come from Italy or 2) the author is in Italy while writing this letter.

Italy

This is the name of a region at that time. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

Hebrews 13:25

General Information:

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Introduction to James

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of James

Greetings (1:1) Testing and maturity (1:2-18) Hearing and doing the Word of God (1:19-27) True faith seen in works Word of God (1:19-27) Royal law of love (2:1-13) Works (2:14-26) Difficulties in community Dangers of the tongue (3:1-12) Wisdom from above (3:13-18) Worldly desires (4:1-12) God's perspective on your decisions Boasting about tomorrow (4:13-17) Warning about riches (5:1-6) Suffering with patience (5:7-11) Closing exhortations Oaths (5:12) Prayer and healing (5:13-18) Care for one another (5:19-20)

Who wrote the Book of James?

The author identified himself as James. This was probably James, the half-brother of Jesus. James was a leader in the early church and was part of the Jerusalem council. The Apostle Paul also called him a "pillar" of the church.

This is not the same man as the Apostle James. The Apostle James was killed before this letter was written.

What is the Book of James about?

In this letter, James encouraged believers who were suffering. He told them know that God uses their suffering to help them become mature Christians. James also told them of the need for believers to do good deeds. He wrote much in this letter about how believers should live and treat one another. For example, he commanded them to treat one another fairly, to not fight with one another, and to use riches wisely.

James taught his readers by using many examples from nature such as in 1:6, 11 and 3:1-12. Also, many parts of this letter are similar to what Jesus wrote in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5-7).

Who were the "twelve tribes in the dispersion"?

James said he was writing to the "twelve tribes in the dispersion" (1:1). Some scholars think that James was writing to Jewish Christians. Other scholars think that James was writing to all Christians in general. This letter is known as one of the "General Epistles" since it was not written to a specific church or individual.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "James." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "A Letter from James" or "The Letter James Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Did James disagree with Paul about how a person is justified before God?

Paul taught in Romans that Christians are justified by faith and not by works. James seems to teach that Christians are justified by works. This can be confusing. But a better understanding of what Paul and James taught shows that they agree with one another. Both of them taught that a person needs faith in order to be justified. And they both taught that true faith will cause a person to do good works. Paul and James taught about these things in different ways because they had different audiences who needed to know different things about being justified. (See: justice and faith and works)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How should the translator signal transitions between topics in the Book of James?

The letter quickly changes topics. Sometimes James does not tell the readers that he is about to change topics. It is acceptable to allow the verses to appear disconnected from each other. It may make sense to set the passages apart by starting a new line or putting a space between topics.

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

"Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is useless?" (2:20). The ULB and modern translations read this way. Some older translations read, "Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

Chapter 1

James 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

James formally introduces this letter in verse 1. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Testing and temptation

These two words occur together in (James 1:12-13). Both words speak of a person who is able to choose between doing something good and doing something evil. The difference between them is important. God is testing the person and wants him to do what is good. Satan is tempting the person and wants him to do what is evil.

Crowns

The crown that a man who passes the test receives is a reward, something that people who do something especially good receive. (See: reward)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

James uses many metaphors in this chapter, and you will need to understand the material on the metaphor page before you can translate them well.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"To the twelve tribes in the dispersion"

It is not clear to whom James wrote this letter. He calls himself a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, so he was probably writing to Christians. But he calls his readers "the twelve tribes in the dispersion," words which usually refer to Jews. It is possible that he is using the words as a metaphor for "all people whom God has chosen" or that he wrote the letter at a time when most Christians had grown up as Jews.

Links:

James 1:1 Notes James intro

James 1:1

General Information:

The apostle James writes this letter to all the Christians. Many of them were Jews, and they lived in many different places.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase "this letter is from" is implied. Alternate translation: "This letter is from James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"

to the twelve tribes

Possible meanings are 1) this is a synecdoche for Jewish Christians, or 2) this is a metaphor for all Christians. Alternate translation: "to God's faithful people"

in the dispersion

The term "dispersion" normally referred to the Jews who were scattered in other countries, away from their homeland, Israel. This abstract noun can be expressed with a phrase with the verb "scattered." Alternate translation: "who are scattered around the world" or "who live in other countries"

Greetings!

This is a basic greeting, such as "Hello!" or "Good day!"

James 1:2

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you experience various troubles

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"My fellow believers, think of all your different kinds of troubles as things to celebrate"
James 1:3
the testing of your faith produces endurance
The expressions "the testing," "your faith," and "endurance" are nouns that stand for actions. God does the testing, that is, he finds out how much the believers trust and obey him. Believers
James 1:4
Let endurance complete its work
Here endurance is spoken of as if it were a person at work. Alternate translation: "Learn to endure any hardship"
fully developed
able to trust in Christ and obey him in all circumstances
not lacking anything
This can be stated in the positive. Alternate translation: "having all that you need" or "being all that you need to be"
James 1:5
ask for it from God, the one who gives
"ask God for it. He is the one who gives"
gives generously and without rebuke to all
"gives generously and does not rebuke any"
he will give it to him
"God will give it to him" or "God will answer his prayer"
James 1:6
in faith, doubting nothing
"with complete certainty that God will answer"
For anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed around
Anyone who doubts that God will help him is said to be like the water in the ocean or in a large lake, which keeps moving in different directions.
James 1:7
General Information:
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James 1:8
is a double-minded man, unstable
The word "double-minded" refers to a person's thoughts when he is unable to make a decision. Alternate translation: "cannot decide if he will follow Jesus or not and is unstable"
unstable in all his ways
Here this person is spoken of as if he cannot stay on one path but instead goes from one to another.
James 1:9
the lowly brother
"the believer who does not have much money" or "the believer whom other people consider unimportant"
boast of his high position
Someone whom God has honored is spoken of as if he were standing in a high place.
James 1:10
but the rich man of his low position
The words "let" and "boast" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "but let the rich man boast of his low position"
but the rich man
"but the man who has a lot of money"
of his low position
A rich believer should be happy if God causes him to suffer. Alternate translation: "should be happy that God has given him difficulties"
he will pass away as a wild flower in the grass
Rich people are spoken of as being similar to wild flowers, which are alive for only a short time.
James 1:11
its beauty perishes
A flower that is becoming less beautiful because it is decaying is spoken of as if its beauty were dying. Alternate translation: "it is no longer beautiful"
the rich man will fade away in the middle of his journey
Here the flower simile is probably continued. As flowers do not die suddenly but instead fade away over a short time, so also the rich people may not die suddenly but instead take a little time to disappear.
in the middle of his journey
A rich man's activities in daily life are spoken of as if they are a journey that he is making. This metaphor implies that he is giving no thought to his coming death, and that it will takes him by surprise.
James 1:12
Connecting Statement:
James reminds the believers who have fled that God does not cause temptation; he tells them how to avoid temptation.
Blessed is the man who endures testing
"The man who endures testing is fortunate" or "The man who endures testing is well off"
endures testing
remains faithful to God during hardships
passed the test
he has been approved by God
receive the crown of life
Eternal life is spoken of as if it were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "receive eternal life as his reward"
has been promised to those who love God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has promised to those who love him"
James 1:13
when he is tempted
"when he desires to do something evil"
I am tempted by God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is trying to make me do something evil"
God is not tempted by evil
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one can make God desire to do evil"
nor does he himself tempt anyone
"and God himself does not try to persuade anyone do evil"
James 1:14
each person is tempted by his own desire
A person's desire is spoken of as if it were someone else who was tempting him to sin.
which drags him away and entices him
Evil desire continues to be spoken of as if it were a person who could drag away someone else.
entices

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attracts, persuades someone to do evil

James 1:15

Then after the desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and after the sin is full grown, it gives birth to death

Desire continues to be spoken of as a person, this time clearly as a woman who becomes pregnant with a child. The child is identified as sin. Sin is a female baby that grows up, becomes pregnant, and gives birth to death. This chain of metaphors is a picture of someone who ends up dying both spiritually and physically because of his evil desires and his sin.

James 1:16

Do not be deceived

"Do not let anyone deceive you" or "Stop deceiving yourselves"

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. James uses them to emphasize that anything good that a person has comes from God.

the Father of lights

God, the creator of all the lights in the sky

With him there is no changing or shadow because of turning

This expression pictures God as an unchanging light. This is in contrast to the sun, moon, and stars that appear to move in the sky and sometimes are darkened. Alternate translation: "God always stays the same. He does not change like shifting shadows"

James 1:18

to give us

The word "us" refers to James and his audience.

give us birth

God, who brought us eternal life, is spoken of as if he had given us birth.

the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth" or 2) "the true message."

so that we would be a kind of firstfruits

James is using the traditional Hebrew idea of firstfruits as a way to describe the value of the Christian believers to God. He implies that there will be many more believers in the future. Alternate translation: "so that we would be like an offering of firstfruits"

James 1:19

You know this

Possible meanings are 1) "Know this" is a command to pay attention to what I am about to write or 2) "You know this" is a statement saying that I am about to remind you of something that you already know.

Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak

These sayings are idioms that mean people should first listen intently, and then consider carefully what they say. Here "slow to speak" does not mean speaking slowly.

slow to anger

"not get angry quickly"

James 1:20

the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God

When a person is always angry, he cannot do God's work, which is righteous.

James 1:21

take off all sinful filth and abundant amounts of evil

Sin and evil are spoken of here as if they were clothing that could be taken off. Alternate translation: "stop doing all filthy sins and stop doing abundant amounts of evil"

take off all sinful filth and abundant amounts of evil

Here the expressions "sinful filth" and "evil" share similar meanings. James uses them to emphasize how bad sin is. Alternate translation: "stop doing every kind of sinful behavior"

sinful filth

Here "filth," that is, dirt, stands for sin and evil.

In humility

"Without pride" or "Without arrogance"

receive the implanted word

The expression "implant" means to place one thing inside of another. Here God's word is spoken of as if it were a plant made to grow inside believers. Alternate translation: "obey the message God has spoken to you"

save your souls

What a person is saved from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "save you from God's judgment"

your souls

Here the word "souls" refers to persons. Alternate translation: "yourselves"

James 1:22

Be doers of the word

"Be people who follow God's instructions"

deceiving yourselves

"fooling yourselves"

James 1:23

For if anyone is a hearer of the word but not a doer

In the phrase "but not a doer" the words "is" and "of the word" are understood from the previous phrase. The noun "doer" can also be expressed with the verbs "do" or "obey." Alternate translation: "For if anyone listens to God's word in the scriptures but does not obey the word"

the word

"the message"

he is like a man who examines his natural face in a mirror

A person who hears God's word is like someone who looks in the mirror.

his natural face

The word "natural" clarifies that James is using the ordinary meaning of the word "face." Alternate translation: "his face"

James 1:24

then goes away and immediately forgets what he was like

It is implied that though he may see that he needs to do something, such as wash his face or fix his hair, he walks away and forgets to do it. This what a person who does not obey God's word is like. Alternate translation: "then goes away and immediately forgets to do what he saw he needed to do"

James 1:25

the person who looks carefully into the perfect law

This expression continues the image of the law as a mirror.

the perfect law of freedom

The relationship between the law and freedom can be

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expressed clearly. Here "freedom" probably refers to freedom from sin. Alternate translation: "the perfect law that gives freedom" or "the perfect law that makes those who follow it free"

this man will be blessed in his actions

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless this man as he obeys the law"

James 1:26

thinks he is religious

"thinks he worships God correctly"

his tongue

Controlling one's tongue stands for controlling one's speech. Alternate translation: "what he says"

deceives

gets someone to believe something that is not true

his heart

Here "heart" refers to his belief or thoughts. Alternate translation: "himself"

his religion is worthless

"he worships God uselessly"

James 1:27

pure and unspoiled before our God and Father

James speaks of religion, the way one worships God, as if it could be physically pure and unspoiled. These are traditional ways for Jews to say that something is acceptable to God. Alternate translation: "completely acceptable to our God and Father"

the fatherless

"the orphans"

in their affliction

The fatherless and widows are suffering because their fathers or husbands have died.

to keep oneself unstained by the world

Sin in the world is spoken of as something dirty that can stain a person. Alternate translation: "to not allow the evil in the world to cause oneself to sin"

Chapter 2

James 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Favoritism

Some of James's readers treated rich and powerful people well and treated poor people badly. This is called favoritism, and James tells them that this is wrong. God wants his people to treat both rich people and poor people well.

Justification

Justification is what happens when God makes a person righteous. James says here that God makes righteous or justifies people who do good works along with having faith. (See: justice and righteous and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Quotation marks

The words "Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works" are hard to understand. Some people think that they are what "someone may say," like the words in the quotation marks. Most versions translate them as words that James is saying back to that "someone."

"You have ... I have"

Some people think that the words "you" and "I" are metonyms for "some people" and "other people." If they are correct, verse 18 could be translated, "Someone may say, 'Some people have faith and other people have works. Not everyone has both.'" If the next sentence is also what "someone may say," it could be translated "Some people show their faith without works, and other people show their faith by their works. Both have faith." In both cases, the reader will understand only if you add the extra sentence. It is probably best to translate as the ULB does.

Links:

[James 2:1 Notes]

James 2:1

Connecting Statement:

James continues to tell the scattered Jewish believers how to live by loving one another and reminds them not to favor rich people over poor people.

My brothers

James considers his audience to be Jewish believers. Alternate translation: "My fellow believers" or "My brothers and sisters in Christ"

do not hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... with partiality toward certain people

James wanted them to hold to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but he did not want them to show partiality to people. Alternate translation: "as you hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... do not show partiality toward certain people"

hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

Believing in Jesus Christ is spoken of as if it were an object that one could hold onto.

our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "our" includes James and his fellow believers.

partiality

the act of treating some people better than others

James 2:2

Suppose that someone enters your meeting

James starts to describe a situation where the believers might give more honor to a rich person than to a poor person.

wearing gold rings and splendid clothes

"dressed like a wealthy person"

James 2:3

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sit here in a good place
sit in this place of honor
stand over there
move to a place with less honor
Sit by my footstool
move to a humble place
James 2:4
are you not judging among yourselves? Have you not become judges with evil thoughts?
James is using rhetorical questions to teach and possibly scold his readers. Alternate translation: "you are making judgments among yourselves and becoming judges with evil thoughts."
James 2:5
Listen, my beloved brothers
James is exhorting his readers as if they were his family. Alternate translation: "Pay attention, my dear fellow believers"
did not God choose ... love him?
Here James uses a rhetorical question to teach his readers not to show favoritism. It can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "God has chosen ... love him"
the poor
This refers to poor people in general. Alternate translation: "poor people"
be rich in faith
Having much faith is spoken of as being wealthy or rich. The object of faith may have to be specified. Alternate translation: "have strong faith in Christ"
heirs
The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.
James 2:6
But you have
James is speaking to his whole audience.
have dishonored the poor
"you have shamed poor people"
Is it not the rich who oppress you?
Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct his readers. Alternate translation: "It is rich people who oppress you."
the rich
This refers to rich people in general. Alternate translation: "rich people"
who oppress you
"who treat you badly"
Are they not the ones ... to court?
Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct his readers. It can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "The rich people are the ones ... to court."
drag you to court
"forcibly take you to court to accuse you in front of judges"
James 2:7
Do they not insult ... have been called?
Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct and teach his readers. It can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "The rich people insult ... have been called."
the good name by which you have been called
Here "name" represents "Christ." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ, who called you" or "Christ, to whom you belong"
James 2:8
you fulfill
The word "you" refers to the Jewish believers.
fulfill the royal law
"obey God's law." The law is "royal" becuase God, the true king, is the one who gave it to people.
Love your neighbor as yourself
James is quoting from the book of Leviticus.
your neighbor
"all people" or "everyone"
you do well
"you are doing well" or "you are doing what is right"
James 2:9
if you favor
"give special treatment to" or "give honor to"
committing sin
"sinning." That is, breaking the law.
you are convicted by the law as transgressors
Here the law is spoken of as if it were a human judge. This can be translated using an active verb. Alternate translation: "the law itself convicts you of transgressing it" or "you are guilty of breaking God's law"
James 2:10
For whoever obeys
"For anyone who obeys"
except that he stumbles ... the whole law
Stumbling is falling down while one is trying to walk. Disobeying one point of the law is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking.
in just a single way
because of disobedience to just one requirement of the law
James 2:11
For the one who said
This refers to God, who gave the law to Moses.
Do not commit
To "commit" is to do an action.
If you ... but if you ... you have
Here "you" means "each one of you." Although James was writing to many Jewish believers, in this case, he used the singular form as if he was writing to each person individually.
James 2:12
So speak and act
"So you must speak and obey." James commands the people to do this.
who will be judged by means of the law of freedom
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who know that God will judge them by means of the law of freedom"
by means of the law
This passage implies that it is God who will judge according to his law.
the law of freedom
"the law that gives true freedom"
James 2:13
Mercy triumphs over

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"Mercy is better than" or "Mercy defeats." Here mercy and justice are spoken of as if they were persons.

James 2:14

Connecting Statement:

James encourages the scattered believers to show their faith before others, just as Abraham showed others his faith by his works.

What profit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works?

James is using a rhetorical question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "Fellow believers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works, that does him no good at all." or "Fellow believers, someone who has no works is no better if he says he has faith than someone who does not say he has faith."

he has faith, but he has no works ... that faith

Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. The abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with the verbs "believe" and "do." Alternate translation: "he believes in God but does not do anything ... what he believes" or "he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief ... that belief"

Can that faith save him?

James is using a rhetorical question to teach his audience. This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "faith." Alternate translation: "That faith cannot save him." or "Just saying he believes in God will not save him."

save him

"spare him from God's judgment"

James 2:15

brother or sister

a fellow believer in Christ, whether male or female

James 2:16

stay warm

This means either "have enough clothes to wear" or "have a place to sleep."

be filled

The thing that fills them is food. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "be filled with food" or "have enough to eat"

for the body

to eat, to wear, and to live comfortably

what profit is that?

James uses a rhetorical question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "how does that help them?" or "that does nothing good for them." or "your speech by itself does not help them."

James 2:17

faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. James speaks of faith as if it were alive if one does good works, and of faith as if it were dead if one does not do good deeds. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." Alternate translation: "a person who says he believes in God but does not do anything, does not really believe in God" or "a person who says he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief, does not really believe in God"

James 2:18

Yet someone may say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Possible meanigs are 1) James describes how someone might argue against his teaching and how he would respond to that person or 2) James describes how someone might support his teaching. If the speaker is supporting James, then the quotation would end at the end of the verse.

"You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works

The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe in God" and "do good things." Alternate translation: "'You believe in God and I do good things.' Prove to me that you can believe in God without doing anything, and I will prove to you that I believe in God by what I do"

James 2:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

James 2:20

Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is useless?

James uses this question to introduce the next part of his teaching. Alternate translation: "Listen to me, foolish man, and I will show that faith without works is useless."

that faith without works is useless

The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe in God" and "do good things." Alternate translation: "that saying that you believe in God without doing good things is useless" or "that if you do not do good things, it is useless to say that you believe"

James 2:21

General Information:

Since these are Jewish believers, they know the story of Abraham, about whom God had told them long ago in his word.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works ... on the altar?

This rhetorical question is used to rebut the foolish man's arguments from [James 2:18]

Was not Abraham our father justified by works ... on the altar?

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "works." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Did not God justify Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar?" or "God certainly justified Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar."

father

Here "father" is used in the sense of "ancestor."

James 2:22

You see

The word "see" is a metonym. Alternate translation: "You understand"

that faith worked with his works, and that by works his faith was completed

James speaks as if "faith" and "works" were things that can work together and help each other. The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe God" and "do what God commanded." Alternate translation: "that because Abraham believed God, he did

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

what God commanded him to do. And Abraham doing what God commanded showed that he truly believed"

You see

James again addresses his audience directly by using the plural form of "you."

James 2:23

The scripture was fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This fulfilled the scripture"

it was counted to him as righteousness

"God regarded his faith as righteousness." Abraham's faith and righteousness were treated as if they were able to be counted as having value.

James 2:24

it is by works that a man is justified, and not only by faith

Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God justifies a man because of what he does, and not just because he believes in God" or "God justifies a man because of what he does as a result of his belief, and not just because he believes in God"

James 2:25

In the same way also ... justified by works

James says that what was true of Abraham was also true of Rahab. Both were justified by works.

was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works ... another road?

James is using this rhetorical question to instruct his audience. Alternate translation: "it was what Rahab the prostitute did that justified her ... another road."

was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works ... another road?

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "works." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did God not justify Rahab the prostitute because of what she did ... another road?" or "God justified Rahab the prostitute because of what she did ... another road."

Rahab the prostitute

James expects his audience to know the Old Testament story about the woman Rahab.

messengers

people who bring news from another place

sent them away by another road

"then helped them escape and leave the city"

James 2:26

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead

James is speaking of faith without works as if it were a dead body without the spirit. Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." Alternate translation: "For just as the body is useless without the spirit, even so it is useless for a person to believe in God if he does not do anything" or "For just as the body is useless without the spirit, even so it is useless for a person to believe in God if he does not do anything as a result of his belief"

Chapter 3

James 3 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

James teaches his readers that they should live to please God by reminding them of things that they know from everyday life.

Links:

James 3:1 Notes

James 3:1

Not many of you

James is making a generalized statement.

my brothers

"my fellow believers"

we who teach will be judged more strictly

"God will judge us who teach more severely." This probably because those whom they teach trust them to know the truth and teach it correctly.

we who teach

James includes himself and other teachers, but not the readers, so the word "we" is exclusive.

James 3:2

we all stumble

James speaks of himself, other teachers, and the readers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

stumble

Sinning is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking. Alternate translation: "fail" or "sin"

does not stumble in words

"does not sin by saying wrong things"

he is a perfect man

"he is spiritually mature"

control even his whole body

James is referring to one's heart, emotions, and actions. Alternate translation: "control all his behavior" or "control all his actions"

James 3:3

General Information:

James is developing an argument that small things can control big things.

Now if we put bits into horses' mouths

James speaks about horses' bits. A bit is a small piece of metal that is placed into a horse's mouth to control where it goes.

Now if

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"If" or "When"
horses
A horse is a large animal used to carry things or people.
James 3:4
Notice also that ships ... are steered by a very small rudder
A ship is like a truck that floats on water. A rudder is a flat piece of wood or metal at the back of the ship, used to control where it goes. The word "rudder" could also be translated as "tool."
are driven by strong winds,
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "strong winds push them, they"
are steered by a very small rudder to wherever the pilot desires
"have a small tool that a person can use to control where the ship goes"
James 3:5
the tongue is a small member
It can be stated explicitly what the tongue is a member of. Alternate translation: "the tongue is a small member of the body" or "the tongue is a small part of the body"
boasts great things
Here "things" is a general word for everything about which these people are proud.
Notice also
"Think about"
how small a fire sets on fire a large forest
In order to help people understand the harm that the tongue can cause, James speaks of the harm that a small flame can cause. Alternate translation: "how a small flame can start a fire that burns many trees"
James 3:6
The tongue is also a fire
The tongue is a metonym for what people say. James calls it a fire because of the great damage it can do. Alternate translation: "The tongue is like a fire"
a world of evil set among our members
The enormous effects of sinful speaking are spoken of as if they were a world by themselves.
our members
"the members of our bodies" or "the parts of our bodies"
The tongue defiles the whole body
The tongue here is a metonym for the words of the person whose tongue it is, and the body is a synecdoche for the whole person. The words defiling the person is a metaphor for God rejecting a person who speaks evil words.
sets on fire the course of life
The phrase "course of life" refers to a person's entire life. Alternate translation: "it ruins a person's entire life"
life, and is itself set on fire by hell
The word "itself" refers to the tongue. Also, here "hell" refers to the powers of evil or to the devil. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "life because the devil uses it for evil"
James 3:7
For every kind of ... mankind
The phrase "every kind" is a general statement referring to all or many kinds of wild animals. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have learned to control many kinds of wild animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures"
reptile
This is an animal that crawls on the ground.
sea creature
an animal that lives in the sea
James 3:8
But no human being can tame the tongue
James speaks of the tongue as if it were a wild animal. Here "tongue" represents a person's desire to speak evil thoughts.
It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison
James speaks of the harm that people can cause by what they say as if the tongue were an evil and poisonous creature that can kill people. Alternate translation: "It is like a restless and evil creature, full of deadly poison" or "It is like a restless and evil creature that can kill people with its venom"
James 3:9
With it we
"We use the tongue to say words that"
we curse men
"we ask God to harm men"
who have been made in God's likeness
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God made in his likeness"
James 3:10
Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing
The nouns "blessing" and "cursing" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "With the same mouth, a person blesses people and curses people"
My brothers
"Fellow Christians"
these things should not happen
"these things are wrong"
James 3:11
Connecting Statement:
After James stresses that the words of believers should not both bless and curse, he gives examples from nature to teach his readers that people who honor God by worshiping him should also live in right ways.
Does a spring pour out from its opening both sweet and bitter water?
James uses a rhetorical question to remind believers about what happens in nature. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that a spring does not pour out both sweet water and bitter water."
James 3:12
Does a fig tree, my brothers, make olives?
James uses another rhetorical question to remind the believers about what happens in nature. Alternate translation: "Brothers, you know that a fig tree cannot grow olives."
my brothers
"my fellow believers"
Or a grapevine, figs?
The word "make" is understood from the previous phrase. James uses another rhetorical question to remind the believers about what happens in nature. Alternate translation: "Or does a grapevine make figs?" or "And a grapevine cannot grow figs."
James 3:13

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Who is wise and understanding among you?
James uses this question to teach his audience about proper behavior. The words "wise" and "understanding" are similar. Alternate translation: "I will tell you how a wise and understanding person is to act."
Let that person show a good life by his works in the humility of wisdom
This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "humility" and "wisdom." Alternate translation: "That person should live a good life by doing the kind of deeds that come from being humble and wise"
James 3:14
if you have bitter jealousy and ambition in your heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions or thoughts. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "jealousy" and "ambition." Alternate translation: "if you are jealous and selfish" or "if you desire what other people have and you want to succeed even if it harms others"
do not boast and lie against the truth
The abstract noun "truth" can be stated as "true." Alternate translation: "do not boast that you are wise, because that is not true"
James 3:15
This is not the wisdom that comes down from above
Here "This" refers to the "bitter jealousy and strife" described in the previous verses. The phrase "from above" is a metonym that represents "heaven" which represents God himself. Alternate translation: "This is not the kind of wisdom that God teaches us from heaven"
This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. Rather, it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic
The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as "wise." Alternate translation: "Whoever acts like this is not wise according to what God in heaven teaches us. Rather, this person is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic"
earthly
The word "earthly" refers to the values and behaviors of the people who do not honor God. Alternate translation: "not honoring to God"
unspiritual
"not from the Holy Spirit" or "not spiritual"
demonic
"from demons"
James 3:16
For where there are jealousy and ambition, there is confusion and every evil practice
This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "jealousy," "ambition," and "confusion." Alternate translation: "For when people are jealous and selfish, this causes them to act in disorderly and evil ways"
there is confusion
"there is disorder" or "there is chaos"
every evil practice
"every kind of sinful behavior" or "every kind of wicked deed"
James 3:17
But the wisdom from above is first pure
Here "from above" is metonym that represents "heaven," which represents God himself. The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as "wise." Alternate translation: "But when a person is wise according to what God in heaven teaches, he acts in ways that are first pure"
is first pure
"is first holy"
full of mercy and good fruits
Here "good fruits" refer to kind things that people do for others as a result of having wisdom from God. Alternate translation: "full of mercy and good deeds"
and sincere
"and honest" or "and truthful"
James 3:18
The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace among those who make peace
Making peace is spoken of as if they were sowing seeds, and righteousness is spoken of as if it were the fruit that grows up as a result of making peace. Alternate translation: "The result of making peace is righteousness" or "Those who work peacefully to help people live in peace produce righteousness"
make peace
The abstract noun "peace" can be expressed by using the word "peacefully." Alternate translation: "cause people to live peacefully" or "help people not to be angry with each other"

Chapter 4

James 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Adultery
Writers in the Bible often speak of adultery as a metaphor for people who say they love God but do things that God hates. (See: and godly)
Law
James probably uses this word in James 4:11 to refer to "the royal law" (James 2:8).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions
James asks many questions because he wants his readers to think about how they are living. He wants to correct and teach them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Humble
This word probably usually refers to people who are not proud. James uses the word here to refer to people who are not

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proud and who also trust in Jesus and obey him.

Links:

James 4:1 Notes

James 4:1

General Information:

In this chapter, the words "yourselves," "your," and "you" are plural and refer to the believers to whom James writes.

Connecting Statement:

James rebukes these believers for their worldliness and their lack of humility. He again urges them to watch how they speak to and about each other.

Where do quarrels and disputes among you come from?

The abstract nouns "quarrels" and "disputes" mean basically the same thing and can be translated with verbs. Alternate translation: "Why do you quarrel and dispute among yourselves?" or "Why do you fight among yourselves?"

Do they not come from your desires that fight among your members?

James uses this question to rebuke his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "They come from your evil desires for things, desires that fight among your members." or "You quarrel and have disputes because of your desires that fight among your members."

Do they not come from your desires that fight among your members

James writes of the tension or conflict that people feel because of their different desires as if those desires were fighting. Alternate translation: "Do they not come because of the conflict you feel because of your different desires? " or "You quarrel and argue because of the tension caused by your different desires."

your desires that fight among your members

Possible meanings are 1) "members" refers to the parts of a person: his body, feelings, and thoughts. Each person wants more than one thing, but he cannot have them all. Alternate translation: "your conflicting desires within you" 2) "members" refers to the individual people in the church. Different members want different things. Alternate translation: "the conflicting desires among you all"

James 4:2

You murder and covet, and you are not able to obtain

The phrase "You murder" is probably a hyperbole. The words "murder" and "covet" are used to express how badly the people behave in order to get what they want. Alternate translation: "You do all kinds of evil things to get what you cannot have"

You fight and quarrel

The words "fight" and "quarrel" mean basically the same thing. James uses them to emphasize how much the people argue among themselves. Alternate translation: "You constantly fight"

James 4:3

you ask wrongly

Possible meanings are 1) "you ask with wrong motives" or "you ask with bad attitudes" or 2) "you are asking for wrong things" or "you are asking for bad things"

James 4:4

You adulteresses!

James speaks of believers as being like wives who sleep with men other than their husbands. Alternate translation: "You are not being faithful to God!"

Do you not know ... God?

James uses this question to teach his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know ... God!"

friendship with the world

This phrase refers to identifying with or participating in the world's value system and behavior.

friendship with the world

Here the world's value system is spoken of as if it were a person that others could be friends with.

friendship with the world is hostility against God

One who is friends with the world is an enemy of God. Here "friendship with the world" stands for being friends with the world, and "hostility against God" stands for being hostile against God. Alternate translation: "friends of the world are enemies of God"

James 4:5

Or do you think the scripture says in vain ... envious"?

This is a rhetorical question James uses to exhort his audience. To speak in vain is to speak uselessly. Alternate translation: "There is a reason that scripture says ... envious.'"

The Spirit he caused to live in us

Some versions, including the ULB and UDB, understand this as a reference to the Holy Spirit. Other versions translate this as "the spirit" and mean by it the human spirit that each person has been created to have. We suggest that you use the meaning that is presented in other translations used by your readers.

James 4:6

But God gives more grace

How this phrase relates to the previous verse can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But, even though our spirits may desire what we cannot have, God gives us even more grace if we will humble ourselves"

so the scripture

"that is why the scripture"

the proud

This refers to proud people in general. Alternate translation: "proud people"

the humble

This refers to humble people in general. Alternate translation: "humble people"

James 4:7

So submit

"Because God gives grace to the humble, submit"

submit to God

"obey God"

Resist the devil

"Oppose the devil" or "Do not do what the devil wants"

he will flee

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"he will run away"

you

Here this pronoun is plural and refers to James's audience.

James 4:8

General Information:

The word "you" here is plural and refers to the scattered believers to whom James writes.

Come close to God

Here the idea of coming close stands for becoming honest and open with God.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded

These are two phrases in parallel with each other.

Cleanse your hands

This expression is a command for people to do righteous acts instead of unrighteous acts. Alternate translation: "Behave in a way that honors God"

purify your hearts

Here "hearts" refers to a person's thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "make your thoughts and intentions right"

you double-minded people

The word "double-minded" refers to a person who cannot make a firm decision about something. Alternate translation: "you people who cannot decide if you want to obey God or not"

James 4:9

Grieve, mourn, and cry

These three words have similar meanings. James uses them together to emphasize that the people should be truly sorry for not obeying God.

Let your laughter turn into mourning and your joy into gloom

This is saying the same thing in different ways for emphasis. The abstract nouns "laughter," "mourning," "joy," and "gloom" can be translated as verbs or adjectives. Alternate translation: "Stop laughing and mourn. Stop being joyful and be gloomy"

James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord

"Be humble toward God." Actions done with God in mind are often spoken of as being done in his physical presence.

he will exalt you

James indicates that God will honor the humble person by saying God will pick that person up off the ground physically from where that person had prostrated himself in humility. Alternate translation: "he will honor you"

James 4:11

brothers

James speaks of the believers as if they are biological brothers. The term here includes women as well as men. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

but a judge

"but you are acting like the person who gives the law"

James 4:12

Only one is the lawgiver and judge

This refers to God. "God is the only one who gives laws and judges people"

Who are you, you who judge your neighbor?

This is a rhetorical question James uses to scold his audience. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are just a human and cannot judge another human."

James 4:13

spend a year there

James speaks of spending time as if it were money. "stay there for a year"

James 4:14

Who knows what will happen tomorrow, and what is your life?

James uses these questions to correct his audience and to teach these believers that physical life is not that important. They can be expressed as statements. Alternate translation: "No one knows what will happen tomorrow, and your life does not last very long!"

For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears

James speaks of people as if they were a mist that appears and then quickly goes away. Alternate translation: "You live for only a short amount of time, and then you die"

James 4:15

Instead, you should say

"Instead, your attitude should be"

we will live and do this or that

"we will live long enough to do what we have planned to do." The word "we" does not directly refer to James or his audience but is part of the example of how James's audience should consider the future.

James 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

James 4:17

for anyone who knows to do good but does not do it, for him it is sin

Anyone who fails to do the good he knows he should do is guilty of sin.

Chapter 5

James 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Eternity

This chapter contrasts living for things of this world, which will not last, with living for things that will last for eternity. It is also important to live with the expectation that Jesus will return soon. (See: eternity)

Oaths

Scholars are divided over whether this passage teaches all oaths are wrong. Most scholars believe some oaths are permissible and James instead is teaching Christians to have integrity.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Elijah

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This story will be difficult to understand if the books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles have not yet been translated.
"Save his soul from death"
This probably teaches that the person who stops their sinful lifestyle will not be punished with physical death as a consequence of their sin. On the other hand, some scholars believe this passage teaches about eternal salvation. (See: sin and death and save)

Links:

James 5:1 Notes

James 5:1
Connecting Statement:
James warns rich people about their focus on pleasure and riches.
you who are rich
Possible meanings are 1) James is giving a strong warning to wealthy believers or 2) James is talking about wealthy unbelievers. Alternate translation: "you who are rich and say you honor God"
because of the miseries coming on you
James states that these people will suffer terribly in the future and writes as if their sufferings were objects that were coming toward them. The abstract noun "miseries" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "because you will suffer terribly in the future"
James 5:2
Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten.
Earthly riches do not last nor do they have any eternal value. James speaks of these events as if they had already happened. Alternate translation: "Your riches will rot, and your clothes will be eaten by moths."
riches ... clothes
These things are mentioned as examples of things that are valuable to wealthy people.
James 5:3
Your gold and your silver have become tarnished
Earthly riches do not last nor do they have any eternal value. James speaks of these events as if they had already happened. Alternate translation: "Your gold and silver will become tarnished"
gold ... silver
These things are mentioned as examples of things that are valuable to wealthy people.
have become tarnished ... their rust
Gold does not actually tarnish, and gold and silver do not actually rust. James wants to emphasize that these precious metals will be ruined. Alternate translation: "are ruined ... their ruined condition"
their rust will be a witness against you. It
James wrote of their valuable things being ruined as if they were a person in a courtroom accusing the wicked of their crimes. Alternate translation: "and when God judges you, your ruined treasures will be like someone who accuses you in court. Their corrosion" (See: and)
will consume ... like fire
Here the corrosion is spoken of as if it were a fire that will burn up their owners.
your flesh
Here "flesh" stands for the physical body.
fire
The idea of fire here is meant to lead people to remember that fire often stands for God's punishment that will come on all the wicked.
for the last days
This refers to the time right before God comes to judge all people. The wicked think they are storing up riches for the future, but what they are doing is storing up judgment. Alternate translation: "for when God is about to judge you"
James 5:4
Connecting Statement:
James continues to warn rich people about thier focus on pleasure and riches.
the wages you kept back from the laborers who mowed your fields are crying out against you
The money that should have been paid is spoken of as a person who is shouting because of the injustice done to him. Alternate translation: "God can see that you kept back the wages you should have given to those who mowed your fields"
The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts
The shouts of the harvesters are spoken of as if they could be heard in heaven. Alternate translation: "The Lord of hosts has heard the cries of the harvesters"
the ears of the Lord of hosts
God is spoken of as if he had ears as humans have.
James 5:5
You have fattened your hearts for a day of slaughter
Here people are viewed as if they were cattle, luxuriously fed on grain so they would become fattened to be slaughtered for a feast. However, no one will feast at the time of judgment. Alternate translation: "Your greed has only prepared you for harsh eternal judgment"
your hearts
The "heart" was considered to be the center of human desire, and here stands for the entire person.
James 5:6
You have condemned ... the righteous person
This is probably not "condemned" in the legal sense of a judge passing a sentence of death on a criminal. Instead, it probably refers to the wicked and powerful people who decide to mistreat the poor until they die.
the righteous person. He does not
"the people who do what is right. They do not." Here "the righteous person" refers to righteous people in general and not to a specific person. Alternate translation: "righteous people. They do not"
James 5:7
General Information:
In closing, James reminds the believers about the Lord's coming and gives several short lessons on how to live for the Lord.
Connecting Statement:

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James changes topics from a rebuke of the rich people to an exhortation to the believers.

Be patient, then

"Because of this, wait and be calm"

until the Lord's coming

This phrase refers to the return of Jesus, when he will begin his kingdom on the earth and judge all people. Alternate translation: "until Christ's return"

the farmer

James makes an analogy using farmers and believers to teach what it means to be patient.

James 5:8

Strengthen your hearts

James is equating the believers' hearts to their will to remain committed. Alternate translation: "Stay committed" or "Keep your faith strong"

the Lord's coming is near

"the Lord will return soon"

James 5:9

Do not complain, brothers ... you

James is writing to all the scattered Jewish believers.

against one another

"about each other"

you will not be condemned

This can be stated in the active. Alternate translation: "Christ will not condemn you"

See, the judge

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

the judge is standing at the door

James compares Jesus, the judge, to a person about to walk through a door to emphasize how soon Jesus will return to judge the world. Alternate translation: "the judge is coming soon"

James 5:10

the suffering and patience of the prophets, those who spoke in the name of the Lord

"how the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord suffered persecution with patience"

spoke in the name of the Lord

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of the Lord. Alternate translation: "spoke by the authority of the Lord" or "spoke for the Lord to the people"

James 5:11

See, we regard

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

those who endured

"those who continued obeying God even through hardship"

James 5:12

Above all, my brothers,

"This is important, may brothers:" or "Especially, my brothers,"

my brothers

This refers to all believers including women. Alternate translation: "my fellow believers"

do not swear

To "swear" is to say that you will do something, or that something is true, and to be held accountable by a higher authority. Alternate translation: "do not make an oath" or "do not make a vow"

either by heaven or by the earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" refer to the spiritual or human authorities that are in heaven and earth.

let your "Yes" mean "Yes" and your "No" mean "No,"

James is telling people to speak the truth without making an oath. Alternate translation: "If you say "Yes" or "No," say it truthfully"

so you do not fall under judgment

Being condemned is spoken of as if one had fallen, crushed by the weight of something heavy. Alternate translation: "so God will not punish you"

James 5:13

Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let him pray

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their need. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone is enduring troubles, he should pray"

Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their blessings. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone is happy, he should sing songs of praise"

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their need. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone is sick, he should call"

in the name of the Lord

"Name" is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by the authority of the Lord" or "with the authority that the Lord has given hthem"

James 5:15

The prayer of faith will heal the sick person

The writer speaks of God hearing believers pray for sick people and healing those people as if the prayers themselves healed the people. Alternate translation: "The Lord will hear the prayer of faith and will heal the sick person"

The prayer of faith

"The prayer made by believers" or "The prayer that people pray believing God will do as they ask"

the Lord will raise him up

"the Lord will make him well" or "the Lord will enable him to resume his normal life"

James 5:16

General Information:

As these are Jewish believers, James reminds them to pray by recalling one of the prophets of old and that prophet's practical prayers.

So confess your sins

Admit to other believers things you did wrong so that you can be forgiven.

to one another

"to each other"

so that you may be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may heal you"

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The prayer of a righteous person is very strong in its working
Prayer is presented as if it were an object that was strong or powerful. Alternate translation: "When the person who obeys God prays, God will do great things"
James 5:17
prayed earnestly
"prayed eagerly" or "prayed passionately"
in the land
There may have been rain in lands other than Israel, but it did not rain in Israel.
three ... six
"3 ... 6"
James 5:18
The heavens gave rain
"The heavens" probably refers to the sky, which is presented as the source of the rain. Alternate translation: "Rain fell from the sky"
the earth produced its fruit
Here the earth is presented as the source of the crops.
fruit
Here "fruit" stands for all the crops of the farmers.
James 5:19
brothers
Here this word probably refers to both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"
if anyone among you strays from the truth, and someone brings him back
A believer who stops trusting in God and obeying him is spoken of as if he were a sheep that wandered away from the flock. The person who persuades him to trust in God again is spoken of as if he were a shepherd who goes to search for the lost sheep. Alternate translation: "whenever anyone stops obeying God, and another person helps him start obeying again"
James 5:20
whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way ... will cover over a great number of sins
James means that God will use the actions of this person to persuade the sinner to repent and be saved. But James speaks as if it were this other person who actually saved the sinner's soul from death.
will save him from death and will cover over a great number of sins
Here "death" refers to spiritual death, eternal separation from God. Alternate translation: "will save him from spiritual death, and God will forgive the sinner for all of his sins"
will cover over a great number of sins
Possible meanings are 1) the person who brings back the disobedient brother will have his sins forgiven or 2) the disobedient brother, when he returns to the Lord, will have his sins forgiven. Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that God could cover so that he would not see them, so that he would forgive them.

Introduction to 1 Peter

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of 1 Peter

Introduction (1:1-2) Praise for God's salvation of the believers (1:3-2:10) Christian living (2:11-4:11) Encouragement to persevere when suffering (4:12-5:11) Closing (5:12-14)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Peter?

The Book of 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter. He wrote the letter to Gentile Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor.

What is the Book of 1 Peter about?

Peter stated that he wrote this letter for the purpose of "encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God" (5:12). He encouraged Christians to continue obeying God even when they were suffering. He told them to do this because Jesus would return soon. Peter also gave instructions about Christians submitting to persons in authority.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title "1 Peter" or "First Peter." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The First Letter from Peter" or "The First Letter Peter Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

How were Christians treated in Rome?

Peter probably was in Rome when he wrote this letter. He gave Rome the symbolic name of "Babylon" (5:13). It appears that when Peter wrote this letter, Romans were badly persecuting Christians.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Peter, except in two places: [1 Peter 1:16]

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Peter?

"You made your souls pure by obedience to the truth. This was for the purpose of sincere brotherly love; so love one another earnestly from the heart" (1:22). The ULB and most other modern translations read this way. Some older translations read, "You made your souls pure by obedience to the truth through the Spirit for the purpose of sincere brotherly love, so love one another earnestly from the heart."

If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

Chapter 1

1 Peter 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Peter formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 1:24-25.

Special concepts in this chapter

What God reveals

When Jesus comes again, everyone will see how good God's people were to have faith in Jesus. Then God's people will see how gracious God has been to them, and all people will praise both God and his people.

Holiness

God wants his people to be holy because God is holy. (See: holy)

Eternity

Peter tells Christians to live for things that will last forever and not to live for the things of this world, which will end. (See: eternity)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Peter writes that his readers are glad and sad at the same time (1 Peter 1:6). He can say this because they are sad because they are suffering, but they are glad because they know that God will save them "in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5)

Links:

1 Peter 1:1 Notes 1 Peter intro

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1 Peter 1:1

General Information:

Peter identifies himself as the writer and identifies and greets the believers to whom he is writing.

the foreigners of the dispersion

Peter speaks of his readers as people who live away from their homes in many different countries.

Cappadocia ... Bithynia

Along with the other places that Peter mentions, "Cappadocia" and "Bithynia" were Roman provinces located in what is now the country of Turkey.

the chosen ones

"the ones whom God the Father has chosen." God has chosen them according to his own foreknowledge.

1 Peter 1:2

the foreknowledge of God the Father

The abstract noun "foreknowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Possible meanings are 1) God had determined what would happen ahead of time. Alternate translation: "what God the Father decided previously" or 2) God knew what would happen ahead of time. Alternate translation: "what God the Father knew beforehand"

for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

Here "the blood" refers to the death of Jesus. Just as Moses sprinkled blood on the people of Israel to symbolize their covenant with God, believers are in covenant with God because of Jesus's death.

May grace be to you, and may your peace increase

This passage speaks of grace as if it were an object that believers could possess, and of peace as if it were something that could increase in amount. Of course, grace is in reality the kind way God acts toward believers, and peace is how believers live in safety and joy with God.

1 Peter 1:3

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about the believers' salvation and faith.

our Lord Jesus Christ ... has given us new birth

The words "our" and "us" refer to Peter and those to whom he is writing.

he has given us new birth to a living hope

Here "new birth" is a metaphor meaning that God has changed people so that they live their lives in a new way. Here "living hope" is a metaphor meaning an enduring, confident expectation." Alternate translation: "he has caused us to live in a new way, having an enduring, confident hope"

he has given us new birth

"he has caused us to be born again"

1 Peter 1:4

This is for an inheritance

You can translate this using a verb. Alternate translation: "We confidently expect to receive an inheritance"

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

will not perish, will not become stained, and will not fade away

Peter uses three similar phrases to describe the inheritance as something that is perfect and eternal.

It is reserved in heaven for you

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This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is reserving it in heaven for you"
1 Peter 1:5
You are protected by God's power
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is protecting you"
by God's power
Here "power" is a way of saying that God is strong and able to protect believers.
through faith
Here "faith" refers to the fact that the believers trust in Christ. Alternate translation: "because of your faith"
that is ready to be revealed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God is ready to reveal"
in the last time
This refers to a particular time, not to an extended period of time. This particular time is as the world as we know it is ending, before the age to come begins.
1 Peter 1:6
In this you greatly rejoice
The word "this" refers to all the blessings that Peter mentions in the previous verses.
1 Peter 1:7
This is for the proving of your faith
In the same way in which fire refines gold, hardships test how well believers trust in Christ.
the proving of your faith
God wishes to test how well believers trust in Christ.
faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes, even though it is tested by fire
Faith is more valuable than gold, because gold does not last forever, even if it is refined in fire.
your faith will be found to result in praise, glory, and honor
Possible meanings are 1) that "God will honor you very highly" because of your faith or 2) that "your faith will bring praise, glory, and honor" to God.
at the revealing of Jesus Christ
"when Jesus Christ is revealed." This refers to the return of Christ. This can also be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "when Jesus Christ appears to all people"
1 Peter 1:8
joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory
"wonderful joy that words cannot describe"
1 Peter 1:9
the salvation of your souls
Here "soul" refers to the whole person. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "your salvation" or "God saving you"
1 Peter 1:10
salvation ... grace
These words present two ideas as if they were things or objects. In reality, "salvation" refers to the action of God saving us, or to what happens as a result. Similarly, "grace" refers to the kind way in which God deals with believers.
searched diligently and examined carefully
The words "searched diligently" and "examined carefully" mean basically the same thing. Together these words emphasize how hard the prophets tried to understand this salvation. Alternate translation: "carefully searched to know all about this salvation" or "carefully examined everything about this salvation"
1 Peter 1:11
Connecting Statement:
Peter continues talking about the prophets' search for salvation.
inquiring into
Possible meanings are 1) "trying to learn" or 2) "trying to make known."
the Spirit of Christ
This is a reference to the Holy Spirit.
1 Peter 1:12
It was revealed to them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God revealed to the prophets"
into which angels long to look
"that angels want to understand"
1 Peter 1:13
So gird
"Because of this, gird." Peter uses the word "So" here to refer back to everything he has said about salvation, their faith, and the Spirit of Christ giving revelations to the prophets.
gird up the loins of your mind
Girding up the loins refers to preparing to work hard. It comes from the custom of tucking the bottom of one's robe into a belt around the waist in order to move with ease. Alternate translation: "get your minds ready"
Be sober
Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. Alternate translation: "Control your thoughts" or "Be careful about what you think"
Put your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you
Peter tells Christians to confidently wait to receive God's grace. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Confidently wait for the grace that God will bring to you" or "Fully trust in the grace that God will bring to you"
the grace that will be brought to you
God's way of dealing kindly with believers is spoken of as if it were an object that he will bring to them. Alternate translation: "the good things that God will kindly give to you"
when Jesus Christ is revealed
This refers to when Christ returns. This can also be expressed with an active form. See how you translated this in 1 Peter 1:7. Alternate translation: "when Jesus Christ appears to all people"
1 Peter 1:14
do not conform yourselves to the desires
"do not desire the same things" Alternate translation: "do not live to gratify the desires"
1 Peter 1:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
1 Peter 1:16
For it is written

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This refers to God's message in the scripture. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For as God said"

Be holy, because I am holy

Here the word "I" refers to God.

1 Peter 1:17

conduct yourselves in fear during your time here as foreigners.

Christians living their lives on earth is spoken of as if they were living in a land far away from their home. Alternate translation: "be reverent while you are living your life on earth"

1 Peter 1:18

you have been redeemed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has redeemed you"

1 Peter 1:19

the precious blood of Christ

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death on the cross.

like that of a lamb without blemish or spot

Jesus died as a sacrifice so that God would forgive people's sins. This phrase shows that Jesus was perfect by comparing his blood to the blood of a spotless lamb. Alternate translation: "like the blood of the spotless lambs that the Jewish priests sacrificed"

without blemish or spot

Peter expresses the same idea in two different ways to emphasize Christ's purity. Alternate translation: "with no imperfections"

1 Peter 1:20

Christ was foreknown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knew Christ" or "God chose Christ"

before the foundation of the world

You can translate this with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "before God created the world"

he has been revealed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has revealed him to you"

he has been revealed to you

Peter does not mean that his readers have actually seen Christ, but that they have learned the truth about him.

1 Peter 1:21

who raised him from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "who caused him to live again so that he was no longer among the dead"

and gave him glory

"and glorified him" or "and showed that he is glorious"

your faith and hope are in God

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "your faith and trust are in God" or "you believe in God and trust him"

1 Peter 1:22

You made your souls pure

Here the word "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "You made yourselves pure"

pure

Here the idea of cleanliness refers to being acceptable to God.

by obedience to the truth

You can translate this using a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "by obeying the truth"

brotherly love

This refers to love between fellow believers.

love one another earnestly from a pure heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or emotions. To love someone "from a pure heart" means to love some one completely with total commitment. Alternate translation: "love one another earnestly and completely"

1 Peter 1:23

born again, not from perishable seed, but from imperishable seed

Possible meanings are that Peter speaks of the word of God either 1) as the seed of a plant that grows and produces new life in believers or 2) as the tiny cells inside a man or woman that combine to cause a baby to grow inside the woman.

imperishable seed

seed that will not rot or dry up or die

through the living and remaining word of God

Peter speaks of God's word as if it were alive forever. In reality, it is God who lives forever, and whose instructions and promises last eternally.

1 Peter 1:24

General Information:

In these verses Peter quotes a passage from the prophet Isaiah relating to what he has just said about them being born of imperishable seed.

All flesh is like grass, and all its

The word "flesh" refers to humanity. The prophet Isaiah compares humanity to grass that grows and dies quickly. Alternate translation: "All people will die like grass dies, and all their"

glory is like the wild flower of the grass

Here the word "glory" refers to beauty or goodness. Isaiah compares the things that people consider to be good or beautiful about humanity to flowers that die quickly. Alternate translation: "goodness soon stops, just as flowers soon die"

1 Peter 1:25

the word of the Lord

"the message that comes from the Lord"

the gospel that was preached

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the gospel that we preached"

Chapter 2

1 Peter 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

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the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:6, 7, 8, and 22.

Special concepts in this chapter

Stones

Peter uses a building made of large stones as a metaphor for the church. Jesus is the cornerstone, the most important stone. The apostles and prophets are the foundation, the part of the building on which all the other stones rest. In this chapter, Christians are the stones that make up the walls of the building. (See: and cornerstone and foundation)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and babies

When Peter tells his readers to "long for pure spiritual milk," he is using the metaphor of a baby craving his mother's milk. Peter wants Christians to crave God's word the same way a baby craves milk.

Links:

1 Peter 2:1 Notes

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1 Peter 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues teaching his readers about holiness and obedience.

Therefore, put aside all evil, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander

These sinful actions are spoken of as if they were objects that people could throw away. The word "Therefore" here refers back to everything that Peter has said about being holy and obedient. Alternate translation: "So then, stop being evil, deceptive, hypocritical, envious, and slanderous"

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk

Peter speaks of his readers as if they were babies. Babies requires very pure food that they can digest easily. In the same way, believers need pure teaching from God's word. Alternate translation: "Just as babies long for their mother's breast milk, so you must yearn for pure spiritual milk"

long for

"desire intensely" or "yearn for"

pure spiritual milk

Peter speaks of the word of God as if it were spiritual milk that nourishes children.

you may grow in salvation

Here the word "salvation" refers to when God brings the salvation of his people to completion when Jesus returns

grow

Peter speaks of believers advancing in knowledge of God and faithfulness to him as if they were children growing up.

1 Peter 2:3

if you have tasted that the Lord is kind

Here to taste means to experience something personally. Alternate translation: "if you have experienced the Lord's kindness toward you"

1 Peter 2:4

General Information:

Peter begins to tell a metaphor about Jesus and the believers being living stones.

Come to him who is a living stone

Peter speaks of Jesus as if he were a stone in a building. Alternate translation: "Come to him who is like a stone in a building, but alive, not a dead stone"

who is a living stone

Possible meanings are 1) "who is a stone that is alive" or 2) "who is a stone that gives life."

that has been rejected by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have rejected"

but that has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but that God has chosen"

1 Peter 2:5

You also are ... being built up to be a spiritual house

Just as people used stones to build the temple in the Old Testament, believers are the materials that God is using to build a house in which he will live.

You also are like living stones

Peter compares his readers to stones that are alive.

that are being built up to be a spiritual house

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God is building into a spiritual house"

a holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices

Here the position of priesthood stands for the priests who fulfill its duties.

1 Peter 2:6

Scripture contains this

The scriptures are spoken of as if they were a container. This passage refers to the words that a person reads in scripture. Alternate translation: "This is what a prophet wrote in the scriptures long ago"

See

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

a cornerstone, chosen and valuable

God is the one who chose the stone. Alternate translation: "a most important cornerstone, which I have chosen"

a cornerstone

The prophet speaks of the Messiah as the most important stone in a building.

1 Peter 2:7

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues quoting from the scriptures.

The value, then, is to you who believe

You may need to make explicit that the value is of the "cornerstone"

The stone that was rejected ... has become the head of the corner

This is a metaphor that means people, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God has made him the most important

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stone in a building.

The stone that was rejected by the builders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The stone that the builders rejected"

the head of the corner

This refers to the most important stone in a building and means basically the same thing as "cornerstone" in 1 Peter 2:6.

1 Peter 2:8

A stone of stumbling and a rock that makes them fall

These two phrases share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that people will take offense at this "stone," which refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "a stone or a rock over which people will stumble"

stumble because they disobey the word

Here "the word" refers to the gospel message. To disobey means to not believe. Alternate translation: "stumble because they do not believe the message about Jesus"

which is what they were appointed to do

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for which God also appointed them"

1 Peter 2:9

a chosen people

You can clarify that God is the one who has chosen them. Alternate translation: "a people whom God has chosen"

a royal priesthood

Possible meanings are 1) "a group of priests who are also kings" or 2) "a group of priests who serve the king."

a people for God's possession

"a people who belong to God"

who called you out

"who called you to come out"

from darkness into his marvelous light

Here "darkness" refers to their condition as sinful people who did not know God, and "light" refers to their condition as people who do know God and practice righteousness. Alternate translation: "from a life of sin and ignorance of God to a life of knowing and pleasing him"

1 Peter 2:10

General Information:

Here Peter quotes a verse from the prophet Hosea. Some modern versions do not format this as a quote, which is also acceptable.

1 Peter 2:11

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about how to live Christian lives.

foreigners and exiles

These two words mean basically the same thing. Peter speaks of his readers as people who are living in foreign lands away from their home. See how you translated "foreigners" in [1 Peter 1:1]

to abstain from fleshly desires

Here the idea of flesh refers to the sinful nature of humanity in this fallen world. Alternate translation: "to not to give in to sinful desires"

fight against your soul

Here the word "soul" refers to a person's spiritual life. Peter speaks of sinful desires as soldiers that are trying to destroy the spiritual life of believers. Alternate translation: "seek to destroy your spiritual life"

1 Peter 2:12

Your conduct among the Gentiles should be honorable

The abstract noun "conduct" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "When you are with the Gentiles, you should always act in an honorable way"

honorable

morally good

they may be eyewitnesses of your good deeds

The abstract noun "deeds" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "they may be eyewitnesses of the good things that you do"

on the day when he appears

"on the day when he comes." This refers to the day when God will judge all people. Alternate translation: "when he comes to judge everyone"

1 Peter 2:13

every human authority

"every person who is in authority" or "everyone who has authority"

for the Lord's sake

Possible meanings are 1) that by obeying human authorities, they are obeying the Lord who established those authorities or 2) that by obeying human authorities, they will honor Jesus who also obeyed human authorities.

the king as supreme

"the king as the highest human authority"

1 Peter 2:14

who are sent for the punishment

The abstract noun "punishment" can be translated using the verb "punish," and the idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the king has sent to punish"

1 Peter 2:15

in doing good you silence the ignorant talk of foolish people

"by doing good you stop foolish people from speaking about things that they do not know"

1 Peter 2:16

as a covering for wickedness

Peter speaks of their condition as free people as something that they should not use to hide sinful behavior. Alternate translation: "as an excuse to do wicked things"

1 Peter 2:17

the brotherhood

This refers to all Christian believers.

1 Peter 2:18

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to people who are servants of other people.

the good and gentle masters

Here the words "good" and "gentle" share similar meanings and emphasize that such masters treat their servants kindly. Alternate translation: "the very kind masters"

the malicious ones

"the cruel ones" or "the mean ones"

1 Peter 2:19

it is praiseworthy

"it is deserving of praise" or "it is pleasing to God"

because he is conscious of God, a person endures sorrows while suffering unjustly

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This person accepts unjust suffering because he knows that he is obeying God.

1 Peter 2:20

For how much credit is there ... while being afflicted?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that there is nothing praiseworthy about suffering for doing something wrong. Alternate translation: "For there is no credit ... while being afflicted."

while being afflicted

Here the word "afflicted" is a metonym for "punished." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "while someone afflicts you" or "while someone punishes you"

1 Peter 2:21

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues speaking to people who are servants of other people.

it is to this that you were called

Here the word "this" refers to believers enduring while suffering for doing good, as Peter has just described. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has called you to this"

for you to follow in his steps

"so that you would follow his footprints." Peter speaks of following Jesus's example in the way that they suffer as if one were walking on the same path that Jesus had taken. Alternate translation: "so that you would imitate his behavior"

1 Peter 2:22

neither was any deceit found in his mouth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "neither did anyone find deceit in his mouth"

neither was any deceit found in his mouth

Here "deceit" refers to words that a person speaks that are intended to deceive other people. Alternate translation: "neither did he speak any lies"

1 Peter 2:23

When he was insulted, he gave no insult in return

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people insulted him, he did not insult them back"

he gave himself over to the one who judges justly

"he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly." This means that he trusted God to take away his shame, which had been put on him by those who treated him harshly.

1 Peter 2:24

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues talking about Jesus Christ. He is still speaking to people who are servants.

He himself

This refers to Jesus, with emphasis.

carried our sins in his body on the tree

Here "carried our sins" means he suffered the punishment for our sins. Alternate translation: "suffered the punishment for our sins in his body on the tree"

the tree

This is a reference to the cross on which Jesus died, which was made of wood.

By his bruises you have been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has healed you because people bruised him"

1 Peter 2:25

you had been straying like lost sheep

Peter compares his readers' actions before they had believed in Christ to the way lost sheep wander away from their shepherd.

the shepherd ... of your souls

The word "shepherd" is a metaphor for a person who protects another, and the word "souls" is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "your shepherd..."

Chapter 3

1 Peter 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 3:10-12.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Outward ornaments"

Most people want to look good so other people will like them and think they are good people. Women are especially careful to look good by wearing nice clothes and jewels. Peter is saying that what a woman thinks and says and does are more important to God than how she looks.

Unity

Peter wanted his readers to agree with each other. More importantly, he wanted them to love each other and be patient with each other.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Peter quotes a psalm that describes God as if he were a person with eyes, ears, and a face. However, God is a spirit, so he does not have physical eyes or ears or a physical face. But he does know what people do, and he does act against wicked people.

Links:

1 Peter 3:1 Notes

1 Peter 3:1

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to women who are wives.

In the same way, you who are wives should submit to your own husbands

Just as believers are to "Obey every human authority" (1 Peter 2:13) and servants are to "be subject" to their masters (1 Peter 2:18), wives are to submit to their husbands. The words "Obey," "be subject," and "submit" translate the same word.

some men are disobedient to the word

Here "the word" refers to the gospel message. To disobey means that they do not believe. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Peter 2:8]

they may be won

"they may be persuaded to believe in Christ." This means that the unbelieving husbands will become believers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they may become believers"

without a word

"without the wife saying a word." Here "a word" refers to anything the wife might speak about Jesus.

1 Peter 3:2

having been eyewitnesses of your respectful, pure behavior

The abstract noun "behavior" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "having seen for themselves that you behave sincerely and respectfully"

your respectful, pure behavior

Possible meanings are 1) "your sincere behavior toward them and the way that you honor them" or 2) "your pure behavior toward them and the way that you honor God."

1 Peter 3:3

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues speaking to women who are wives.

your adornment

"the things that make you beautiful" or "your beauty"

1 Peter 3:4

the inner person of the heart

Here the words "inner person" and "heart" refer to the inward character and personality of a person. Alternate translation: "what you really are on the inside"

a gentle and quiet spirit

"a gentle and peaceful attitude." Here the word "quiet" means "peaceful" or "calm." The word "spirit" refers to a person's attitude or temperament.

which is precious before God

Peter speaks of God's opinion of a person as if that person were standing directly in front of him. Alternate translation: "which God considers to be precious"

1 Peter 3:5

who hoped in God

The holy women confidently expected that God would do what he promised to do. Alternate translation: "who fully trusted God"

1 Peter 3:6

called him her lord

said that he was her lord, that is, her master

You are now her children

Peter says that believing women who act as Sarah acted can be thought of as if they were her actual children.

1 Peter 3:7

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to men who are husbands.

In the same way

This refers back to how Sarah and other godly women obeyed their husbands in 1 Peter 3:5 and 1 Peter 3:6.

wives according to understanding, as with a weaker container, a woman

Peter speaks of women as if they were containers, as men are sometimes also spoken of. The abstract noun "understanding" can also be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "wives, understanding that the woman is the weaker partner"

give them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life

You can translate this using verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "honor them because they will also receive by grace the eternal life that God gives"

heirs of the grace of life

Eternal life is often spoken of as if it were something that people inherit.

Do this

Here "this" refers to the ways husbands should treat their wives. Alternate translation: "Live with your wives in this way"

so that your prayers will not be hindered

To "hinder" is to prevent something from happening. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that nothing will hinder your prayers" or "so that nothing will keep you from praying as you should"

1 Peter 3:8

General Information:

Peter begins to speak again to all of the believers.

be like-minded, compassionate

"have the same opinion and be compassionate" or "have the same attitude and be compassionate"

tenderhearted

being gentle and compassionate towards others

1 Peter 3:9

Do not pay back evil for evil or insult for insult

Peter speaks of responding to the actions of another person as remitting payment for those actions. Alternate translation: "Do not do evil to someone who does evil to you or insult someone who insults you"

continue to bless

You can clarify the object of blessing. Alternate translation: "continue to bless those who do evil to you or insult you"

for this you were called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God called you for this"

that you might inherit a blessing

Peter speaks of receiving God's blessing as receiving an inheritance. Alternate translation: "that you might receive God's blessing as your permanent possession"

1 Peter 3:10

General Information:

In these verses Peter quotes from the Psalms.

to love life and see good days

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and

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emphasize the desire to have a good life.

see good days

Here experiencing good things is spoken of as seeing good days. The word "days" refers to one's lifetime. Alternate translation: "experience good things during life"

stop his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit

The words "tongue" and "lips" refer to the person who is speaking. The phrases "his tongue from evil" and "his lips from speaking deceit" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the command not to lie. Alternate translation: "stop himself from saying evil and deceitful things"

1 Peter 3:11

Let him turn away from what is bad

Here "turn away" is a metaphor that means to stop doing something. Alternate translation: "Let him stop doing what is bad"

1 Peter 3:12

The eyes of the Lord see the righteous

The word "eyes" refers to the Lord's ability to know things. The Lord's approval of the righteous is spoken of as his seeing them. Alternate translation: "The Lord sees the righteous" or "The Lord approves of the righteous"

his ears hear their prayers

The word "ears" refers to the Lord's awareness of what people say. That the Lord hears their prayers implies that he also responds to them. Alternate translation: "he hears their prayers" or "he grants their prayers"

the face of the Lord is against

The word "face" refers to the Lord's will to oppose his enemies. Opposing someone is spoken of as setting one's face against that person. Alternate translation: "the Lord opposes"

1 Peter 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues teaching the believers how to live Christian lives.

Who is the one who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that it is unlikely that someone would harm them if they do good things. Alternate translation: "No one will harm you if you do good things."

1 Peter 3:14

suffer because of righteousness

You can translate this with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "suffer because you do what is right"

you are blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"

Do not fear their threats. Do not be troubled

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that believers should not be afraid of those who persecute them. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of what people might do to you"

their threats

Here the word "their" refers to anyone who might try to harm those to whom Peter is writing.

1 Peter 3:15

Instead, set apart

"Instead of being troubled, set apart"

set apart the Lord Christ in your hearts as holy

The phrase "set apart the Lord Christ ... as holy" is a metaphor for acknowledging Christ's holiness. Here "hearts" is a metonym for the "inner person." Alternate translation: "acknowledge within yourselves that the Lord Christ is holy" or "honor the Lord Christ as holy within yourselves"

about the hope you have

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "about why you have confidence in God" or "about what you are confidently expecting God to do for you"

1 Peter 3:16

however, with meekness and respect

This describes how Christias should answer people who ask about their hope. Alternate translation: "but do this with gentleness and respect"

1 Peter 3:17

if it should be God's will

This statement is hypothetical. Peter is saying that it is sometimes God's will that his people suffer, but it is not always God's will.

1 Peter 3:18

Connecting Statement:

Peter explains how Christ suffered and what Christ accomplished by suffering.

suffered for us

The word "us" includes the people Peter was writing to.

so that he would bring us to God

Peter probably means here that Christ died in order to create a close relationship between us and God.

He was put to death in the flesh

Here "flesh" refers to Christ's body; Christ was physically put to death. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People put Christ to death physically"

he was made alive by the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit made Jesus alive. Alternate translation: "the Spirit made him alive" or 2) Jesus now had a spiritual body that would never die. Alternate translation: "he was made alive in the spirit" or "he was made alive with a spiritual body"

1 Peter 3:19

By the Spirit, he went

Possible meanings are 1) "By the Holy Spirit's power, he went" or 2) "In his spiritual existence, he went."

the spirits who are now in prison

Possible meanings of the word "spirits" are 1) "evil spirits" or 2) "spirits of the dead people."

1 Peter 3:20

when the patience of God was waiting

God's patience is a metonym for God himself. Peter writes of God's patience as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "when God was waiting patiently"

in the days of Noah, in the days of the building of an ark

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "during the time of Noah, when he was building an ark"

1 Peter 3:21

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

"because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This phrase

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

completes the thought, "This is a symbol of the baptism that saves you now."

1 Peter 3:22

Christ is at the right hand of God

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbol that God has given Jesus the greatest honor and authority over all others. Alternate translation: "Christ is beside God in the place of honor and authority"

submit to him

"submit to Jesus Christ"

Chapter 4

1 Peter 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:18.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungodly Gentiles

This passage uses the term "Gentiles" to refer to all ungodly people who are not Jews. It does not include Gentiles who have become Christians. "Sensuality, passion, drunkenness, drunken celebrations, having wild parties, and committing disgusting acts of idolatry" were actions that characterized or typified the ungodly Gentiles. (See: godly)

Martyrdom

It is apparent that Peter is speaking to many Christians who are experiencing great persecution and are facing death for their beliefs.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Let it" and "Let none" and "Let him" and "Let those"

Peter uses these phrases to tell his readers what he wants them to do. They are like commands because he wants his readers to obey. But it is as if he is telling one person what he wants other people to do.

Links:

1 Peter 4:1 Notes

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1 Peter 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to teach the believers about Christian living. He begins by giving a conclusion to his thoughts from the previous chapter about Christ's sufferings.

in the flesh

Here "flesh" means "body." Alternate translation: "in his body" or "while here on earth"

arm yourselves with the same intention

The phrase "arm yourselves" makes readers think of soldiers who get their weapons ready for battle. It also pictures "the same intention" as a weapon or perhaps as a piece of armor. Here this metaphor means that believers should be determined in their mind to suffer as Jesus did. Alternate translation: "prepare yourselves with the same thoughts that Christ had"

has ceased from sin

"has stopped sinning"

1 Peter 4:2

for men's desires

for the things that sinful people normally desire

1 Peter 4:3

the time that has passed is enough for you to do the desire of the Gentiles

Peter wanted the believers to stop doing the sinful things the Gentiles did. He was not praising them for doing those things enough. Alternate translation: "you have been doing for too long the things that the Gentiles like to do"

drunken celebrations, having wild parties

These terms refer to activities in which people gather to drink too much alcohol and behave in a shameful manner.

1 Peter 4:4

floods of reckless behavior

These examples of wild, boundless sin are spoken of as if they were great floods of water that sweep over people.

reckless behavior

doing everything they can to satisfy the desires of their bodies

1 Peter 4:5

the one who is ready to judge

Possible meanings are 1) "God, who is ready to judge" or 2) "Christ, who is ready to judge"

the living and the dead

This means all people, whether they are still alive or have died. Alternate translation: "every person"

1 Peter 4:6

the gospel was preached also to the dead

Possible meanings are 1) "the gospel was preached also to people who had already died" or 2) "the gospel was preached also to those who were alive but are now dead"

the gospel was preached

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) Christ preached. Alternate translation: "Christ preached the gospel" or 2) men preached. Alternate translation: "men preached the gospel"

they have been judged in the flesh as humans

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) God judged them in this life on earth. Alternate translation: "God judged them in their bodies as humans" or 2) men judged them according to human standards. Alternate

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translation: "men judged them in their bodies as humans"
judged in the flesh as humans
This is a reference to death as the ultimate form of judgment.
live in the spirit the way God does
Possible meanings are 1) "live spiritually as God lives because the Holy Spirit will enable them to do so" or 2) "live according to God's standards by the power of the Holy Spirit"
1 Peter 4:7
The end of all things
This refers to the end of the world at Christ's second coming.
is coming
The end that will happen soon is spoken of as if it is physically coming closer in distance. Alternate translation: "will soon happen"
be of sound mind, and be sober in your thinking
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Peter uses them to emphasize the need to think clearly about life since the end of the world is near.
be sober in your thinking
Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. See how you translated this in [1 Peter 1:13]
1 Peter 4:8
Above all things
"Most importantly of all"
for love covers a multitude of sins
Peter describes "love" as if it were a person who places a cover over the sins of others. Possible meanings are 1) "for a person who loves will not try to find out if another person has sinned" or 2) "for a person who loves will forgive the sins of other people, even if those sins are many"
1 Peter 4:9
Be hospitable
Show kindness to and welcome guests and travelers
1 Peter 4:10
As each one of you has received a gift
This refers to special spiritual abilities that God gives to believers. Alternate translation: "Because each one of you has received a special spiritual ability as a gift from God"
1 Peter 4:11
so that in all ways God would be glorified
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that in all ways you will glorify God"
glorified
praised, honored
1 Peter 4:12
do not regard as strange the testing
"do not be surprised by the testing"
the testing in the fire that has come upon you
In the same way that fire refines gold, trials test and refine a person's faith. Alternate translation: "the difficult trial that you are experiencing" or "your troubles that are like a test by fire"
1 Peter 4:13
General Information:
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1 Peter 4:14
If you are insulted for Christ's name,
Here the word "name" refers to Christ himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If people insulted you because you believe in Christ"
the Spirit of glory and of God
This refers to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God," or "the glorious Spirit of God"
rests on you
"is with you" or "stays with you" or "lives with you"
1 Peter 4:15
a meddler
This refers to a person who gets involved with the affairs of others without having a right to do so.
1 Peter 4:16
with that name
"because he bears the name Christian" or "because people have recognized him as a Christian." The words "that name" refer to the word "Christian."
1 Peter 4:17
household of God
This phrase refers to believers, whom Peter speaks of as God's family.
If it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who disobey God's gospel?
Peter use this question to emphasize that God's judgment will be more severe for people who reject the gospel than for believers. Alternate translation: "If it begins with us, the outcome for those who do not obey God's gospel will be much worse."
what will be the outcome for those
"what will happen to those"
those who disobey God's gospel
"those who do not believe God's gospel." Here the word "disobey" means to not believe.
1 Peter 4:18
the righteous ... what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?
Peter use this question to emphasize that sinners will suffer much more than believers do. Alternate translation: "the righteous man ... the outcome will be much worse for the ungodly and the sinner."
If it is difficult for the righteous to be saved
Here the word "saved" refers to final salvation when Christ returns. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If the righteous person experiences many difficulties before God saves him"
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner
"what will happen to the ungodly and the sinner"
the ungodly and the sinner
The "the ungodly" is a nominal adjective that means "the ungodly person." The words "ungodly" and "sinner" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the wickedness of these people. Alternate translation: "ungodly sinners"
1 Peter 4:19
commit their souls
Here the word "souls" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "commit themselves" or "commit their lives"
in well-doing
The abstract noun "well-doing" can be translated with a

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verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "while they do good" or "while they live rightly"

Chapter 5

1 Peter 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Most people in the ancient Near East would end a letter the way Peter ends this one.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crowns

The crown that the Chief Shepherd will give is a reward, something that people who do something especially good receive. (See: reward)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Lion

All animals are afraid of lions because they are fast and strong, and they eat almost every other kind of animal. They also eat people. Satan wants to make God's people afraid, so Peter uses the simile of a lion to teach his readers that Satan can harm their bodies, but if they trust in God and obey him, they will always be God's people, and God will care for them.

Babylon

Babylon was the evil nation that in Old Testament times had destroyed Jerusalem, taken the Jews away from their homes, and ruled over them. Peter uses Babylon as a metaphor for the nation that was persecuting the Christians he was writing to. Many scholars think that Peter was referring to Rome because the Romans were persecuting the Christians.

Links:

1 Peter 5:1 Notes

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1 Peter 5:1

General Information:

Peter speaks specifically to men who are elders.

the glory that will be revealed

This is a reference to Christ's second coming. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the glory of Christ that God will reveal"

1 Peter 5:2

Be shepherds of God's flock

Peter speaks of the believers as a flock of sheep and the elders as the shepherds who care for them.

1 Peter 5:3

Do not act as lords over those allotted to you. Instead, be examples

Elders are to lead by example and not act toward the people as a harsh master would toward his servants.

those allotted to you

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has placed in your care"

1 Peter 5:4

Then when the Chief Shepherd is revealed

Peter speaks of Jesus as if he were a shepherd who has authority over all other shepherds. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, appears" or "When God reveals Jesus, the Chief Shepherd"

an unfading crown of glory

Here the word "crown" represents the reward that someone receives as a symbol of victory. The word "unfading" means that it is eternal. Alternate translation: "a glorious prize that will last forever"

1 Peter 5:5

General Information:

Peter gives an instruction specifically to younger men and then continues to instruct all of the believers.

In the same way

This refers back to the way the elders were to submit to the Chief Shepherd as Peter described in 1 Peter 5:1 through 1 Peter 5:4.

All of you

This refers to all believers, not just the younger men.

clothe yourselves with humility

Peter speaks of the moral quality of humility as if it were clothing that people could put on. Alternate translation: "act humbly toward each other" or "act with humility"

1 Peter 5:6

under God's mighty hand so

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power to save the humble and punish the proud. Alternate translation: "under God's great power so" or "before God, realizing that he has great power, so"

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him

Peter speaks of anxiety as if it were a heavy burden that a person places on God, rather than carrying it himself. Alternate translation: "Trust him with everything that worries you" or "Let him take care of all the things that trouble you"

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober

Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. See how you translated this in [1 Peter 1:13]

the devil is walking around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour

Peter compares the devil to a roaring lion. Just as a hungry lion completely devours its prey, the devil is seeking to completely destroy the faith of believers.

walking around

The context indicates that this is part of the simile of the

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"roaring lion," so if your language has a word for the way an animal walks when it is hunting, you may use it here.
1 Peter 5:9
Stand against him
Standing is a metonym for fighting. Alternate translation: "Fight against him"
your brotherhood in the world is enduring
Peter speaks of fellow believers as members of the same family. Alternate translation: "your fellow believers who are in the world are enduring"
in the world
"in various places throughout the world"
1 Peter 5:10
for a little while
"for a short time"
the God of all grace
Here the word "grace" may refer either to the things that God gives or to God's character. Possible meanings are 1) "the God who always gives us what we need" or 2) "the God who is always gracious."
who called you to his eternal glory in Christ
"who chose you to share his eternal glory in heaven because you are joined to Christ"
perfect you
"make you perfect" or "restore you" or "make you well again"
confirm you, strengthen you
These two expressions have similar meanings, that is, that God will enable the believers to trust in him and to obey him regardless of any suffering they may experience.
1 Peter 5:11
General Information:
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1 Peter 5:12
General Information:
This is the end of Peter's letter. Here he gives his final remarks about his letter and his closing greetings.
I have written to you briefly through him
Silvanus wrote the words that Peter told him to write in the letter.
what I have written is the true grace of God
"I have written about the true grace of God." Here the word "grace" refers to the gospel message, which tells of the kind things that God has done for believers.
Stand in it
The word "it" refers to "the true grace of God." Being strongly committed to this grace is spoken of as standing firmly in one place, refusing to move. Alternate translation: "Remain strongly committed to it"
1 Peter 5:13
The woman who is in Babylon
Here "The woman" probably refers to the group of believers who live in "Babylon." Possible meanings for "Babylon" are 1) it is a symbol for the city of Rome, 2) it is a symbol for anywhere that Christians are suffering, or 3) it refers literally to the city of Babylon. It most likely refers to the city of Rome.
who is chosen together with you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has chosen as he has chosen you"
my son
Peter speaks of Mark as if he were his spiritual son. Alternate translation: "my spiritual son" or "who is like a son to me"
1 Peter 5:14
a kiss of love
"a loving kiss" or "a kiss to show your love for each other"

Introduction to 2 Peter

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Peter

Introduction (1:1-2) Reminder to live good lives because God has enabled us to (1:3-21) Warning against false teachers (2:1-22) Encouragement to prepare for the second coming of Jesus (3:1-17)

Who wrote the Book of 2 Peter?

The author identified himself as Simon Peter. Simon Peter was an apostle. He also wrote 1 Peter. Peter probably wrote this letter while in a prison in Rome just before he died. Peter called this letter his second letter, so we can date it after 1 Peter. He addressed the letter to the same audience as his first letter. The audience probably was Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor.

What is the Book of 2 Peter about?

Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers to live good lives. He warned them about false teachers who were saying Jesus was taking too long to return. He told them that Jesus was not slow in returning. Instead, God was giving people time to repent so that they would be saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Peter" or "Second Peter." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Second Letter from Peter" or "The Second Letter Peter Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people Peter spoke against?

It is possible that the people Peter spoke against were those who would become known as Gnostics. These teachers distorted the teachings of scripture for their own gain. They lived in immoral ways and taught others to do the same.

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What does it mean that God inspired Scripture?

The doctrine of scripture is a very important one. 2 Peter helps readers to understand that while each writer of scripture had his own distinct way of writing, God is the true author of scripture (1:20-21).

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Peter. Also, the word "you" is always plural and refers to Peter's audience.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Peter?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"to be kept in chains of lower darkness until the judgment" (2:4). Some modern versions and older versions have, "to be kept in pits of lower darkness until the judgment." "They enjoy their deceitful actions while they are feasting with you" (2:13). Some versions have, "They enjoy their actions while they are feasting with you in love feasts." "Beor" (2:15). Some other translations read, "Bosor." "The elements will be burned with fire, and the earth and the deeds in it will be revealed" (3:10). Other versions have, "The elements will be burned with fire, and the earth and the deeds in it will be burned up."

Chapter 1

2 Peter 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Peter formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Knowledge of God

To have knowledge of God means to belong to him or to have a relationship with him. Here, "knowledge" is more than just mentally knowing about God. It is a knowledge that causes God to save a person and to give him grace and peace. (See: know)

Living godly lives

Peter teaches that God has given believers all that they need for living godly lives. Therefore, believers should do everything they can to obey God more and more. If believers continue to do this, then they will be effective and productive through their relationship with Jesus. However, if believers do not continue living godly lives, then it is like they have forgotten what God did through Christ to save them. (See: godly and save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The truth of Scripture

Peter teaches that the prophecies in Scripture were not made up by men. The Holy Spirit revealed God's message to the men who spoke them or wrote them down. Also, Peter and the other apostles did not make up the stories they told people about Jesus. They witnessed what Jesus did and heard God call Jesus his son.

Links:

2 Peter 1:1 Notes 2 Peter intro

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2 Peter 1:1

General Information:

Peter identifies himself as the writer and identifies and greets the believers he is writing to.

slave and apostle of Jesus Christ

Peter speaks of being Jesus Christ's servant. He also was given the position and authority of being Christ's apostle.

to those who have received the same precious faith

That these people have received faith implies that God has given that faith to them. Alternate translation: "to those to whom God has given the same precious faith"

to those who have received

"to you who have received." Peter addresses all believers who may read this letter.

we have received

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and the other apostles, but not to those to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "we apostles have received"

2 Peter 1:2

May grace and peace increase in measure

God is the one who will give grace and peace to believers. Alternate translation: "May God increase your grace and your peace"

May grace and peace increase

Peter speaks of peace as if it were an object that could increase in size or numbers.

in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "through your knowing God and Jesus our Lord"

2 Peter 1:3

General Information:

Peter begins to teach the believers about living godly lives.

for life and godliness

Here "godliness" describes the word "life." Alternate translation: "for a godly life"

through the knowledge of him who called us

You may need to make specific that it is Peter and his readers who know God. Alternate translation: "through our knowledge of God, who called us" or "because we know God, who has called us"

who called us

Here the word "us" refers to Peter and his audience.

through his own glory and excellence

Possible meanings are 1) "by showing us his own glory and greatness" or 2) "to share his own glory and excellence."

2 Peter 1:4

Through these

Here "these" refers to "his own glory and virtue."

you might be sharers

"you might share"

the divine nature

what God is like

having escaped the corruption in the world that is caused by evil desires

Peter speaks of people not suffering from the corruption that wicked desires cause as if they were escaping from that corruption. The word "corruption" is an abstract noun that can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "and so that the wicked desires in this world will no longer corrupt you"

2 Peter 1:5

For this reason

This refers to what Peter has just said in the previous verses. Alternate translation: "Because of what God has done"

2 Peter 1:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Peter 1:7

brotherly love

This refers to love for a friend or family member and likely means love for one's spiritual family.

2 Peter 1:8

these things

This refers to faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love, which Peter mentioned in the previous verses.

they will keep you from being barren or unfruitful

Peter speaks of these qualities as if they were people who could change his readers, and he speaks of his readers as if they were cattle or a food crop. This can be translated using the opposites of "barren" and "unfruitful." Alternate translation: "because you have them you will not be barren or unfruitful" or "they will enable you to do much valuable work"

barren or unfruitful

A "barren" animal is one that cannot bear offspring, and an "unfruitful" plant is one that cannot bear food. These are metaphors that describe people who do not do valuable work. If your language has only one word for these two ideas, you can treat them as a doublet and combine them. Alternate translation: "unproductive"

in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "through your knowing God and Jesus our Lord"

2 Peter 1:9

whoever lacks these things

any person who does not have these things

is so nearsighted that he is blind

Peter speaks of a person who does not possess these qualities as if he were a nearsighted or blind person because he does not understand their value. Alternate translation: "is like a shortsighted person who cannot see their importance"

he has been cleansed from his past sins

You can use a verb to translate this. Alternate translation: "that God has cleansed him from his old sins"

2 Peter 1:10

make your calling and election sure

The words "calling" and "election" share similar meanings and refer to God's choosing people to belong to him. Alternate translation: "make sure that God has really chosen you to belong to him"

you will not stumble

Here the word "stumble" refers either to 1) committing sin. Alternate translation: "you will not practice sinful behavior" or 2) becoming unfaithful to Christ. Alternate translation: "you will not become unfaithful to Christ"

2 Peter 1:11

there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will richly provide for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom"

an entrance

the opportunity to enter

2 Peter 1:12

Connecting Statement:

Peter tells the believers about his obligation to continue reminding them and teaching them.

you are strong in the truth

"you strongly believe the truth of these things"

2 Peter 1:13

to stir you up by way of reminder

Here the word "stir" means to awaken someone from sleep. Peter speaks of causing his readers to think about these things as if he were waking them from sleep. Alternate translation: "to remind you of these things so that you will think about them"

as long as I am in this tent

Peter speaks of his body as if it were a tent that he is wearing and will take off. Being in his body represents being alive, and taking it off represents dying. Alternate translation: "as long as I am in this body" or "as long as I am alive"

2 Peter 1:14

the putting off of my tent will be soon

Peter speaks of his body as if it were a tent that he is wearing and will take off. Being in his body represents being alive, and taking it off represents dying. Alternate

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translation: "I will soon take off this body" or "I will die soon"

2 Peter 1:15

you may always be able to remember these things

Here the words "these things" refers to everything that Peter has said in the previous verses.

after my departure

Peter speaks of his death as if he were leaving one place to go to another. Alternate translation: "after my death" or "after I die"

2 Peter 1:16

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to explain his teachings to the believers and explains why they are trustworthy.

For we did not follow cleverly invented myths

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and the other apostles, but not to his readers. Alternate translation: "For we apostles did not follow cleverly made-up stories"

the power and the coming

These two phrases may refer to the same thing and be translated as a single phrase. Alternate translation: "the powerful coming"

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) the future second coming of the Lord Jesus or 2) the first coming of the Lord Jesus.

our Lord Jesus Christ

Here the word "our" refers to all believers.

2 Peter 1:17

when a voice was brought to him by the Majestic Glory

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when he heard a voice come from the Majestic Glory" or "when he heard the voice of the Majestic Glory speak to him" or "when the Majestic Glory spoke to him"

the Majestic Glory, saying

Peter refers to God in terms of his glory. This is a euphemism that avoids using God's name, out of reverence for him. Alternate translation: "God, the Supreme Glory, saying"

2 Peter 1:18

We ourselves heard this voice brought from heaven

With the word "We," Peter is referring to himself and to the disciples James and John, who heard the voice of God. Alternate translation: "We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven"

heard this voice brought from heaven

"heard the voice of the one who spoke from heaven"

we were with him

"we were with Jesus"

2 Peter 1:19

General Information:

Peter begins to warn the believers about false teachers.

For we have the prophetic word made more certain

The things that Peter and the other apostles saw, which he described in the previous verses, confirm what the prophets spoke. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the things that we saw make this prophetic message more sure"

For we have

Here the word "we" refers to all believers, including Peter and his readers.

the prophetic word made

This refers to the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the scriptures, which the prophets spoke, made"

to which you would do well to pay attention

Peter instructs the believers to pay close attention to the prophetic message.

as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns

Peter compares the prophetic word to a lamp that gives light in the dark until light comes in the morning. The coming of morning is a reference to Christ's coming.

the morning star rises in your hearts

Peter speaks of Christ as the "morning star," which indicates that daybreak and the end of darkness is near. Christ will bring light into the hearts of believers, ending all doubt and bringing full understanding of who he is. Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. Alternate translation: "Christ shines his light into your hearts like the morning star shines its light into the world"

the morning star

The "morning star" refers to the planet Venus, which sometimes rises just before the sun and indicates that daybreak is near.

2 Peter 1:20

Above all, you must understand

"Most importantly, you must understand"

no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation

Possible meanings are 1) the prophets did not make their prophecies on their own or 2) people must rely on the Holy Spirit to understand the prophecies or 3) people must interpret the prophecies with the help of the entire Christian community of believers.

2 Peter 1:21

men spoke from God when they were carried along by the Holy Spirit

Peter speaks of the Holy Spirit helping the prophets to write what God wanted them to write as if the Holy Spirit were carrying them from one place to another. Alternate translation: "men spoke from God as the Holy Spirit directed them"

Chapter 2

2 Peter 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Flesh

"Flesh" is a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. Here it does not represent the physical part of man. "Flesh" represents the human nature that rejects all things godly and desires what is sinful. This is the condition of all humans before they receive the Holy Spirit by believing in Jesus. (See: flesh)

Implicit information

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There are several analogies in 2:4-8 that are difficult to understand if the Old Testament has not yet been translated. Further explanation may be necessary.

Links:

2 Peter 2:1 Notes

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2 Peter 2:1

General Information:

Peter begins to warn the believers about false teachers.

False prophets came to the people, and false teachers will also come to you

Just as false prophets came deceiving Israel with their words, so will false teachers come teaching lies about Christ.

destructive heresies

The word "heresies" refers to opinions that are contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles. These heresies destroy the faith of those who believe them.

the master who bought them

The word "master" here refers to a person who owns slaves. Peter speaks of Jesus as the owner of people whom he has bought, the price being his death.

2 Peter 2:2

sensuality

immoral sexual behavior

the way of truth will be slandered

The phrase "way of truth" refers to the Christian faith as the true path to God. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "unbelievers will slander the way of truth"

2 Peter 2:3

exploit you with deceptive words

"convince you to give them money by telling you lies"

Their condemnation has been coming for a long time, and their destruction is not asleep

Peter speaks of "condemnation" and "destruction" as if they are persons who act. These abstract nouns can be expressed with the verbs "condemn" and "destroy". Alternate translation: "It was decided long ago that they would be condemned; they will surely be destroyed" or "God said long ago that he would condemn them; he is ready to destroy them"

Their condemnation has been coming for a long time, and their destruction is not asleep

Possible meanings are 1) the false teachers will be condemned, and as a result they will be destroyed, or 2) the two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how soon or how certainly the false teachers will be condemned.

2 Peter 2:4

Connecting Statement:

In verses 4-9, Peter gives three examples of times that God punished sinners. Two of these times there were also some righteous people whom God did not punish.

did not spare

"did not refrain from punishing" or "punished"

but delivered them into hell

This tells how God punished the angels who sinned. Alternate translation: "but threw them down into hell" or "but sent them to hell"

to be kept in chains of darkness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where he keeps them in chains of darkness"

in chains of darkness

Possible meanings are 1) "in chains in a very dark place" or 2) "in darkness that imprisons them like chains."

until the judgment

This refers to the day of judgment when God will judge every person.

2 Peter 2:5

Connecting Statement:

Verse 5 is Peter's second example of a time that God punished sinners. This time there was a righteous man whom God did not punish.

and if he did not spare the ancient world

Here the word "world" refers to the people who lived in it. Alternate translation: "and if God did not refrain from punishing the people who lived in the ancient world"

but preserved Noah ... along with seven others

"But protected Noah ... along with seven others." God did not destroy Noah and seven other people when he destroyed the rest of the people who lived in the ancient world.

Noah, a herald of righteousness

"Noah, a preacher of righteousness." Possible meanings are 1) Noah taught people that they should live righteous lives, or 2) Noah warned people that the righteous God would judge them.

when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly

God punished ungodly people by sending a flood that killed them.

2 Peter 2:6

Connecting Statement:

Verses 6-8 are Peter's third example of a time that God punished sinners. Again, there was a righteous man whom God did not punish.

and if he reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes

"and if God burned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire until only ashes remained"

condemned them to destruction

Here the word "them" refers to Sodom and Gomorrah and the people who lived in them.

as an example of what is to happen to the ungodly

Sodom and Gomorrah serve as an example and a warning of what will happen to others who disobey God.

2 Peter 2:7

Connecting Statement:

Verses 6-8 are Peter's third example of a time that God punished sinners. Verses 7-8 tell about a righteous man whom God did not punish with the sinners.

but delivered righteous Lot

Lot was righteous, and God rescued him from the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

punishment he sent on Sodom and Gomorrah.

the sensual behavior of lawless people

"the immoral behavior of people who broke God's law"

2 Peter 2:8

that righteous man

This refers to Lot.

was tormented in his righteous soul

Here the word "soul" refers to Lot's thoughts and emotions. The immoral behavior of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah disturbed him emotionally. Alternate translation: "was greatly disturbed"

2 Peter 2:9

Connecting Statement

In this verse Peter tells us what we can know about God because of what God did in verses 4-8.

if the Lord did these things

The words "these things" refer to what God did in verses 4-8.

rescue ... out of trials

Possible meanings of the word "trials" are 1) tests or temptations, "enable ... to resist temptation" or "enable ... to pass the test," or 2) suffering, "bring ... through suffering."

2 Peter 2:10

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins describing the characteristics of unrighteous men.

This is especially true

The word "this" refers to God keeping unrighteous men in prison until judgment day in 2 Peter 2:9.

those who walk after the corrupt desires of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body and for selfish desires, and to "walk after" or pursue its "corrupt desires" is a metaphor for those people doing whatever they want to do to satisfy those desires. Alternate translation: "those who continue to indulge their corrupt, sinful desires"

despise authority

"refuse to submit to God's authority." Here the word "authority" probably refers to God's authority.

authority

Here "authority" stands for God, who has the right to give commands and to punish disobedience.

self-willed

"doing whatever they want to do"

the glorious ones

This phrase refers to spiritual beings, such as angels or demons.

2 Peter 2:11

greater strength and power

"more strength and power than the false teachers"

they do not bring insulting judgments against them

The word "they" refers to angels. Possible meanings for the word "them" are 1) the glorious ones or 2) the false teachers.

bring insulting judgments against them

The idea that angels could accuse them is spoken of as if they could attack them using accusations as weapons.

2 Peter 2:12

these people are like unreasoning animals, born for capture and destruction

Just as people cannot reason with animals, no one can reason with these men. Alternate translation: "these false teachers are like unreasoning animals whose nature is to be born for capture and destruction"

for capture and destruction

These abstract nouns can be translated as verbs. The author has not stated the actor in these cases, so it is best if you can leave it unstated. Alternate translation: "so that people can capture and destroy them" or "so that other animals can capture and destroy them" or "so that people can capture them or other animals can destroy them" or "and they become prey or die"

They do not know what they insult

They speak evil of what they do not know or understand.

In destruction they also will be destroyed

This emphasizes that God will destroy them and can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will completely destroy them"

2 Peter 2:13

suffering harm as a reward for doing harm

Peter speaks of the punishment that the false teachers will receive as if it were a reward. Alternate translation: "receiving what they deserve for the harm they have done"

luxury during the day

Here the word "luxury" refers to immoral activity that includes gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual activity. Doing these things during the day indicates that these people are not ashamed of this behavior.

They are stains and blemishes

The words "stains" and "blemishes" share similar meanings. Peter speaks of the false teachers as if they were stains on a garment that cause shame for those who wear it. Alternate translation: "They are like stains and blemishes on clothes, which cause disgrace"

2 Peter 2:14

They have eyes full of adultery

Here the "eyes" represent their desires and "eyes full" means they constant want something. Alternate translation: "They constantly want to commit adultery"

they are never satisfied with sin

Although they sin in order to satisfy their lusts, the sin that they commit never satisfies.

They entice unstable souls

Here the word "souls" refers to persons. Alternate translation: "They entice unstable people"

hearts trained in greed

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and emotions of the person. Because of their habitual actions, they have trained themselves to think and act out of greed.

2 Peter 2:15

the straight way

Behavior that honors God is spoken of as if it were a path to follow.

have gone astray

People who commit evil behavior that displeases God are spoken of as if they were animals like cows or sheep who go away from the people who take care of them.

to receive payment for unrighteousness

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"to receive money for doing things that are not righteous"
2 Peter 2:16
he obtained a rebuke
You can specify it was God who rebuked Balaam. Alternate translation: "God rebuked him"
a mute donkey speaking in a human voice
A donkey, which is naturally unable to speak, spoke with a voice like a human.
stopped the prophet's insanity
God used a donkey to stop the prophet's foolish action.
2 Peter 2:17
These men are springs without water
Springs flowing with water promise refreshment for thirsty people, but "springs without water" will leave the thirsty disappointed. In the same way, false teachers, although they promise many things, are unable to do what they promise.
mists driven by a storm
When people see storm clouds, they expect rain to fall. When the winds from the storm blow the clouds away before the rain can fall, the people are disappointed. In the same way, false teachers, although they promise many things, are unable to do what they promise.
The gloom of thick darkness is reserved for them
The word "them" refers to the false teachers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has reserved the gloom of thick darkness for them"
2 Peter 2:18
They speak with vain arrogance
They use impressive but meaningless words.
Through the lusts of the flesh, through sensuality, they entice people
"They appeal to people's fleshly lusts and desire for sensuality. This is how they entice people"
people who are trying to escape from those who live in error
This phrase refers to people who recently became believers. The phrase "those who live in error" refers to unbelievers who still live in sin. Alternate translation: "people who try to live rightly, instead of living sinfully as they used to and as other people do"
people who are trying to escape
Peter speaks of people who live sinfully as if they are slaves to sin who need to be released from their captivity.
2 Peter 2:19
They promise freedom to them, but they themselves are slaves of corruption
"Freedom" here is an idiom for the ability to live exactly as one wants. Alternate translation: "They promise to give them the ability to live exactly as they want to live, but they themselves cannot escape their own sinful desires"
promise freedom ... slaves of corruption
Peter speaks of people who live sinfully as if they were slaves to sin and need to be released from their captivity.
For a man is a slave to whatever overcomes him
Peter speaks of a person as a slave when anything has control over that person, and that thing as the master of that person. Alternate translation: "For if something has control over a person, that person becomes like a slave to that thing"
2 Peter 2:20
Connecting Statement:
The words "they" and "them" refer to the false teachers Peter speaks of in verses 12-19.
If they have escaped the corruptions ... and are again entangled in them and overcome
The events in this conditional statement have happened. The false teachers had at one time escaped, but they became entangled and were overcome. Alternate translation: "Since they have escaped ... and are again entangled in them and overcome"
the corruptions of the world
The word "corruptions" refers to sinful behavior that makes one morally impure. The "world" refers to human society. Alternate translation: "the corrupting practices of sinful human society"
through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase. See how you translated similar phrases in [2 Peter 1:2]
the last state has become worse for them than the first
"their condition is worse than it was before"
2 Peter 2:21
the way of righteousness
Peter speaks of life as a "way" or path. This phrase refers to living a life that is according to God's will.
turn away from the holy commandment
Here "turn away from" is a metaphor that means to stop doing something. Alternate translation: "stop obeying the holy commandment"
the holy commandment delivered to them
This can be stated in active terms. Alternate translation: "the holy commandment that God delivered to them" or "the holy commandment that God made sure that they received"
2 Peter 2:22
This proverb is true for them
"This proverb applies to them" or "This proverb describes them"
A dog returns to its own vomit, and a washed pig returns to the mud
Peter uses two proverbs to illustrate how the false teachers, although they have known "the way of righteousness," have turned back to the things that make them morally and spiritually impure.

Chapter 3

2 Peter 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Fire

People often use fire to destroy things or to make something pure by burning off the dirt and worthless parts. Therefore when God punishes the wicked or purifies his people, it is often associated with fire. (See: fire)

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Day of the Lord

The exact time of the coming day of the Lord will come as a surprise to people. This is what the simile "like a thief in the night" means. Because of this, Christians are to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Links:

2 Peter 3:1 Notes

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2 Peter 3:1

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about the last days.

to stir up your sincere mind

Peter speaks of causing his readers to think about these things as if he were waking them from sleep. Alternate translation: "to cause you to think pure thoughts"

2 Peter 3:2

the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the words that the holy prophets spoke in the past"

the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the command of our Lord and Savior, which your apostles gave to you"

2 Peter 3:3

Know this first

"Know this as the most important thing." See how you translated this in 2 Peter 1:20.

proceed according to their own desires

Here the word "desires" refers to sinful desires that are opposed to God's will. Alternate translation: "live according to their own sinful desires"

proceed

act, behave

2 Peter 3:4

Where is the promise of his return?

The mockers ask this rhetorical question to emphasize that they do not believe that Jesus will return. The word "promise" refers to the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus will return. Alternate translation: "The promise that Jesus would return is not true! He will not return!"

our fathers fell asleep

Here "fathers" refers to ancestors who lived long ago. Falling asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "our ancestors died"

all things have stayed the same, since the beginning of creation

The mockers exaggerate with the word "all," and they argue that since nothing in the world has ever changed, it cannot be true that Jesus will return.

since the beginning of creation

This can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "since God created the world"

2 Peter 3:5

by the word of God the heavens and the earth came to exist

"God spoke and the heavens and the earth came to exist"

came to exist out of water and through water

This means that God caused the land to come up out of the water, gathering the bodies of water together to make the land appear.

2 Peter 3:6

through which

Here "which" refers to God's word and water.

the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God flooded the world that existed at that time with water and destroyed it"

2 Peter 3:7

By the same word the heavens and the earth are reserved for fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God, by that same word, has reserved the heavens and the earth for fire"

the same word

"that same command"

fire, being kept for the day of judgment

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "fire. God is reserving them for the day of judgment"

for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people

This can be stated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "for the day when he judges and destroys ungodly people"

2 Peter 3:8

It should not escape your notice

"You should not fail to understand this" or "Do not ignore this"

that one day with the Lord is like a thousand years

"that from the Lord's point of view, one day is like a thousand years"

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow concerning his promise

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise." The noun "promise" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "The Lord will not delay in doing what he promised to do"

his promise

This is the Lord's promise to return.

as some consider slowness to be

Some people think that the Lord is slow to fulfill his promise because their perspective of time is different from God's.

2 Peter 3:10

However ... laid bare

Although the Lord is being patient and wants people to repent, he will indeed return and bring judgment.

the day of the Lord will come as a thief

Peter speaks of the day when God will judge everyone as if it were a thief who will come unexpectedly, and the people will be surprised when it happens.

The heavens will pass away

"The heavens will disappear"

The elements will be burned with fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will burn the elements with fire"

The elements

Possible meanings are 1) the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars or 2) the things that make up heaven and earth, such as soil, air, fire, and water.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the earth and the deeds in it will be laid bare
God will see all the earth and all the deeds of everyone, and he will then judge everything. This can be stated in active terms. Alternate translation: "God will expose the earth and everything that people have done on it"
2 Peter 3:11
Connecting Statement:
Peter begins to tell the believers how they should live as they wait for the day of the Lord.
Since all these things will be destroyed in this way
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Since God will destroy all these things in this way"
what kind of people should you be?
Peter uses this rhetorical question to emphasize what he will say next, that they "should live holy and godly lives." Alternate translation: "you know what kind of people you should be."
2 Peter 3:12
the heavens will be destroyed by fire, and the elements will be melted in great heat
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will destroy the heavens by fire, and he will melt the elements in great heat"
the elements
Possible meanings are 1) the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars or 2) the things that make up heaven and earth, such as soil, air, fire, and water. See how you translated this in 2 Peter 3:10.
2 Peter 3:13
where righteousness will dwell
Peter speaks of "righteousness" as if it were a person. This is a metonym for people who are righteous. Alternate translation: "where righteous people will dwell" or "where people will live righteously"
2 Peter 3:14
do your best to be found spotless and blameless before him, in peace
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "do your best to live in such a way that God will find you spotless and blameless, and be at peace with him and each other"
spotless and blameless
The words "spotless" and "blameless" mean basically the same thing and emphasize moral purity. Alternate translation: "completely pure"
spotless
Here this stands for "faultless."
2 Peter 3:15
Also, consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation
Because the Lord is patient, the day of judgment has not yet happened. This gives people an opportunity to repent and be saved, as he explained in [2 Peter 3:9]
according to the wisdom that was given to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "according to the wisdom that God gave to him"
2 Peter 3:16
Paul speaks of these things in all his letters
"Paul speaks of the patience of God leading to salvation in all his letters"
in which there are things that are difficult to understand
There are things in Paul's letters that are difficult to understand.
Ignorant and unstable men distort these things
Ignorant and unstable men misinterpret the things that are difficult to understand in Paul's letters.
Ignorant and unstable
"Unlearned and unsteady." These men have not been taught how to properly interpret scripture and are not well established in the truth of the gospel.
to their own destruction
"resulting in their own destruction"
2 Peter 3:17
Connecting Statement:
Peter finishes instructing the believers and ends his letter.
since you know about these things
"These things" refers to the truths about the patience of God and the teachings of these false teachers.
guard yourselves
"protect yourselves"
so that you are not led astray by the deceit of lawless people
Here "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that lawless people do not deceive you and cause you do something wrong"
and lose your own faithfulness
Faithfulness is spoken of as if it were a possession that believers could lose. Alternate translation: "and stop being faithful"
2 Peter 3:18
grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Here growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord represents experiencing his grace more and knowing him more. The abstract noun "grace" can be expressed with the phrase "act kindly." Alternate translation: "receive more of the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and know him more" or "be more aware of how our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ acts kindly toward you, and know him better"

Introduction to 1 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 John

Introduction (1:1-4) Christian living (1:5-3:10) The command to love one another (3:11-5:12) Conclusion (5:13-21)

Who wrote the Book of 1 John?

This book does not name the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the Apostle John was the author. He also wrote of the Gospel of John.

What is the Book of 1 John about?

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John wrote this letter to Christians at a time when false teachers were troubling them. John wrote this letter because he wanted to prevent believers from sinning. He wanted to protect believers from false teachings. And he wanted to assure believers that they were saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 John" or "First John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The First Letter From John" or "The First Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people that John spoke against?

The people John spoke against were possibly those who would become known as Gnostics. These people believed that the physical world was evil. Since they believed Jesus was divine, they denied that he was truly human. This is because they thought God would not become human since the physical body is evil. (See: evil)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What do the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" mean in 1 John?

John often used the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" as metaphors. John spoke of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if Jesus's word "remained" in the believer. Also, John spoke of someone being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person "remained" in the other person. Christians are said to "remain" in Christ and in God. The Father is said to "remain" in the Son, and the Son is said to "remain" in the Father. The Son is said to "remain" in believers. The Holy Spirit is also said to "remain" in the believers.

Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. For example, John intended to express the idea of the Christian being spiritually together with God when he said, "He who says he remains in God" (1 John 2:6). The UDB says, "If we say that we are in union with God," but translators will often have to find other expressions that communicate these ideas well.

In the passage "the word of God remains in you" (1 John 2:14), the UDB expresses this idea as "you are living by the commands of the word of God." Many translators will find it possible to use this translation as a model.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 John?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"And we are writing these things to you so that our joy may be complete" (1:4). Some older versions have, "And we are writing these things to you so that your joy may be complete." "And you all know the truth" (2:20). Other modern versions have, "And you all have knowledge." Some older versions have, "and you know all things." "and this is what we are!" (3:1). The ULB and most modern translations read this way. Some older versions omit this phrase. "and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God" (4:3). The ULB and most modern versions have this reading. Some older translations read, "and every spirit that does not acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God."

For the following passage, translators are advised to translate this as the ULB does. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include this passage, the translators can include it. If it is included, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it was probably not in the original version of 1 John.

"For there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three are in agreement." (5:7-8) Some older versions have, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are as one."

Chapter 1

1 John 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is a letter that John wrote to Christians.

Special concepts in this chapter

Christians and sin

In this chapter John teaches that all Christians are still sinners. But God continues to forgive a Christian's sins. (See: sin and faith and forgive)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In this chapter John writes that God is light. Light is a metaphor for understanding and righteousness. (See: and righteous)

John also writes about people walking in the light or in the darkness. Walking is a metaphor for behaving or living. People who walk in the light understand what is righteous and do it. People who walk in the darkness may not

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understand what is righteous, and they do what is sinful.

Links:

1 John 1:1 Notes 1 John intro

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1 John 1:1

General Information:

The apostle John wrote this letter to believers. All instances of "you," "your," and "yours" include all believers and are plural. Here the words "we" and "us" refer to John and those who had been with Jesus. In verses 1-2 many pronouns like "that," "which," and "it" are used. They refer to "the Word of life" and "the eternal life." But, since these are names for Jesus, you can use pronouns that refer to a person like "who," "whom" or "he."

which we have heard

"which we have heard him teach"

which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at

This is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "which we ourselves have seen"

the Word of life

This refers to Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "the one who gives life" or "the one who causes people to live forever"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually.

1 John 1:2

the life was made known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made the eternal life known to us" or "God made us able to know him, who is eternal life"

we have seen and testify

"we have seen it and testify about it" or "we have seen him and testify about him"

the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to us

Here, "the eternal life" refers to the one who gives that life, Jesus. Alternate translation: "the one who enables us to live forever, who was with God the Father, and who has been made known to us"

and which has been made known to us

This was when he lived on earth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and which the Father has made known to us" or "and who came to live among us"

1 John 1:3

General Information:

Here the words "we," "us," and "our" refer to John and those who had been with Jesus.

That which we have seen and heard we declare also to you

"We say to you also what we have seen and heard"

have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father

"be our close friends. We are friends with God the Father"

Our fellowship

It is not clear if John is including or excluding his readers. You may translate this either way.

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

1 John 1:4

so that our joy will be complete

"to make our joy complete" or "to make ourselves completely happy"

1 John 1:5

General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to all believers, including the people to whom John was writing. Unless otherwise stated, that is the meaning for the remainder of this book.

Connecting Statement:

From here into the next chapter, John writes about fellowship—close relationships with God and other believers.

God is light

This is a metaphor that means that God is perfectly pure and holy. Cultures that associate goodness with light may be able to keep the idea of light without explaining the metaphor. Alternate translation: "God is purely righteous like pure light"

in him there is no darkness at all

This is a metaphor that means that God never sins and is not evil in any way. Cultures that associate evil with darkness may be able to keep the idea of darkness without explaining the metaphor. Alternate translation: "in him there is nothing that is evil"

1 John 1:6

walk in darkness

Here "walk" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for "evil." Alternate translation: "do what is evil"

1 John 1:7

walk in the light as he is in the light

Here "walk" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here "light" is a metaphor for "good" or "right." Alternate translation: "do what is good as God is perfectly good" or "do what is right as God is perfectly right"

the blood of Jesus

This refers to the death of Jesus.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 1:8

have no sin

"never sin"

are deceiving

"are tricking" or "lying to"

the truth is not in us

The truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God says is true"

1 John 1:9

he is faithful

"God is faithful"

to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John uses them to emphasize that God will surely forgive our sins. Alternate translation: "and will completely forgive us for what we have done wrong"

1 John 1:10

we make him out to be a liar

It is implied that a person who claims to be without sin would be calling God a liar since he said that everyone is a sinner. Alternate translation: "it is the same as calling God a liar, because he said we have all sinned"

his word is not in us

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Obeying and honoring God's word is spoken of as if his word were inside the believers. Alternate translation: "we do not understand God's word and do not obey what he says"

Chapter 2

1 John 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Antichrist

In this chapter John writes about both a specific antichrist and many antichrists. The word "antichrist" means "opposed to Christ." The antichrist is a person who will come in the last days and imitate Jesus's work, but he will do it for evil. Before this person comes, there will be many people who work against Christ; they too are called "antichrists." (See: antichrist and lastday and evil)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

There are several groups of similar metaphors that are used throughout this chapter.

Being in God is a metaphor for having fellowship with God, and God's word and truth being in people is a metaphor for people knowing and obeying God's word.

Walking is a metaphor for behaving, not knowing where one is going is a metaphor for not knowing how to behave, and stumbling is a metaphor for sinning.

The light is a metaphor for knowing and doing what is right, and darkness and blindness are metaphors for not knowing what is right and doing what is wrong.

Leading people astray is a metaphor for teaching people things that are not true.

Links:

1 John 2:1 Notes

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1 John 2:1

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and all believers.

Connecting Statement:

John continues to write about fellowship and shows that it is possible because Jesus goes between believers and the Father.

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. Alternate translation: "You who are as dear to me as my own children"

I am writing these things

"I am writing this letter"

But if anyone sins

"But when anyone sins." This is something that is likely to happen.

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the one who is righteous

The word "advocate" here refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "we have Jesus Christ, the one who is righteous, who speaks to the Father and asks him to forgive us"

1 John 2:2

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins

"God is no longer angry with us because Jesus sacrificed his own life for our sins"

1 John 2:3

We know that we have come to know him

"We know that we know him" or "We know that we have a good relationship with him"

if we keep his commandments

"if we obey what he commands"

1 John 2:4

The one who says

"Anyone who says" or "The person who says"

I know God

"I have a good relationship with God"

does not keep

"does not obey" or "disobeys"

his commandments

"what God tells him to do"

the truth is not in him

The truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be inside the believers. Alternate translation: "he does not believe what God says is true"

1 John 2:5

keeps his word

To keep someone's word here is an idiom for to obey. Alternate translation: "does what God tells him to do"

in him truly the love of God has been perfected

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "the love of God" refers to a person loving God, and "perfected" represents completely or fully. Alternate translation: "it is that person who loves God completely" or 2) "the love of God" refers to God loving people, and

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"perfected" represents completing its purpose. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in that person's life"

By this we know that we are in him

The phrase "we are in him" means that the believer has fellowship with God. Alternate translation: "When we obey what God says, we can be certain that we have fellowship with him" or "By this we know that are joined to God"

1 John 2:6

remains in God

To remain in God means to continue to have fellowship with God. Alternate translation: "continues to have fellowship with God" or "stays joined to God"

should himself also walk just as he walked

Conducting one's life is spoken of as if it were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "must live as he lived" or "should also obey God just as Jesus Christ did"

1 John 2:7

Connecting Statement:

John gives believers basic principles of fellowship—obedience and love.

Beloved, I am

"You people whom I love, I am" or "Dear friends, I am"

I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment that you have had

"I write to you to love one other, which is not a new thing to do but an old commandment that you have heard." John refers to Jesus's command to love one another.

from the beginning

Here, "beginning" refers to when they decided to follow Christ. Alternate translation: "from when you first believed in Christ"

The old commandment is the word that you heard

"The old commandment is the message that you heard"

1 John 2:8

Yet I am writing a new commandment to you

"But in one way the commandment I write to you is a new commandment"

which is true in Christ and in you

"which is true, as shown in Christ's deeds and your deeds"

the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for "evil," and "light" is a metaphor for "good." Alternate translation: "you are ceasing to do evil and you are doing more and more good"

1 John 2:9

General Information:

Here the word "brother" refers to a fellow Christian.

The one who says

"Anyone who says" or "Someone who claims." This does not refer to a specific person.

he is in the light

Here to be "in the light" is a metaphor for doing what is right. Alternate translation: "he does what is right"

is in the darkness

Here to be "in the darkness" is a metaphor for doing what is evil. Alternate translation: "does what is evil"

1 John 2:10

there is no occasion for stumbling in him

"nothing will cause him to stumble." The word "stumbling" is a metaphor that means to fail spiritually or morally. Alternate translation: "nothing will cause him to sin" or "he will not fail to do what is pleasing to God"

1 John 2:11

is in the darkness and walks in the darkness

Here "walk" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here to be "in the darkness" and "walks in the darkness" mean the same thing. This brings attention to how evil it is to hate a fellow believer. Alternate translation: "does what is evil"

he does not know where he is going

This is a metaphor for the believer who is not living as a Christian should be living. Alternate translation: "he does not know what he should do"

the darkness has blinded his eyes

"the darkness has made him unable to see." Darkness is a metaphor for sin or evil. Alternate translation: "sin has made it impossible for him to understand the truth"

1 John 2:12

General Information:

John explains why he is writing his letter either to different age groups or to believers with differences in maturity. Try to use similar wording for these sentences, as they are written poetically.

you, children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

your sins are forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God forgives your sins"

because of his name

"his name" refers to Christ and who he is. Alternate translation: "because of what Christ has done for you"

1 John 2:13

I am writing to you, fathers

The word "fathers" here is possibly a metaphor referring to mature believers. Alternate translation: "I am writing to you, mature believers"

you know

"you have a relationship with"

the one who is from the beginning

"the one who has always lived" or "the one who has always existed." It refers either to "Jesus" or to "God the Father."

young men

This possibly refers to those who are no longer new believers but are growing in spiritual maturity. Alternate translation: "young believers"

overcome

The writer is speaking of the believers' refusal to follow Satan and of their frustrating his plans as if it were a matter of conquering him.

1 John 2:14

you are strong

Here "strong" refers not to believers' physical strength, but to their faithfulness to Christ.

the word of God remains in you

"Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. The writer refers to the believers' increased

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

faithfulness to Christ and knowledge of him as if he were speaking of God's word existing in them. Alternate translation: "God's message continues to teach you" or "you know the word of God"

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world or

In 2:15-17 the word "world" refers to all the things people want to do that do not honor God. Alternate translation: "Do not behave like the people in the world who do not honor God, and do not love"

the things that are in the world

"the things that those who dishonor God want"

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

A person cannot love this world and all that dishonors God and love the Father at the same time.

the love of the Father is not in him

"he does not love the Father"

1 John 2:16

the lust of the flesh

"the strong desire to have sinful physical pleasure"

the lust of the eyes

"the strong desire to have things that we see"

is not from the Father

"does not come from the Father" or "is not how the Father teaches us to live"

1 John 2:17

are passing away

"pass away" or "will one day not be here"

1 John 2:18

Connecting Statement:

John warns about those who are against Christ.

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

it is the last hour

The phrase "the last hour" refers to the time just before Jesus returns. Alternate translation: "Jesus will return soon"

many antichrists have come

"there are many people who are against Christ"

have come. By this we know

"have come, and because of this we know" or "have come, and because many antichrists have come, we know"

1 John 2:19

They went out from us

"They left us"

but they were not from us

"but they did not really belong to us anyway" or "but they were not really part of our group in the first place." The reason they were not really part of the group is that they were not believers in Jesus.

For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us

"We know this because they would not have left us if they really had been believers"

1 John 2:20

General Information:

In the Old Testament the word "anointing" referred to pouring oil on a person to set him apart to serve God.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One

John speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were "an anointing" that the people have received from Jesus. The abstract noun "anointing" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "But the Holy One has anointed you" or "But Jesus Christ, the Holy One, has given you his Spirit"

the Holy One

This refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the Holy One"

you all know

Your language might allow you to use the abstract noun "knowledge" here. If your language requires you to state what it is that the readers know, be as general as possible. Alternate translation: "you all have knowledge" or "you all know what is true"

1 John 2:21

the truth ... no lie is from the truth

The abstract noun "truth" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "what is true ... no lie comes from what is true"

1 John 2:22

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

"Who is the liar? Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ." John used a question to emphasize who liars are. Alternate translation: "The one who denies that Jesus is the Christ is the liar"

denies that Jesus is the Christ

"refuses to say that Jesus is the Christ" or "says that Jesus is not the Messiah"

denies the Father and the Son

"refuses to say the truth about the Father and the Son" or "rejects the Father and the Son."

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

1 John 2:23

has the Father

"belongs to the Father"

confesses the Son

"speaks the truth about the Son"

has the Father

"belongs to the Father"

1 John 2:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the people to whom John wrote, as well as all believers. The word "he" is emphatic and refers to Christ.

Connecting Statement:

John reminds believers to continue in what they have first heard.

As for you

This marks John's telling them how they should live as followers of Jesus instead of how those against Christ live.

let what you have heard from the beginning remain in you

"remember and believe what you have heard from the beginning." How they heard it, what they heard, and what "the beginning" means can be made explicit: Alternate translation: "continue to trust what we have taught you about Jesus just as you have trusted since you first became believers"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

what you have heard from the beginning
"what we taught you about Jesus when you first became believers"
If what you heard from the beginning remains in you
The word "remains" is talking about relationship, not salvation. Alternate translation: "If you continue to trust what we first taught you"
also remain in the Son and in the Father
To "remain in" means to continue to have fellowship with. See how you translated a similar phrase to "remain in" in [1 John 2:6]
1 John 2:25
This is the promise he gave to us—eternal life.
"This is what he promised to give us—eternal life" or "He has promised to cause us to live forever"
life
The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]
1 John 2:26
those who would lead you astray
Here "lead you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "those who want to deceive you" or "those who want to make you believe lies about Jesus Christ"
1 John 2:27
Connecting Statement:
Starting in verse 29, John introduces the idea of being born into God's family. The previous verses show that believers continue to sin; this part shows that believers also have the new nature, which cannot sin. It continues to show how believers can recognize each other.
As for you
This marks John's telling them something else about how they should live as followers of Jesus instead of following those who are against Christ.
the anointing that you received from him remains in you
John speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were "the anointing" that the people have received from Jesus and remains in them. The abstract noun "anointing" can be translated with a verbal phrase. See how you translated "anointing" in [1 John 2:20]
as his anointing teaches you everything
Here the word "everything" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "because his anointing teaches you everything that you need to know" or "because his Spirit teaches you everything that you need to know"
1 John 2:28
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the letter.
Now, children
John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]
he appears
"we see him"
boldness
having no fear
not be ashamed before him
"not be ashamed in his presence"
at his coming
"when he comes again"
1 John 2:29
has been born from him
"has been born of God" or "is God's child"

Chapter 3

1 John 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Children of God
God created all people, but people can only become children of God by believing in Jesus. (See: believe)
Cain
Cain was a son of the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. He was jealous of his brother and murdered him. Readers may not know who Cain was if they have not read Genesis. It may help them if you explain this to them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"To know"
The verb "to know" is used in two different ways in this chapter. Sometimes it is used about knowing a fact, as in 3:2, 3:5, and 3:19. Sometimes it means to experience and understand someone or something, as in 3:1, 3:6, 3:16, and 3:20. Some languages have different words for these different meanings.
"He who keeps God's commandments remains in him, and God remains in him"
Many scholars believe this is about remaining in God's will and is not about being saved. (See: eternity and save)

Links:

1 John 3:1 Notes

1 John 3:1
Connecting Statement:
In this part John tells the believers about their new nature, which cannot sin.
See what kind of love the Father has given to us
"Think about how our Father loves us so much"
we should be called children of God
"the Father called us his children"
children of God
Here this means people who belong to God through faith in

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jesus.

For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know him

Possible meanings are 1) "Because we are the children of God and because the world did not know God, it does not know us" or 2) "Because the world did not know God, it does not know us."

the world does not know us, because it did not know him

Here "the world" refers to people who do not honor God. What the world did not know can be made explicit: Alternate translation: "those who do not honor God do not know that we belong to God, because they did not know God"

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are

"You people whom I love, we are" or "Dear friends, we are." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

it has not yet been revealed

This can be stated in active form: Alternate translation: "God has not yet revealed"

revealed

This can mean here either "told," "demonstrated," or "shown."

1 John 3:3

Everyone who has this hope in him

The word "him" refers to Christ. Having hope in Christ means expecting that because of Christ, what is hoped for will happen. Alternate translation: "Everyone who has this hope because of Christ" or "Everyone who trusts Christ to fulfill this hope"

who has this hope in him

The phrase "this hope" refers to the hope of being like Christ, as mentioned in the previous verse. Here to have hope is to confidently expect something good. Alternate translation: "who confidently expects in Christ to become like Christ" or "who confidently waits for Christ to cause him to become like Christ"

purifies himself just as he is pure

"keeps himself pure because Christ is pure"

1 John 3:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 3:5

Christ was revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ appeared" or "the Father revealed Christ"

1 John 3:6

remains in him

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

No one ... has seen him or known him

John uses the words "seen" and "known" to say that the person who sins has never met Christ in a spiritual sense. A person behaving according to his sinful nature cannot know Christ. Alternate translation: "No one ... has ever truly believed in him"

1 John 3:7

Children, do not let

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

do not let anyone lead you astray

Here "lead you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "do not let anyone fool you" or "do not let anyone deceive you"

The one who does righteousness is righteous, just as Christ is righteous

"He who does what is right is pleasing to God just as Christ is pleasing to God."

1 John 3:8

is from the devil

"belongs to the devil" or "is like the devil"

from the beginning

This refers to the very earliest time of creation before humans first sinned. Alternate translation: "since the earliest time of creation"

the Son of God was revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God revealed his Son"

Son of God

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

1 John 3:9

Connecting Statement:

For now John ends this section on the new birth and the new nature which cannot sin.

Whoever has been born from God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Whoever God has made his child"

God's seed

This speaks of the Holy Spirit, whom God gives to believers and who makes them able to resist sin and do what pleases God as if he were a physical seed that is planted in the earth and grows. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit"

he has been born of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has given him new spiritual life" or "he is a child of God"

1 John 3:10

In this the children of God and children of the devil are revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are"

Whoever does not do what is righteous is not from God, neither is the one who does not love his brother

"whoever does not do what is righteous is not from God; whoever does not love his brother is also not from God" or "those who are from God do what is right, and those who are from God love their brothers"

his brother

Here "brother" means fellow Christians.

1 John 3:11

General Information:

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1 John 3:12

General Information:

Cain and Abel were the first sons of Adam and Eve, the first

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man and woman.

We should not be like Cain

"We should not do as Cain did"

brother

This refers to Cain's younger brother Abel.

Why did he kill him? Because

John uses a question to teach his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "He killed him because"

his works were evil and his brother's righteous

The words "works were" are also understood in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "Cain's works were evil and his brother's works were righteous" or "Cain did evil things and his brother did what was right"

1 John 3:13

my brothers

"my fellow believers." John's readers were both male and female.

if the world hates you

Here the word "world" refers to the people who do not honor God. Alternate translation: "if those who do not honor God hate you who do honor God"

1 John 3:14

we have passed out of death into life

The conditions of living and of being dead are spoken of as if they were physical locations that a person could leave from and go to. The abstract nouns "life" and "death" can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "we are no longer spiritually dead but are spiritually alive"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

remains in death

"is still spiritually dead"

1 John 3:15

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer

John speaks of a person who hates another believer as if he were a murderer. Since people commit murder because they hate other people, God considers anyone who hates to be as guilty as someone who kills a person. Alternate translation: "Whoever hates another believer is as guilty as someone who kills a person"

no murderer has eternal life residing in him

"Eternal life" does refer to believers living forever after they have died, but it is also the power that God gives believers in this life to help them to stop sinning and to do what please him. Here eternal life is spoken of as if it were a person that could live in someone. Alternate translation: "a murderer does not have the power of spiritual life"

1 John 3:16

Christ laid down his life for us

This expression means "Christ willingly gave his life for us" or "Christ willingly died for us"

1 John 3:17

the world's goods

material possessions like money, food, or clothing

sees his brother in need

"realizes a fellow believer needs help"

shuts up his heart of compassion from him

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "emotions." Here "shuts up his heart of compassion" is a metaphor for no longer showing someone compassion. Alternate translation: "does not show him compassion" or "does not willingly help him"

how does the love of God remain in him?

John uses a question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "God's love is not in him"

1 John 3:18

My children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

let us not love in word or in tongue, but in actions and truth

The phrases "in word" and "in tongue" both refer to what a person says. Alternate translation: "do not just say that you love people, but show that you truly love people by helping them"

in actions and truth

The words "let us love" are understood here. Alternate translation: "let us love in actions and truth"

1 John 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Here John probably means that believers' ability to love God and each other sincerely (1 John 3:18) is a sign that their new life has indeed originated from the truth about Christ.

we are from the truth

People living according to the truth is spoken of as they were "from the truth." Alternate translation: "we are living according the way Jesus taught us" or "we belong to him who is true"

we assure our hearts

The word "heart" here refers to feelings. Alternate translation: "we do not feel guilty"

1 John 3:20

if our hearts condemn us

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts or consciences. Here "hearts condemn us" is a metaphor for feeling guilty. Alternate translation: "if we know that we have sinned and as a result feel guilty"

God is greater than our hearts

Here "hearts" is metonym for people's thoughts or consciences. For God to be "greater than our hearts" means that God knows more than a person. Therefore he can judge things better than a person can. The effect of this truth is probably that God is more merciful than our consciences would suppose. Alternate translation: "God knows more than we do"

1 John 3:21

Beloved, if

"You people whom I love, if" or "Dear friends, if." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

1 John 3:22

do the things that are pleasing before him

Here "before him" represents God's opinion or what he thinks about something. Alternate translation: "do the things that are pleasing to him" or "do what pleases him"

1 John 3:23

This is his commandment: that we should believe ... just as he gave us this commandment

The abstract noun "commandment" can be stated as "command." Alternate translation: "This is what God commands us to do: Believe ... just as he commanded us to do"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 3:24

remains in him, and God remains in him

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

he remains in us

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. Alternate translation: "God continues to have fellowship with us"

Chapter 4

1 John 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Spirit

This word "spirit" is used in different ways in this chapter. Sometimes the word "spirit" refers to spiritual beings. Sometimes it refers to the character of something. For example "the spirit of the antichrist," "the spirit of truth," and "the spirit of error" refer to what is typical of the antichrist, truth, and error. "The Spirit" (written with a capital "S") and "the Spirit of God" refer to God. (See: antichrist)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Loving God

If people love God, they should show it in the way they live and the way they treat other people. Doing this may assure us that God has saved us and that we belong to him, but loving others does not save us. (See: save)

Links:

1 John 4:1 Notes

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1 John 4:1

General Information:

John gives a warning against false teachers who teach against Christ's having had a human body and teachers who talk the way those who love the world talk.

Beloved, do not believe

"You people whom I love, do not believe" or "Dear friends, do not believe." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

do not believe every spirit

Here, the word "spirit" refers to a spiritual power or being that gives a person a message or prophecy. Alternate translation: "do not trust every prophet who claims to have a message from a spirit"

test the spirits

Here, the word "spirits" refers to a spiritual power or being that gives a person a message or prophecy. Alternate translation: "think carefully about what the prophet says"

1 John 4:2

has come in the flesh

Here "flesh" represents the human body. Alternate translation: "has come as a human being" or "has come in a physical body"

1 John 4:3

This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world

"These are prophets opposed to Christ, whom you have heard are coming, and now are already in the world"

1 John 4:4

God, children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

have overcome them

"have not believed the false teachers"

the one who is in you is

"God, who is in you, is"

the one who is in the world

Here "the one" refers to the devil. Here "the world" represents the people of the world. Alternate translation: "the devil who is in the people of the world"

1 John 4:5

They are from the world

"They" refers to the false teachers. "From the world" is in contrast to being from God. "The world" represents all things that oppose God. Alternate translation: "They are of the world"

therefore what they say is from the world

Here "from the world" is in contrast to being from God. Here "the world" represents all things that oppose God. Alternate translation: "therefore what the false teachers say is of the world"

and the world listens to them

The words "the world" are a metonym for people who do not obey God. Alternate translation: "so the people who do not obey God listen to them"

1 John 4:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 4:7

General Information:

John continues to teach about the new nature. He teaches his readers about God's love and loving one another.

Beloved, let us love

"You people whom I love, let us love" or "Dear friends, let us

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love." See how you translated "Beloved" in 1 John 2:7.
let us love one another
"believers are to love other believers"
and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God
"and because those who love their fellow believers have become God's children and know him"
for love is from God
"because God causes us to love each other"
born from God
This is a metaphor which means someone has a relationship to God like a child to his father.
1 John 4:8
The person who does not love does not know God, for God is love
The phrase "God is love" a metaphor which means "the character of God is love." Alternate translation: "Those who do not love their fellow believers do not know God, because the character of God is to love people"
1 John 4:9
Because of this ... among us, that God has sent his only Son
"Because of this ... among us: God has sent his only Son."
The phrase "Because of this" refers to the phrase "that God has sent his only Son."
the love of God was revealed among us
The noun "love" can be translated as a verb. This phrase can be made active. Alternate translation: "God showed that he loves us"
so that we would live because of him
"to enable us to live eternally because of what Jesus did"
1 John 4:10
In this is love: not that
"The true demonstration of love was not that" or "This is true love: not that
he sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins
By dying on the cross as a sacrifice, Christ satisfied God's wrath against our sin. The phrase "atoning sacrifice" can translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that satisfied his wrath against our sins"
1 John 4:11
Beloved, if
"You people whom I love, if" or "Dear friends, if." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.
if God so loved us
"since God loved us in this way"
we also should love one another
"believers are to love other believers"
1 John 4:12
God remains in us
To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]
his love is perfected in us
"God's love is complete in us"
1 John 4:13
we remain in him and he in us
To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]
and he in us
The word "remains" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and he remains in us"
By this we know ... us, because he has given
Your translation may be clearer if you omit either "by this" or "because." Alternate translation: "We know ... us because he gave" or "By this we know ... us: he gave"
because he has given us some of his Spirit
"because he gave us his Spirit" or "because he has put his Holy Spirit in us." This phrase, however, does not imply that God has less of his Spirit after he has given us some.
1 John 4:14
Also, we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world
"And we apostles have seen the Son of God and tell everyone that God the Father has sent his Son to save people on this earth"
Father ... Son
These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
1 John 4:15
Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God
"Anyone who says the truth about Jesus, that he is the Son of God"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.
God remains in him and he in God
To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]
and he in God
The word "remains" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and he remains in God" (See: Ellipsis)
1 John 4:16
God is love
This is a metaphor which means "the character of God is love." See how you translated this in [1 John 4:8]
the one who remains in this love
"those who continue to love others"
remains in God, and God remains in him
To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]
1 John 4:17
Because of this, this love has been made perfect among us, so that we will have confidence
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "Because of this" refers back to [1 John 4:16]
this love has been made perfect among us
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has made his love for us complete"
because as he is, just so are we in this world
"because the relationship that Jesus has with God is the same relationship we have with God in this world"
1 John 4:18
Instead, perfect love throws out fear
Here "love" is described as a person with the power to remove fear. God's love is perfect. Alternate translation:

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"Instead, when our love is complete, we are no longer afraid"
because fear has to do with punishment
"because we would be afraid only if we thought that he would punish us"
But the one who fears has not been made perfect in love
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when a person is afraid that God will punish him, his love is not complete"
1 John 4:19
General Information:
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1 John 4:20
hates his brother
"hates a fellow believer"
the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen
If two negative statements in a row are confusing, this can be translated differently. Alternate translation: "the one who hates his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen"
1 John 4:21
General Information:
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Chapter 5

1 John 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Children born from God
When people believe in Jesus, God makes them his children and gives them eternal life. (See: believe)
Christian living
People who believe in Jesus should obey God's commands and love his children.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

A sin that results in death
This seems to refer to behaviors that will result in a person experiencing spiritual death, that is, to be separated from God forever. (See: death)
"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"
The phrase "the evil one" refers to Satan. God has allowed him to rule the world, but ultimately God is in control over everything. God keeps his children safe from the evil one. (See: satan)

Links:

1 John 5:1 Notes

1 John 5:1
General Information:
John continues to teach his readers about God's love and the love believers are to have because they have this new nature from God.
is born from God
"is a child of God"
1 John 5:2
This is how we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and obey his commandments.
"When we love God and do what he commands, then we know that we love his children"
1 John 5:3
For this is love for God: that we keep his commandments
"Because when we do what he commands, that is true love for God"
his commandments are not burdensome
"what he commands is not difficult"
burdensome
"heavy" or "crushing" or "difficult"
1 John 5:4
everyone who is born from God overcomes
"all children of God overcome"
overcomes the world
"has victory over the world," "succeeds against the world," or "refuses to do the evil things unbelievers do"
the world
This passage uses "the world" to refer to all the sinful people and the evil systems in the world. Alternate translation: "everything in the world that is against God"
And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith
"And this is what gives us the power to resist whatever would lead us to sin against God: our faith" or "And it is our faith that gives us the power to resist whatever would lead us to sin against God"
1 John 5:5
Who is the one who overcomes the world?
John used this question to introduce something he wanted to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who overcomes the world:"
The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God
This does not refer to a specific person but to anyone who believes this. Alternate translation: "Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.
1 John 5:6
Connecting Statement:
John teaches about Jesus Christ and what God said about him.
This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ
"Jesus Christ is the one who came by water and blood."
Here "water" is probably a metonym for the baptism of Jesus, and "blood" stands for Jesus's death on the cross. Alternate translation: "God showed that Jesus Christ is his

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son at Jesus's baptism and his death on the cross"

He came not only by water, but also by water and blood

Here "water" is probably a metonym for the baptism of Jesus, and "blood" stands for Jesus's death on the cross. Alternate translation: "God did not show us Jesus was his son just through his baptism, but through his baptism and his death on the cross"

1 John 5:7

General Information:

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1 John 5:8

General Information:

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1 John 5:9

If we receive the testimony of men

The idiom to "receive the testimony" means to believe what another person testifies concerning something that he has seen. The abstract noun "testimony" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "If we believe what men testify" or "If we believe what men say about what they have seen"

the testimony of God is greater

the testimony of God is more important and more reliable

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 5:10

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself

"Whoever believes in Jesus knows for sure Jesus is the Son of God"

has made him out to be a liar

"has called God a liar"

because he has not believed the testimony that God has given concerning his Son

"because he has not believed that God has told the truth about his Son"

1 John 5:11

And the testimony is this

"This is what God says"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

this life is in his Son

"this life is through his Son" or "we will live forever if we are joined with his Son" or "we will live forever if we are united with his Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 5:12

The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life

Being in a close relationship to the Son is spoken of as having the Son. Alternate translation: "He who believes in the Son of God has eternal life. He who does not believe in the Son of God does not have eternal life"

1 John 5:13

General Information:

This begins the end of John's letter. He tells his readers the last purpose for his letter and gives them some final teachings.

these things

"this letter"

to you who believe in the name of the Son of God

Here "name" is a metonym for the Son of God. Alternate translation: "to you who trust in the Son of God"

Son of God

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

1 John 5:14

this is the confidence we have before him, that

The abstract noun "confidence" can be stated as "confident." Alternate translation: "we are confident in God's presence because we know that"

if we ask anything according to his will

"if we ask for the things that God desires"

1 John 5:15

we know that we have whatever we have asked of him

"we know that we will receive that for which we have asked God"

1 John 5:16

his brother

"a fellow believer"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

death

This refers to eternal death, that is, eternity spent away from God's presence.

1 John 5:17

General Information:

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1 John 5:18

Connecting Statement:

John closes his letter, reviewing what he has said about the new nature of believers, which cannot sin, and he reminds them to keep themselves from idols (5:21).

the evil one cannot harm him

The phrase "the evil one" refers to Satan, the devil.

1 John 5:19

the whole world lies in the power of the evil one

Lying in someone's power represents being controlled or ruled by him. Alternate translation: "the whole world is controlled by the evil one"

the whole world lies in the power

Here "world" represents all the people who rebel against God. Alternate translation: "all the people of the world are under the power"

1 John 5:20

Son of God

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

has given us understanding

"has enabled us to understand the truth"

we are in him who is true

Being "in" someone represents having a close relationship with him, that is being united to him or belonging to him. The phrase "him who is true" refers to the true God, and the

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phrase "in his Son Jesus Christ" explains how we are in him who is true. Alternate translation: "we are united to him who is true by being united to his Son Jesus Christ"

him who is true

"the true one" or "the real God"

This one is the true God

Possible meanings are 1) "This one" refers to Jesus Christ, or 2) "This one" refers to the one true God.

and eternal life

He is called "eternal life" becasue he gives us eternal life. Alternate translation: "and the one who gives eternal life"

1 John 5:21

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

keep yourselves from idols

"stay away from idols" or "do not worship idols"

Introduction to 2 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 John

Greeting (1:1-3) Encouragement and the greatest commandment (1:4-6) Warning about false teachers (1:7–11) Greetings from fellow believers (1:12-13)

Who wrote the Book of 2 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as "the elder." The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life. The content of 2 John is similar to the content in John's Gospel.

What is the Book of 2 John about?

John addressed this letter to someone he called "the chosen lady" and to "her children"

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 John" or "Second John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Second Letter from John" or "The Second Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. John wanted believers to offer hospitality to guests. However, he did not want believers to offer hospitality to false teachers.

Who were the people John spoke against?

The people John spoke against were possibly those who would become known as Gnostics. These people believed that the physical world was evil. Since they believed Jesus was divine, they denied that he was truly human. This is because they thought God would not become human since the physical body is evil. (See: evil)

Chapter 1

2 John 1:1

General Information:

Tradition identifies the apostle John as the writer of this letter. Though possibly addressed to an individual woman, because he writes that they should "love one another," this is probably to a church. All instances of "you" and "your" in this letter are plural unless noted otherwise. In this letter, John includes himself and his readers by using the word "us" and "our."

From the elder to the chosen lady and her children

This is how letters were started. The name of the author can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I, John the elder, am writing this letter to the chosen lady and her children"

the elder

This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church.

to the chosen lady and her children

This probably refers to a congregation and the believers that belong to it.

2 John 1:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 John 1:3

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

in truth and love

The word "truth" describes "love." Possibly the phrase means "in true love."

2 John 1:4

your children

The word "your" is singular.

just as we have received this commandment from the Father

"just as God the Father commanded us"

2 John 1:5

you, lady ... writing to you

These instances of "you" are singular.

I were writing to you a new commandment, but one that we have had from the beginning

Here, "beginning" refers to "when we first believed." Alternate translation: "I were commanding you to do something new, but what Christ commanded us to do when

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we first believed"

beginning—that we should love one another

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "beginning. He commanded that we should love one another"

2 John 1:6

This is the commandment, just as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it

Conducting our lives according to God's commands is spoken of as if we were walking in them. The word "it" refers to love. "And he has commanded you, since you first believed, to love one another"

2 John 1:7

Connecting Statement:

John warns his readers of deceivers, reminds them to remain in Christ's teaching, and warns them to stay away from those who do not remain in Christ's teaching.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world

"For many false teachers have left the congregation" or "For many deceivers are in the world"

many deceivers

"many false teachers" or "many imposters"

Jesus Christ came in the flesh

Coming in the flesh is a metonym for being a real person. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ came as a real human"

This is the deceiver and the antichrist

"They are the ones who deceive others and oppose Christ himself"

2 John 1:8

Look to yourselves

"Watch out" or "Pay attention" or "Be on guard"

lose the things

"lose your future rewards in heaven"

the things for which we have labored

Another possible meaning is, "the things that we have accomplished."

full reward

"complete reward in heaven"

2 John 1:9

Whoever goes on ahead

This refers to a person who claims to know more about God and truth than everyone else. Alternate translation: "Whoever claims to know more about God" or "Whoever disobeys the truth"

goes on ahead

Some modern translations read, "transgresses."

does not have God

"does not belong to God"

The one who remains in the teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son

"Someone who follows Christ's teaching belongs to both the Father and the Son"

the Father and the Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

2 John 1:10

receive him into your house

Here this means to welcome him and treat him with honor in order to build a relationship with him.

2 John 1:11

participates in his evil deeds

"shares with him in his evil deeds" or "helps him in his evil deeds"

2 John 1:12

General Information:

The words "you" in verse 12 are singular.

Connecting Statement:

John's letter closes with his desire to visit his readers and gives greetings from another church.

I did not wish to write them with paper and ink

John does not wish to write these other things but would like to come say the words to them. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than paper and ink.

I hope to come to you

John wants to visit his readers but he does not know with certainty that he would be able to visit them. Alternate translation: "I plan to come to you" or "I want to come to you"

speak face to face

"Speak face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "to speak in their presence." Alternate translation: "speak in your presence" or "speak to you in person"

2 John 1:13

General Information

The word "your" in verse 13 is plural.

The children of your chosen sister

Here John speaks of this other church as if it were a sister to the readers' church and the believers that are a part of that church as if they were that church's children. This emphasizes that all believers are a spiritual family.

Introduction to 3 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 3 John

Introduction (1:1) Encouragement and instructions to show hospitality (1:2-8) Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12) Conclusion (1:13-14)

Who wrote the Book of 3 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as "the elder" (1:1). The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life.

What is the Book of 3 John about?

John wrote this letter to a believer named Gaius. He instructed Gaius to be hospitable to fellow believers who were

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

traveling through his area.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "3 John" or "Third John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Third Letter from John" or "The Third Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. In 2 John, John discouraged Christians from showing hospitality to false teachers. In 3 John, John encouraged Christians to show hospitality to faithful teachers.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How does the author use family relationships in his letter?

The author used the terms "brother" and "children" in a way that can be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "brothers" to refer to Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to Christians. Also, John called some believers his "children." These are believers he taught to obey Christ.

John also used the term "Gentile" in a way that could be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "Gentile" to refer to people who are not Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to those who did not believe in Jesus.

Chapter 1

3 John 1:1

General Information:

This is a personal letter from John to Gaius. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to Gaius and are singular.

The elder

This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church. The name of the author can be made explicit: "I, John the elder, am writing."

Gaius

This is a fellow believer to whom John is writing this letter.

whom I love in truth

"whom I truly love"

3 John 1:2

all may go well with you and that you may be healthy

"you may do well in all things and be healthy"

just as it is well with your soul

"just as you are doing well spiritually"

3 John 1:3

brothers came

"fellow believers came." These people were probably all male.

you walk in truth

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "you are living your life according to God's truth"

3 John 1:4

my children

John speaks of those he taught to believe in Jesus as though they were his children. This emphasizes his love and concern for them. It could also be that he himself led them to the Lord. Alternate translation: "my spiritual children"

3 John 1:5

Connecting Statement:

John's purpose in writing this letter is to compliment Gaius in the way he took care of traveling Bible teachers; then he talks about two people, one evil and one good.

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer.

you practice faithfulness

"you are doing what is faithful to God" or "you are being loyal to God"

labor for the brothers and for strangers

"help fellow believers and those you do not know"

3 John 1:6

You do well to send them

John is thanking Gaius for his normal practice of helping these believers.

3 John 1:7

because it was for the sake of the name that they went out

Here "the name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for they have gone out to tell people about Jesus"

taking nothing

receiving no gifts or help

the Gentiles

Here "Gentiles" means non-Jews who do not believe in Christ.

3 John 1:8

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and those with him, and possibly includes all believers.

so that we will be fellow workers for the truth

"so that we will cooperate with them in announcing God's truth to people"

3 John 1:9

General Information:

The word "us" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

congregation

This refers to Gaius and the group of believers who met together to worship God.

Diotrephes

He was a member of the congregation.

who loves to be first among them

"who loves to be the most important one among them" or "who loves to act as though he's their leader"

3 John 1:10

falsely accusing us with wicked words

"and how he says evil things about us that certainly are not

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

true"

refuses to welcome the brothers

"does not welcome the fellow believers"

stops those who want to welcome them

"stops those who want to welcome the believers"

drives them out of the church

"he forces them to leave the congregation"

3 John 1:11

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer. See how you translated this in 3 John 1:5.

do not imitate what is evil

"do not copy the evil things that people do"

but what is good

There are words left out but they are understood. Alternate translation: "but imitate what is good" or "but imitate the good things that people do"

is of God

"belongs to God"

has not seen God

"does not belong to God" or "does not believe in God"

3 John 1:12

General Information:

Here "we" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

Demetrius received a good testimony from everyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All who know Demetrius testify that he is a good man" or "Every believer who knows Demetrius speaks well of him"

Demetrius

This is probably a man whom John wants Gaius and the congregation to welcome when he comes to visit.

by the truth itself

"the truth itself speaks well of him." Here "truth" is described as a person speaking. Alternate translation: "everyone who knows the truth knows he is a good person"

We also testify about him

What John is confirming is implied and can be made specific here. Alternate translation: "We also testify about Demetrius" or "We also speak well of Demetrius"

3 John 1:13

General Information:

This is the end of John's letter to Gaius. He gives some final remarks and closes with a greeting.

I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink

John does not wish to write these other things at all. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than pen and ink.

3 John 1:14

I hope to see you soon

John wants to visit him, but he does not know with certainty that he would be able to visit him. Alternate translation: "I plan to come to you" or "I want to come to you"

face to face

"Face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "in person." Alternate translation: "in person"

3 John 1:15

May peace be with you

"May God give you peace"

The friends greet you

"The friends here greet you"

Greet our friends there by name

"Greet each of the believers there for me"

Introduction to Jude

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Jude

Introduction (1:1-2) Warning against false teachers (1:3-4) Old Testament examples (1:5-16) Proper response (1:17-23) Praises to God (1:24-25)

Who wrote the Book of Jude?

The author identified himself as Jude the brother of James. Both Jude and James were half-brothers of Jesus. It is unknown whether this letter was intended for a specific church.

What is the Book of Jude about?

Jude wrote this letter to warn believers against false teachers. Jude often referred to the Old Testament. This may suggest that Jude was writing to a Jewish Christian audience. This letter and 2 Peter have similar content. They both speak about angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and false teachers.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Jude." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter from Jude" or "The Letter Jude Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people Jude spoke against?

It is possible that the people Jude spoke against were those who would become known as Gnostics. These teachers distorted the teachings of scripture for their own gain. They lived in immoral ways and taught others to do the same.

Chapter 1

Jude 1:1

General Information:

Jude identifies himself as the writer of this letter and greets his readers. He was probably the half-brother of Jesus. There are two other Judes mentioned in the New Testament. The word "you" in this letter refers to the

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Christians to whom Jude was writing and is always plural.

Jude, a servant of

Jude is the brother of James. Alternate translation: "I am Jude, a servant of"

brother of James

James and Jude were half brothers of Jesus.

Jude 1:2

May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you

"may mercy, peace, and love be increased many times for you." These ideas are spoken of as if they were objects that could grow in size or number. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "mercy," "peace," and "love." Alternate translation: "May God continue to be merciful to you so that you live peacefully and love one another more and more

Jude 1:3

General Information:

The word "our" in this letter includes both Jude and believers.

Connecting Statement:

Jude tells the believers his reason for writing this letter.

our common salvation

"the salvation we share"

I had to write

"I felt a great need to write" or "I felt an urgent need to write"

to exhort you to struggle earnestly for the faith

"to encourage you to defend the true teaching"

once for all

"finally and completely"

Jude 1:4

For certain men have slipped in secretly among you

"For some men have come in among the believers without drawing attention to themselves"

These men were marked out for condemnation

This can also be put into the active voice. Alternate translation: "These were men whom God chose to condemn"

who have changed the grace of our God into sensuality

God's grace is spoken of as if it were a thing that could be changed into something horrible. Alternate translation: "who teach that God's grace permits one to continue to live in sexual sin"

deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) they teach that he is not God or 2) these men do not obey Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:5

Connecting Statement:

Jude gives examples from the past of those who did not follow the Lord.

the Lord saved a people out of the land of Egypt

"the Lord rescued the Israelites long ago from Egypt"

the Lord

Some texts read "Jesus."

Jude 1:6

their own position of authority

"the responsibilities God entrusted to them"

their proper dwelling place

The proper dwelling place of angels is heaven.

God has kept them in everlasting chains, in utter darkness

"God has put these angels in a dark prison from which they will never escape"

utter darkness

Here "darkness" is a metonym which represents the place of the dead or hell. Alternate translation: "in utter darkness in hell"

the great day

the final day when God will judge everyone

Jude 1:7

Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them

Here "Sodom," "Gomorrah," and "cities" represent the people who lived in them. Alternate translation: "the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the people in the cities around them"

gave themselves over to sexual immorality and perverse sexual acts

"engaged in every kind of sexual immorality and all of the perverse sexual acts they desired." The sexual sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were the result of the same kind of rebellion as the angels' evil ways.

as an example of those who suffer the punishment

The destruction of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah became an example of the fate of all who reject God.

Jude 1:8

these dreamers

These are the people who disobey God, probably because they claim to have seen visions that gave them authority to do so.

defile their bodies

The people sinning is spoken of as if they were making their bodies unclean. Alternate translation: "sin and defile themselves"

they slander

"they speak insults about"

glorious ones

This refers to spiritual beings, such as angels.

Jude 1:9

General Information:

Balaam was a prophet who refused to curse Israel for an enemy but then taught that enemy to get the people to marry unbelievers and become idol worshipers. Korah was a man of Israel who rebelled against Moses's leadership and Aaron's priesthood.

did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment against him

"did not dare to speak anything evil against him" or "did not dare to insult or condemn him"

Jude 1:10

these people

the ungodly people

whatever they do not understand

"anything of which they do not know the meaning." Possible meanings are 1) "everything good that they do not understand" or 2) "the glorious ones, which they do not understand" (Jude 1:8).

Jude 1:11

walked in the way of Cain

"Walked in the way" here is a metaphor for "lived in the same way as." Alternate translation: "lived the same way Cain lived"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Jude 1:12

Connecting Statement:

Jude uses a series of metaphors to describe the ungodly men. He tells the believers how to recognize these men when they are among them.

These people

The word "These" refers to the "ungodly men" of Jude 1:4.

dangerous reefs

Reefs are large rocks that are very close to the surface of water in the sea. Because sailors cannot see them, they are very dangerous. Ships can easily be destroyed if they hit these rocks.

autumn trees without fruit—twice dead, uprooted

These words contain two metaphors for dead people and apply them both to "these people."

autumn trees without fruit

This is the first metaphor for dead people. Trees in autumn look dead because their leaves have all fallen off, as has the fruit of fruit trees.

twice dead, uprooted

This is the second metaphor for dead people. After these "autumn trees" have lost their leaves and fruit, they die their first metaphorical death. Then people uproot them, and they die their second metaphorical death.

uprooted

completely pulled out of the ground so their roots dry out

Jude 1:13

violent waves in the sea

As the sea's waves are blown by a strong wind, so the ungodly people are easily moved in many directions.

foaming up their shame

As wind causes wild waves to stir up dirty foam—so these men, through their false teaching and actions, shame themselves. Alternate translation: "and just as waves bring up foam and dirt, these men pollute others with their shame"

wandering stars

Those who studied the stars in ancient times noticed that some "stars,"—what we call planets—do not move the way that stars do, so they called them "wandering stars." Alternate translation: "They are like moving stars"

for whom the gloom of complete darkness has been reserved forever

Here "darkness" is a metonym that represents the place of the dead or hell, and "the gloom of complete darkness" is an idiom that means "a totally dark place." The phrase "has been reserved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and God will put them in the gloom and complete darkness of hell forever"

Jude 1:14

the seventh from Adam

If Adam is counted as the first generation of mankind, Enoch is the seventh. If Adam's son is counted as the first, Enoch is sixth in line.

Look

"Listen" or "Pay attention to this important thing I am going to say"

holy ones

Possible meanings are 1) "angels" or 2) "saints" or 3) "angels and saints"

Jude 1:15

to execute judgment on

"to make judgment on" or "to judge"

Jude 1:16

grumblers, complainers

People who do not want to obey and speak against godly authority. "Grumblers" tend to speak quietly, while "complainers" speak openly.

Their mouths speak loud boasts

They praise themselves so that others can hear.

flattering others

"giving false praise to others"

Jude 1:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Jude 1:18

mockers who will follow their own ungodly desires

Ungodly desires are spoken of as if they were a path that a person will follow. Alternate translation: "mockers who will continue to dishonor God by doing the evil things they wish to do"

Jude 1:19

It is these

"It is these mockers" or "These mockers are the ones"

they are worldly

Here "worldly" describes someone who is concerned with things of the world rather than things of God. Often in the Bible "world" represents all things opposed to God. Alternate translation: "they are only concerned with doing what is evil"

they do not have the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that people can possess. Alternate translation: "the Spirit is not within them"

Jude 1:20

Connecting Statement:

Jude tells the believers how they should live and how they should treat others.

But you, beloved

"Do not be like them, beloved. Instead"

build yourselves up

Becoming increasingly able to trust in God and obey him is spoken of as if it were the process of constructing a building.

Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in God's love

Remaining able to receive God's love is spoken of as if one were keeping oneself in a certain place.

wait for

"eagerly look forward to"

the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings you eternal life

Here "mercy" stands for Jesus Christ himself, who will show his mercy to the believers by making them live forever with him.

Jude 1:22

those who doubt

"those who do not yet believe that Jesus is God"

Jude 1:23

snatching them out of the fire

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

The picture is that of pulling people from a fire before they start to burn. Alternate translation: "doing for them whatever needs to be done to keep them from dying without Christ. This is like pulling them from the fire"

to others show mercy with fear

"be kind to others, but be afraid of sinning the way they do"

hating even the garment defiled by the flesh

Jude exaggerates to warn his readers that they can become like those sinners. Alternate translation: "treating them as though you could become guilty of sin just by touching their clothes"

Jude 1:24

Connecting Statement:

Jude closes with a blessing.

to cause you to stand before his glorious presence

His glory is brilliant light that represents his greatness. Alternate translation: "and to allow you to enjoy and worship his glory"

glorious presence without blemish and with

Here sin is spoken of as if it were dirt on one's body or a flaw on one's body. Alternate translation: "glorious presence, where you will be without sin and have"

Jude 1:25

to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord

"to the only God, who saved us because of what Jesus Christ did." This emphasizes that God the Father as well as the Son is the Savior.

be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time, now, and forever

God has always had, now has, and always will have glory, absolute leadership, and complete control of all things.

Introduction to Revelation

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Revelation

Opening (1:1-20) Letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22) Vision of God in heaven, and a vision of the Lamb (4:1-5:14) The seven seals (6:1-8:1) The seven trumpets (8:2-13:18) Worshipers of the Lamb, the martyrs, and the harvest of wrath (14:1-20) The seven bowls (15:1-18:24) Worship in heaven (19:1-10) The Lamb's judgment, the destruction of the beast, the thousand years, the destruction of Satan, and the final judgment (19:11-20:15) The new creation and the new Jerusalem (21:1-22:5) Jesus's promise to return, the witness from the angels, John's closing words, Christ's message to his church, and the invitation and the warning (22:6-21)

Who wrote the Book of Revelation?

The author identified himself as John. This was probably the Apostle John. He wrote the Book of Revelation while on the island of Patmos. The Romans exiled John there for teaching people about Jesus.

What is the Book of Revelation about?

John wrote the Book of Revelation to encourage believers to remain faithful even when they are suffering. John described visions he had of Satan and his followers fighting against and killing believers. In the visions God causes many terrible things to happen on the earth to punish wicked people. In the end, Jesus defeats Satan and his followers. Then Jesus comforts those who were faithful. And the believers will live forever with God in the new heavens and earth.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by one of its traditional titles, "Revelation," "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," "The Revelation to Saint John," or "The Apocalypse of John." Or they may choose a possibly clearer title, such as "The Things that Jesus Christ Showed to John."

What type of writing is the Book of Revelation?

John used a special style of writing to describe his visions. John described what he saw by using many symbols. This style of writing is called symbolic prophecy or apocalyptic literature.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Are the events of Revelation past or future?

Since early Christian times, scholars have interpreted Revelation differently. Some scholars think John described events that happened during his time. Some scholars think John described events happening from his time until the return of Jesus. Other scholars think John described events that will happen in a short period of time just before Christ returns. Translators will not need to decide how to interpret the book before they translate it. Translators should leave the prophecies in the tenses that are used in the ULB.

Are there any other books in the Bible like Revelation?

No other book of the Bible is like the Book of Revelation. But passages in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and especially Daniel are similar in content and style to Revelation. It may be beneficial to translate Revelation at the same time as Daniel since they have some imagery and style in common.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Does one need to understand the Book of Revelation to translate it?

One does not need to understand all of the symbols in the Book of Revelation to translate it properly. Translators should

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

not give possible meanings for the symbols or numbers in their translation.

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Revelation in the ULB?

The scriptures use these words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating Revelation into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

The meaning in two passages indicates moral holiness. Here, the ULB uses "holy." (See: 14:12; 22:11) Usually the meaning in Revelation indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:8; 20:9) Sometimes the meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "sanctify," "set apart," "dedicated to," or "reserved for."

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

Periods of time

John referred to various periods of time in Revelation. For example, there are many references to forty-two months, seven years, and three and a half days. Some scholars think these time periods are symbolic. Other scholars think these are actual time periods. The translator should treat these time periods as referencing actual periods of time. It is then up to the interpreter to determine their significance or what they may represent.

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

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"'I am the alpha and the omega,' says the Lord God, 'the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'" (1:8). Some versions add the phrase "the Beginning and the End." "the elders prostrated themselves and worshiped" (5:14). Some older translations read, "the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves and worshiped the one who lives forever and ever." "so that a third of it [the earth] was burned up" (8:7). Some older versions do not include this phrase. "the one who is and who was" (11:17). Some versions add the phrase "and who is to come." "they are blameless" (14:5). Some versions add the phrase "before the throne of God" (14:5). "the one who is and who was, the Holy One" (16:5). Some older translations read, "O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be." "The nations will walk by the light of that city" (21:24). Some older translations read, "The nations that are saved will walk by the light of that city." "Blessed are those who wash their robes" (22:14). Some older translations read "Blessed are those who do his commandments." "God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city" (22:19). Some older translations read, "God will take away his share in the book of life and in the holy city."

Chapter 1

Revelation 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter explains how the Book of Revelation records the vision John received on the island of Patmos.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven churches

John wrote this book to seven actual churches in Asia Minor, which is now the country of Turkey.

White

The Bible often speaks of something that belongs to a person as being "white." This is metaphor and metonym for that person living rightly and pleasing God. (See: and and righteous)

"the one who is, and who was, and who is to come"

God exists now. He has always existed. He will always exist. Your language may have a different way of saying this.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Blood

Blood is a metonym for death. Jesus "has released us from our sins by his blood." John means that Jesus saved us from our sins by dying for us.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"He is coming with the clouds"

Jesus went into the clouds when he went up to heaven after God raised him from the dead. When Jesus returns, he will also be "with the clouds." It is not clear whether he will be sitting or riding on clouds or coming in the clouds or "with the clouds" in some other way. Your translation should express this in a way that is natural in your language.

"One like a son of man"

This refers to Jesus. You should translate the words "son of man" using the same words as you did in the Gospels for when Jesus called himself the "Son of Man."

"The angels of the seven churches"
The word "angels" here can also mean "messengers." This might refer to heavenly beings, or to the messengers or leaders of these seven churches. John uses the same word "angel" (singular) in verse 1 and in many other places throughout the book. Your translation should also use the same word.

Links:

Revelation 1:1 Notes Revelation intro

Revelation 1:1
General Information:
This is an introduction to the book of Revelation. It explains that it is a revelation from Jesus Christ and it gives a blessing to those who read it.
his servants
This refers to people who believe in Christ.
what must soon take place
"the events that must happen soon"
made it known
"communicated it"
to his servant John
John wrote this book and was referring to himself here. Alternate translation: "to me, John, his servant"
Revelation 1:2
who testified about ... all the things that he saw
The word "who" refers to John. This tells what John did after he learned about the revelation. Alternate translation: "And John testified about ... all the things that he saw"
the word of God
"the message that God spoke"
the testimony of Jesus Christ
These words could refer to 1) the testimony that John has given about Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "he has also given testimony about Jesus Christ" Or 2) the testimony that Jesus Christ has given about himself.
Revelation 1:3
the one who reads aloud
This does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who reads it aloud. Alternate translation: "anyone who reads aloud"
obey what is written in it
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "obey what John has written in it" or "obey what they read in it"
the time is near
"the things that must happen will soon happen"
Revelation 1:4
General Information:
This is the beginning of John's letter. Here he names himself as the writer and greets the people he is writing to.
May grace be to you and peace
"May you receive grace and peace" or "May you experience grace and peace." This is a wish or blessing.
from the one who is
"from God, who is"
who is to come
Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.
seven spirits
The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God.
Revelation 1:5
and from Jesus Christ
This continues the blessing from Revelation 1:4. Alternate translation:"and may grace be to you and peace also from Jesus Christ" or "and may Jesus Christ treat you kindly and enable you to live peacefully and securely"
the firstborn from the dead
"the first person to be raised from death, never to die again"
from the dead
The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"
has freed us from our sins
"has released us from our sins"
Revelation 1:6
has made us a kingdom, priests
"has set us apart and begun to rule over us and he has made us priests"
his God and Father
This is one person. Alternate translation: "God, his Father"
Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
to him be the glory and the power
This is a wish or prayer. Possible meanings are 1) "May people honor his glory and power" or 2) "May he have glory and power." John prays that Jesus Christ will be honored and will be able to rule completely over everyone and everything.
the power
This probably refers to his authority as king.
Revelation 1:7
General Information:
Here John quotes from Daniel and Zechariah.
every eye
Since people see with the eyes, the word "eye" is used to refer to people. Alternate translation: "every person" or "everyone"
including those who pierced him
"even those who pierced him will see him"
pierced him
Jesus's hands and feet were pierced when he was nailed to the cross. Here it refers to people killing him. Alternate translation: "killed him"
pierced
made a hole in
Revelation 1:8
"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is ... the Almighty."

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

This can be restated so that the quotation is not split. Alternate translation: "The Lord God says, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is ... the Almighty.'" or "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is ... the Almighty,' says the Lord God."

the Alpha and the Omega

These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If the meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. Alternate translation: "the A and the Z" or "the first and the last"

who is to come

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

Revelation 1:9

General Information:

John explains how his vision began and the instructions the Spirit gave him.

your ... you

These refer to the believers in the seven churches.

I, John—your brother and the one who shares with you in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are in Jesus—was

This can be stated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "I, John, am your brother who shares with you in God's kingdom and also suffers and patiently endures trials along with you because we belong to Jesus. I was"

because of the word of God

"because I told others the word of God"

the word of God

"the message that God spoke." Translate as in Revelation 1:2.

the testimony about Jesus

"the testimony that God has given about Jesus." Translate as in Revelation 1:2.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit

John speaks of being influenced by God's Spirit as if he were in the Spirit. Alternate translation: "I was influenced by the Spirit" or "The Spirit influenced me"

the Lord's day

the day of worship for believers in Christ

loud voice like a trumpet

The voice was so loud it sounded like a trumpet.

trumpet

This refers to an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting.

Revelation 1:11

Smyrna ... Pergamum ... Thyatira ... Sardis ... Philadelphia ... Laodicea

These are names of cities in the region of western Asia that today is modern Turkey.

Revelation 1:12

Connecting Statement:

John begins to explain what he saw in his vision.

whose voice

This refers to the person speaking. Alternate translation: "who"

Revelation 1:13

son of man

This expression describes a human figure, someone who looks human.

a golden sash

a piece of cloth worn around the chest. It may have had golden threads in it.

Revelation 1:14

His head and hair were as white as wool—as white as snow

Wool and snow are examples of things that are very white. The repetition of "as white as" emphasizes that they were very white.

wool

This is the hair of a sheep or goat. It was known to be very white.

his eyes were like a flame of fire

His eyes are described as being full of light like fire flames. Alternate translation: "his eyes were glowing like a flame of fire"

Revelation 1:15

His feet were like polished bronze

Bronze is polished to make it shine and reflect light. Alternate translation: "His feet were very shiny like polished bronze"

like polished bronze, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace

The bronze would be refined first and then polished. Alternate translation: "like bronze that has been purified in a hot furnace and polished"

furnace

a strong container for holding a very hot fire. People would put metal in it, and the hot fire would burn away any impurities that were in the metal.

the sound of many rushing waters

This is very loud, like the sound of a large, fast flowing river, of a large waterfall, or of loud waves in the sea.

Revelation 1:16

a sword ... was coming out of his mouth

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion.

a sword with two sharp edges

This refers to a double-edged sword, which is sharpened on both sides to cut both directions.

Revelation 1:17

fell at his feet like a dead man

John lay down facing the ground. He was probably very frightened and was showing Jesus great respect.

He placed his right hand on me

"He touched me with his right hand"

I am the first and the last

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus.

Revelation 1:18

I have the keys of death and of Hades

Having the power over something is spoken of as having the keys to it. The implied information is that he can give life to those who have died and let them out of Hades. Alternate translation: "I have the power over death and over Hades" or "I have the power to give life to people who have died and to let them out of Hades"

Revelation 1:19

Connecting Statement:

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The Son of Man continues to speak.

Revelation 1:20

stars

These stars are symbols that represent the seven angels of the seven churches.

lampstands

The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:12.

the angels of the seven churches

Possible meanings are that these "angels" are 1) heavenly angels who protect the seven churches or 2) human messengers to the seven churches, either messengers who went from John to the churches or the leaders of those churches.

seven churches

This refers to seven churches that actually existed in Asia Minor at that time. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:11.

Chapter 2

Revelation 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the "seven letters to the seven churches." You may wish to set each letter apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 27.

Special concepts in this chapter

Poverty and wealth

The Christians in Smyrna were poor because they did not have much money. But they were rich spiritually because God would reward them for their suffering. (See: spirit)

"The devil is about to"

Some authorities were about to take some of the Christians in Smyrna and throw them into prison and even kill some of them

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel were people who lived long before Jesus was born. They all tried to harm the Israelites either by cursing them or by making them want to stop obeying God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"

The writer knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The angel of the church"

The word "angel" here can also mean "messenger." This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

"The words of the one who"

The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add "These are" to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in Revelation 1:17. He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

Links:

Revelation 2:1 Notes

Revelation 2:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Ephesus.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

stars

These stars are symbols. They represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16]

lampstands

The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:12]

Revelation 2:2

I know ... your hard labor, and your patient endurance

"Labor" and "endurance" are abstract nouns and can be translated with verbs "work" and "endure." Alternate translation: "I know ... that you work very hard and that you endure patiently"

but are not

"but are not apostles"

you have found them to be false

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

"you have recognized that those people are false apostles"
Revelation 2:3
for my name
"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you believe in my name" or "because you believe in me"
you have not grown weary
Being discouraged is spoken of as being tired. Alternate translation: "you have not become discouraged" or "you have not quit"
Revelation 2:4
I have against you the fact that
"I disapprove of you because" or "I am angry with you because"
you have left behind your first love
To stop doing something is spoken of as leaving it behind. Love is spoken of as if it is an object that can be left behind. Alternate translation: "you have stopped loving me as you did at the beginning"
Revelation 2:5
from where you have fallen
No longer loving as much as they used to is spoken of as haven fallen. Alternate translation: "how much you have changed" or "how much you used to love me"
Unless you repent
"If you do not repent"
remove your lampstand
The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated "lampstand" in [Revelation 1:12]
Revelation 2:6
Nicolaitans
people who followed the teachings of a man named Nicolaus
Revelation 2:7
Let the one who has an ear, hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"
Let the one ... hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey"
the one who conquers
This refers to anyone who conquers. Alternate translation: "anyone who resists evil" or "those who do not agree to do evil"
the paradise of God
"God's garden." This is a symbol for heaven.
Revelation 2:8
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Smyrna.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Smyrna
This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
the first and the last
This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17]
Revelation 2:9
I know your sufferings and your poverty
"Sufferings" and "poverty" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "I know how you have suffered and how poor you are"
I know the slander of those who say they are Jews
"Slander" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "I know how people have slandered you—those who say they are Jews" or "I know how people have said terrible things about you—those who say they are Jews"
but they are not
"but they are not real Jews"
a synagogue of Satan
People who gather to obey or honor Satan are spoken of as if they were a synagogue, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews.
Revelation 2:10
The devil is about to throw some of you into prison
The words "The devil" here are a metonym for the people who obey the devil. Alternate translation: "The devil will soon cause others to put some of you in prison"
Be faithful until death
"Be faithful to me even if they kill you." The use of the word "until" does not mean that you should stop being faithful at death.
the crown
"the winner's crown." This was a wreath, originally of olive branches or laurel leaves, that was put on the head of a victorious athlete.
the crown of life
Possible meanings are 1) "a crown that shows that I have given you eternal life" or 2) "true life as a prize like a winner's crown"
Revelation 2:11
Let the one who has an ear, hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Let the one ... hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
The one who conquers
This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]
will not be hurt by the second death

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"will not experience the second death" or "will not die a second time"
Revelation 2:12
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Pergamum.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Pergamum
This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
the sword with two sharp edges
This refers to a double-edged sword, which is sharpened on both sides to cut both directions. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:16
Revelation 2:13
Satan's throne
Possible meanings are 1) Satan's power and evil influence on people, or 2) the place where Satan rules.
you hold on tightly to my name
"Name" here is a metonym for the person. Firmly believing is spoken of as holding on tightly. Alternate translation: "you firmly believe in me"
you did not deny your faith in me
"Faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "you continued to tell people that you believe in me"
Antipas
This is the name of a man.
Revelation 2:14
But I have a few things against you
"I disapprove of you because of a few things you have done" or "I am angry with you because of a few things you did." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 2:4.
who hold tightly to the teaching of Balaam, who
Possible meanings are 1) "who teach what Balaam taught; he" or 2) "who do what Balaam taught; he."
Balak
This is the name of a king.
who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel
Something that leads people to sin is spoken of as a stone in the road that people stumble on. Alternate translation: "who showed Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin"
be sexually immoral
"sin sexually" or "commit sexual sin"
Revelation 2:15
Nicolaitans
This was the name for a group of people who followed the teachings of a man named Nicolaus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:6]
Revelation 2:16
Repent, therefore
"So repent"
If you do not, I
The verb can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "If you do not repent, I"
wage war against them
"fight against them"
with the sword in my mouth
This refers to the sword in [Revelation 1:16]
Revelation 2:17
Let the one who has an ear hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Let the one ... hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
To the one who conquers
This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]
Revelation 2:18
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Thyatira.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Thyatira
This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
who has eyes like a flame of fire
His eyes are describes as being full of light like a flame of fire. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:14]
feet like polished bronze
Bronze is polished to make it shine and reflect light. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:15]
Revelation 2:19
your love and faith and service and your patient endurance
The abstract nouns "love," "faith," "service," and "endurance" can be translated with verbs. Alternate translation: "How you have loved, trusted, served, and endured patiently"
your love and faith and service and your patient endurance
The implied objects of these verbs can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "How you have loved me and others, trusted me, served me and others, and endured troubles patiently"
Revelation 2:20
But I have this against you
"But I disapprove of some of the things you are doing" or "But I am angry with you because of something you are doing." See how you translated a similar phrase in

Revelation 2:4.

the woman Jezebel, who

Jesus spoke of a certain woman in their church as if she were Queen Jezebel because she did the same kinds of sinful things that Queen Jezebel had done long before that time. Alternate translation: "the woman who is just like Jezebel and"

Revelation 2:21

I gave her time to repent

"I gave her opportunity to repent" or "I waited for her to repent"

Revelation 2:22

I will throw her onto a sickbed ... into great suffering

Her having to lie in bed would be the result of Jesus making her very sick. Alternate translation: "I will make her lie sick in bed ... I will make suffer greatly" or "I will make her very sick ... I will make suffer greatly"

those who commit adultery with her into great suffering

Jesus speaks of causing people to suffer as throwing them into suffering. Alternate translation: "I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer greatly"

commit adultery

"practice adultery"

unless they repent of her deeds

This implies that they have participated with her in her wicked behavior. By repenting of her deeds, they also repent of participating in her behavior. Alternate translation: "if they do not repent from doing the evil that she does" or "if they do not repent of participating in her deeds"

Revelation 2:23

I will strike her children dead

"I will kill her children"

her children

Jesus spoke of her followers as if they were her children. Alternate translation: 'her followers" or "the people who do what she teaches"

thoughts and hearts

The term "heart" a metonym that represents feelings and desires. Alternate translation: "what people think and want"

I will give to each one of you

This is an expression about punishment and reward. Alternate translation: "I will punish or reward each one of you"

Revelation 2:24

everyone who does not hold this teaching

Believing a teaching is spoken of as holding the teaching. Alternate translation: "everyone who does not believe this teaching"

does not hold this teaching

The noun "teaching" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "does not hold to what she teaches" or "does not believe what she teaches"

deep things

Secret things are spoken of as if they were deep. Alternate translation: "secret things"

Revelation 2:25

General Information:

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Revelation 2:26

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

does my works

"does what I command him to do"

Revelation 2:27

He will rule ... break them into pieces

This is a prophecy from the Old Testament about a king of Israel, but Jesus applies it here to those to whom he gives authority over the nations.

He will rule them with an iron rod

Ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling with an iron rod. Alternate translation: "He will rule them harshly as if striking them with an iron stick"

like clay jars he will break them into pieces

Breaking them to pieces is an image that represents either 1) destroying evildoers or 2) defeating enemies. Alternate translation: "He will defeat his enemies completely as if breaking clay jars into pieces"

Revelation 2:28

Just as I have received from my Father

Some languages may need to tell what was received. Possible meanings are 1) "Just as I have received authority from my Father" or 2) "Just as I have received the morning star from my Father."

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

I will also give him

Here "him" refers to the one who conquers.

morning star

This is a bright star that sometimes appears early in the morning just before dawn. It was a symbol of victory.

Revelation 2:29

Let the one who has an ear hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Chapter 3

Revelation 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the "seven letters to the seven churches." You may wish to set each letter

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apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verse 7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven spirits of God
These spirits are the seven spirits of Revelation 1:4.
Seven stars
These stars are the seven stars of Revelation 1:20.

Important metaphors in this chapter

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking
Jesus speaks of his desire to have the Christians in Laodicea obey him as if he were a man asking people in a house to allow him to enter and eat with them
"Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"
The speaker knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The angel of the church"
The word "angel" here can also mean "messenger." This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
"The words of the one who"
The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add "These are" to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in Revelation 1:17. He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

Links:

Revelation 3:1 Notes

Revelation 3:1
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Sardis.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Sardis
This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
the seven spirits
The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4]
the seven stars
These stars are symbols that represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16]
You have a name that you are alive
The word "name" here is a metonym for a reputation. Alternate translation: "You have a reputation for being alive" or "People think that you are alive"
alive ... dead
Obeying and honoring God is spoken of as being alive; disobeying and dishonoring him is spoken of as being dead.

Revelation 3:2
Wake up and strengthen what remains but is about to die
The good deeds done by the believers in Sardis are spoken of as if they were alive but in danger of dying. Alternate translation: "Wake up and complete the work that remains; otherwise what you have done will become worthless" or "Wake up. If you do not finish what you have started to do, your previous work will have been useless"
Wake up
Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. Alternate translation: "Be alert" or "Be careful"
Revelation 3:3
what you have received and heard
This refers to God's word, which they believed. Alternate translation: "God's word that you heard and the truth that you believed"
if you do not wake up
Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. See how you translated "wake up" on [Revelation 3:2]
I will come as a thief
Jesus will come at a time when people do not expect him, just as a thief comes when not expected.
Revelation 3:4
a few names
The word "names" is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "a few people"
have not stained their clothes
Jesus speaks of sin in a person's life as if it were a stain on clothes. Alternate translation: "have not made their lives sinful"

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will walk with me
People commonly spoke of living as "walking." Alternate translation: "will live with me"
dressed in white
White clothes represent a pure life without sin. Alternate translation: "and they will be dressed in white, which shows that they are pure"
Revelation 3:5
The one who conquers
This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]
will be clothed in white garments
This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "will wear white garments" or "I will give white clothes"
I will confess his name
He would announce that the person belongs to him, not simply say the person's name. Alternate translation: "I will announce that he belongs to me"
before my Father
"in the presence of my Father"
my Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
Revelation 3:6
Let the one who has an ear hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Let the one ... hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Revelation 3:7
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Philadelphia.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Philadelphia
This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
key of David
Jesus speaks of his authority to decide who may go into his kingdom as if it were King David's key.
he opens and no one shuts
"he opens the door to the kingdom and no one can close it"
he shuts and no one can open
"he closes the door and no one can open it"
Revelation 3:8
I have put before you an open door
"I have opened a door for you"
you have obeyed my word
Possible meanings are 1) "you have followed by teachings" or 2) "you have obeyed my commands"
my name
The word "name" here is is a metonym for the person who has that name. Alternate translation: "me"
Revelation 3:9
General Information:
The writer begins his sentence with "I will cause," but he does not finish the sentence by telling what he will cause "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan" to do. He begins the sentence again with "I will make them," where "them" refers to "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan."
synagogue of Satan
People who gather to obey or honor Satan are spoken of as if they were in a synagogue, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:9]
those calling themselves Jews but are not, but rather liars
"those calling themselves Jews when they are not Jews: instead, they are liars." These words further describe "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan."
bow down
This is a sign of submission, not worship. Alternate translation: "bow down in submission"
before your feet
Here the word "feet" represent the person before whom these people bow down. Alternate translation: "before you" or "to you"
they will know
"they will learn" or "they will admit"
Revelation 3:10
will also keep you from the hour of testing
"will also prevent the hour of testing from happening to you" or "will protect you so you do not enter the hour of testing"
hour of testing
"time of testing." This probably means "the time when people try to make you disobey me."
is coming
Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.
Revelation 3:11
I am coming soon
It is understood that he is coming in order to judge. Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon"
Hold to what you have
Continuing to believe firmly in Christ is spoken of as if it were holding something tightly. Alternate translation: "Continue to believe firmly"
crown
A crown was a wreath, originally of olive branches or laurel leaves, that was put on the head of a victorious athlete. Here "crown" stands for a reward. See how you translated "crown" in Revelation 2:10.
Revelation 3:12
The one who conquers I will make a pillar in the temple of my God
Here "The one who conquers" refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Revelation 3:13

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Revelation 3:14

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Laodicea.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Laodicea

This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

The words of the Amen

Here "the Amen" is a name for Jesus Christ. He guarantees God's promises by saying amen to them.

the ruler over God's creation

Possible meanings are 1) "the one who rules over everything that God created" or 2) "the one through whom God created everything."

Revelation 3:15

you are neither cold nor hot

The writer speaks of the Laodiceans as if they were water. Possible meanings are 1) "cold" and hot" represent two extremes of spiritual interest or love for God, where "cold" is to be completely against God, and to be "hot" is to be zealous to serve him, or 2) "cold" and "hot" both refer to water that is useful for drinking or for cooking or healing, respectively. Alternate translation: "you are like water that is neither cold nor hot"

Revelation 3:16

I am about to vomit you out of my mouth

Rejecting them is spoken of as vomiting them out of the mouth. Alternate translation: "I will reject you as I would spit out lukewarm water"

Revelation 3:17

you are most miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked

Jesus speaks of their spiritual condition as if he were speaking about their physical condition. Alternate translation: "You are like people who are most miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked"

Revelation 3:18

Buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and brilliant white garments so you may clothe yourself and not show the shame of your nakedness, and salve to anoint your eyes so you will see

Here to "buy" represents receiving things from Jesus that have true spiritual value. The "gold refined by fire" represents spiritual wealth. The "brilliant white garments" represents rightousness. And the "salve to anoint your eyes" represents the ability to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "Come to me and receive spiritual wealth, which is more valuable than gold that is refined by fire. Receive from me righteousness, which is like brilliant white garments, so that you will not be ashamed. And receive from me wisdom, which is like salve for the eyes, so that you may understand spiritual things"

Revelation 3:19

be earnest and repent

"be serious and repent"

Revelation 3:20

I am standing at the door and am knocking

Jesus speaks about wanting people to relate to him as if he wanted them to invite him into their home. Alternate translation: "I am like one standing at the door and knocking"

am knocking

When people want someone to welcome them into their home, they knock on the door. Alternate translation: "I want you to let me come inside"

hears my voice

The phrase "my voice" refers to Christ speaking. Alternate translation: "hears me speak" or "hears me call"

I will come into his home

Some languages might prefer the verb "go" here. Alternate translation: "I will go in to his home"

and will eat with him

This represents being together as friends.

Revelation 3:21

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

to sit down with me on my throne

To sit on a throne means to rule. Alternate translation: "to rule with me" or "to sit down on my throne and rule with me"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Revelation 3:22

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the Son of Man's messages to the angels of the seven churches.

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

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Chapter 4

Revelation 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verses 8 and 11.

John has finished describing the letters to the churches. He now begins to describe a vision that God showed him.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jasper, carnelian, and emerald

These words refer to kinds of special stones that the people in John's day considered valuable. It may be difficult for you to translate these words if people in your culture do not value special kinds of stones.

Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church.

Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of Revelation 1:4.

Giving glory to God

God's glory is the great beauty and radiant majesty that God has because he is God. Other Bible writers describe it as if it were a light so bright that no one can look at it. No one can give God this kind of glory, because it is already his. For people "to give glory" to God and for God "to receive glory" means that people are praising and worshiping God because of the glory he already has. (See: glory and worthy and worship)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult images

Such things as bolts of lightning coming from the throne, lamps that are spirits, and a sea in front of the throne may be difficult to imagine, and so the words for them may be difficult to translate.

Links:

Revelation 4:1 Notes

Revelation 4:1

General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the throne of God.

After these things

"Just after I had seen these things." Here "these things" refers to what John saw in (Revelation 2:1-3:22)

an open door in heaven

This expression stands for the ability that God gave John to see into heaven, at least by means of a vision.

speaking to me like a trumpet

How the voice was like a trumpet can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "speaking to me loudly like the sound of a trumpet"

trumpet

This refers to an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:10.

Revelation 4:2

I was in the Spirit

John speaks of being influenced by God's Spirit as if he were in the Spirit. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:10]

Revelation 4:3

jasper and carnelian

These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal, and carnelian may have been red.

emerald

a green, valuable stone

Revelation 4:4

twenty-four elders

"24 elders"

golden crowns

These were likenesses of wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Such crowns, made of leaves, were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.

Revelation 4:5

flashes of lightning

Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears.

rumblings, and crashes of thunder

These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder.

seven spirits of God

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4]

Revelation 4:6

a sea of glass

How it was like glass or a sea can be stated clearly. Possible meanings are 1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass. Alternate translation: "a sea that was as smooth as glass" or 2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. Alternate translation: "glass that was spread out like a sea"

like crystal

How it was like crystal can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "clear as crystal"

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In the middle of the throne and around the throne
"Immediately around the throne" or "Close to the throne and around it"
four living creatures
"four living beings" or "four living things"
Revelation 4:7
The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle
How the head of each living creature appeared to John is expressed as a comparison with something more familiar.
living creature
"living being" or "living thing." See how you translated this in Revelation 4:6
Revelation 4:8
full of eyes on top and underneath
The top and bottom of each wing was covered with eyes.
who is to come
Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.
Revelation 4:9
the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever
This is one person. The one who sits on the throne lives forever and ever.
forever and ever
These two words mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "for all eternity"
Revelation 4:10
twenty-four elders
"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]
fall down
They purposely lie down facing the ground to show that they are worshiping.
They lay their crowns before the throne
These crowns looked like wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. The elders were respectfully placing the crowns on the ground, showing that they were submitting to God's authority to rule. Alternate translation: "they lay their crowns before the throne to show that they are submitting to him"
lay
Possible meanings are 1) to place or 2) to throw down forcibly, as of something worthless ("throw," Revelation 2:22). The reader should understand that the elders are acting respectfully.
Revelation 4:11
our Lord and our God
"our Lord and God." This is one person, the one sitting on the throne.
to receive glory and honor and power
These are things that God always has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. Alternate translation: "to be praised for your glory, honor, and power" or "for everyone to praise you because you are glorious, honorable, and powerful"

Chapter 5

Revelation 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sealed scroll

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, "the one who was seated on the throne" had written the scroll. Only the person called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" and "the Lamb" had the authority to open it. (See: scroll and authority)

Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church.

Christian prayers

The prayers of Christians are described as incense. Christian prayers have a good smell to God. He is pleased when Christians pray.

Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of Revelation 1:4.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" and the "Root of David" are metaphors that refer to Jesus. Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah and the family of David. Lions are fierce, and all animals and people are afraid of them, so they are a metaphor for a king whom everyone obeys. The words "Root of David" speak of Israel's King David as if he were a seed that God had planted and of Jesus as if he were a root growing from that seed.

Links:

Revelation 5:1 Notes

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Revelation 5:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe what he saw in his vision of the throne of God.

Then I saw

"After I saw those things, I saw"

the one who was seated on the throne

This is the same "one" as in Revelation 4:2-3.

a scroll written on the front and on the back

"a scroll with writing on the front and the back"

sealed with seven seals

"and it had seven seals keeping it closed"

Revelation 5:2

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?

The person would need to break the seals in order to open the scroll. Alternate translation: "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?

This can be translated as a command: "The one who is worthy to do this should come to break the seals and open the scroll!"

Revelation 5:3

in heaven or on the earth or under the earth

This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. Alternate translation: "anywhere in heaven or on the earth or under the earth"

Revelation 5:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 5:5

Look

"Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

The Lion of the tribe of Judah

This is a title for the man from the tribe of Judah that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "The one who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah" or "The king who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah"

The Lion

The king is spoken of as if he were a lion because a lion is very strong.

the Root of David

This is a title for the descendant of David that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "the one who is called the Root of David"

the Root of David

The descendant is spoken of as if David's family were a tree and he were a root of that tree. Alternate translation: "the Descendant of David"

Revelation 5:6

General Information:

The Lamb appears in the throne room.

a Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ.

seven spirits of God

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:4.

sent out into all the earth

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "which God sent out over all the earth"

Revelation 5:7

He went

He approached the throne. Some languages would use the verb "come." Alternate translation: "He came"

Revelation 5:8

the Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

fell down

"lay down on the ground." Their faces were toward the ground to show that they were worshiping the Lamb. They did this on purpose; they did not fall accidentally.

Each of them

Possible meanings are 1) "each of the elders and living creatures" or 2) "each of the elders."

a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of God's holy people

The incense here is a symbol for the believers' prayers to God.

Revelation 5:9

For you were slaughtered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For they slaughtered you" or "For people killed you"

slaughtered

If your language has a word for killing an animal for a sacrifice, consider using it here.

with your blood

Since blood represents a person's life, losing the blood represents dying. This probably means "by your death" or "by dying."

you purchased people for God

"you bought people so that they could belong to God" or "you paid the price so that people could belong to God"

from every tribe, language, people, and nation

This means that people from every ethnic group are included.

Revelation 5:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 5:11

ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands

Use an expression in your language that shows that it is a huge number. Alternate translation: "millions" or "too many thousands to count"

Revelation 5:12

Worthy is the Lamb, who has been slaughtered

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"The Lamb, who has been slaughtered, is worthy"
to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise
These are all things that the Lamb has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns. See how you translated a similar sentence in [Revelation 4:11]
Revelation 5:13
in heaven and on the earth and under the earth
This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:3]
To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be
"May he who sits on the throne and the Lamb have"
Revelation 5:14
General Information:
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Chapter 6

Revelation 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author describes what happened after the Lamb opens each of the first six seals. The Lamb does not open the seventh seal until Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven Seals

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, the Lamb opens the seals.

The Four Horsemen

As the Lamb opens each of the first four seals, the author describes horsemen riding different colored horses. The colors of the horses seem to symbolize how the rider will affect the earth.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus.

Similes

In verses 12-14, the author uses several similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things.

Links:

Revelation 6:1 Notes

Revelation 6:1
Connecting Statement:
John continues to describe the events that happened before the throne of God. The Lamb begins to open the seals on the scroll.
Come!
This is a command to one person, apparently the rider of the white horse who is spoken of in verse 2.
Revelation 6:2
he was given a crown
This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "he received a crown" or "God gave him a crown"
a crown
Crowns were wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves and were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads. The crown given to rider may have been hammered out in gold in the likeness of wreaths of olives branches or laurel leaves.
Revelation 6:3
the second seal
"the next seal" or "seal number two"
the second living creature
"the next living creature" or "living creature number two"
Revelation 6:4
came out—fiery red
This can the stated as a second sentence. Alternate translation: "came out. It was red like fire" or "came out. It was bright red"
To its rider was given permission
This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God gave permission to its rider" or "Its rider received person"
This rider was given a huge sword
This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "This rider received a huge sword" or "God gave this rider a huge sword"
a huge sword
"a very large sword" or "a great sword"
Revelation 6:5
the third seal
"the next seal" or "seal number three"
the third living creature
"the next living creature" or "living creature number three"
a pair of scales
a tool used for weighing things
Revelation 6:6
A choenix of wheat for one denarius

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Some languages might want a verb such as "cost" or "buy" in the sentence. There was very little wheat for all the people, so its price was very high. Alternate translation: "A choenix of wheat now costs one denarius" or "Buy a choenix of wheat with one denarius"

A choenix of wheat ... three choenices of barley

A "choenix" was a specific measure that was about one liter. The plural of "choenix" is "choenices." Alternate translation: "One liter of wheat ... three liters of barley" or "One bowl of wheat ... three bowls of barley"

one denarius

This coin was worth a day's wages. Alternate translation: "one silver coin" or "the pay for one day of work"

But do not harm the oil and the wine

If the oil and wine were harmed, there would be less of them for people to buy, and their prices would go up.

the oil and the wine

These expressions probably stand for the olive oil harvest and the grape harvest.

Revelation 6:7

the fourth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number four"

the fourth living creature

"the next living creature" or "living creature number four"

Revelation 6:8

pale horse

"grey horse." This is the color of a dead body, so its color is a symbol of death.

one-fourth of the earth

Here "the earth" represents the people of the earth. Alternate translation: "one-fourth of the people on the earth"

the sword

A sword is a weapon, and here it represents war.

with the wild animals of the earth

This means that Death and Hades would cause the wild animals to attack and kill people.

Revelation 6:9

the fifth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number five"

under the altar

This may have been "at the base of the altar."

those who had been killed

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "those whom others had killed"

because of the word of God and the testimony which they held

Here "word of God" is a metonym for the message from God and "held" is a metaphor. Possible meanings are 1) holding the testimony refers to believing God's word and testimony. Alternate translation: "because of the teachings of scripture and what they taught about Jesus Christ" or "because they believed the word of God, which is his testimony" or 2) holding the testimony refers to testifying about the word of God. Alternate translation: "because they testified about the word of God"

Revelation 6:10

avenge our blood

The word blood here represents their deaths. Alternate translation: "punish those who killed us"

Revelation 6:11

Then each of them was given a white robe

Either God or an angel gave them a white robe. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then each of them received a white robe"

they were told

Either God or an angel is speaking. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God told them" or "an angel told them"

until the full number of their fellow servants and their brothers who were to be killed, just as they had been killed, was made complete

Here "servants" and "brothers" refer to the same group. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until enemies have killed all of Christ's servants whom God had determined would die, just as those under the altar had died"

brothers

Christians are often spoken of as being one another's brothers. Females were among those spoken of here. Alternate translation: "fellow Christians" or "fellow believers"

Revelation 6:12

the sixth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number six"

as black as sackcloth

Sometimes sackcloth was made of black hair. People would wear sackcloth when they were mourning. The image of sackcloth is meant to lead people to think of death and mourning. Alternate translation: "as black as mourning clothes"

like blood

The image of blood is meant to lead people to think of death. How it was like blood can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "red like blood"

Revelation 6:13

just as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a stormy wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: ""just as figs do when a stormy wind shakes a fig tree and causes it to drop its unripe figs"

Revelation 6:14

The sky vanished like a scroll that was being rolled up

The sky was normally thought of as being as strong as a sheet of metal, but now it had become as weak as a sheet of paper and was easily torn and rolled up.

Revelation 6:15

the commanders

soldiers who command warriors during battle

caves

large holes in the sides of hills

Revelation 6:16

the face of the one

Here "face" represents "presence." Alternate translation: "the presence of the one" or "the one"

Revelation 6:17

the great day of their wrath has come

The day of their wrath refers to the time when they would punish wicked people. Alternate translation: "this is the terrible time when they will punish people"

has come

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Existing now is spoken of as having come.

their wrath

"Their" refers to the one on the throne and the Lamb.

Who is able to stand?

Surviving, or staying alive, is spoken of as if it were standing. This question is used to express great sadness and fear that no one will be able to survive when God punishes him. Alternate translation: "No one can survive."

Chapter 7

Revelation 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Scholars have interpreted parts of this chapter in many different ways. Translators do not need to fully understand what this chapter means to accurately translate its contents.

It is important to accurately translate the large numbers in this chapter. The number 144,000 is twelve times twelve thousand.

Translators should be aware that the tribes of the people of Israel are not listed in this chapter the same as they are generally listed in the Old Testament.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 5-8 and 15-17.

Special concepts in this chapter

Worship

God saves his people and keeps them through times of trouble. His people respond by worshipping him. (See: worship)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus.

Links:

Revelation 7:1 Notes

Revelation 7:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of 144,000 servants of God who become marked with seals. Their marking takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal.

the four corners of the earth

The earth is spoken of as if it were flat and square like a sheet of paper. The phrase "the four corners" refers to the north, south, east, and west.

Revelation 7:2

the seal of the living God

The word "seal" here refers to a tool that is used to press a mark onto a wax seal. In this case the tool would be used to put a mark on God's people. Alternate translation: "the marker of the living God" or "the stamp of the living God"

Revelation 7:3

put a seal on the foreheads

The word "seal" here refers to a mark. This mark shows that the people belong to God and that he will protect them. Alternate translation: "put a mark on the foreheads"

foreheads

The forehead is the top of the face, above the eyes.

Revelation 7:4

those who were sealed

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "those whom God's angel marked"

144,000

"one hundred forty-four thousand people"

Revelation 7:5

twelve thousand from the tribe

"12,000 people from the tribe"

twelve thousand from ... Judah were sealed

This can be translated in active form. See how you translated similar words in [Revelation 7:4]

Revelation 7:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 7:7

Connecting Statement:

This continues the list of the people of Israel who were sealed.

Revelation 7:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 7:9

General Information:

John begins to describe a second vision about a multitude praising God. This vision also takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal.

a huge multitude

"a huge crowd" or "a great number of people"

white robes

Here the color "white" represents purity.

Revelation 7:10

Salvation belongs to

"Salvation comes from"

Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

They were praising God and the Lamb. The noun "salvation" can be expressed with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "Our God, who sits on the throne, and the Lamb

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have saved us!"
Revelation 7:11
the four living creatures
These are the four creatures mentioned in Revelation 4:6-8.
they fell on their faces
Here "fell on their faces" is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated "prostrated themselves" in [Revelation 4:10]
Revelation 7:12
Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and strength be to our God
"Our God is worthy of all praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power and strength" or "We must give praise, glory, thanks, and honor to our God"
forever and ever
These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the praise will never end.
Revelation 7:13
these, clothed with white robes
The white robes showed that these people were righteous.
Revelation 7:14
have come out of the great tribulation
"have survived the great tribulation" or "have lived through the great tribulation"
the great tribulation
"the time of terrible suffering"
They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb
People who have been made righteous by the blood of the Lamb are spoken of as if they have washed their robes in his blood. Alternate translation: "They have been made righteous by washing their robes white in his blood"
the blood of the Lamb
The word "blood" is used to refer to the death of Lamb.
Revelation 7:15
Connecting Statement:
The elder continues to speak to John.
they ... them
These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation.
day and night
These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping"
will spread his tent over them
"will put his tent up over them." Protecting them is spoken of as if it were giving them shelter to live under. Alternate translation: "will shelter them" or "will protect them"
Revelation 7:16
They ... them
These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation.
The sun will not beat down
The sun's heat no longer causing people to suffer is spoken of as if the sun would not beat down on them. Alternate translation: "The sun will not burn them" or "The sun will not make them weak"
Revelation 7:17
them ... them ... their
These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation.
the Lamb at the center of the throne will
"the Lamb, who is standing in the middle of the area around the throne, will be"
For the Lamb ... will shepherd them
The elder speaks of the Lamb's care for his people as if it were a shepherd's care for his sheep. Alternate translation: "For the Lamb ... will be like a shepherd to them" or "For the Lamb ... will care for them as a person cares for his animals"
he will guide them to springs of living water
The elder speaks of what gives life as if it were springs of fresh water. Alternate translation: "he will guide them like a shepherd guiding his sheep to fresh water" or "he will guide them to life like a shepherd guiding his sheep to living water"
God will wipe away every tear from their eyes
Tears here represent sadness. Alternate translation: "God will wipe away their sadness, like wiping away tears" or "God will cause them to not be sad anymore"

Chapter 8

Revelation 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven seals and seven trumpets

This chapter begins to show what happens when the Lamb opens the seventh seal. God uses the prayers of all believers to cause dramatic things to happen on earth. John then describes what happens when angels sound the first four of seven trumpets.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

In verses 8 and 10, John uses similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things.

Links:

Revelation 8:1 Notes

Revelation 8:1
Connecting Statement:
The Lamb opens the seventh seal.
the seventh seal

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This is the last of the seven seals on the scroll. Alternate translation: "the next seal" or "the final seal" or "seal number seven"

Revelation 8:2

seven trumpets were given to them

They were each given one trumpet. This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God gave them seven trumpets" or 2) "the Lamb gave them seven trumpets"

Revelation 8:3

he would offer it

"he would offer the incense to God by burning it"

Revelation 8:4

the angel's hand

This refers to the bowl in the angel's hand. Alternate translation: "the bowl in the angel's hand"

Revelation 8:5

filled it with fire

The word "fire" here probably refers to burning coals. Alternate translation: "filled it with burning coals" or "filled it with coals of fire"

Revelation 8:6

General Information:

The seven angels sound the seven trumpets, one at a time.

Revelation 8:7

It was thrown down onto the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The angel threw the hail and fire mixed with blood down onto the earth"

a third of it was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it burned up a third of the earth, a third of the trees, and all the green grass"

a third

"A third" is a fraction.

Revelation 8:8

The second angel

"The next angel" or "Angel number two"

something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angel threw something like a great mountain burning with fire"

A third

"A third" is a fraction.

became blood

Possible meanings are it 1) "became red like blood" or it 2) really became blood.

Revelation 8:9

the living creatures in the sea

"the things living in the sea" or "the fish and other animals that lived in the sea"

Revelation 8:10

a huge star fell from the sky, blazing like a torch

"a huge star that was blazing like a torch fell from the sky." The fire of the huge star looked similar to the fire of a torch.

torch

a stick with one end lit on fire to provide light

Revelation 8:11

The name of the star is Wormwood

Wormwood is a shrub that tastes bitter. People made medicine out of it, but they also believed that it was poisonous. Alternate translation: "The name of the star is Bitterness" or "The name of the star is Bitter Medicine"

became wormwood

The bitter taste of the water is spoken of as if it were wormwood. Alternate translation: "became bitter like wormwood" or "became bitter"

died from the waters that became bitter

"died when they drank the bitter water"

Revelation 8:12

a third of the sun was struck

Causing something bad to happen to the sun is spoken of as striking, or hitting, it. This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "a third of the sun changed" or "God changed a third of the sun"

a third of them turned dark

Possible meanings are 1) "one third of the time they were dark" or 2) "one third of the sun, one third of the moon, and one third of the stars became dark"

a third of the day and a third of the night had no light

"there was no light during one third of the day and one third of the night" or "they did not shine during one third of the day and one third of the night"

Revelation 8:13

because of the remaining trumpet blasts that are about to be sounded by the three angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the three angels who have not yet sounded their trumpets are about to sound them"

Chapter 9

Revelation 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, John continues to describe what happens when angels sound seven trumpets.

Woe

John describes several "woes" in the Book of Revelation. This chapter begins to describe three "woes" announced at the end of Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Animal imagery

This chapter includes several animals: locusts, scorpions, horses, lions, and snakes. These animals represent different qualities or traits. For example, a lion is powerful and dangerous. Translators should use the same animals in their translation if possible. If the animal is unknown, one with similar qualities or traits should be used.

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Bottomless pit
This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: hell)
Abaddon and Apollyon
"Abaddon" is a Hebrew word. "Apollyon" is a Greek word. Both words mean "Destroyer." John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. The ULB and UDB write the sounds of both words with English letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate these words using the letters of the target language. The original Greek readers would have understood "Apollyon" to mean "Destroyer." So translators may also supply what it means in the text or in a footnote.
Repentance
Despite great signs, people are described as not repenting and so remain in their sin. People refusing to repent are also mentioned in Chapter 16. (See: repent and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile
John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision.

Links:

Revelation 9:1 Notes

Revelation 9:1
Connecting Statement:
The fifth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.
I saw a star from heaven that had fallen
John saw the star after it had fallen. He did not watch if fall.
the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit
"the key that unlocks the shaft of the bottomless pit"
the shaft of the bottomless pit
Possible meanings are 1) "shaft" is another way of referring to the pit and describes it as long and narrow, or 2) "shaft" refers to the opening of the pit.
the bottomless pit
This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom.
Revelation 9:2
like smoke from a huge furnace
A huge furnace gives off a great amount of thick, dark smoke. Alternate translation: "like the great amount of smoke that comes from a huge furnace"
turned dark
"became dark"
Revelation 9:3
locusts
insects that fly together in large groups. People fear them because they can eat up all the leaves in gardens and on trees.
power like that of scorpions
Scorpions have the ability to sting and poison other animals and people. Alternate translation: "the ability to sting people as scorpions do"
scorpions
small insects with poisonous stingers on their tails. Their sting is extremely painful and the pain lasts a long time.
Revelation 9:4
They were told not to damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or tree
Ordinary locusts were a terrible threat to people because when they swarm, they can eat up all the grass and all the leaves on plants and trees. These locusts were told not to do this.
but only the people
The phrase "to damage" or "to harm" is understood. Alternate translation: "but only to harm the people"
the seal of God
The word "seal" refers a mark that would be left by a tool being pressed into a a wax seal. In this case it refers to mark that God would place upon the foreheads of his people. The people who do not have this mark do not belong to God. See how you translated "seal" in [Revelation 7:3]
foreheads
The forehead is the top of the face, above the eyes.
Revelation 9:5
They were not given permission
"They" refers to the locusts. (Revelation 9:3)
those people
the people whom the locusts were stinging
but only to torture them
Here the words "given permission" are understood. Alternate translation: "but only given permission to torture them"
to torture them for five months
The locusts would be allowed to do this for five months.
to torture them
"to make them suffer terrible pain"
the sting of a scorpion
A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death.
Revelation 9:6
people will seek death but will not find it
This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "death." Alternate translation: "people will try to find a way to die but will not find it" or "people will try to kill themselves but will not find a way to die"
will greatly desire to die
"will want very much to die" or "will wish that they could die"

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death will flee from them
John speaks of death as if it were a person or animal that could run away. Alternate translation: "they will not be able to die" or "they will not die"
Revelation 9:7
General Information:
These locusts did not look like ordinary locusts. John describes them by telling how parts of them looked like other things.
crowns of gold
These were likenesses of wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Examples actually made of leaves were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.
Revelation 9:8
General Information:
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Revelation 9:9
General Information:
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Revelation 9:10
They had tails
The word "They" refers to the locusts.
with stingers like scorpions
A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. Its sting can cause severe pain or even death. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 9:3]
in their tails they had power to harm people for five months
Possible meanings are 1) they had power for five months to harm people or 2) they could sting people and the people would be in pain for five months.
Revelation 9:11
the bottomless pit
This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.
Abaddon ... Apollyon
Both names mean "Destroyer."
Revelation 9:12
there are still two disasters to come
Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.
Revelation 9:13
Connecting Statement:
The sixth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.
I heard a voice coming
The voice refers to the one who was speaking. John does not say who the speaker was, but it may have been God. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking"
horns of the golden altar
These are horn-shaped extensions at each of the four corners of the top of the altar.
Revelation 9:14
the four angels who had been bound
This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "the four angels whom God had commanded someone to bind" or "the four angels whom God bound"
Revelation 9:15
The four angels who had been prepared for ... that year were released
This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "The angel released the four angels who had been prepared for ... that year"
The four angels who had been prepared
This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "The four angels whom God had prepared"
for that hour, that day, that month, and that year
These words are used to show that the time to release the angels is a specific, chosen time and not just any time. Alternate translation: "for that exact time"
Revelation 9:16
General Information:
Suddenly, 200,000,000 soldiers on horseback appear in John's vision. John is no longer speaking about the four angels mentioned in the previous verse.
200,000,000
Some ways to express this are: "two hundred million" or "two hundred thousand thousand" or "twenty thousand times ten thousand." If your language does not have a specific number for this, you could also see how you translated a similar large number in [Revelation 5:11]
Revelation 9:17
fiery red
"red like fire" or "bright red." See how you translated this in Revelation 6:3.
out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur
"fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths"
Revelation 9:18
Connecting Statement:
John continues to describe the horses and the plagues brought upon humanity.
A third of the people
"One third of the people." See how you translated "A third" in [Revelation 8:7]
Revelation 9:19
General Information:
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Revelation 9:20
those who were not killed by these plagues
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the plagues had not killed"
the works of their hands
The word "hand" here is a metonym for the person whose hands they are. Alternate translation: "the deeds they had done"
things that cannot see, hear, or walk
This phrase reminds us that idols are not alive and do not deserve to be worshiped. But the people did not stop worshiping them. Alternate translation: "even though idols cannot see, hear, or walk"
Revelation 9:21
General Information:
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Chapter 10

Revelation 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven thunders

John here describes the seven thunders as making sounds that he could understand as words. However, translators should use their normal word for "thunder" when translating these verses.

"The mystery of God"

This refers to some aspect of the hidden plan of God. It is not necessary to know what this mystery is to translate it. (See: reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

John uses similes to help him describe the face, legs, and voice of the mighty angel. Translators should understand other objects in this chapter, such as the rainbow and the cloud, with their normal meanings.

Links:

Revelation 10:1 Notes

Revelation 10:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of a mighty angel holding a scroll. In John's vision he is viewing what is happening from earth. This takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

He was clothed in a cloud

John speaks of the angel as if he were wearing a cloud as his clothing. This expression may be understood as metaphor. However, because very unusual things were often seen in visions, it might be understood as a literally true statement in its context.

His face was like the sun

John compares the brightness of his face with the brightness of the sun. Alternate translation: "His face was bright like the sun"

his feet were like pillars of fire

The word "feet" here refers to the legs. Alternate translation: "his legs were like pillars of fire"

Revelation 10:2

He put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land

"He stood with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land"

Revelation 10:3

Then he shouted

"Then the angel shouted"

the seven thunders spoke out

The thunder is described as if it were a person who could speak. Alternate translation: "the seven thunders made a loud noise" or "the thunder sounded very loudly seven times"

seven thunders

Thunder occurring seven times is spoken of as if it were seven different "thunders."

Revelation 10:4

but I heard a voice from heaven

The word "voice" refers to words spoken by someone other than the angel. Alternate translation: "but I heard someone speaking from heaven"

Seal up

People in John's day would write a message on a scroll and then seal the scroll so that only the person whom the writers wanted to open it were able to open it. This is a metaphor for keeping something secret. Alternate translation: "Keep secret"

Revelation 10:5

raised his right hand to heaven

He did this to show that he was swearing by God.

Revelation 10:6

He swore by the one who lives forever and ever

"He asked that what he was going to say would be confirmed by the one who lives forever and ever"

the one who lives forever and ever

Here "the one" refers to God.

There will be no more delay

"There will be no more waiting" or "God will not delay"

Revelation 10:7

the mystery of God will be accomplished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will accomplish his mystery" or "God will complete his secret plan"

Revelation 10:8

Connecting Statement:

John hears the voice from heaven, which he had heard in Revelation 10:4, speak to him again.

The voice I heard from heaven

The word "voice" refers to the speaker. Alternate translation: "The one I heard speak from heaven" or "The one who had spoken to me from heaven"

I heard

John heard

Revelation 10:9

He said to me

"The angel said to me"

make ... bitter

"make ... sour" or "make ... acid." This refers to a bad taste from the stomach after eating something that is not good.

Revelation 10:10

General Information:

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Revelation 10:11
languages
This refers to the people who speak the languages.
Alternate translation: "language communities" or "groups of people who speak their own languages"

Chapter 11

Revelation 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 15 and 17-18.

Woe

John describes several "woes" in the book of Revelation. This chapter describes a second and third "woe" announced at the end of Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gentiles

The word "Gentiles" here refers to ungodly people groups and not Gentile Christians. (See: godly)

Two witnesses

Scholars have suggested many different ideas about these two witnesses. Translators do not need to understand this passage to accurately translate it. (See: prophet)

Bottomless pit

This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: hell)

Links:

Revelation 11:1 Notes

Revelation 11:1
General Information:
John begins to describe a vision about receiving a measuring rod and about two witnesses that God appointed. This vision also takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.
A reed was given to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone gave me a reed"
given to me ... I was told
The words "me" and "I" refer to John.
those who worship in it
"count those who worship in the temple"
Revelation 11:2
trample
to treat something as worthless by walking on it
forty-two months
"42 months"
Revelation 11:3
Connecting Statement:
God continues speaking to John.
for 1,260 days
"for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" or "for twelve hundred and sixty days"
days, clothed in sackcloth
Why they will wear sackcloth can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "days, wearing rough mourning clothes" or "days. They will wear scratchy clothes to show that they are very sad"
Revelation 11:4
These witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth
The two olive trees and the two lampstands symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation: "The two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth represent these witnesses"
the two olive trees and the two lampstands that
John expects his readers to know about them because many years earlier another prophet had written about them. Alternate translation: "the two olive trees and the two lampstands, told about in scripture, that"
Revelation 11:5
fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies
Because this is about future events, it can also be stated in the future tense. Alternate translation: "fire will come out of their mouth and devour their enemies"
fire comes ... and devours their enemies
Fire burning and killing people is spoken of as if it were an animal that could eat them up. Alternate translation: "fire will come ... and destroy their enemies" or "fire will come ... and completely burn up their enemies"
Revelation 11:6
to close up the sky so that no rain will fall
John speaks of the sky as if it had a door that can be opened to let rain fall or closed to stop the rain. Alternate translation: "to keep rain from falling from the sky"
the days that they prophesy
"the time that they prophesy." The word "days" here can refer to weeks, months, or years.
to turn
"to change"
to strike the earth with every kind of plague
John speaks of the plagues as if they were a stick that someone could hit the earth with. Alternate translation: "to cause all kinds of trouble to occur on earth"

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Revelation 11:7
bottomless pit
This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.
Revelation 11:8
Their bodies
This refers to the bodies of the two witnesses.
in the street of the great city
The city had more than one street. This was a public place where people could see them. Alternate translation: "in one of the streets of the great city" or "in the main street of the great city"
their Lord
They served the Lord, and, like him, would die in that city.
Revelation 11:9
three and a half days
"3 full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3 1/2 days"
They will not permit them to be placed in a tomb
This will be a sign of disrespect.
Revelation 11:10
will rejoice over them and celebrate
"will rejoice that the two witnesses have died"
even send gifts to one another
This action shows how happy the people were.
because these two prophets tormented those who lived on the earth
This is the reason that the people will be so happy that the witnesses have died.
Revelation 11:11
three and a half days
"3 full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3 1/2 days." See how you translated this in [Revelation 11:9]
a breath of life from God will enter them
The ability to breathe is spoken of as if it were something that can go into people. Alternate translation: "God will cause the two witnesses to breathe again and live"
Great fear will fall on those who see them
Fear is spoken of as if it is a object that can fall on people. Alternate translation: "Those who see them will be extremely afraid"
Revelation 11:12
Then they will hear
Possible meanings are 1) the two witnesses will hear or 2) the people will hear what is said to the two witnesses.
a loud voice from heaven
The word "voice" refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly to them from heaven and"
say to them
"say to the two witnesses"
Revelation 11:13
Seven thousand people
"7,000 people"
the survivors
"those who do not die" or "those who are still living"
give glory to the God of heaven
"say that the God of heaven is glorious"
Revelation 11:14
The second woe is past
"The second terrible event is over." See how you translated "The first woe is past" in Revelation 9:12.
The third woe is coming quickly
Existing in the future is spoken of as coming. Alternate translation: "The third woe will happen soon"
Revelation 11:15
Connecting Statement:
The last of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.
the seventh angel
This is the last of the seven angels. See how you translated "seventh" in [Revelation 8.1]
loud voices spoke in heaven and said
The phrase "loud voices" represents speakers who spoke loudly. Alternate translation: "speakers in heaven spoke loudly and said"
The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ
Here "kingdom" refers to the authority to rule the world. Alternate translation: "The authority to rule the world now belongs to our Lord and his Christ" or "Our Lord and his Christ are now the rulers of the world"
the world
This refers to everyone in the world. Alternate translation: "everyone in the world"
Revelation 11:16
twenty-four elders
"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]
fell upon their faces
This is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated "prostrated themselves" in [Revelation 4:10]
Revelation 11:17
you, Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was
These phrases can be stated as sentences. Alternate translation: "you, Lord God, the ruler over all. You are the one who is, and you are the one who was"
the one who is
"the one who exists" or "the one who lives"
who was
"who has always existed" or "who has always lived"
you have taken your great power
What God did with his great power can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "you have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you"
Revelation 11:18
General Information:
The words "you" and "your" refer to God.
Connecting Statement:
The twenty-four elders continue praising God.
were enraged
"were extremely angry"
your wrath has come
Existing in the present is spoken of as having come. Alternate translation: "You are ready to show your anger"
The time has come
Existing in the present is spoken of as having come. Alternate translation: "The time is right" or "Now is the time"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

for the dead to be judged
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to judge the dead"
the dead
This nominal adjective can be stated as a verb or adjective. Alternate translation: "Those who have died" or "the dead people"
the prophets, those who are believers, and those who feared your name
This list explains what "your servants" means. These were not three completely different groups of people. The prophets also were believers and feared God's name. "Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "the prophets, those who are believers, and those who fear you" or "the prophets and the others who are believers and fear your name"

Revelation 11:19
Then God's temple in heaven was opened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone opened God's temple in heaven"
the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I saw the ark of his covenant in his temple"
flashes of lightning
Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.
rumblings, crashes of thunder
These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

Chapter 12

Revelation 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 10-12.

Special concepts in this chapter

Serpent

The Book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. For example, John refers to Satan as the serpent. This image comes from the account of the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"A great sign was seen in heaven"

By using the passive voice here, John does not say who saw this great sign in heaven. The translation may be difficult when the subject is unclear, if your language does not have a passive voice. Many English translations use the past tense here and say "A great sign appeared in heaven."

Links:

Revelation 12:1 Notes

Revelation 12:1
General Information:
John begins to describe a woman who appears in his vision.
A great sign was seen in heaven
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A great sign appeared in heaven" or "I, John, saw a great sign in heaven"
a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a woman who was wearing the sun and had the moon under her feet"
a crown of twelve stars
This was apparently a likeness of a wreath made of laurel leaves or olive branches, but with twelve stars included in it.
twelve stars
"12 stars"
Revelation 12:2
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 12:3
Connecting Statement:
John describes a dragon that appears in his vision.
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos.
Revelation 12:4
His tail swept away a third of the stars
"With his tail he swept away a third of the stars"
a third
"one third." See how you translated this in [Revelation 8:7]
Revelation 12:5
rule all the nations with an iron rod
Ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling with an iron rod. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:27]
Her child was snatched away to God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God quickly took her child to himself"
Revelation 12:6
for 1,260 days
"for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" or "for twelve hundred and sixty days"
Revelation 12:7
Now
John uses this word to mark a shift in his account to introduce something else happening in his vision.

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dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]
Revelation 12:8
So there was no longer any place in heaven for him and his angels
"So the dragon and his angels could no longer stay in heaven"
Revelation 12:9
dragon—that old serpent called the Devil or Satan, who deceives the whole world—was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him
The information about the serpent can be given in a separate sentence after the statement that it was thrown down to the earth. Alternate translation: "dragon was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. He is the old serpent who deceives the world and is called the Devil or Satan"
The great dragon ... was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw the great dragon ... and his angels out of heaven and sent them to the earth"
Revelation 12:10
I
The word "I" refers to John.
I heard a loud voice in heaven
The word "voice" refers to someone who speaks. Alternate translation: "I heard someone saying loudly from heaven"
Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ
God saving people by his power is spoken of as if his salvation and power were things that have come. God's ruling and Christ's authority are also spoken of as if they have come. Alternate translation: "Now God has saved his people by his power, God rules as king, and his Christ has all authority"
have come
"have begun to really exist" or "have appeared" or "have become real." God is revealing these things because their time to occur has "come." It is not that they did not exist before.
the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down
This is the dragon that was thrown down in Revelation 12:9.
our brothers
Fellow believers are spoken of as if they were brothers. Alternate translation: "our fellow believers"
day and night
These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping"
Revelation 12:11
Connecting Statement:
The loud voice from heaven continues to speak.
They conquered him
"They conquered the accuser"
by the blood of the Lamb
The blood refers to his death. Alternate translation: "because the lamb had shed his blood and died for them"
by the word of their testimony
The word "testimony" can be expressed with the verb "testify." Also, whom they testified about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified to others about Jesus"
even to death
The believers told the truth about Jesus, even though they knew that their enemies might try to kill them because of it. Alternate translation: "but kept testifying even though they knew that doing so might cause their death"
Revelation 12:12
He is filled with terrible anger
The devil is spoken of as if he were a container, and anger is spoken of as if it were a liquid that could be in him. Alternate translation: "He is terribly angry"
Revelation 12:13
the dragon realized he had been thrown down to the earth
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the dragon realized that God had thrown him out of heaven and sent him to earth"
he pursued the woman
"he chased after the woman"
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]
Revelation 12:14
the serpent's presence
This is another way of referring to the dragon. Alternate translation: "the dragon's presence"
Revelation 12:15
serpent
This is the same being as the dragon mentioned earlier in Revelation 12:9.
poured water out of his mouth like a river so that
The water flowed from his mouth like a river flows. Alternate translation: "poured a very large amount of water out of his mouth so that"
river so that he might make a flood to sweep
"river; he was trying to make a flood that would sweep"
to sweep her away
"to wash her away"
Revelation 12:16
The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon was pouring out of his mouth
The earth is spoken of as if it were a living thing, and a hole in the earth is spoken of as if it were a mouth that could drink up the water. Alternate translation: "A hole in the ground opened up and the water went down into the hole"
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]
Revelation 12:17
hold to the testimony about Jesus
The word "testimony" can be translated as a verb. Alternate

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

translation: "continue to testify about Jesus"
Revelation 12:18

General Information:
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Chapter 13

Revelation 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 10, which is from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Unknown animals

John uses different animals to try to describe what he saw. Some of these animals may not be known in the target language.

Links:

Revelation 13:1 Notes

Revelation 13:1

General Information:
John begins to describe a beast who appears in his vision. The word "I" here refers to John.

Revelation 13:2

dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

The dragon gave it his power
The dragon made the beast as powerful as he was. He did not lose his power, however, by giving it to the beast.

his power ... his throne, and his great authority to rule
These are three ways of referring to his authority, and together they emphasize that the authority was great.

his throne
The word "throne" here refers to the dragon's authority to rule as king. Alternate translation: "his royal authority" or "his authority to rule as king"

Revelation 13:3

but that fatal wound had been healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but that fatal wound had healed"

fatal wound
"deadly wound"

The whole earth
The word "earth" refers to the people on it. Alternate translation: "All the people on the earth"

followed the beast
"obeyed the beast"

Revelation 13:4

dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

he had given his authority to the beast
"he had caused the beast to have as much authority as he had"

Who is like the beast?
This question shows how amazed they were about the beast. Alternate translation: "No one is as powerful as the beast!"

Who can fight against it?
This question shows how much the people feared the power of the beast. Alternate translation: "No one could ever fight against the beast and win!"

Revelation 13:5

The beast was given ... It was permitted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave the beast ... God permitted the beast"

The beast was given a mouth that could speak
Being given a mouth refers to being allowed to speak. Alternate translation: "The beast was allowed to speak"

forty-two months
"42 months"

Revelation 13:6

to speak blasphemies against God
"to say disrespectful things about God"

blaspheming his name and his tabernacle, those who live in heaven
The words "those who live in heaven" describe "his tabernacle." John is speaking as though God's people were a tabernacle in which God dwells. Alternate translation: "blaspheming his name and those who live in heaven, who are like a tabernacle for him"

blaspheming his name
God's name is a metonym for God himself. Alternate translation: "blaspheming God"

his name and his tabernacle, those who live in heaven
Some modern translations read, "his name, his tabernacle, and those who live in heaven."

Revelation 13:7

authority was given to it
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave authority to the beast"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

every tribe, people, language, and nation
This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in Revelation 5:9.
Revelation 13:8
will worship it
"will worship the beast"
everyone whose name was not written ... in the Book of Life
This phrase clarifies who on the earth will worship the beast. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whose names the Lamb did not write ... in The Book of Life" or "those whose names were not ... in the Book of Life"
from the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "from the time that God created the world"
the Lamb
A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]
who had been slaughtered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the people slaughtered"
Revelation 13:9
General Information:
These verses are a break from John's account of his vision. Here he give a warning to the people reading his account.
If anyone has an ear, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he is about to say is important. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
If anyone ... let him hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Revelation 13:10
If anyone is to be taken
This expression means that someone has decided who should be taken. If needed, translators may state clearly who decided it. Alternate translation: "If God has decided that someone should be taken" or "If it is God's will that someone should be taken"
If anyone is to be taken into captivity
This can be stated in active form. The noun "captivity" can be stated with the verb "capture." Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to capture a certain person"
into captivity he will go
The noun "captivity" can be stated with the verb "capture." Alternate translation: "he will be captured" or "the enemy will capture him"
If anyone is to be killed with the sword
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to kill a certain person with a sword"
with the sword
The sword represents war. Alternate translation: "in war"
he will be killed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy will kill him"
Here is a call for the patient endurance and faith of God's holy people
"God's holy people must endure patiently and be faithful"
Revelation 13:11
Connecting Statement:
John begins to describe another beast who appears in his vision.
it spoke like a dragon
Harsh speech is spoken of as if it were the roar of a dragon. Alternate translation: "it spoke harshly like a dragon speaks"
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]
Revelation 13:12
the earth and those who live on it
"everyone on the earth"
the one whose lethal wound had been healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who had a lethal wound that healed"
lethal wound
"deadly wound." This was an injury that was serious enough that it could have made him die.
Revelation 13:13
He performed
"The beast from the earth performed"
Revelation 13:14
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 13:15
He was permitted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God permitted the beast from the earth"
to give breath to the beast's image
Here the word "breath" represents life. Alternate translation: "to give life to the beast's image"
the beast's image
This is the image of the first beast that had been mentioned.
cause all who refused to worship the beast to be killed
"put to death anyone who refused to worship the first beast"
Revelation 13:16
He also forced everyone
"The beast from the earth also forced everyone"
Revelation 13:17
It was impossible for anyone to buy or sell unless he had the mark of the beast
"People could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast." The implicit information that the beast from the earth commanded it can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "He commanded that people could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast"
the mark of the beast
This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast.
Revelation 13:18

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

General Information:
This verse is a break from John's account of his vision. Here he gives another warning to the people reading his account.
This calls for wisdom
"Wisdom is needed" or "You need to be wise about this"
If anyone has insight
The word "insight" can be translated with the verb "understand." Alternate translation: "If anyone is able to understand things"
let him calculate the number of the beast
"he should discern what the number of the beast means" or "he should figure out what the number of the beast means"
is the number of a human being
Possible meanings are 1) the number represents one person or 2) the number represents all of humanity.

Chapter 14

Revelation 14 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to gather ripe food from plants. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about him so those people can be part of God's kingdom. This chapter uses the metaphor of two harvests. Jesus gathers in his people from the whole earth. Then an angel gathers in wicked people whom God will punish. (See: and harvest and faith)

Links:

Revelation 14:1 Notes

Revelation 14:1
General Information:
The word "I" refers to John.
Connecting Statement:
John begins to describe the next part of his vision. There are 144,000 believers standing before the Lamb.
Lamb
A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]
144,000
"one hundred forty-four thousand." See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4]
who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on whose foreheads the Lamb and his Father had written their names"
his Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
Revelation 14:2
a voice from heaven
"a sound from heaven"
Revelation 14:3
They sang a new song
"The 144,000 people sang a new song." This explains what the sound was that John heard. Alternate translation: "That sound was a new song that they sang"
the four living creatures
"the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated "living creature" in Revelation 4:6
elders
This refers to the twenty-four elders around the throne. See how you translated "elders" in Revelation 4:4.
No one could learn the song except for the 144,000
This double negative emphasizes that the 144,000 were unique. Alternate translation: "The only ones who could learn the song were the 144,000"
144,000
"one hundred forty-four thousand." See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4]
Revelation 14:4
have not defiled themselves with women
Possible meanings are 1) "have never had immoral sexual relations with a woman" or 2) "have never had sexual relations with a woman." Defiling oneself with women may be a symbol of worshiping idols.
they have kept themselves sexually pure
Possible meanings are 1) "they have not had sexual relations with a woman who was not their wife" or 2) "they are virgins."
follow the Lamb wherever he goes
Doing what the Lamb does is spoken of as following him. Alternate translation: "they do whatever the Lamb does" or "they obey the Lamb"
redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits
"Firstfruits" here is a metaphor for the first offering to be made to God in celebration of harvest. Alternate translation: "purchased out of the midst of the rest of mankind as a special celebration of salvation"
Revelation 14:5
No lie was found in their mouth
Their "mouth" refers to what they said." Alternate translation: "They never lied when they spoke"
Revelation 14:6
Connecting Statement:
John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This is the first of three angels who proclaim judgment on the earth.
every nation, tribe, language, and people
This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in Revelation 5:9.
Revelation 14:7

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the hour of his judgment has come
Here "the hour" represents the time that has been chosen for something, and the hour having "come" is a metaphor for now being the chosen time. The idea of "judgment" can be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: "now is the time that God has chosen for judgment" or "it is now the time for God to judge people"
Revelation 14:8
Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great
The angel speaks of Babylon having been destroyed as if it had fallen. Alternate translation: "Babylon the great has been destroyed"
Babylon the great
"Babylon the large city" or "the important city of Babylon." This was probably a symbol for the city of Rome, which was large, wealthy, and sinful.
who persuaded
Babylon is spoken of as if it were a person, instead of a city filled with people.
to drink the wine of her immoral passion
This is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: "to be sexually immoral like her" or "to get drunk like her in sexual sin"
her immoral passion
Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods.
Revelation 14:9
with a loud voice
"loudly"
Revelation 14:10
will also drink some of the wine of God's wrath
Drinking the wine of God's wrath is a symbol for being punished by God. Alternate translation: "will also drink some of the wine that represents God's wrath"
that has been poured undiluted
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has poured full strength"
that has been poured undiluted
This means that the wine has no water mixed into it. It is strong, and a person who drinks much of it will get very drunk. As a symbol, it means that God will be extremely angry, not just a little angry.
cup of his anger
This symbolic cup holds the wine that represents God's anger.
Revelation 14:11
Connecting Statement:
The third angel continues to speak.
The smoke from their torment
The phrase "their torment" refers to the fire that torments them. Alternate translation: "The smoke from the fire that torments them"
they have no rest
"they have no relief" or "the torment does not stop"
Revelation 14:12
Here is a call for the patient endurance of God's holy people
"God's holy people must endure patiently and be faithful." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 13:10.
Revelation 14:13
the dead who die
"those who die"
who die in the Lord
"who are united with the Lord when they die." This may refer to people who are killed by their enemies. Alternate translation: "who die because they are united to the Lord"
labors
difficulties and sufferings
their deeds will follow them
These deeds are spoken of as if they were alive and able to follow those who did them. Possible meanings are 1) "others will know the good deeds these people have done" or 2) "God will reward them for their deeds"
Revelation 14:14
Connecting Statement:
John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This part is about the Son of Man harvesting the earth. Harvesting the grain is a symbol of God's judging people.
one like a son of man
This expression describes a human figure, someone who looks human. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:13]
golden crown
This was the likeness of a wreath of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Examples actually made of leaves were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.
sickle
a tool with a curved blade used for cutting grass, grain, and vines
Revelation 14:15
came out of the temple
"came out of the heavenly temple"
the time to reap has come
Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.
Revelation 14:16
the earth was reaped
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he reaped the earth"
Revelation 14:17
Connecting Statement:
John continues describing his vision about the earth being harvested.
Revelation 14:18
who had authority over the fire
Here "authority over" refers to responsibility to tend the fire.
Revelation 14:19
harvested the grapevine of the earth ... threw it
John describes the earth as a grapevine full of ripe grapes that the angel is harvesting. The grapevine is a metonym for the grapes on the vine, and the grapes are a metaphor for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: "harvested the earth as if he were a person harvesting grapes ... threw the harvest" or "took away the people of the earth as if he were a person harvesting grapes ... threw

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

them"
threw it
"threw the grapevine," a metonym for the harvest from the grapevine, or "threw the harvest from the grapevine"
the great winepress of God's wrath
"the large winepress where God will show his wrath." A winepress is a large container in which people put grapes and then crush them to get the juice out. John is saying that the angel will take the people of the earth and put them where God will punish or destroy them because he is angry with them.
Revelation 14:20
winepress
This is "the great wine vat" of Revelation 14:19.
up to the height of a horse's bridle
"as high as the bridle on a horse's head"
bridle
a device made of leather straps that goes around a horse's head and is used for directing the horse
1,600 stadia
"one thousand six hundred stadia" or "sixteen hundred stadia." A "stadium" is 185 meters. In modern measures this would be about "300 kilometers" or "200 miles."

Chapter 15

Revelation 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter John describes events and pictures that occur in heaven.
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 3-4.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Victorious over the beast"
Those who are "victorious over the beast" are spiritually victorious. While most spiritual battles cannot be seen, the Book of Revelation pictures spiritual battles as openly occurring.
"The temple having the tent of witness was open in heaven"
Scripture elsewhere indicates the earthly temple copied God's perfect dwelling place in heaven. Here John seems to refer to God's heavenly dwelling place or temple.
Songs
The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped.

Links:

Revelation 15:1 Notes

Revelation 15:1
General Information:
This verse is a summary of what will happen in 15:6-16:21.
great and marvelous
These words have similar meanings and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "something that greatly amazed me"
seven angels with seven plagues
"seven angels who had authority to send seven plagues on the earth"
which are the final plagues
"and after them, there will not be any more plagues"
for with them the wrath of God will be completed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for these plagues will complete the wrath of God"
for with them the wrath of God will be completed
Possible meanings are 1) these plagues will show all of God's anger or 2) after these plagues, God will no longer be angry.
Revelation 15:2
General Information:
Here John begins to describe his vision of the people who had been victorious over the beast and who were praising God.
sea of glass
How it was like glass or a sea can be stated clearly. Possible meanings are 1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass. Alternate translation: "a sea that was as smooth as glass" or 2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6]
who had been victorious over the beast and his image
How they were victorious can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "who had been victorious over the beast and his image by not worshiping them"
over the number representing his name
How they were victorious over the number can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "over the number representing his name by not being marked with that number"
the number representing his name
This refers to the number described in Revelation 13:18.
Revelation 15:3
They were singing
"Those who had been victorious over the beast were singing"
Revelation 15:4
Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name?
This question is used to show their amazement at how great and glorious the Lord is. It can be expressed as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Lord, everyone will

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fear you and glorify your name!"
glorify your name
The phrase "your name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "glorify you"
your righteous deeds have been revealed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you have made everyone know about your righteous deeds"
Revelation 15:5
Connecting Statement:
The seven angels with the seven plagues come out of the most holy place. They were spoken of previously in Revelation 15:1.
After these things
"After the people finished singing"
the temple of the tabernacle of witness
The words "the temple" seem to refer either literally to a solid building or metaphorically to a tent or tabernacle. Possible meanings of "tabernacle of witness" are 1) "the tabernacle" is the place where the priests had set the "witness," also called "the ark of the testimony," or 2) the "tabernacle of witness" is another name for "the ark of the testimony."
Revelation 15:6
Out of the temple
This is the "temple" spoken of in Revelation 15:5.
the seven angels holding the seven plagues
These angels were seen as holding seven plagues because in Revelation 17:7 they are given seven bowls full of the wrath of God.
linen
a fine, expensive cloth made from flax
sashes
A sash is a decorative piece of cloth worn on the upper body.
Revelation 15:7
the four living creatures
"the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated "living creatures" in Revelation 4:6
seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God
The image of the wine in the bowls can be stated clearly. The word "wrath" here refers to punishment. The wine is a symbol for punishment. Alternate translation: "seven gold bowls full of the wine that represents the wrath of God"
Revelation 15:8
until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed
"until the seven angels finished sending the seven plagues to the earth"

Chapter 16

Revelation 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the vision of chapter 15. Together they give the seven plagues that complete the wrath of God. (See: wrath)
Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 5-7.

Special concepts in this chapter

"I heard a loud voice call out of the temple"
This is the same temple that was mentioned in chapter 15.
Seven bowls of God's wrath
This chapter reveals severe judgments. They are pictured as angels pouring out seven bowls of God's wrath.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The tone of this chapter is meant to astonish the reader. Translations should not minimize the vivid language expressed in this chapter.
Armageddon
This is a Hebrew word. It is the name of a place. John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate it using the letters of the target language.

Links:

Revelation 16:1 Notes

Revelation 16:1
Connecting Statement:
John continues to describe the part of the vision about the seven angels with the seven plagues. The seven plagues are the seven bowls of God's wrath.
I heard
The word "I" refers to John.
bowls of God's wrath
The image of the wine in the bowls can be stated clearly. The word "wrath" here refers to punishment. The wine is a symbol for punishment. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 15:7]
Revelation 16:2
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. Alternate translation: "poured out the wine from his bowl" or "poured out God's wrath from his bowl"
painful sores
"painful wounds." These could be infections from diseases or injuries that have not healed.

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

mark of the beast
This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in Revelation 13:17.
Revelation 16:3
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]
the sea
This refers to all the salt water lakes and oceans.
Revelation 16:4
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]
rivers and the springs of water
This refers to all bodies of fresh water.
Revelation 16:5
the angel of the waters
These words could be a reference to 1) the third angel who was in charge of pouring out God's wrath on the rivers and springs of water or 2) another angel who was in charge of all the waters.
You are righteous
"You" refers to God.
the one who is and who was
"God who is and who was." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:4.
Revelation 16:6
they poured out the blood of God's holy people and prophets
Here "poured out the blood" means killed. Alternate translation: "they murdered God's holy people and the prophets"
you have given them blood to drink
God will make the evil people drink the waters that he turned to blood.
Revelation 16:7
I heard the altar reply
The word "altar" here refers perhaps to someone at the altar. "I heard someone at the altar reply"
Revelation 16:8
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]
on the sun, and it was given permission to scorch the people
John speaks about the sun as if it were a person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on the sun and caused it to severely burn the people"
Revelation 16:9
They were scorched by the terrible heat
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The extreme heat burned them badly"
they blasphemed the name of God
Here the name of God represents God. Alternate translation: "they blasphemed God"
God, who has the authority over these plagues
This phrase reminds readers of something they already know about God. It helps to explain why the people were blaspheming God. Alternate translation: "God because he has the authority over these plagues"
the authority over these plagues
This refers to the power to inflict these plagues on people, and the power to stop the plagues.
Revelation 16:10
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]
the throne of the beast
This is where the beast reigns from. It may refer to the capital city of his kingdom.
darkness covered its kingdom
Here "darkness" is spoken of as if it were something like a blanket. Alternate translation: "it became dark in all his kingdom" or "all of his kingdom became dark"
They chewed
The people in the beast's kingdom chewed.
Revelation 16:11
They blasphemed
The people in the beast's kingdom blasphemed.
Revelation 16:12
poured out his bowl
The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]
the Euphrates. Its water was dried up
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Euphrates. Its water dried up" or "the Euphrates, and caused its water to dry up"
Revelation 16:13
looked like frogs
A frog is a small animal that lives near water. Jews considered them unclean animals.
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in 12:9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]
Revelation 16:14
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 16:15
Look! I am coming ... his shameful condition
This is in parentheses to show that it is not part of the vision about the spirits. Rather, this is something that the Lord Jesus said. It can be stated clearly that the Lord Jesus said this, as in the UDB.
I am coming as a thief
Jesus will come at a time when people do not expect him, just as a thief comes when not expected. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 3:3]
keeping his garments on
Living the right way is spoken of as keeping one's clothes on. Alternate translation: "doing what is right, like keeping his clothes on"
keeping his garments on
Some versions translate this as, "keeping his garments with him."
does not walk around naked
Walking around naked is a metaphor for living foolishly without knowing it. Alternate translation: "does not live

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

foolishly"

they do not see his shameful condition

Here the word "they" refers to other people.

his shameful condition

This is a general term for anything of which a person should be ashamed. Here the shame is from living foolishly. Alternate translation: "those things of which he should be ashamed"

Revelation 16:16

They brought them together

"The spirits of the demons brought the kings and their armies together"

the place that is called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place that people call"

Armageddon

This is the name of a place.

Revelation 16:17

Connecting Statement:

The seventh angel pours out the seventh bowl of God's wrath.

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

Then a loud voice came out of the temple and from the throne

This means someone sitting on the throne or someone standing near the throne spoke loudly. It is unclear who is speaking.

Revelation 16:18

flashes of lightning

Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

rumblings, crashes of thunder

These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

Revelation 16:19

The great city was split

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The earthquake split the great city"

Then God called to mind

"Then God remembered" or "Then God thought of" or "Then God started to pay attention to." This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten.

he gave that city the cup filled with the wine made from his furious wrath

The wine is a symbol of his wrath. Making people drink it is a symbol of punishing them. Alternate translation: "he made the people of that city drink the wine that represents his wrath"

Revelation 16:20

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the seventh bowl of God's wrath.

the mountains were no longer found

The inability to see any mountains is metonymy expressing the idea that no mountains existed any longer. Alternate translation: "there were no longer any mountains"

Revelation 16:21

a talent

You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "33 kilograms"

Chapter 17

Revelation 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to describe how God will destroy Babylon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prostitute

Scripture often pictures idolatrous Jews as adulterous people and sometimes as prostitutes. This is not the reference here. The translator should allow this illustration to be vague.

Seven hills

This possibly refers to the city of Rome, which was known as the city on seven hills. However, the translator should not attempt to identify Rome in the translation.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

John uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He explains some of their meanings, but allows them to remain relatively unclear. The translator should attempt to do the same.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The beast you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up "

This and similar phrases in this chapter contrast the beast with Jesus. Jesus is called "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come" elsewhere in the Book of Revelation.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in 17:11 is a paradox: "the beast ... is itself also an eighth king; but it is one of those seven kings." The translator should not attempt to resolve this paradox. It should remain a mystery. (Revelation 17:11)

Links:

Revelation 17:1 Notes

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Revelation 17:1

General Information:

John begins to describe the part of his vision about the great prostitute.

the condemnation of the great prostitute

The noun "condemnation" can be expressed with the verb "condemn." Alternate translation: "how God will condemn the great prostitute"

the great prostitute

"the prostitute that everyone knows about." She represents a certain sinful city.

on many waters

If you need to, you can use a more specific word for the kind of water. Alternate translation: "on many rivers"

Revelation 17:2

with the wine of her sexual immorality the inhabitants of the earth became drunk

The wine represents sexual immorality. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth became drunk by drinking her wine, that is, they were sexually immoral"

her sexual immorality

This may well have a double meaning: sexual immorality among people and also the worship of false gods.

Revelation 17:3

carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness

The setting changes from John being in heaven to being in a wilderness.

Revelation 17:4

pearls

beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

Revelation 17:5

On her forehead was written a name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had written on her forehead a name"

Babylon the great

If it needs to be made clear that the name refers to the woman, it can be put in a sentence. Alternate translation: "I am Babylon, the powerful one"

Revelation 17:6

was drunk with the blood ... and with the blood

"was drunk because she had drunk the blood ... and had drunk the blood"

the martyrs for Jesus

"the believers who have died because they told others about Jesus"

astonished

amazed, surprised

Revelation 17:7

General Information:

The angel begins to explain to John the meaning of the prostitute and the red beast. The angel explains these things through verse 18.

Why are you astonished?

The angel used this question to gently scold John. Alternate translation: "You should not be astonished!"

Revelation 17:8

the bottomless pit

This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.

Then he will go on to destruction

The noun "destruction" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "Then he will be destroyed" or "Then God will destroy him"

he will go on to destruction

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were going to it.

those whose names have not been written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whose names God did not write"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

Revelation 17:9

Connecting Statement:

The angel continues speaking. Here he explains the meaning of the seven heads of the beast that the woman is riding.

This calls for a mind that has wisdom

The abstract nouns "mind" and "wisdom" can be expressed with "think" and "wise" or "wisely." Why a wise mind is needed can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "A wise mind is needed in order to understand this" or "You need to think wisely in order to understand this"

This calls for

"This makes it necessary to have"

The seven heads are seven hills

Here "are" means "stand for" or "represent."

Revelation 17:10

Five kings have fallen

The angel speaks of dying as falling. Alternate translation: "Five kings have died"

one exists

"one is king now" or "one king is alive now"

the other has not yet come, and when he comes

Not having existed yet is spoken of as not yet having come. Alternate translation: "the other has not yet become king; when he becomes king"

he must remain for a little while

The angel speaks of someone continuing to be king as if he were remaining in a place. Alternate translation: "he can be king only for a little while"

Revelation 17:11

He belongs to the seven

Possible meanings are 1) the beast rules twice: first as one of the seven kings, and then as the eighth king or 2) the beast belongs to that group of seven kings because he is like them.

and is going to his destruction

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

as if the beast were going to it. Alternate translation: "and will certainly be destroyed" or "and God will surely destroy him"

Revelation 17:12

Connecting Statement:

The angel continues speaking to John. Here he explains the meaning of the ten horns of the beast.

for one hour

If your language does not divide the day into 24 hours, you may need to use a more general expression. Alternate translation: "for a very short time" or "for a very small part of a day"

Revelation 17:13

These are of one mind

"These all think the same thing" or "These all agree to do the same thing"

Revelation 17:14

the Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

the called, chosen, and faithful ones

This refers to one group of people. The words "called" and "chosen" can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God has called and chosen, who are faithful to him"

Revelation 17:15

The waters you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages

Here "are" stands for "represent."

The waters

If you need to, you can use a more specific word for the kind of water. See how you translated "many waters" in [Revelation 17:1]

multitudes

large groups of people

languages

This refers to people who speak the languages. See how you translated this in [Revelation 10:11]

Revelation 17:16

make her desolate and naked

"steal everything that she has and leave her with nothing"

they will devour her flesh

Destroying her completely is spoken of as eating all her flesh. "They will destroy her completely"

Revelation 17:17

For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give ... until God's words are fulfilled

They would agree to give their power to the beast, but it would not be that they want to obey God. Alternate translation: "For God has put it into their hearts to agree to give ... until God's words are fulfilled, and by doing this, they would carry out God's purpose"

God has put it into their hearts

Here "heart" is a metonym for desires. Making them want to do something is spoken of as putting it in their hearts to do it. Alternate translation: "God has made them want"

power to rule

"authority" or "kingly authority"

until God's words are fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until God fulfills what he said will happen"

Revelation 17:18

Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John about the prostitute and the beast.

is

Here "is" stands for "represents."

the great city that has power to rule

The city having power to rule is a metonym for the leader of the city having power to rule. Alternate translation: "the great city whose leader has power to rule"

Chapter 18

Revelation 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 2-8, 10, 16-17, and 19-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecy

The angel prophesies about Babylon falling, which here means being destroyed. It is spoken of as having already happened. This is common in prophecy. It emphasizes that the coming judgment will certainly happen. The angel also prophesies that the people will lament over Babylon falling.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Prophecy frequently uses metaphors. This chapter has an apocalyptic style that is slightly different from that of the rest of the Book of Revelation.

Links:

Revelation 18:1 Notes

Revelation 18:1

Connecting Statement:

Another angel comes down from heaven and speaks. This is not the angel mentioned in the previous chapter who spoke

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

about the prostitute and the beast.

Revelation 18:2

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great

The angel speaks of Babylon having been destroyed as if it had fallen. See how you translated this in [Revelation 14:8]

She has become

The pronoun "she" refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

a prison

The word "prison" here is a metaphor for a secure place. This was probably a secure place where the unclean spirits feel safe, such as a refuge or hideout. Alternate translation: "a hideout"

Revelation 18:3

all the nations

The nations is a metonym for the people of those nations. Alternate translation: "the people of all the nations"

have drunk the wine of her immoral passion

This is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: "have become sexually immoral like her" or "have become drunk like her in sexual sin"

her immoral passion

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods.

merchants

A merchant is a person who sells things.

from the power of her sensual way of living

"because she spent so much money on sexual immorality"

Revelation 18:4

General Information:

The pronouns "she" and "her" refer to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

Connecting Statement:

Another voice from heaven begins to speak.

another voice

The word "voice" refers to the speaker, which is probably either Jesus or the Father. Alternate translation: "someone else"

from her

The pronoun "her" refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

Revelation 18:5

Her sins have piled up as high as heaven

The voice speaks of Babylon's sins as if they were objects that could form a pile. Alternate translation: "Her sins are so many they are like a pile that reaches heaven"

has remembered

"has thought of" or "has started to pay attention to." This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten. See how you translated "called to mind" in Revelation 16:19.

Revelation 18:6

Pay her back as she has paid others back

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were payment. Alternate translation: "Punish her as she has punished others"

her ... she

The pronouns "her" and "she" refer to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

repay her double

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were payment. Alternate translation: "punish her twice as much"

in the cup she mixed, mix double the amount for her

The voice speaks of causing others to suffer as preparing strong wine for them to drink. Alternate translation: "prepare for her the wine of suffering that is twice as strong as what she made for others" or "make her suffer twice as much as she made others suffer"

mix double the amount

Possible meanings are 1) "prepare twice the amount" or 2) "make it twice as strong"

Revelation 18:7

Connecting Statement:

The same voice from heaven continues speaking about Babylon as if it were a woman.

she glorified herself

"the people of Babylon glorified themselves"

For she says in her heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: "For she says to herself"

I am seated as a queen

She claims to be a ruler, having her own authority.

I am not a widow

She implies that she will not be dependent on other people.

I will never see mourning

Experiencing mourning is spoken of as seeing mourning. Alternate translation: "I will never mourn"

Revelation 18:8

her plagues will come

Existing in the future is spoken of a coming.

She will be consumed by fire

Being burned up by fires is spoken of as being eaten up by fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Fire will completely burn her up"

Revelation 18:9

General Information:

In these verses the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon.

committed sexual immorality and went out of control with her

"sinned sexually and did whatever they wanted just as the people of Babylon did"

Revelation 18:10

Connecting Statement:

John tells what people say about Babylon.

afraid of her torment

The abstract noun "torment" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "afraid that they will be tormented as Babylon is" or "afraid that God will torment them as he torments Babylon"

Woe, woe

This is repeated for emphasis.

your punishment has come

Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.

Revelation 18:11

mourn for her

"mourn for the people of Babylon"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Revelation 18:12

precious stone, pearls

"many kinds of expensive stones." See how you translated these in Revelation 17:4.

fine linen

expensive cloth made from flax. See how you translated "linen" in Revelation 15:6.

purple, silk, scarlet

Purple is a very dark red cloth that is very expensive. Silk is a soft, strong cloth made from the fine string that silkworms make when they make their cocoons. Scarlet is an expensive red cloth.

every vessel of ivory

"all kinds of containers made of ivory"

ivory

a beautiful hard, white material that people get from the tusks or teeth of very large animals such as elephants or walruses. Alternate translation: "tusks" or "valuable animal teeth"

marble

a precious stone used for building

Revelation 18:13

cinnamon

a spice that smells nice and comes from the bark of a certain kind of tree

spice

a substance used to add flavor to food or a good smell to oil

bodies and souls of people

Possible meanings are 1) the parts of people are used figuratively to refer to people who are sold as slaves. Alternate translation: "slaves" or 2) the word "bodies" refers to slaves, and the phrase "souls of people" expresses the truth that slaves are real people. Alternate translation: "slaves, that is human souls"

Revelation 18:14

The fruit

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "The result"

desired with all your might

"wanted very much"

vanished, never to be found again

Not to be found stands for not existing. This figure of speech can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "vanished; you will never have them again"

Revelation 18:15

General Information:

In these verses, the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon.

because of the fear of her torment

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "fear" and "torment." Alternate translation: "because they will be afraid of God tormenting them they way he torments her" or "because they will be afraid of suffering the way she is suffering"

weeping and mourning loudly

This is what the merchants will be doing. Alternate translation: "and they will weep and mourn loudly"

Revelation 18:16

the great city that was dressed in fine linen

Throughout this chapter, Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman. The merchants speak of Babylon as being dressed in fine linen because its people were dressed in fine linen. Alternate translation: "the great city, which was like a woman dressed in fine linen" or "the great city, whose women were dressed in fine linen"

that was dressed in fine linen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that wore fine linen"

was adorned with gold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "adorned herself with gold" or "adorned themselves with gold" or "wore gold"

precious jewels

"valuable gems" or "treasured gems"

pearls

beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4]

Revelation 18:17

who make their living from the sea

The phrase "from the sea" refers to what they do on the sea. Alternate translation: "who travel on the sea to make their living" or "who sail on the sea to different places in order to trade things"

Revelation 18:18

General Information:

In these verses the word "they" refers to the sailors and seafarers, and the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon.

What city is like the great city?

This question shows that the merchants thought the city of Babylon was very important. Alternate translation: "No other city is like the great city, Babylon!"

Revelation 18:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 18:20

God has brought your judgment on her

The noun "judgment" can be expressed with the verb "judge." Alternate translation: "God has judged her for you" or "God has judged her because of the bad things she did to you"

Revelation 18:21

Connecting Statement:

Another angel begins to speak about Babylon. This angel is not one of those who has spoken previously.

millstone

a large round stone used to crush grain

Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will not be seen anymore

God will completely destroy the city. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will violently throw down Babylon, the great city, and it will no longer exist"

will not be seen anymore

"no one will see it anymore." Not being seen here means that it will not exist. Alternate translation: "it will not exist anymore"

Revelation 18:22

The sound made by harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will not be heard anymore in you

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Not being heard here means that they will not be there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will no longer make a sound in your city"

in you

The angel speaks as if he were talking to Babylon. Alternate translation: "in Babylon"

No craftsman ... will be found in you

Not being found there means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: "No craftsman ... will be in your city"

No sound of a mill will be heard anymore in you

The sound of something not being heard means that no one will make that sound. Alternate translation: "No one will use a mill in your city anymore"

Revelation 18:23

General Information:

The words "you" and "your" refer to Babylon.

Connecting Statement:

The angel who threw the millstone finishes talking.

The voices of the bridegroom and the bride will not be heard in you anymore

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will ever again hear in Babylon the happy voices of a bridegroom and a bride"

will not be heard in you anymore

Not being heard here means that they will not be there. Alternate translation: "will not be in your city anymore"

your merchants were the princes of the earth

The angel speaks of important and powerful people as if they were princes. Alternate translation: "your merchants were like princes of the earth" or "your merchants were the most important men in the world"

the nations were deceived by your sorcery

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you deceived the people of the nations with your magic spells"

Revelation 18:24

General Information:

The word "her" refers to Babylon.

In her the blood of prophets and of God's holy people was found, and the blood of all who have been killed on the earth

Blood being found there means that the people there were guilty of killing people. Alternate translation: "Babylon is guilty of killing the prophets and believers and all the other people in the world who were killed"

Chapter 19

Revelation 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The beginning of chapter 19 concludes the topic of Babylon falling.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 1-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped. (See: heaven)

Wedding celebration

The wedding celebration or feast is an important image in Scripture. Jewish culture often pictured paradise, or life with God after death, as a feast. Here, the wedding feast is for the Lamb, who is Jesus, and his bride, who is all his people.

Links:

Revelation 19:1 Notes

Revelation 19:1

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. Here he describes the rejoicing in heaven over the fall of the great prostitute, who is the city of Babylon.

I heard

Here "I" refers to John.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord."

Revelation 19:2

the great prostitute

Here John refers to the city of Babylon whose wicked people rule over all the people of the earth and lead them to worship false gods. He speaks of the wicked people of Babylon as if they were a great prostitute. Alternate translation: "that wicked city that was like a prostitute who corrupted the earth

Here "the earth" is a metonym for its inhabitants. Alternate translation: "who corrupted the people of the earth"

He has avenged the blood of his servants from her hand

Here "the blood ... from her hand" is a metonym for her murdering people. The word "her" refers to the "prostitute," the city of Babylon. Alternate translation: "He has punished her for murdering his servants"

Revelation 19:3

They spoke

Here "They" refers to the crowd of people in heaven.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

smoke rises from her

The word "her" refers to the city of Babylon, which is

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

spoken of as if it were a prostitute. The smoke is from the fire that destroys the city. Alternate translation: "smoke rises from that city"

Revelation 19:4

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

the four living creatures

"the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated this in Revelation 4:6

who was seated on the throne

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who sat on the throne"

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

Revelation 19:5

a voice came out from the throne

Here John speaks of the "voice" as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "someone spoke from the throne"

Praise our God

Here "our" refers to the speaker and all God's servants.

you who fear him

Here "fear" does not mean to be afraid of God, but to honor him. Alternate translation: "all you who honor him"

both the unimportant and the powerful

The speaker uses these words together to mean all of God's people.

Revelation 19:6

Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a great number of people, like the roar of many waters, and like mighty crashes of thunder

John speaks of what he is hearing as if it were like the sound made by a very large crowd of people, a large body of rushing water, and very loud thunder.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

For the Lord

"Because the Lord"

Revelation 19:7

Connecting Statement:

The voice of the crowd from the previous verse continues speaking.

Let us rejoice

Here "us" refers to all of God's servants.

give him the glory

"give God the glory" or "honor God"

wedding celebration of the Lamb ... his bride has made herself ready

Here John speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people together forever as if it were a wedding celebration.

Lamb

This is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

has come

Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.

his bride has made herself ready

John speaks of God's people as if they were a bride who has gotten ready for her wedding.

Revelation 19:8

She was permitted to be dressed in bright and clean fine linen

Here "she" refers to the people of God. John speaks of the righteous acts of God's people as if they were a bright and clean dress that a bride wears on her wedding day. You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed her to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen"

Revelation 19:9

General Information:

An angel begins to speak to John. This is likely the same angel who began to speak to John in Revelation 17:1.

those who are invited

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the people whom God invites"

the wedding feast of the Lamb

Here the angel speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people forever as if it were a wedding feast.

Revelation 19:10

I fell down at his feet

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated "fell down" in Revelation 5:8.

your brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to all believers, male and female.

who hold the testimony about Jesus

Here holding stands for believing in or announcing. Alternate translation: "who speak the truth about Jesus"

for the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

Here "spirit of prophecy" refers to God's Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "for it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus"

Revelation 19:11

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new vision. John begins to describe a rider on a white horse.

Then I saw heaven open

This imagery is used to signify the beginning of a new vision. See how you translated this idea in Revelation 4:1 and Revelation 11:19 and Revelation 15:5.

The one riding it

The rider is Jesus.

It is with justice that he judges and wages war

Here "justice" refers to what is right. Alternate translation: "He judges all people and wages war according to what is right"

Revelation 19:12

His eyes are like a fiery flame

John speaks of the rider's eyes as if they shone like a flame of fire.

He has a name written on him

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has written a name on him"

on him that no one knows but himself

"on him, and only he knows the meaning of that name"

Revelation 19:13

He is clothed with a robe that was dipped in blood

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

You can state this in an active form. Alternate translation: "He wears a robe that has blood on it"

his name is called the Word of God

You can state this in active form. "Word of God" here is a metonym for Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "his name is called the Message of God" or "his name is also the Word of God"

Revelation 19:14

General Information:

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Revelation 19:15

Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:16.

strikes down the nations

"destroys the nations" or "brings the nations under his control"

rule them with an iron rod

John speaks of the rider's power as if he were ruling with an iron rod. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:27]

He tramples in the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty

John speaks of the rider's destroying his enemies as if they were grapes that a person tramples in a winepress. Here "wrath" refers to God's punishment of evil persons. Alternate translation: "He crushes his enemies according to the judgment of God Almighty, just as a person crushes grapes in a winepress"

Revelation 19:16

He has a name written on his robe and on his thigh:

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has written a name on his robe and thigh:"

Revelation 19:17

I saw an angel standing in the sun

Here "the sun" is a metonym for the light of the sun. Alternate translation: "Then I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun"

Revelation 19:18

both free and slave, the unimportant and the powerful

The angel uses these two sets of opposite-meaning words together to mean all people.

Revelation 19:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 19:20

The beast was captured and with him the false prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The rider on the white horse captured the beast and the false prophet"

the mark of the beast

This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in Revelation 13:17.

The two of them were thrown alive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw the beast and the false prophet alive"

the fiery lake of burning sulfur

"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur"

Revelation 19:21

The rest of them were killed by the sword that came out of the mouth of the one who rode on the horse

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The rider of the horse killed the remainder of the beast's armies with the sword that extended from his mouth"

the sword that came out of the mouth

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:16.

Chapter 20

Revelation 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The thousand-year reign of Christ

In this chapter, Jesus is said to reign for a thousand years, at the same time that Satan is bound. Scholars are divided over whether this refers to a future period of time or to Jesus reigning now from heaven. It is not necessary to understand this passage in order to translate it accurately. (See: prophet)

Final rebellion

This chapter also describes what happens after the thousand years are ended. During this time, Satan and many people will attempt to rebel against Jesus. This will result in God's ultimate and final victory over sin and evil. (See: sin and evil and eternity)

Great white throne

This chapter ends with God judging all people who ever lived. God separates people who believe in Jesus from those who do not believe in him. (See: judge and heaven and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hades and the lake of fire

These appear to be two distinct places. The translator may wish to do further research to determine how to translate these two places differently. They should not be made the same as each other in translation. (See: hell)

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Links:

Revelation 20:1 Notes

Revelation 20:1
General Information:
John begins to describe a vision of an angel throwing the devil into the bottomless pit.
Then I saw
Here "I" refers to John.
bottomless pit
This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.
Revelation 20:2
dragon
This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos.
Revelation 20:3
sealed it over him
The angel sealed the pit to keep anyone from opening it. Alternate translation: "sealed it to prevent anyone from opening it"
deceive the nations
Here "nations" is a metonym for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: "deceive the people-groups"
the thousand years
"1,000 years"
he must be set free
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will command the angel to free him"
Revelation 20:4
General Information:
This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing thrones and the souls of believers.
who had been given authority to judge
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God had given authority to judge"
who had been beheaded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose heads others had cut off"
for the testimony about Jesus and for the word of God
"because they had spoken the truth about Jesus and about the word of God"
for the word of God
These words are a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "for what they taught about the scriptures"
They came to life
"They came back to life" or "They became alive again"
Revelation 20:5
The rest of the dead
"All of the other dead people"
the thousand years were ended
"the end of the 1,000 years"
Revelation 20:6
Over these the second death has no power
Here John describes "death" as a person with power. Alternate translation: "These people will not experience the second death"
the second death
"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]
Revelation 20:7
Satan will be released from his prison
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will release Satan from his prison"
Revelation 20:8
They will be as many as the sand of the sea
This emphasizes the extremely large number of soldiers in Satan's army.
Revelation 20:9
They went
"Satan's army went"
the beloved city
This refers to Jerusalem.
fire came down from heaven and devoured them
Here John speaks of fire as if it were alive. Alternate translation: "God sent fire from heaven to burn them up"
Revelation 20:10
The devil, who deceived them, was thrown into
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw the devil, who had deceived them, into" or "God's angel threw the devil, who had deceived them, into"
lake of burning sulfur
"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:20.
where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where he had also thrown the beast and the false prophet"
They will be tormented
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will torment them"
Revelation 20:11
General Information:
This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing a great white throne and the dead being judged.
The earth and the heavens fled away from his presence, but there was no place for them to go
John describes heaven and earth as if they were people who were trying to escape God's judgment. This means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth.
Revelation 20:12
the books were opened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone opened the books"
The dead were judged
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God judged the people who had died and now lived again"
by what was recorded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what he had recorded"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

Revelation 20:13
The sea gave up the dead ... Death and Hades gave up the dead
Here John speaks of the sea, death, and Hades as if they were living persons.
the dead were judged
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God judged the dead people"
Hades
Here "Hades" is a metonym that represents the place where unbelievers go when they die, to wait for God's judgment.
Revelation 20:14
Death and Hades were thrown
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw Death and Hades" or "God's angel threw Death and Hades"
the second death
"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]
Revelation 20:15
If anyone's name was not found written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If God's angel did not find a person's name"
he was thrown into the lake of fire
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angel threw him into the lake of fire" or "the angel threw him into the place where fire burns forever"

Chapter 21

Revelation 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter gives a detailed picture of the new Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Second death

Death is a type of separation. The first death is physically dying, when the soul is separated from the body. The second death is being eternally separated from God. (See: death and soul and eternity)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

New heaven and new earth

It is unclear whether this is an entirely new heaven and earth or if it is remade out of the present heaven and earth. The same is also true of the new Jerusalem. It is possible this will affect translation in some languages. The word "new" in the original language means different and better than the old. It does not mean new in time.

Links:

Revelation 21:1 Notes

Revelation 21:1
General Information:
John begins to describe his vision of the new Jerusalem.
I saw
Here "I" refers to John.
Revelation 21:2
like a bride adorned for her husband
This compares the new Jerusalem to a bride who has made herself beautiful for her bridegroom.
Revelation 21:3
a great voice from the throne saying
The word "voice" refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly from the throne saying"
Look!
The word "Look" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.
The dwelling place of God is with human beings, and he will live with them
These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God will, indeed, live among men.
Revelation 21:4
He will wipe away every tear from their eyes
Tears here represent sadness. See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:17]
Revelation 21:5
these words are trustworthy and true
Here "words" refers to the message that they formed. Alternate translation: "this message is trustworthy and true"
Revelation 21:6
the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end
These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's eternal nature.
the Alpha and the Omega
These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If the meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8]
the beginning and the end
Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end" or 2) "the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things."
To the one who thirsts ... water of life

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God speaks of a person's desire for eternal life as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving water.

Revelation 21:7

Connecting Statement:

The one seated on the throne continues to speak to John.

Revelation 21:8

the cowards

"those who are too afraid to do what is right"

the detestable

"those who do terrible things"

the fiery lake of burning sulfur

"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:20.

the second death

"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]

Revelation 21:9

the bride, the wife of the Lamb

The angel speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a woman who is about to marry her groom, the Lamb. Jerusalem is metonymy for those who believers who will inhabit it.

the Lamb

This is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

Revelation 21:10

carried me away in the Spirit

The setting changes as John is taken to a high mountain where he can see the city of Jerusalem. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 17:3]

Revelation 21:11

Jerusalem

This refers to the "Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven" that he described in the previous verse and not to the physical Jerusalem.

like a very precious jewel, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the brilliance of Jerusalem by naming a specific jewel.

crystal-clear

"extremely clear"

jasper

This is a valuable stone. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3]

Revelation 21:12

twelve gates

"12 gates"

were written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written"

Revelation 21:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 21:14

Lamb

This refers to Jesus. See how you translated this in Revelation 5:6.

Revelation 21:15

General Information:

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Revelation 21:16

twelve thousand stadia

"12,000 stadia." You may convert this to modern measures. Alternate translation: "2,200 kilometers"

Revelation 21:17

144 cubits

"one hundred forty-four cubits." You may convert this to modern measures. Alternate translation: "66 meters"

Revelation 21:18

The wall was built of jasper and the city of pure gold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had built the wall with jasper and the city with pure gold"

pure gold, like clear glass

The gold was so clear that it is spoken of as if it were glass.

jasper

This is a valuable stone. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3]

Revelation 21:19

The foundations of the wall were adorned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone adorned the foundations of the wall"

jasper ... sapphire ... agate ... emerald

These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated it in [Revelation 4:3]

Revelation 21:20

onyx ... chrysolite ... beryl ... topaz ... chrysoprase ... jacinth ... amethyst

These are all valuable gems.

Revelation 21:21

pearls

beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4]

each of the gates was made from a single pearl

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had made each of the gates from a single pearl"

pure gold, like transparent glass

The gold was so clear that it is spoken of as if it were glass. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 21:18]

Revelation 21:22

Lord God ... and the Lamb are its temple

The temple represented God's presence. This means the new Jerusalem does not need a temple because God and the Lamb will live there.

Revelation 21:23

its lamp is the Lamb

Here the glory of Jesus, the Lamb, is spoken of as if it were a lamp that gives light to the city.

Revelation 21:24

The nations will walk

The words "the nations" are a metonym for the people who live in the nations. "Walk" here is a metaphor for "live." Alternate translation: "The people from all the different

nations will live"
Revelation 21:25
Its gates will not be shut
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will shut the gates"
Revelation 21:26
They will bring
"The kings of the earth will bring"
Revelation 21:27
nothing unclean will ever enter into it, nor anyone
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "only what is clean will ever enter, and never anyone"
but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but only those whose names the Lamb wrote in his Book of Life"
the Lamb
This is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

Chapter 22

Revelation 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tree of life

There is probably an intended connection between the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life mentioned in this chapter. The curse that began in Eden will end at this time.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Alpha and omega

These are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The ULB spells out their names in English. This strategy can serve as a model for translators. Some translators, however, may decide to use the first and last letters in their own alphabet. This would be "A and Z" in English.

Links:

Revelation 22:1 Notes

Revelation 22:1
Connecting Statement:
John continues to describe the new Jerusalem as the angel shows it to him.
showed me
Here "me" refers to John.
the river of the water of life
"the river flowing with life-giving water"
the water of life
Eternal life is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving water. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6]
the Lamb
This is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]
Revelation 22:2
the nations
Here "nations" refers to the people who live in every nation. Alternate translation: "the people of all nations"
Revelation 22:3
There will no longer be any curse
Possible meanings are 1) "There will never be anyone there that God will curse" or 2) "There will not be anyone there who is under God's curse"
his servants will serve him
Possible meanings of "his" and "him" are 1) both words refer to God the Father, or 2) both words refer to both God and the Lamb, who rule together as one.
Revelation 22:4
They will see his face
This is an idiom, meaning to be in God's presence. Alternate translation: "They will be in God's presence"
Revelation 22:5
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 22:6
General Information:
This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. In this versethe angel is speaking to John. This can be shown clearly as it is in the UDB.
These words are trustworthy and true
Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:5]
the God of the spirits of the prophets
Possible meanings are 1) the word "spirits" refers to the inward disposition of the prophets and indicates that God inspires them. Alternate translation: "God who inspires the prophets" or 2) the word "spirits" refers to the Holy Spirit who inspires the prophets. Alternate translation: "God who gives his Spirit to the prophets"
Revelation 22:7
General Information:
This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. Jesus is speaking. This can be shown clearly as it is in the UDB.
Look!
Here Jesus begins to speak. The word "Look" adds emphasis to what follows.
I am coming soon!
It is understood that he is coming in order to judge. See how you translated this in Revelation 3:11. Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon!"

generated on Wed Jul 30 13:48:33 2025

the words of the prophecy of this book
Here "words" refers to a message. Alternate translation: "the prophetic message of this book"
Revelation 22:8
General Information:
John tells his readers about how he responded to the angel.
I fell down to worship at the feet
This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated similar words in Revelation 19:10.
Revelation 22:9
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 22:10
Connecting Statement:
The angel finishes speaking to John.
Do not seal up ... this book
To seal a book was to keep it closed with something that makes it impossible for anyone to read what was inside without breaking the seal. The angel is telling John not to keep the message a secret. Alternate translation: "Do not keep secret ... this book"
the words of the prophecy of this book
Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7]
Revelation 22:11
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Revelation 22:12
General Information:
As the book of Revelation is ending, Jesus gives a closing greeting.
Revelation 22:13
the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end
These three phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Jesus has existed and will exist for all time.
the Alpha and the Omega
These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If these meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8]
the first and the last
This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17]
the beginning and the end
Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end" or 2) "the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things." See how you translated this in Revelation 21:6.
Revelation 22:14
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues giving his closing greeting.
those who wash their robes so that
Becoming righteous is spoken of as if it were washing one's clothing. See how you translated as similar phrase in [Revelation 7:14]
Revelation 22:15
Outside
This means they are outside the city and not allowed to enter.
are the dogs
In that culture the dog was an unclean, despised animal. Here the word "dogs" is derogatory and refers to people who are wicked.
Revelation 22:16
to testify to you
Here the word "you" is plural.
the root and the descendant of David
The words "root" and "descendant" mean basically the same thing. Jesus speaks of being a "descendant" as if he were a "root" that grew out of David. Together the words emphasize that Jesus belongs to the family of David.
the bright morning star
Jesus speaks of himself as if he were the bright star that sometimes appears early in the morning and indicates that a new day is about to begin. See how you translated "morning star" in [Revelation 2:28]
Revelation 22:17
Connecting Statement:
This verse is a response to what Jesus said.
the Bride
Believers are spoken of as if they were a bride about to be married to her groom, Jesus.
Come!
Possible meanings are 1) that this is an invitation for people to come and drink the water of life. Alternate translation: "Come and drink!" or 2) that this is a polite request for Jesus to return. Alternate translation: "Please come!"
Whoever is thirsty ... the water of life
A person's desire for eternal life is spoken of as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving water.
the water of life
Eternal life is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving water. See how you translated this in Revelation 21:6.
Revelation 22:18
General Information:
John gives his final remarks.
I testify
Here "I" refers to John.
the words of the prophecy of this book
Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7]
If anyone adds to them ... God will add
This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.
that are written about in this book
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which I have written about in this book"
Revelation 22:19
If anyone takes away ... God will take away
This is a strong warning to not change anything about this

prophecy.

Revelation 22:20

General Information:

In these verses John gives his and Jesus's closing greetings.

The one who testifies to these things says

"Jesus, who testifies to these things, says"

Revelation 22:21

with all

"with every one of you"

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