

# English: Translation Notes for Genesis

## Formatted for Translators

©2022 Wycliffe Associates

Released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Bible Text: The English Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB)

©2017 Wycliffe Associates

Available at <https://bibleineverylanguage.org/translations>

The English Unlocked Literal Bible is based on the unfoldingWord® Literal Text, CC BY-SA 4.0. The original work of the unfoldingWord® Literal Text is available at <https://unfoldingword.bible/ult/>.

The ULB is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

©2017 Wycliffe Associates

Available at <https://bibleineverylanguage.org/translations>

The English ULB Translation Notes is based on the unfoldingWord translationNotes, under CC BY-SA 4.0. The original unfoldingWord work is available at <https://unfoldingword.bible/utn>.

The ULB Notes is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of the CC BY-SA 4.0 license visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Below is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following conditions:

Attribution — You must attribute the work as follows: "Original work available at <https://BibleInEveryLanguage.org>."

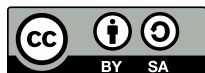
Attribution statements in derivative works should not in any way suggest that we endorse you or your use of this work.

ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Notices:

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.



# Genesis 1 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter presents the first account of God creating the world. There is a pattern to this account: "God said ... God saw that it was good ... This was evening and morning, the first day." Translators should preserve this pattern in their versions.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### The universe

This account of creation is told within the framework of ancient Hebrew ideas about the universe: the earth was resting with water around it and below it. Over the earth was something like a vast dome, called "an expanse between the waters" (1:6), on top of which was more water. Translators should try to keep these original images in their work, even though readers in their project language might have a completely different idea of what the universe is like.

### Evening and morning

Genesis 1 presents the ancient Hebrew idea of a day: it begins with sunset, lasts through the night and continues through the daylight hours until the next sunset. This pattern should be preserved in translation, even if readers in the project language define "day" differently.

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### "In the beginning"

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.

### "God said, 'Let there be'"

This expression occurs often in this chapter. It can be difficult to translate, because God is not shown as talking to a particular person. If God is talking to a thing, it is something not yet in existence. Translators should find the most natural way in the project language to signal the idea that God spoke things into existence; he created the world and the things in it by simply commanding that they should exist.

## Links:

[Genesis 1:1 Notes](#) [Genesis intro](#)

---

### Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth  
"This is about how God made the heavens and the earth in the beginning." This statement summarizes the rest of the chapter. Some languages translate it as "A very long time ago God created the heavens and the earth." Translate it in a way that shows this actually happened and is not just a folk story.

#### In the beginning

This refers to the start of the world and everything in it.  
the heavens and the earth

"the sky, the ground, and everything in them"

heavens

This refers here to the sky.

#### Genesis 1:2

without form and empty

God had not yet put the world in order.

the deep

"the water" or "the deep water" or "the vast water"

the surface of the waters

"the surface of the water" or "the water"

#### Genesis 1:3

Let there be light

This is a command. By commanding that light should exist, God made it exist.

#### Genesis 1:4

God saw the light, that it was good

"God considered the light and was pleased with it." "Good" here means "pleasing" or "suitable."

divided the light from the darkness

"separated the light and the darkness" or "made it light at one time and dark at another." This refers to God creating the daytime and the night time.

#### Genesis 1:5

And there was evening and there was morning, the first day

God did these things on the first day that the universe existed.

evening and ... morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets.

#### Genesis 1:6

Let there be an expanse ... let it divide

These are commands. By commanding that the expanse should exist and that it divide the waters, God made it exist and divide the waters.

expanse

large empty space. The Jewish people thought of this space as being shaped like the inside of dome or the inside of a bowl that is turned upside down.

between the waters

"in the water"

Genesis 1:7

God made the expanse and divided the waters

"In this way God made the expanse and divided the waters." When God spoke, it happened. This sentence explains what God did when he spoke.

It was so

"It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears.

Genesis 1:8

And there was evening and there was morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5]

the second day

This refers to the second day that the universe existed. See how you translated "the first day" in Genesis 1:5 and decide if you should translate this the same way.

Genesis 1:9

Let the waters ... be gathered

This can be translated with an active verb. This is a command. By commanding that the waters gather together, God made them gather together. Alternate translation: "Let the waters ... gather" or "Let the waters ... come together"

let the dry land appear

The water had covered the land. Now the water would move aside and some of the land would be uncovered. This is a command. By commanding that dry land should appear, God made it appear. Alternate translation: "let dry land become visible" or "let the dry land become clear" or "let the land be uncovered"

dry land

This refers to land that is not covered with water. It does not refer to land that is too dry for farming.

It was so

"It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears. See how you translated it in Genesis 1:7.

Genesis 1:10

the dry land "earth," and

"the part that was dry 'earth,' and"

He saw that it was good

Here "it" refers to the land and the sea. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:4.

Genesis 1:11

Let the earth sprout vegetation

This is a command. By commanding that vegetation should sprout on the earth, God made it sprout. Alternate translation: "Let vegetation sprout up on the earth" or "Let vegetation grow on the earth"

vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit

"vegetation, each plant that bears seed and each tree that bears fruit" or "vegetation. Let them be plants that produce seeds and fruit trees that produce fruit." Here "vegetation" is used here as a general term that includes all plants and

trees.

plants

These are kinds of vegetation that have soft stems, rather than woody stems.

fruit trees bearing fruit whose seed is in the fruit

"trees that bear fruit with seeds in them"

each according to its own kind

The seeds would produce plants and trees that would be like the ones they came from. In this way, the plants and trees would "reproduce themselves" .

It was so

"It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning wherever it appears. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:7.

Genesis 1:12

God saw that it was good

Here "it" refers to the vegetation, plants, and trees. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:10.

Genesis 1:13

And there was evening and there was morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5]

the third day

This refers to the third day that the universe existed. See how you translated "the first day" in Genesis 1:5 and decide if you should translate this the same way.

Genesis 1:14

Let there be lights in the sky

This is a command. By commanding that lights should exist, God made them exist.

lights in the sky

"things that shine in the sky" or "things that give light in the sky." This refers to the sun, moon, and stars.

in the sky

"in the expanse of the sky" or "in the large space of the sky"

to divide the day from the night

"to separate the day from the night." This means "to help us tell the difference between day and night." The sun means it is daytime, and the moon and stars mean it is nighttime.

let them be as signs

This is a command. By commanding that they should serve as signs, God made them serve as signs. Alternate translation: "Let them serve as signs" or "let them show" signs

Here this means something that reveals or points to something.

for seasons, for days and years

The sun, moon, and stars show the passing of time. This enables us to know when it is time for events that happen each week, month, or year.

seasons

times that are set aside for festivals and other things that people do

Genesis 1:15

Let them be lights in the sky to give light upon the earth

This is a command. By commanding that they should light the earth, God made them light the earth.

to give light upon the earth

"to shine light on the earth" or "to brighten the earth." The earth does not self-shine but it is lit and so reflects light.

It was so

"It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:7.

Genesis 1:16

God made the two great lights

"In this way God made the two great lights." This sentence explains what God did when he spoke.

the two great lights

"the two large lights" or "the two bright lights." The two great lights are the sun and the moon.

to rule the day

The lights that controlled the day are spoken of as if they were a human ruler that controlled what people do.

Alternate translation: "to direct the daytime as a ruler directs a group of people" or "to mark the times of the day"

day

This refers only to the daylight hours.

the lesser light

"the smaller light" or "the dimmer light"

Genesis 1:17

in the sky

"in the heavens" or "in the open space of the sky"

Genesis 1:18

to divide the light from the darkness

"to separate the light from the darkness" or "to make it light at one time and dark at another." See how you translated this in Genesis 1:4.

God saw that it was good

Here "it" refers to the sun, moon, and stars. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:4.

Genesis 1:19

And there was evening and there was morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5]

the fourth day

This refers to the fourth day that the universe existed. See how you translated "the first day" in Genesis 1:5 and decide if you should translate this the same way.

Genesis 1:20

Let the waters be filled with great numbers of living creatures

This is a command. By commanding that living creatures should fill the waters, God made them exist. Some languages may have one word that refers to all kinds of fish and sea animals. Alternate translation: "Let the waters be full of many living things" or "Let many animals that swim live in the oceans"

let birds fly

This is a command. By commanding that birds should fly, God made them fly.

birds

"animals that fly" or "flying things"

the expanse of the sky

"the open space of the sky" or "the sky"

Genesis 1:21

God created

"In this way God created"

great sea creatures

"large animals that live in the sea"

after its kind

Living things of the same "kind" are like the ones they came from. See how you translated "kind" in [Genesis 1:11,12](#).

every winged bird

"every flying thing that has wings." If the word for birds is used, it may be more natural in some languages to simply say "every bird," since all birds have wings.

God saw that it was good

Here "it" refers to the birds and the fish. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:4.

Genesis 1:22

blessed them

"blessed the animals that he had made"

Be fruitful and multiply

This is God's blessing. He told the sea animals to produce more sea animals like themselves, so that there would be many of them in the seas. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful."

multiply

increase greatly in number

Let birds multiply

This is a command. By commanding that birds should multiply, God made birds multiply.

birds

"animals that fly" or "flying things." See how you translated this in Genesis 1:20.

Genesis 1:23

And there was evening and there was morning

This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5]

the fifth day

This refers to the fifth day that the universe existed. See how you translated "the first day" in Genesis 1:5 and decide if you should translate this the same way.

Genesis 1:24

Let the earth produce living creatures

"Let the earth produce living things" or "Let many living animals live on the earth." This is a command. By commanding that the earth should produce living creatures, God made the earth produce living creatures.

each according to its own kind

"so that each kind of animal will produce more of its own kind"

livestock, creeping things, and wild animals

This shows that God created all kinds of animals. If your language has another way of grouping all the animals, you can use that, or you can use these groups.

livestock

These are animals that people look after.

creeping things  
 "small animals"  
 wild animals  
 These are animals that live in the wild. People do not take care of them.  
 It was so  
 "It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:7.  
 Genesis 1:25  
 God made the wild animals  
 "In this way God made the wild animals"  
 He saw that it was good  
 Here "it" refers to the living creatures on the earth. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:4.  
 Genesis 1:26  
 Let us make  
 The word "us" here refers to God. God was saying what he intended to do. The pronoun "us" is plural. Possible reasons for the plural use are 1) the plural form suggests that God is discussing something with the angels that make up his heavenly court or 2) the plural form foreshadows the later New Testament implications that God exists in the form of the Holy Trinity. Some translate it as "Let me make" or "I will make." If you do this, consider adding a footnote to say that the word is plural.  
 man  
 human beings  
 in our image, after our likeness  
 These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God made mankind to be like him. This verse does not tell in what ways God made people to be like himself. God does not have a body, so it does not mean that people would look like God. Alternate translation: "to truly be like us"  
 have dominion over  
 "rule over" or "have authority over"  
 Genesis 1:27  
 God created man ... he created him  
 These two sentences mean the same thing and emphasize that God created people in his own image.  
 God created man  
 The way that God created man was different from the way he created everything else. Do not specify that he created man by simply speaking, as in the preceding verses.

Genesis 1:28  
 God blessed them  
 The word "them" refers to the man and woman God had created.  
 Be fruitful, and multiply  
 God told the man and the woman to produce more people like themselves so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful." See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:22]  
 Fill the earth  
 Fill the earth with people.  
 Genesis 1:29  
 General Information:  
 This page has intentionally been left blank.  
 Genesis 1:30  
 General Information:  
 God continues speaking.  
 every bird of the heavens  
 "all the birds that fly in the sky"  
 that has the breath of life  
 "that breathes." This phrase emphasizes that these animals had a different kind of life than the plants. Plants do not breathe, and were to be used as food for the animals. Here "life" means physical life.  
 It was so  
 "It happened like that" or "That is what happened." What God commanded happened just as he said it should. This phrase appears throughout the chapter and has the same meaning. See how you translated it in Genesis 1:7.  
 Genesis 1:31  
 Behold, it  
 "This is true and important: it"  
 it was very good  
 Now when God looked at everything he had made, it was "very good." See how you translated "it was good" in Genesis 1:10.  
 And there was evening and there was morning  
 This refers to the whole day. The writer speaks of the whole day as if it were these two parts. In the Jewish culture, a day begins when the sun sets. See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:5]  
 the sixth day  
 This refers to the sixth day that the universe existed. See how you translated "the first day" in Genesis 1:5 and decide if you should translate this the same way.

## Chapter 2

# Genesis 2 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

Gen. 2:1-3 ends the first creation account, begun in the previous chapter. The second creation account, beginning in 2:4, is very different, using a more natural, story-telling style instead of following a set formula using repeated phrases. Translators should try to imitate this difference in their versions.

## Special concepts in this chapter

The second creation account in Gen. 2:4-25

Gen. 2:4-25 presents an account of creation from a different viewpoint than the one given in Gen. 1:1-2:3. This second account should be regarded as filling out the first account, not as conflicting with it.

Yahweh, the name of God

"Yahweh," the personal name of God in the Old Testament, appears for the first time in this chapter. Translators must

decide how to represent it in their versions. For 2,000 years, it has been traditional for many Christians to represent it with the term "the Lord." Indeed, it is demanded by Roman Catholics for their Bible versions to continue doing this. Of course, the disadvantage of using "the Lord" is that this is a title for God, not a personal name. (See: yahweh) Translators who are not producing versions for Roman Catholics can consider transliterating the name "Yahweh," approximating the name as best as their project languages allow.

Or translators can consider using expressions for the supreme god that might exist in their project languages, such as, "The Great One," "The Ruler of All," "The One who Never Sleeps," etc. Of course, these are descriptive titles, not personal names, so they suffer from the same disadvantages that "the Lord" has.

Translators can also consider pairing a transliteration of "Yahweh" with a meaningful title for the supreme god in the project language. Whatever solution is found should be followed consistently when the name "Yahweh" occurs in the Scriptures.

#### The Garden of Eden

This was not a vegetable garden or cultivated field. Instead, it was probably a large area of land with fruit trees and other plants bearing leaves, etc., that were good to eat. A river flowed out from the Garden of Eden, giving the impression that the Garden was a holy place; in the ancient Near East, temples had gardens and waterways. In Rev. 22:1-2, the throne of God in the New Jerusalem is pictured with a river flowing out from it. (See: holy)

## Links:

[Genesis 2:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 2:1

the heavens

"the sky" or "the skies"

and all the living things that filled them

"and all the many living things that are in them" or "and all the crowds of living things in them"

were finished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God had finished creating them"

### Genesis 2:2

On the seventh day God came to the end of his work

God did not work at all on the seventh day.

came to the end of

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "had finished"

he rested on the seventh day from all his work

"on that day he did not work"

### Genesis 2:3

God blessed the seventh day

Possible meanings are 1) God caused the seventh day to produce good result or 2) God said that the seventh day was good.

sanctified it

"made it holy" or "set it apart"

### Genesis 2:4

General Information:

The rest of Genesis 2 tells about how God created people on the sixth day.

This is the account of the heavens and the earth

"This is the story about the heavens and the earth." Possible meanings are 1) it is a summary of the events described in Genesis 1:1-2:3 or 2) it introduces the events to follow. If possible, translate this so that people can understand it either way.

they were created

"Yahweh God created them." In chapter 1 the writer always speaks of God as "God," but in chapter 2 he always speaks of God as "Yahweh God."

on the day that Yahweh God made

"when Yahweh God created." The word "day" refers to the

whole time span of the creation, not to just one particular day.

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

### Genesis 2:5

No bush of the field

no shrubs growing in the wild that animals might eat

no plant of the field

no leafy plants like vegetables or greens that both animals and humans can eat

to cultivate

to do everything he needed to do so that the plants would grow well

### Genesis 2:6

mist

Possible meanings are 1) something like dew or morning fog or 2) springs from underground streams.

the whole surface of the ground

the entire earth

### Genesis 2:7

formed man

"molded man" or "shaped man" or "created man"

man ... man

"a human being ... the human" or "a person ... the person" not specifically a male

his nostrils

"his nose"

breath of life

"breath that makes things live." Here "life" refers to physical life.

### Genesis 2:8

a garden

This could have been an orchard of fruit trees or an area with all kinds of trees.

eastward

in the east

### Genesis 2:9

the tree of life

"the tree that gives people life"

life

Here this means "eternal life" or life that does not end.

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

"the tree that gives people the ability to understand both good and evil" or "the tree that makes people who eat its fruit able to know good things and bad things"

good and evil

This is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. Alternate translation: "everything, including both good and evil"

in the midst of the garden

"in the middle of the garden." The two trees may not have been in the exact center of the garden.

Genesis 2:10

A river went out of Eden to water the garden

The garden was in Eden. The river continued to flow outside of Eden. "A river flowed through Eden to water the garden"

Genesis 2:11

Pishon

This is the only time this river is referred to in the Bible.

the whole land of Havilah

"the whole land called Havilah." It was somewhere in the Arabian Desert.

where there is gold

This phrase gives information about Havilah. Some languages would translate it as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "There is gold in Havilah"

Genesis 2:12

There are also bdellium and the onyx stone

The word "there" is placed first in the sentence for emphasis. Alternate translation: "This is also where people can find bdellium and onyx stones"

bdellium

This resin comes from a tree and smells nice. A resin is sticky stuff that comes out of some trees and can burn.

the onyx stone

"onyx stones." Onyx is a certain kind of beautiful stone.

Genesis 2:13

Gihon

This is the only mention of this river in the Bible.

flows throughout the whole land of Cush

The river did not cover the whole land, but wound through various parts of the land.

the whole land of Cush

"the entire land called Cush"

Genesis 2:14

it flows east of Ashur

The Tigris River flows from north to south. If people do not know what Ashur was, it can be made clear that it was a city. Alternate translation: "it flows in the land east of the city of Ashur"

Genesis 2:15

the garden of Eden

"the garden that was in Eden"

to work it

"to cultivate it." This means to do everything necessary so

that the plants will grow well.

to maintain it

to guard against anything bad happening in it

Genesis 2:16

From every tree in the garden

"The fruit of every tree in the garden"

you

This pronoun is singular.

may freely eat

"may eat without restriction"

Genesis 2:17

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

"the tree that gives people the ability to understand both good and evil" or "the tree that makes people who eat its fruit able to know good things and bad things." See how you translated this in Genesis 2:9.

Genesis 2:18

I will make him a helper suitable for him

"I will make a helper who is just right for him"

Genesis 2:19

every animal of the field and every bird of the sky

The phrases "of the field" and "of the sky" tell where the animals and birds are usually found. Alternate translation:

"all kinds of animals and birds"

Genesis 2:20

all the livestock

"all the animals that people look after"

there was found no helper suitable for him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"there was no companion that was right for him"

Genesis 2:21

caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man

"caused the man to sleep intensely." A deep sleep is a time of sleeping in which a person is not easily disturbed or awakened.

flesh

This refers to the soft parts of the body like skin and muscle.

Genesis 2:22

With the rib ... he made a woman

"From the rib ... he formed a woman." The rib was the material God made the woman from.

Genesis 2:23

This time, this one is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh

"Finally, this one's bones are like my bones, and her flesh is like my flesh." After looking among all the animals for a partner and not finding one, he finally saw someone who was like him and could be his partner. The man was probably expressing his feeling of relief and joy.

She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of man

The translator may want to write a footnote saying "The Hebrew word for 'woman' sounds like the Hebrew word for 'man.'"

Genesis 2:24

General Information:

What follows is written by the author. The man did not say these things.

Therefore a man

"That is why a man"



a man will leave his father and his mother  
"a man will stop living in his father and mother's home."  
This is about men in general. It does not refer to any particular man at any particular time.  
they will become one flesh  
This idiom speaks of sexual activity as though the bodies that are together become one body. Alternate translation: "their two bodies will become one body"

Genesis 2:25  
They were both naked  
The word "they" refers to the man and the woman that God had created.  
naked  
"not wearing clothing"  
but were not ashamed  
"they were not ashamed about being naked"

---

## Chapter 3

# Genesis 3 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the second creation account that began in Gen. 2:4. But a new section of this account begins in 3:1. The ULB reads, "Now the serpent was more shrewd than any other beast of the field which Yahweh God had made," because this is how the Scriptures introduce the serpent into the account. However, many languages prefer different ways to introduce new characters or things into stories, for example, "One of the wild animals made by God was the serpent" or "This is about the serpent, one of the wild animals that God had made."  
Scholars typically refer to the events of this chapter as "the fall" or "the fall of man" because sin is introduced into creation. (See: sin)

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Curses

In this chapter, God curses the man, the woman, and the serpent for their sins. In general, cursing is calling down God's punishment on someone or something. In this chapter, however, it is God himself who is doing the cursing. Of course, he does not call down punishment on the man, the woman, and the serpent from someone else. Instead, he is promising that he himself will punish them. (See: curse)

### Serpent

Most scholars believe that the serpent is Satan, even though his name is not used in this chapter. There are other places in Scripture where the serpent is used as an image for Satan. )

## Links:

[Genesis 3:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 3:1

Now

The writer is beginning a new part of the story.

more shrewd

"more cunning" or "smarter at getting what he wanted by telling lies"

Has God really said, 'You ... garden'?

The snake is pretending to be surprised that God has made this rule. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that God said, 'You ... garden.'"

You must not eat

The word "you" is plural and refers to the man and the woman.

### Genesis 3:2

We may eat

"We are allowed to eat" or "We have permission to eat"

### Genesis 3:3

You must not ... and you must not ... you will die

The word "you" is plural and refers to the man and the woman.

You must not eat it, and you must not touch it

"Do not eat it, and do not touch it" or "You must not eat it or touch it"

or you will die

This tells what would happen if they ate or touched the

fruit of that tree. Alternate translation: "If you eat it or touch it, you will die"

### Genesis 3:4

You will ... not die

These words refer to the man and the woman and so are dual or plural.

### Genesis 3:5

you ... your ... you

These words refer to the man and the woman and so are dual or plural.

your eyes will be opened

"your eyes will open." This idiom means "you will become aware of things" or "you will understand new things." This meaning can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "It will be as though your eyes were opened"

knowing good and evil

Here "good and evil" is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. See how you translated "knowledge of good and evil" in [Genesis 2:9]

### Genesis 3:6

it was a delight to the eyes

"the tree was delightful to look at" or "it was nice to look at" or "it was very beautiful"

that the tree was desirable to make one wise

"she wanted the tree's fruit because it could make a person wise" or "she wanted its fruit because it could make her

understand what was right and wrong just as God does"

Genesis 3:7

The eyes of both of them were opened

"Then their eyes opened" or "They became aware" or "They understood." See how you translated "your eyes will be opened" in Genesis 3:5.

sewed

put together, probably using vines as thread

fig leaves

If people do not know what fig leaves are like, this can be translated as "large leaves from a fig tree" or simply "large leaves."

made coverings for their loins

They did this because they were ashamed. This implicit information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "clothed themselves with them because they were ashamed"

Genesis 3:8

in the cool of the day

"at the time of day when a cool breeze blows"

from the presence of Yahweh God

"from Yahweh God's sight" or "so that Yahweh God would not see them" or "from Yahweh God"

Genesis 3:9

Where are you?

"Why are you trying to hide from me?" God knew where the man was. When the man answered, he did not say where he was but why he was hiding.

you

In verses 9 and 11, God was speaking to the man.

Languages that have a singular form of "you" would use that here.

Genesis 3:10

I heard you

"I heard the sound you were making"

Genesis 3:11

Who told you

God knew the answer to this question. He asked it in order to help Adam to confess that he had disobeyed God.

Have you eaten from ... from?

Again, God knew that Adam had eaten from that tree. Translate this question in a form that shows that God was speaking about Adam's disobedience. The sentence can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You must have eaten from ... from."

Genesis 3:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 3:13

What is this you have done?

God already knew what the woman had done. When he asked this question, he was giving her the opportunity to tell him about it, and he was expressing his disappointment with what she had done. Many languages use rhetorical questions for scolding or rebuking. If possible, use a form that expresses this disappointment. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have done a terrible thing."

Genesis 3:14

cursed are you alone

"you alone are cursed." The word "curse" is first in Hebrew in order to emphasize the contrast between God's blessing on the animals and this curse on the serpent. This is a "curse formula," or the way that curses were expressed. By saying this curse, God made it happen.

all the livestock and all the beasts of the field

"all domestic animals and all wild animals"

It is on your stomach that you will go

"You will move along the ground on your stomach." The words "it is upon your stomach" comes first to emphasize the contrast between the way other animals would move along using their legs and the way the serpent would slither along on its stomach. This is also part of the curse formula.

it is dust that you will eat

"you will eat dust." The words "it is dust" comes first to emphasize the contrast between the plants above the ground that other animals would eat and the dirty food on the ground that the serpent would eat. This is part of the curse formula.

Genesis 3:15

hostility between you and the woman

This means that the serpent and the woman would become enemies.

seed

The word "seed" refers to what a man puts into a woman to cause a baby to grow inside the woman. Like the word "offspring," it can refer to more than one person. Try to find a word that is singular but can refer to more than one person.

He will bruise ... his heel

The words "he" and "his" refer to the woman's descendant. If "seed" was translated as plural, this can be translated as "they will bruise ... their heel"; in this case, consider inserting footnotes to say that the "they" and "their" are used to translate a singular pronoun.

bruise

"crush" or "strike" or "attack"

Genesis 3:16

I will greatly multiply your pain

"I will make your pain increase much" or "I will make your pain to be very severe"

in childbirth

"in giving birth to children" or "when you give birth to children"

Your desire will be for your husband

"You will have a strong desire for your husband." Possible meanings are 1) "You will want very much to be with your husband" or 2) "You will want to control your husband"

he will rule over you

"he will be your master" or "he will control you"

Genesis 3:17

Adam

The name Adam is the same as the Hebrew word for "man." Some translations say "Adam" and some say "the man." You may use either form as it refers to the same person.

you have listened to the voice of your wife

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "you have obeyed what your wife said"

have eaten from the tree

You can say what it was that they ate. Alternate translation: "have eaten the fruit of the tree" or "have eaten some of the fruit of the tree"

You may not eat from it

"You must not eat from it" or "Do not eat its fruit"

cursed is the ground

The word "curse" comes first in the sentence to emphasize that the ground, which had been "good"

through painful work

"by doing hard work"

you will eat from it

The word "it" refers to the ground and is a metonym for the parts of the plants, which grow in the ground, that people eat. Alternate translation: "you will eat what grows from it"

Genesis 3:18

the plants of the field

Possible meanings are 1) "the plants that you take care of in your fields" or 2) "the wild plants that grow in the open fields."

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your face

"By doing hard work that makes your face sweat"

you will eat bread

Here the word "bread" is a synecdoche for food in general.

Alternate translation: "you will eat food"

until you return to the ground

"until you die and your body is put in the ground." In some cultures, they put the bodies of people who have died in a hole in the ground. Man's hard work does not end until the time of his death and burial.

For dust you are, and to dust you will return

"I made you from soil, so your body will become soil again."

Translate both occurrences of "dust" with the same word in order to show that man begins and ends in the same condition.

Genesis 3:20

The man

Some translations say "Adam."

called his wife's name Eve

"gave his wife the name Eve" or "named his wife Eve"

Eve

Translators may write a footnote saying "The name Eve sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'living.'"

all the living

The word "living" refers to people. Alternate translation:

"all people" or "all living people"

Genesis 3:21

garments of skins

"clothing made out of animal skins"

Genesis 3:22

the man

Possible meanings are 1) God was referring to one human, the man, or 2) God was referring to humans in general, so this would mean the man and his wife. Even if God was speaking about one person, what he said applied to both of them.

like one of us

"like us." The pronoun "us" is plural. See how you translated "Let us make" in Genesis 1:26.

knowing good and evil

Here "good and evil" is a figure of speech that refers to both extremes and everything in between. See how you translated "knowledge of good and evil" in [Genesis 2:9]

he must not be allowed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not allow him"

tree of life

"the tree that gives people life." See how you translated this in Genesis 2:9.

Genesis 3:23

the ground from which he had been taken

"dirt because he had been taken from dirt." This does not refer to the particular place on the land that the God took man from.

to cultivate

This means to what is needed so that plants grow well. See how you translated this in Genesis 2:5.

Genesis 3:24

So God drove the man out of the garden

"God forced the man to leave the garden." This refers to the event in Genesis 3:23, where it says "Yahweh God sent him out of the garden of Eden." God did not send the man out a second time.

in order to guard the way to the tree of life

"in order to stop people from going to the tree of life"

flaming sword

Possible meanings are 1) a sword that had flames coming from it or 2) a fire that was shaped like a sword. Languages that do not have swords could use another weapon such as a spear or arrow.

---

## Chapter 4

# Genesis 4 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

Most of the text in this chapter is prose, but 4:23-24 is poetry. It would be good if the translator could put these two verses into poetic form, or at least into elegant speech, so that they are different from the rest of the chapter.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Vengeance

The theme of vengeance is important in this chapter. Ancient Hebrew society allowed for people to seek revenge if a relative was murdered. After Cain murdered his brother Abel, he thought that he would be helpless against this danger because he had been driven away from God's protection. (See: avenge)

The theme of vengeance continues with the words of Lamech, who had killed someone for injuring him: "I have killed a

man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain is avenged seven times as much, truly Lamech will be avenged seventy-seven times as much" (Gen. 4:23b-24).

## Links:

[Genesis 4:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 4:1

The man knew Eve

This is a polite way of saying that the man had sexual relations with Eve. You may need to use another euphemism in your language.

The man

"the human being" or "Adam"

I have produced a man

The word for "man" typically describes an adult male, rather than a baby or child. If that would cause confusion, it could be translated as "manchild" or "boy" or "baby boy" or "son."

Cain

Translators may want to include a footnote that says "The name Cain sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'produce.' Eve named him Cain because she produced him."

### Genesis 4:2

Then she gave birth

We do not know how much time passed between the births of Cain and Abel. They may have been twins, or Abel may have been born after Eve became pregnant again. If possible, use an expression that does not tell how much time passed.

cultivated

This means he did everything he needed to do so that the plants would grow well. See how "cultivate" is translated in Genesis 2:5.

### Genesis 4:3

It came about that

This phrase is used to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using that method here.

in the course of time

Possible meanings are 1) "after some time had passed" or 2) "at the right time"

fruit of the ground

This refers to the food that came from plants he had tended. Alternate translation: "crops" or "harvest"

### Genesis 4:4

some of the fat

This refers to the fatty parts of the lambs that he had killed, it was the best part of the animal. Alternate translation: "some of their fat parts"

accepted

"looked favorably upon" or "was pleased with"

### Genesis 4:5

did not accept

"did not look favorably upon" or "was not pleased with"

was very angry

Some languages have an idiom for anger such as "He burned" or "His anger burned."

he scowled

This means that the expression on his face showed that he

was angry or jealous. Some languages have an idiom that describes what a person's face looks like when he is angry.

### Genesis 4:6

Why are you angry and why are you scowling?

God used these rhetorical questions to tell Cain that he was wrong to be angry and scowl. They may also have been intended to give Cain an opportunity to confess that he was wrong.

### Genesis 4:7

If you ... will you not be accepted?

God used this rhetorical question to remind Cain of something Cain should have already known. Alternate translation: "You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you"

But if you do not ... you must rule over it

God speaks of sin as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "But if you do not do what is right, you will desire to sin even more, and then you will do sinful things. You must refuse to obey it"

sin crouches ... to control you

Here sin is spoken of as a dangerous wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack Cain. Alternate translation: "you will become so angry that you will not be able to stop sin"

sin

Languages that do not have a noun that means "sin" could translate this as "your desire to sin" or "the bad things you want to do."

you must rule over it

Yahweh speaks of Cain's desire to sin as if it were a person over whom Cain should rule. Alternate translation: "you must control it so you do not sin"

### Genesis 4:8

Cain spoke to Abel his brother.

Some early translations tell explicitly what Cain said to his brother. You may want to do the same if it is present in your national version. Alternate translation: "Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go into the fields.'"

brother

Abel was Cain's younger brother. Some languages may need to use the word for "younger brother."

rose up against

Standing up to fight against a person is an idiom for attacking him. Alternate translation: "attacked"

### Genesis 4:9

Where is Abel your brother

God knew that Cain had killed Abel, but he asked Cain this question so that Cain would have to answer.

Am I my brother's keeper?

Cain used this rhetorical question so that he would not have to tell the truth. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am not my brother's keeper!" or "You know that taking care of my brother is not my job!"

#### Genesis 4:10

What have you done?

God uses a rhetorical question to rebuke Cain. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "What you have done is terrible!"

Your brother's blood is calling out to me

Abel's blood is a metonym for his death, as if it were a person calling out for God to punish Cain. Alternate translation: "Your brother's blood is like a person calling out to me to punish the person who killed him"

#### Genesis 4:11

Now cursed are you from the ground

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am cursing you so that you will not be able to grow food from the ground"

which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood

God speaks of the earth as if it were a person who could drink Abel's blood. Alternate translation: "which is soaked with your brother's blood"

from your hand

Here Cain is represented by his "hand," to emphasize that he personally had killed his brother. Alternate translation: "that spilled when you killed him" or "from you"

#### Genesis 4:12

cultivate

This means to do everything necessary to do so that the plants would grow well. See how "cultivate" is translated in Genesis 2:5.

it will not yield to you its strength

The ground is personified as if it were a person who loses strength. Alternate translation: "the ground will not produce much food for you"

A fugitive and a wanderer

You can join these words together. Alternate translation: "A homeless wanderer"

#### Genesis 4:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 4:14

I will be hidden from your face

The term "your face" represents God's presence. Alternate translation: "I will not be able to speak to you"

a fugitive and a wanderer

See how you translated this in Genesis 4:12

#### Genesis 4:15

vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will take vengeance on him seven times" or "I will punish that person seven times as severely as I am punishing you" would not attack him

"would not kill Cain"

#### Genesis 4:16

went out from the presence of Yahweh

Even though Yahweh is everywhere, this idiom speaks of Cain as though he went far away. Alternate translation: "went away from where Yahweh spoke to him"

Nod

Translators may add a footnote saying "The word Nod means 'wandering.'"

#### Genesis 4:17

Cain knew his wife

This is a polite way of saying that Cain had sexual relations with his wife. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 4:1]

He built a city

"Cain built a city"

#### Genesis 4:18

To Enoch was born Irad

It is implied that Enoch grew up and married a woman.

Alternate translation: "Enoch grew up and married and became the father of a son whom he named Irad"

Irada

This is a man's name.

#### Genesis 4:19

Adah ... Zillah

women's names

#### Genesis 4:20

Adah

See how you translated this woman's name in Genesis 4:19.

He was the father of those who live in tents and have livestock

Possible meanings are 1) "He was the first person to live in a tent and have livestock" or 2) "his descendants live in tents and have livestock."

#### Genesis 4:21

He was the father of those who play the harp and pipe

Possible meanings are 1) "He was the first person to play the harp and pipe" or 2) "He and his descendants played the harp and pipe."

#### Genesis 4:22

Zillah

See how you translated this woman's name in Genesis 4:19.

Tubal-Cain

the name of a man

the forger of tools of bronze and iron

"who made tools out of bronze and iron"

iron

a very strong metal used to make tools and weapons.

#### Genesis 4:23

Adah ... Zillah

See how you translated these women's names in Genesis 4:19.

listen to my voice ... listen to my words

Lamech said the same thing twice for emphasis. His voice is a synecdoche for his whole person. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to me"

a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me

Lamech killed only one person. These two phrases means the same thing and are repeated to emphasize the certainty of his action. Alternate translation: "a young man because he hurt me"

#### Genesis 4:24

If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech

Lamech knows that God will avenge Cain seven times.

Alternate translation: "Since God will punish anyone who kills Cain seven times, Lamech"

then Lamech will be avenged seventy-seven times

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whoever kills me, God will punish seventy-seven times"

seventy-seven

77

Genesis 4:25

Adam knew his wife

This is a polite way of saying that Adam had sexual relations with his wife. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 4:1]

said, "God has given me another son

This is the reason that she named him Seth. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "explained, 'God has given me another child'"

Seth

Translators may add a footnote that says "This name sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'has given.'"

Genesis 4:26

A son was born to Seth

This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Seth's wife bore him a son"

to call on the name of Yahweh

This is the first time people called God by the name Yahweh. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "to worship God by using the name Yahweh"

---

## Chapter 5

# Genesis 5 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter provides the first of many lists of descendants in the Bible. This is not a simple list, because the author makes comments about each person. Translators should format this text in the way that is clearest in the project language. Many may choose to introduce each new person in a separate paragraph, as the ULB and UDB do.

## Links:

[Genesis 5:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 5:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of the list of Adam's descendants.

in his own likeness

This phrase means that God made mankind to be like him.

This verse does not tell in what ways God made people to be like himself. God does not have a body, so it does not mean that people would look like God. See how "after our likeness" is translated in [Genesis 1:26]

Genesis 5:2

when they were created

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "when he created them"

Genesis 5:3

130

Translators may write the words "one hundred thirty."

he became the father of a son

"he had a son"

in his own likeness, after his image

These two phrases mean the same thing. They are used as a reminder that God made man in his own image. See how you translated similar phrases in Genesis 1:26.

Seth

See how you translated this name in Genesis 4:25.

Genesis 5:4

eight hundred

Translators may write the numerals "800."

He became the father of more sons and daughters

"He had more sons and daughters"

Genesis 5:5

then he died

This phrase will be repeated throughout the chapter. Use the ordinary word for "died."

Adam lived 930 years

"Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years." People used to

live a very long time. Use your ordinary word for "years."

Alternate translation: "Adam lived a total of 930 years"

Genesis 5:6

105 years

"one hundred and five years"

he became the father of Enosh

Here "father" means his actual father, not his grandfather.

Alternate translation: "he had his son Enosh"

Enosh

This is the name of a person.

Genesis 5:7

807 years

"eight hundred and seven years"

and became the father of more sons and daughters

"and had more sons and daughters"

Genesis 5:8

Seth lived 912 years

"Seth lived nine hundred and twelve years." Seth lived a total of 912 years.

then he died

This phrase is repeated throughout the chapter. Use the ordinary word for "died."

Genesis 5:9

General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format.

Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8]

ninety years

"90 years"

Genesis 5:10

815 years

"eight hundred and fifteen years"

Genesis 5:11

905 years

"nine hundred and give years"

Genesis 5:12

General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format.

Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8]

seventy years

"70 years"

Genesis 5:13

840 years

"eight hundred and forty years"

Genesis 5:14

910 years

"nine hundred and ten years"

Genesis 5:15

General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format.

Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8]

Genesis 5:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:18

General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format.

Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8]

Genesis 5:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:21

he became the father of Methuselah

"he had his son Methuselah"

Methuselah

This is the name of a man.

Genesis 5:22

Enoch walked with God

To walk with someone is a metaphor for being in a close relationship with him. Alternate translation: "Enoch had a close relationship with God" or "Enoch lived in union with God"

He became the father of more sons and daughters

"He had more sons and daughters"

Genesis 5:23

Enoch lived 365 years

"Enoch lived three hundred and sixty-five years." Enoch

lived a total of 365 years.

Genesis 5:24

then he was gone

The word "he" refers to Enoch. He was no longer on earth.

for God took him

This means that God took Enoch to be with himself (God).

Genesis 5:25

General Information:

The records in Genesis 5:6-27 have the same format.

Translate them according to the notes in [Genesis 5:6-8]

Lamech

This Lamech is different from the Lamech in Genesis 4:18.

Genesis 5:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 5:28

182 years

"one hundred and eighty-two years"

became the father of a son

"had a son"

Genesis 5:29

Noah

Translators may want to add a footnote that says: "This

name sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'rest.'"

from our work and from the painful labor of our hands

Lamech says the same thing twice to emphasize how hard

the work was. Alternate translation: "from working so hard

with our hands"

Genesis 5:30

595 years

"five hundred and ninety-five years"

Genesis 5:31

Lamech lived 777 years

"Lamech lived seven hundred seventy-seven years."

Lamech lived a total of 777 years"

Genesis 5:32

he became the father of

"he had his sons." This does not tell us whether the sons

were born on the same day or in different years.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth

These sons may not be listed in the order of their birth.

There is disagreement about which one was the oldest.

Avoid translating this in a way that implies that the list is in

the order of their ages.

---

Chapter 6

## Genesis 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Beginning in 6:22, the author gives statements summarizing events he tells about again in the text that follows. In the next chapter, the author sometimes gives summary statements that introduce events for the first time. If these statements, and the surrounding events, are not carefully translated, readers can believe that the same events happened twice or three times instead of only one time. Translators should be careful not to give this impression.

Links:

[Genesis 6:1 Notes](#)

Genesis 6:1

It came about

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.

daughters were born to them

This can be active. Alternate translation: "the women bore daughters"

Genesis 6:2

sons of God

Translators could add a footnote saying: "It is not clear whether this refers to heavenly beings or human beings. In either case, they were beings that God created." Some believe these words refer to angels who rebelled against God, that is, evil spirits or demons. Others think this may refer to powerful political rulers, and others think this may refer to the descendants of Seth.

Genesis 6:3

My spirit

Here Yahweh is talking about himself and his spirit, which is the Spirit of God.

flesh

This means that they have physical bodies that will one day die.

They will live 120 years

"They will live one hundred and twenty years." Possible meanings are 1) the normal lifespan of people would decrease to 120 years. Alternate translation: "They will not live more than 120 years" or 2) in 120 years everyone would die. Alternate translation: "They will live only 120 years"

Genesis 6:4

The Nephilim

These seem to have been giants, very tall, large people.

This happened when

"The Nephilim were born because"

sons of God

See how you translated this in Genesis 6:2.

These were the mighty men of old

"These Nephilim were the mighty men who lived long ago" or "These children grew to become the powerful fighters who lived long ago"

mighty men

men who are courageous and victorious in battle

men of renown

"famous men"

Genesis 6:5

every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts

"everything their hearts wanted to think about"

the thoughts of their hearts

The writer speaks of the heart as if it were the part of the body that thinks. Your language may use a word other than "heart" to talk about the part of people that thinks.

Alternate translation: "their inner, secret thoughts"

Genesis 6:6

it grieved him to his heart

The writer speaks of the heart as if it were the part of the body that feels sadness. Your language may use a word other than "heart" to talk about the emotions. Alternate

translation: "he was very, very sad about it"

Genesis 6:7

I will wipe away mankind ... from the surface of the earth

The writer speaks of God killing people as if God were wiping dirt off a flat surface. Alternate translation: "I will destroy mankind ... so that there will not be any people on the earth"

I will wipe away mankind whom I have created

Some languages would need to translate this as two sentences. Alternate translation: "I created mankind. I will wipe them away"

wipe away

"completely destroy." Here "wipe away" is used in a negative sense, for God is talking about destroying the people because of their sin.

Genesis 6:8

Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh

The phrase "found favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "Yahweh looked favorably on Noah" or "Yahweh was pleased with Noah"

Genesis 6:9

General Information:

This begins the story of Noah, which continues into chapter 9.

walked with God

See how you translated this in Genesis 5:21.

Genesis 6:10

Noah became the father of three sons

"Noah had three sons" or "Noah's wife had three sons"

Shem, Ham, and Japheth

Translators may add the following footnote: "The sons are not listed in the order in which they were born."

Genesis 6:11

The earth

Possible meanings are 1) the people who lived on the earth or 2) "The earth itself."

was corrupt

The people doing what is evil is spoken of as if they were food that has become rotten. Alternate translation: "was rotten" or "was completely evil"

before God

Possible meanings are 1) "in God's sight" or 2) "in the presence of Yahweh" as in Genesis 4:16.

and it was filled with violence

The writer speaks of violence as if it were something that could be put into a container and of the earth as a container. Alternate translation: "and there were very

many violent people on the earth" or "because it was full of people who did evil things to each other"

Genesis 6:12

behold

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

all flesh

Possible meanings for what "all flesh" represents are 1) all human beings or 2) all physical beings, including humans and animal.



had corrupted their way

How a person behaves is spoken of as if it were a way or road. Alternate translation: "had stopped living the way God wanted" or "had behaved in an evil way"

Genesis 6:13

all flesh

See how you translated these words in Genesis 6:12.

the earth is filled with violence through them

"people everywhere on earth are violent"

I will destroy them with the earth

"I will destroy both them and the earth" or "I will destroy them when I destroy the earth"

Genesis 6:14

an ark

This refers to a very large box that would be able to float on water even in a very bad storm. "a large boat" or "a ship" or "a barge"

cypress wood

People do not know exactly what kind of tree this was.

"wood used for building boats" or "good wood"

cover it with pitch

The reason for doing this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "spread pitch on it" or "paint tar on it" or "cover it with pitch to make it waterproof"

pitch

This is a thick, sticky or oily liquid that people put on the outside of a boat to stop water from going through gaps in the wood into the boat.

Genesis 6:15

cubits

A cubit was a unit of measure, a little less than half a meter long.

three hundred cubits

"138 meters." You may use the Hebrew measuring units from the ULB or the metric units from the UDB or your own culture's units if you know how they compare to the metric units. You may also write a footnote that says: "Three hundred cubits is about 138 meters."

fifty cubits

"twenty-three meters"

thirty cubits

"fourteen meters"

Genesis 6:16

a roof for the ark

This was probably a peaked or slanted roof. Its purpose was to protect everything in the ark from the rain.

cubit

A cubit was a little less than half a meter long. See how you translated this in [Genesis 6:15]

a lower, a second, and a third deck

"a lower deck, a middle deck, and an upper deck" or "three decks inside"

deck

"floor" or "level"

Genesis 6:17

Listen

God said this in order to emphasize that he would do what he was about to say. "Pay attention" or "Listen to what I am saying"

I am about to bring the flood of waters

In some languages it may be better to say "to send" instead of "to bring." It is also possible to avoid the direction and say "to cause." Alternate translation: "I am about to send a flood of waters" or "I am about to cause a flood"

all flesh

Here "flesh" represents all physical beings, including humans and animals.

that has in it the breath of life

Here "breath" represents life. Alternate translation: "that lives"

Genesis 6:18

establish my covenant with you

"make a covenant between you and me"

with you

with Noah

You will come into the ark

"You will enter the ark." Some translations say "You will go into the ark."

Genesis 6:19

Of every living creature of all flesh, two of every kind you must bring into the ark

"You must bring into the ark two of every kind of living creature"

creature

an animal God created

all flesh

See how you translated these words in Genesis 6:12.

Genesis 6:20

after their kind

"of each different kind"

creeping thing of the ground

This refers to small animals that move on the ground .

two of every sort

This refers to two of every kind of bird and animal.

to you

This refers to Noah and so is singular.

to keep them alive

"so you can keep them alive"

Genesis 6:21

yourself ... you

These refer to Noah and are singular.

food that is eaten

"food that people and animals eat"

Genesis 6:22

So Noah did this. According to all that God commanded him, so he did. These two sentences mean the same thing. The second sentence explains the first and emphasizes that Noah obeyed God. These parallel sentences can be combined into one. Alternate translation: "So Noah did everything that God commanded him to do"

Chapter 7

## Genesis 7 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the author continues his pattern of statements that summarize events already described, and of repeating events that have already happened. Again, careful translation is necessary so that readers do not think that the same events happened more than one time in the story. Special attention in this regard should be given to 7:5,10,13, and 17.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Clean animals and birds

Noah sacrificed to Yahweh some of the "clean" animals and birds that he had with him (8:20). These were animals and birds that the Hebrew people would later consider to be fit to eat and to sacrifice to God. (See: clean)

### Water underneath and over the earth

The flood is presented as occurring because of rain pouring out of the sky and because of seawater rising from under the earth. This is because the ancient Hebrews pictured the earth as resting on top of the sea. They also pictured the sky as containing water above the earth that poured down through windows in the sky when God allowed it to rain. Translators should not try to change this picture in order to suit what readers believe about the world. (See: heaven)

## Links:

[Genesis 7:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 7:1

#### General Information:

The events in this chapter take place after Noah built the ark, gathered the food, and put it in the ark.

Come ... into the ark

"Enter ... into the ark." Many translations read "Go ... into the ark."

you

The word "you" refers to Noah and is singular.

your household

"your family"

righteous before me

This means that God saw Noah as righteous.

in this generation

This refers to all the people who were living at that time.

Alternate translation: "among all the people who are now living"

### Genesis 7:2

you will bring

"take." Many translations read "you will take."

clean animal

This was an animal that God allowed his people to eat and to sacrifice.

animals that are not clean

These were animals that God did not allow people to eat or to sacrifice.

### Genesis 7:3

to keep their offspring alive

"so that they will have offspring that will live" or "so that, after the flood, animals will continue to live"

### Genesis 7:4

forty days and forty nights

This was a full forty days. It was not a total of eighty days.

Alternate translation: "forty days and nights"

living

This refers to physical life.

### Genesis 7:5

#### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

### Genesis 7:6

#### General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

came upon the earth

"happened" or "came on the earth"

### Genesis 7:7

because of the waters of the flood

"because of the flood that would come" or "to escape the flood water"

### Genesis 7:8

#### General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

clean animals

These were animals that God allowed people to eat and to give to him as sacrifices.

unclean animals

These were animals that God did not allow people to eat or to give to him as sacrifices.

### Genesis 7:9

two by two

The animals entered the boat in pairs of one male and one female.

### Genesis 7:10

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story: the start of the flood. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

after the seven days

"after seven days" or "seven days later"

the waters of the flood came upon the earth

The implicit information, "it started to rain" can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "it started to rain and the waters of the flood came upon the earth"

### Genesis 7:11

#### General Information:

Verses 6-12 repeat for a second time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life

"When Noah was 600 years old"

the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month

Since Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring to the second month of the Hebrew calendar. But this is uncertain.

on the same day

This refers to the specific day when the rain began. This phrase emphasizes how all of these major events happened quickly when the time arrived.

the fountains of the great deep burst open

"water from under the earth rushed up to the earth's surface"

the great deep

This refers to the sea that was thought to be under the earth.

the windows of heaven were opened

This refers to rain. It describes the sky as a ceiling that keeps the waters above it from falling down to the earth. When the windows, or doors, in the sky were opened, the water came down through them. Alternate translation: "the sky opened" or "the doors in the sky opened"

Genesis 7:12

rain

If your language has a word for a great amount of rain, it would be appropriate here.

Genesis 7:13

General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

On that very same day

"On that exact day." This refers to the day that the rain started. Verses 13-16 tell what Noah did immediately before the rain began.

Genesis 7:14

wild animal ... livestock ... creeping thing ... bird

These four groups are listed to show that every kind of animal was included. If your language has another way of grouping all the animals, you can use that, or you can use these groups. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:24.

creeping thing

This refers to animals that crawl on the ground, like rodents, insects, lizards, and snakes.

according to its kind

"so that each kind of animal will produce more of its own kind." See how you translated this in Genesis 1:24.

Genesis 7:15

General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

Two of all flesh

Here "flesh" represents animals.

in which was the breath of life

Here "breath" represents life. Alternate translation: "that lived"

came to Noah

The word "came" can be translated as "went."

of all flesh

Here "flesh" represents animals. Alternate translation: "of every kind of animal"

Genesis 7:16

after them

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "after they entered the ark"

Genesis 7:17

General Information:

Verses 13-18 repeat for a third time and give more detail about how Noah went into the ark with his family and the animals in [Genesis 7:1-5](#). This is not a new event.

the water increased

"the water became very deep." This happened during the forty days while the water kept coming.

lifted the ark

"it caused the ark to float"

raised it above the earth

"causes the ark to rise up high over the ground" or "he ark floated on top of the deep water"

Genesis 7:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 7:19

The waters rose greatly on the earth

"The water totally overwhelmed the earth"

Genesis 7:20

fifteen cubits

"six meters." See how you translated this in Genesis 6:15.

Genesis 7:21

moved upon

"moved about" or "roamed"

all the living creatures that lived in great numbers upon the earth

This refers to all the animals that move around on the ground in large groups.

Genesis 7:22

who breathed the breath of life through their noses

Here "noses" represent the whole animal or human.

Alternate translation: "everyone that breathed"

the breath of life

The words "breath" and "life" represent the power that causes people and animals to be alive.

Genesis 7:23

So every living thing ... was wiped out

If necessary, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So every living thing ... perished" or "So the flood completely destroyed every living thing"

They were all destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God destroyed them all"

from the earth

"so they were no longer on the earth"

those with him

"the people and animals that were with him"

were left

"remained" or "lived" or "remained alive"

Genesis 7:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

## Genesis 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 in 8:22, which is part of what Yahweh was telling Noah.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Flood waters

The waters receded after this great flood. Because there was so much water, and it came from God, it is described in a unique way.

#### The mountains of Ararat

It is unclear where Ararat was located. Many people believe it is located in the modern country of Turkey.

### Links:

[Genesis 8 1 Notes](#)

---

#### Genesis 8:1

God remembered Noah

This does not mean that God had forgotten about Noah and suddenly remembered him. The words "God remembered Noah" mean that God was now going to help Noah after the flood. Alternate translation: "God had not forgotten Noah" or "God thought of Noah" or "God decided to help Noah"

ark

This refers to a very large box that would be able to float on water even in a very bad storm. See how you translated this in Genesis 6:14. Alternate translation: "a large boat" or "a ship" or "a barge"

#### Genesis 8:2

The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed  
"The water stopped coming out of the ground and the rain stopped falling." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God closed the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven"

fountains of the deep

"water from under the earth." See how this is translated in Genesis 7:11.

the windows of heaven were closed

This refers to the rain stopping. It describes the sky as a ceiling that keeps the waters above it from falling down to the earth. When the windows, or doors, in the sky were closed, the water stopped coming through them. See how "the windows of heaven" is translated in Genesis 7:11. Alternate translation: "the sky closed" or "the doors in the sky closed"

#### Genesis 8:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 8:4

came to rest

"landed" or "stopped on solid ground"

in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month

Because Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring to the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain.

#### Genesis 8:5

tenth month

Because Moses wrote this book, it is possible he is referring

to the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain.

On the first day of the month

"On the first day of the tenth month"

appeared

This can be made more explicit: "appeared above the surface of the water."

#### Genesis 8:6

It came about

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. Alternate translation: "It happened that"

It came about ... the window of the ark which he had made

The phrase "which he had made" tells about the window. Some languages may need to make this phrase a separate sentence: "Noah had made a window in the boat. It came about after forty days that he opened the window"

#### Genesis 8:7

raven

a black bird that eats mainly the flesh of dead animals

it flew back and forth

This means that the raven kept leaving the boat and returning.

until the waters were dried up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the wind dried up the waters" or "until the waters dried up"

#### Genesis 8:8

he sent out a dove

If you use masculine pronouns for the word "dove," you may need to insert Noah's name here to avoid confusion: "Noah sent out a dove."

#### Genesis 8:9

to rest her foot

"to land" or "to perch." It means to land on something in order to rest from flying.

her foot ... she returned ... and brought her

The word "dove" is feminine in the author's language. You could translate these phrases with the pronouns "its ... it ... it" or "his ... he ... him," depending on how your language refers to a dove.

he ... him

If you use masculine pronouns for the word "dove," you may need to insert Noah's name here to avoid confusion: "Noah sent out a dove," "Noah stretched forth his hand," etc.

Genesis 8:10

He waited another seven days

"He again waited for seven days"

Genesis 8:11

Look

"Pay attention" or "This is important"

a freshly plucked olive leaf

"a leaf that she had just plucked from an olive tree"

plucked

"broken off"

Genesis 8:12

She did not return again to him

If people would not understand, you could state the reason explicitly: "She did not return again to him because she found a place to land."

Genesis 8:13

It came about

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.

in the six hundred and first year

"when Noah was 601 years old"

the first month, on the first day of the month

Since Moses wrote this book it is possible he is referring to the first month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain.

the waters were dried up from off the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the waters covering the earth dried up" or "the wind dried up the waters covering the earth"

the covering of the ark

This refers to a cover that kept the rain water from going into the ark.

behold

The word "behold" tells us to pay attention to the important information that comes next.

Genesis 8:14

In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month

"On the twenty seventh day of the second month." This may refer to the second month of the Hebrew calendar, but this is uncertain.

the earth was dry

"the ground was completely dry"

Genesis 8:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 8:16

Go out of

"Leave." Some translations read "Come out."

Genesis 8:17

Take out

"Take." Some translations read "Bring out."

every living creature of all flesh

"every kind of living creature." See how "all flesh" is translated in Genesis 6:12.

be fruitful and multiply

This is an idiom. See how this is translated in [Genesis 1:28]

Genesis 8:18

Noah went out

Some translations read "Noah came out."

Genesis 8:19

according to their families

"in groups of their own kinds"

Genesis 8:20

built an altar to Yahweh

"built an altar dedicated to Yahweh" or "built an altar for worshiping Yahweh." He may have built it with stones.

clean animals ... clean birds

Here "clean" means that God allowed these animals to be used in sacrifice. Some animals were not used for sacrifices and were called "unclean."

offered burnt offerings

Noah killed the animals and then completely burned them up as an offering to God. Alternate translation: "burned the animals as offerings to Yahweh"

Genesis 8:21

pleasing aroma

This refers to the good smell of the roasted meat.

said in his heart

Here the word "heart" refers to God's thoughts and emotions.

curse the ground

"do very serious harm to the earth"

because of mankind

This can be made more explicit: "because mankind is sinful."

the intention of mankind's heart is evil from childhood

"from their earliest years they tend to do evil things" or

"when they are young, they want to do evil things"

the intention of mankind's heart

Here the word "heart" refers to people's thoughts, emotions, desires, and will. Alternate translation: "their tendency" or "their habit"

from childhood

This refers to an older child. Alternate translation: "from their youth"

Genesis 8:22

While the earth remains

"While the earth lasts" or "As long as the earth exists"

seed time

"the season for planting"

cold and heat, summer and winter

These expressions both refer to two major weather conditions in the year. Translators may use local expressions.

summer

the hot, dry time of the year

winter

the cool, wet or snowy time of the year

will not cease

"will continue"

## Genesis 9 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers or songs. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of 9:6-7, which is the poetic part of the quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

They also set apart 9:25-27, which contains two quotations.

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 9:6 and 9:25-27.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Man's relationship to animals

There is a noticeable shift in man's relationship with the animals on the earth. Before the flood, there apparently was harmony between man and the animals. After the flood, the animals fear man and man is permitted to eat the animals, something he was not allowed to do previously.

#### Life in the blood

This chapter introduces the concept that there is life in the blood of an animal and in man. In Hebrew thought, blood represents the life present in a living thing. This is an image used throughout Scripture. (See: life and blood)

#### Covenant with Noah

God made a covenant with Noah. This covenant was an unconditional promise God made to never destroy the whole world with a flood. Rainbows are a perpetual sign of this covenant. (See: covenant and promise)

#### A father's nakedness

In Noah's culture, it was unacceptable to see a father's nakedness. It was wrong for Ham to show his brothers their father's nakedness. Ham's actions were insulting or disrespectful.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth"

This is a command that God gives. He expects Noah to obey him.

### Links:

[Genesis 9:1 Notes](#)

---

#### Genesis 9:1

Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth

This is God's blessing. He told Noah and his family to produce more humans like themselves, so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful." See how you translated these commands in [Genesis 1:28]

#### Genesis 9:2

The fear of you and the dread of you will be upon every living thing ... and upon all the fish of the sea

The writer speaks of fear and dread as if they were physical objects that could be upon the animals. Alternate translation: "Every living thing ... and all the fish of the sea will be dreadfully afraid of you"

The fear of you and the dread of you

The words "fear" and "dread" mean basically the same thing and emphasize how afraid the animals will be of mankind. Alternate translation: "A dreadful fear of you" or "A terrible fear of you"

every living thing on the earth

"every animal on the earth." This is the first of the four categories of animals that the writer lists, and not a summary of the rest of the animals that he mentions next. Here, the writer is referring to larger animals that walk on the earth.

bird

This is a general term for things that fly. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:21.

upon everything that moves on the ground

This includes all types of small animals. See how you translated this in Genesis 1:25.

They are given into your hand

The hand represents control. This can be made active.

Alternate translation: "They are given into your control" or "I have put them under your control"

#### Genesis 9:3

General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

#### Genesis 9:4

life ... blood

Translators may add a footnote such as this: "The blood is a symbol for life." They may also add a footnote that says something like this: "God was commanding people not to eat meat while the blood was still in it. They had to drain out the blood first."

#### Genesis 9:5

General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

But for your blood

This contrasts man's blood with the blood of animals (Genesis 9:4).

for your blood, the life that is in your blood

It is implied that the blood is shed, or poured out, or spilled out. Alternate translation: "if anyone causes your blood to pour out" or "if anyone spills your blood" or "if anyone kills you"

life

This refers to physical life.

I will require payment

This payment refers to the death of the murderer, not to money. Alternate translation: "I will require anyone who kills you to pay"

from the hand

Here the word "hand" refers to the one who is responsible for something happening.

From the hand of every animal I will require it

"I will require any animal that takes your life to pay"

From the hand of any man, that is, from the hand of one who has murdered his brother, I will require an accounting for the life of that man

"I will require anyone who takes the life of another person to pay"

From the hand of

This phrase refers to the person in a very personal way.

Alternate translation: "From that very man"

brother

Here "brother" is used as a general reference to relatives, such as members of the same tribe, clan, or people group.

Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man will his blood be shed

The shedding of blood is a metaphor for killing someone.

This means that if a person murders someone, someone else must kill the murderer. However, "blood" is very significant in this passage and should be used in the translation if possible. Translate "sheds blood" with words that indicate a major loss of blood that causes death.

for it was in the image of God that he made man

"because God made people to be like him" or "because I made people in my own image"

Genesis 9:7

be fruitful and multiply

This is God's blessing. He told Noah and his family to produce more humans like themselves, so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how they are to be "fruitful." See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:28]

Genesis 9:8

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him

God was already speaking to them. This phrase marks a change in what God was going to speak about. Alternate translation: "God continued speaking to Noah and his sons" or "Then God went on to say"

Genesis 9:9

As for me

This phrase is used in English to mark the change from God talking about what Noah and his sons must do to talking about what God would do.

confirm my covenant with you

"make a covenant between you and me." See how you translated this in Genesis 6:18.

Genesis 9:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 9:11

General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

I hereby confirm my covenant with you

"By saying this, I make my covenant with you." See how similar words are translated in Genesis 6:18.

all flesh

Possible meanings for what "all flesh" represents are 1) all human beings or 2) all physical beings, including humans and animal. See how this is translated in [Genesis 6:12]

Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth

"There will never again be a flood that destroys the earth."

There would be floods, but they would not destroy the whole earth.

Genesis 9:12

sign

This means a reminder of something that was promised.

covenant ... for all future generations

The covenant applies to Noah and his family and also to all generations that follow.

Genesis 9:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 9:14

General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

It will come about when

"Whenever." It is something that would happen many times.

the rainbow is seen

It is not clear who will see the rainbow, but because the covenant is between Yahweh and people, if you need to say who it is who will see the rainbow, it would be best to name both Yahweh and people. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people and I see the rainbow"

rainbow

the colorful strip of light that appears in the rain when the sun shines from behind the viewer

Genesis 9:15

I will call to mind my covenant

This does not mean that God would first forget. Alternate translation: "I will think about my covenant"

me and you

The word "you" is plural. God was speaking to Noah and Noah's sons.

every living creature of all flesh

"every kind of living being"

all flesh

Possible meanings for what "all flesh" represents are 1) all human beings or 2) all physical beings, including humans and animal. See how this is translated in [Genesis 6:12]

Genesis 9:16

General Information:

God continues speaking to Noah and his sons.

in order to remember

"so that I will remember" or "so that I will think about"

between God and every living creature

God is speaking here. Alternate translation: "between me and every living creature"

every living creature of all flesh

"every kind of living being." See how you translated this in

Genesis 9:15.

Genesis 9:17

Then God said to Noah

God was already talking to Noah. This phrase marks the final part of what God was saying. Alternate translation: "God finished by saying to Noah" or "So God said to Noah"

Genesis 9:18

General Information:

Verses 18-19 introduce the three sons of Noah, who will be an important part of the next story.

father

Ham was Canaan's true father.

Genesis 9:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 9:20

man of the soil

person who raises plants for food

Genesis 9:21

became drunk

"drank too much wine"

uncovered

The text does not specify how much of Noah's body was uncovered as he lay drunk. His sons' reactions show us that it was shameful.

Genesis 9:22

his father

This refers to Noah.

Genesis 9:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 9:24

awoke from his wine

He awoke after drinking wine and becoming drunk. He "became sober."

his youngest son

This refers to Ham. Alternate translation: "his youngest son, Ham"

Genesis 9:25

General Information:

In verses 25-27 Noah pronounced a curse on Ham's son and blessings on Ham's brothers. What Noah said about them also applied to their descendants, as shown in the UDB.

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 Noah's curse and blessings in verses 25-27.

Cursed be Canaan

"I curse Canaan" or "May bad things happen to Canaan"

Canaan

This was one of Ham's sons. Alternate translation: "Ham's son Canaan"

a servant to his brothers' servants

"the lowest servant of his brothers" or "the least important servant of his brothers"

his brothers

This could refer either to Canaan's brothers or to his relatives in general.

Genesis 9:26

General Information:

If you can, format these verses as they are formatted here to show your readers that this is poetry.

May Yahweh, the God of Shem, be blessed

"Praised be Yahweh, the God of Shem," or "Yahweh, the God of Shem, is worthy of praise" or "I praise Yahweh, the God of Shem"

Genesis 9:27

May Canaan be his servant

"And let Canaan be Shem's servant." This includes Canaan's and Shem's descendants.

May God extend the territory of Japheth

Possible meanings are 1) "May God make Japheth's territory larger" or 2) "May God cause Japheth to have many descendants."

let him make his home in the tents of Shem

"let him leave peacefully with Shem." This includes Japheth's and Shem's descendants.

May Canaan be his servant

"Let Canaan be Japheth's servant." This includes Canaan's and Japheth's descendants.

Genesis 9:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 9:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 10

## Genesis 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a genealogical record. It also records the location of ancient people groups.

Special concepts in this chapter

Assyria and Nineveh

While these places may be located in the same area as the Assyria mentioned later in Scripture, they are not the same kingdom.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Sons were born to"

This is an unusual phrase meaning "were sons of."

Links:

[Genesis 10:1 Notes](#)



---

#### Genesis 10:1

These were the descendants of the sons of Noah

"This is the account of Noah's sons." This sentence introduces the account of Noah's descendants in Genesis 10:1-11:9.

#### Genesis 10:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:5

From these the coastland peoples separated and went into their lands  
"Javan's sons and descendants separated and moved to the coastlands and islands"

coastland peoples

This refers to people who lived along the coast and on the islands.

their lands

"their homelands." These are the places that the people moved to and lived in.

every one with its own language

"Each people group spoke its own language" or "The people groups divided themselves according to their languages"

#### Genesis 10:6

Mizraim

Mizraim is the Hebrew name for "Egypt."

#### Genesis 10:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:8

mighty one

Possible meanings are 1) "mighty warrior" or 2) "mighty man" or 3) "powerful ruler."

#### Genesis 10:9

before Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) "in Yahweh's sight" or 2) "with Yahweh's help"

That is why it is said

This introduces a proverb. Your language may introduce proverbs and sayings in a different way. Alternate translation: "This is the reason people say"

#### Genesis 10:10

The first centers

Possible meanings are 1) the first centers he developed or 2) the important cities.

#### Genesis 10:11

he went to Assyria

"Nimrod went into Assyria"

#### Genesis 10:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:13

Mizraim became

The list of Noah's descendants continues.

Mizraim

Mizraim was one of Ham's sons. His descendants became the people of Egypt. Mizraim is the Hebrew name for Egypt.

#### Genesis 10:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:16

Jebusites ... Amorites ... Girgashites

These names refer to larger groups of people that descended from Canaan.

#### Genesis 10:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:19

border

line between one person's land and another person's land from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza

The direction south can be stated explicitly if needed.

Alternate translation: "from Sidon city in the north as far south as Gaza town, which is near Gerar"

as one goes toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha

The direction "east" or "inland" can be stated explicitly if needed. Alternate translation: "then east toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim towns, as far as Lasha"

#### Genesis 10:20

These were the sons of Ham

The word "these" refers to the people and people groups who were listed in verses [Genesis 6-19](#).

by their languages

"broken up according to their different languages"

in their lands

"in their homelands"

#### Genesis 10:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Genesis 10:24

Arphaxad

Arphaxad was one of Shem's sons.

#### Genesis 10:25

Peleg

Translators may add a footnote note that says: "The name Peleg means 'division.'"

the earth was divided

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth divided themselves" or "the people of the earth separated from one another" or "God divided the people of the earth"

Genesis 10:26

Joktan

Joktan was one of Eber's sons.

Genesis 10:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 10:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 10:29

All these

"These" here refers to the sons of Joktan.

Genesis 10:30

Their territory

"The land they controlled" or "The land they lived in"

Genesis 10:31

These were the sons of Shem

The word "these" refers to the descendants of Shem

([Genesis 10:21-29](#)).

Genesis 10:32

These were the clans

This refers back to all the people listed in [Genesis 10:1-31](#).

according to

"listed by"

From these the nations separated and went over the earth

"From these clans the nations divided and spread over the earth" or "These clans divided from each other and formed the nations of the earth"

after the flood

This can be stated clearly or more explicitly. Alternate translation: "after the flood destroyed the earth"

---

## Chapter 11

# Genesis 11 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter is a story traditionally referred to as the "Tower of Babel."

This chapter seeks to answer the questions: why do people speak different languages? how did people become so dispersed across the earth? God's punishment described in this chapter may also explain why the world has racial and ethnic divisions.

## Special concepts in this chapter

Age of people when they die

After the flood, people began to live shorter lives. This chapter begins to record the shortening of the average lifespan.

## Important figures of speech in this chapter

Personification

The statement "Yahweh came down to see" is a type of personification. Yahweh always knows what happens on earth.

This statement indicates that Yahweh is about to bring judgment on mankind. (See: and judge)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach to the sky"

The people were very full of pride and rebelled against God in this action.

## Links:

[Genesis 11:1](#)

---

Genesis 11:1

Now

This word shows that the writer is beginning a new part of the story.

the whole earth

This represents all the people on the earth. Alternate translation: "all the people on the earth"

used one language and had the same words

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that all people spoke the same language.

Genesis 11:2

they journeyed

"they moved around"

in the east

Possible meanings are 1) "in the east" or 2) "from the east" or 3) "to the east." The preferred choice is "in the east" because Shinar is to the east of where scholars believe the

ark came to rest.

settled

stopped moving from one place to another and began to live at one location

Genesis 11:3

Come

If your language has a way of urging or commanding people to begin work, like the English "Come on!" you might use it here.

bake them thoroughly

People make bricks out of clay and heat them in a very hot oven to make them hard and strong.

tar

a thick, sticky, black liquid that comes up from the ground

mortar

This is a thick substance made of lime powder, clay, sand, and water used to make stones or bricks stick together.

Genesis 11:4

let us make a name for ourselves

"let us make our reputation great"

name

reputation

we will be scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we will separate from each other and live in different places"

Genesis 11:5

the descendants of Adam

"the people"

came down

The information about where he came down from can be made explicit: "came down from heaven." This does not tell how he came down. Use a general word meaning "came down."

to see

"to observe" or "to look more closely"

Genesis 11:6

one people with the same language

All the people were one big group and they all spoke the same language.

they are beginning to do this

Possible meanings are 1) "they have begun to do this," meaning that they have begun to build the tower but it is not finished, or 2) "this is just the first thing they have done," meaning that in future they will do greater things. nothing that they intend to do will be impossible for them

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "anything they intend to do will be possible for them" or "they will be able to do anything they want to do"

Genesis 11:7

Come

If your language has a way of urging or commanding people to begin work, like the English "Come on!" you might use it here. See how this is translated in Genesis 11:3.

let us go down

The word "us" is plural even though it refers to God. Some translate it as "let me go down" or "I will go down." If you do this, consider adding a footnote to say that the pronoun is plural. See the note on "Let us make" in [Genesis 1:26]

confuse their language

This means that Yahweh would cause the people all over the earth to stop speaking the same language. Alternate translation: "mix up their language"

so that they may not understand each other

This was the purpose of confusing their language. Alternate translation: "so that they will not be able to understand what each other is saying"

Genesis 11:8

from there

"from the city"

Genesis 11:9

its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused

The name "Babel" sounds like the word that means "confused." Translators may want to add a footnote about this.

confused the language of the whole earth

It means that Yahweh caused the people all over the earth

to no longer speak the same language. Alternate translation: "mixed up the language of the whole earth"

Genesis 11:10

General Information:

The rest of this chapter lists the line of Shem's descendants down to Abram.

These were the descendants of Shem

This sentence begins the list of Shem's descendants.

flood

This is the flood from Noah's time when people had become so evil that God sent a worldwide flood to cover the earth.

became the father of Arphaxad

"had his son Arphaxad" or "his son Arphaxad was born"

Arphaxad

a man's name

a hundred ... two

Translators may write the words or the numerals "100" and "2."

Genesis 11:11

five hundred

Translators may write the words or the numeral "500."

Genesis 11:12

he became the father of Shelah

"his son Shelah was born"

Shelah

This is a man's name.

Genesis 11:13

403 years

"four hundred and three years"

Genesis 11:14

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:16

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:18

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:20

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:22

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:24

General Information:

The records in Genesis 11:12-25 have the same format. See how you translated them in [Genesis 11:12-13]

Genesis 11:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 11:26

Abram, Nahor, and Haran

We do not know the birth order of his sons.

Genesis 11:27

Now these were the descendants of Terah

This sentence introduces the account of Terah's descendants. Genesis 11:27-25:11 tells about Terah's descendants, particularly his son Abraham. Alternate translation: "This is the account of Terah's descendants"

Genesis 11:28

Haran died in the presence of his father Terah

This means that Haran died while his father was still living.

Alternate translation: "Haran died while his father, Terah, was with him"

Genesis 11:29

took wives

"married wives"

Iskah

This is a female name.

Genesis 11:30

Now

This word is used to introduce new information about Sarai that will become important in later chapters.

barren

This term describes a woman who is physically unable to conceive or bear a child.

Genesis 11:31

his

Here the word "his" refers to Terah.

Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife

"his daughter-in-law Sarai, who was the wife of his son Abram"

Haran ... Haran

These are two different names and they are spelled differently in Hebrew. One refers to a person and the other refers to a city. (The "h" sound in the city's name is louder than the "h" sound in the person's name.) You might choose to spell them differently in your language to show this.

Genesis 11:32

205 years

"two hundred and five years"

---

## Chapter 12

# Genesis 12 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

Abram

When God said, "Go from your country, and from your relatives," he established several new people groups. These groups descended from Abram.

God's covenant with Abram

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abram needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. (See: covenant and fulfill and promise)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"They will kill me"

Abram was afraid the Egyptians would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Sarai to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Abram's sister, they would have shown favor to him. (See: and favor)

## Links:

[Genesis 12:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 12:1

Now

This word is used to mark a new part of the story.

Go from your country, and from your relatives

"Go from your land, from your family"

Genesis 12:2

I will make of you a great nation

Here "you" is singular and refers to Abram, but Abram represents his descendants. Alternate translation: "I will start a great nation through you" or "I will make your descendants become a great nation"

make your name great

The word "name" represents the person's reputation.

Alternate translation: "make you famous"

you will be a blessing

The words "to other people" are understood. Alternate translation: "you will be a blessing to other people"

Genesis 12:3

whoever dishonors you I will curse

"I will curse whoever treats you in a shameful way" or "if anyone treats you as worthless, I will curse him"

Through you will all the families of the earth be blessed

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the families of the earth through you"

Through you

"Because of you" or "Because I have blessed you"

Genesis 12:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 12:5

possessions

This includes animals and non-living property.

the people that they had acquired

Possible meanings are 1) "slaves that they had accumulated" or 2) "the people whom they had gathered to be with them."

Genesis 12:6

Abram passed through the land

Only Abram's name is mentioned because he was the head of the family. God had given him the command to take his family and go there. Alternate translation: "So Abram and his family went through the land"

the land

"the land of Canaan"

the oak of Moreh

Moreh was probably the name of a place.

Genesis 12:7

Yahweh, who had appeared to him

"Yahweh, because he had appeared to him"

Genesis 12:8

he pitched his tent

Abram had many people with him as he traveled. People who moved from place to place lived in tents. Alternate translation: "they set up their tents"

called on the name of Yahweh

"prayed in the name of Yahweh" or "worshiped Yahweh"

Genesis 12:9

Then Abram continued journeying

You may need to make explicit that he took his tent with him. "Then Abram took his tent and continued journeying."

toward the Negev

"toward the Negev region" or "toward the south" or "south to the Negev desert"

Genesis 12:10

There was a famine

The crops did not grow well that season. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "There was a shortage of food"

in the land

"in the area" or "in the land where Abram was living"

went down into

Possible meanings are 1) "went further south" or 2) "went away from Canaan into." It would be best to translate this using your usual words for going from a higher place to a lower place.

Genesis 12:11

See now, I

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite

request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: I"

Genesis 12:12

they will kill me ... you alive

The reason they would kill Abram can be made explicit: "they will kill me so that they can marry you"

Genesis 12:13

so that my life will be spared because of you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that, because of you, they will not kill me"

Genesis 12:14

It came about that

Possible meanings are 1) This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts, and if your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here, or 2) "And that was what happened" .

Genesis 12:15

The princes of Pharaoh saw her

"Pharaoh's officials saw Sarai" or "the king's officials saw her"

the woman was taken into Pharaoh's household

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh took her into his household" or "Pharaoh had his soldiers take her into his household"

the woman

Sarai

Pharaoh's household

Possible meanings are 1) "Pharaoh's family," that is, as a wife, or 2) "Pharaoh's house" or "Pharaoh's palace," a euphemism for Pharaoh making her one of his wives.

Genesis 12:16

for her sake

"for Sarai's sake" or "because of her"

Genesis 12:17

because of Sarai, Abram's wife

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "because Pharaoh intended to take Sarai, Abram's wife, to be his own wife"

Genesis 12:18

Pharaoh summoned Abram

"Pharaoh called Abram" or "Pharaoh ordered Abram to come to him"

What is this that you have done to me?

Pharaoh used this rhetorical question to show how angry he was about what Abram had done to him. It can also be stated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You have done a terrible thing to me!"

Genesis 12:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 12:20

Then Pharaoh gave orders to his men concerning him

"Then Pharaoh directed his officials concerning Abram"

they sent him away, along with his wife and all that he had

"the officials sent Abram away from Pharaoh, with his wife and all his possessions"

## Genesis 13 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Abram's faith

Since the land could not support both Lot's and Abram's family, they each went their own way. Even though good land was not plentiful, Abram allowed Lot to choose the better land because he trusted in God to fulfill his promises. (See: trust and fulfill and promise)

#### God's covenant with Abram

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abram needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. This chapter continues the covenant which began in the previous chapter. (See: covenant)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Built an altar

Abram would have built an altar in order to offer sacrifices to Yahweh. There is an implicit understanding that building an altar was an act of worship.

### Links:

[Genesis 13:1 Notes](#)

---

#### Genesis 13:1

went up from

"left" or "departed from"

went into the Negev

The Negev was a desert region in southern Canaan, east of Egypt. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation:

"went back to the Negev desert"

#### Genesis 13:2

Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold

"Abram had many livestock, much silver, and much gold"

#### Genesis 13:3

He continued on his journey

Abram and his family traveled by stages, going from place to place. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation:

"They continued on their journey"

to the place where his tent had been before

Translators may add a footnote that says "See Genesis 12:8."

The time of his travel can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "to the place where he had set up his tent before he went to Egypt"

#### Genesis 13:4

called on the name of Yahweh

"prayed in the name of Yahweh" or "worshiped Yahweh."

See how you translated this in Genesis 12:8.

#### Genesis 13:5

Now

This word is used to show what follows is background information to help the reader understand the events that follow.

#### Genesis 13:6

The land was not able to support them

There was not enough grazing land and water for all their animals.

their possessions

This includes livestock, which need pasture and water.

could not stay together

"could not live together"

#### Genesis 13:7

The Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land at that time

This is another reason that the land could not support them all.

#### Genesis 13:8

Let there be no strife between you and me

"Let's not quarrel"

strife

arguments or fights

between your herdsmen and my herdsmen

"let's stop the men who take care of our animals from quarreling"

after all, we are family

"because we are family"

family

"kinsmen" or "relatives." Lot was Abraham's nephew.

#### Genesis 13:9

Is not the whole land before you?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "The whole land is available for you to use."

Go ahead and separate yourself from me

Abraham was speaking kindly to Lot and encouraging him to do something that would help them both. "Let's separate."

If you go to the left, then I will go to the right

Possible meanings are 1) "If you go one way, then I will go the other" or 2) "If you go to the north, I will go to the south." Abram let Lot choose the part of the land he wanted, and Abram would take what remained.

#### Genesis 13:10

the whole plain of the Jordan

This refers to the general region of the Jordan River.

was well watered

"had much water"

like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt

"like the garden of Yahweh or like the land of Egypt." These were two different places.

the garden of Yahweh

This is another name for the garden of Eden.  
garden  
Use the same word for "garden" as you used in Genesis 2:8.  
This was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah  
This anticipates something that would happen later. It is important here because it explains why Lot settled in a region that later was not fertile.  
Genesis 13:11  
the relatives  
"the kinsmen" or "the families." This refers to Lot and Abram with their households.  
Genesis 13:12  
Abram lived  
"Abram made his home" or "Abram stayed"  
the land of Canaan  
"the land of the Canaanites"  
He set up his tents as far away as Sodom  
Possible meanings are 1) "He set up his tents near Sodom" or 2) "He moved his tents around in an area that reached all the way to Sodom."  
Genesis 13:13  
General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 13:14  
after Lot had departed from him  
"after Lot left Abraham"  
Genesis 13:15  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 13:16  
I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth  
This is a simile. God is saying that he will give Abram very many descendants.  
Genesis 13:17  
walk through the length and breadth of the land  
"walk around all over the whole land"  
Genesis 13:18  
Mamre  
This was the name of the man who owned the oak trees.  
Hebron  
This is the name of a place.  
an altar to Yahweh  
"an altar for worshiping Yahweh"

---

## Chapter 14

# Genesis 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. ULB does this with the poetry in 14:19-20.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Names of places

Sometimes the names of places in Scripture are referred to by the name used during the time of the writer. For example, the location referred to as Dan was not yet known by that name because Dan had not yet come to live there. Moses, the author of Genesis, would have known this location as Dan.

### Melchizedek

Melchizedek was both a priest and a king. Because of this, he parallels the roles of Jesus. Melchizedek is an important figure in the book of Hebrews. (See: priest)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### God Most High

Melchizedek worshiped the God Most High. This is probably a reference to the true and only God who created the heavens and the earth and came to be known as Yahweh. (See: heaven)

## Links:

[Genesis 14:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 14:1

It came about

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.

in the days of

"in the time of"

Amraphel ... Arioch ... Kedorlaomer ... Tidal

These are names of men.

Shinar ... Ellasar ... Elam ... Goyim

These are names of places. See how you translated "Shinar" in Genesis 10:10

Genesis 14:2

they made war

"they went to war" or "they started a war" or "they prepared for war"

Genesis 14:3

These latter five kings joined together

The information that their armies were with them can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "These latter five kings and their armies joined together"

Genesis 14:4

Twelve years they had served

The events in verses 4-7 happened before verse 3. Your language may have a way of showing this.

they had served Kedorlaomer

They probably had to pay him taxes and serve in his army.  
Alternate translation: "they had been under the control of Kedorlaomer"

they rebelled

"they refused to serve him" or "they stopped serving him"

Genesis 14:5

came and attacked

They did this because the other kings rebelled.

the Rephaim ... the Zuzites ... the Emite

These are the names of people groups.

Ashteroth Karnaim ... Ham ... Shaveh Kiriathaim

These are the names of places.

Ham

This name in Hebrew is different from the name of Noah's son, which is spelled the same way in English.

Genesis 14:6

the Horites

This is the name of a people group.

Seir ... El Paran

These are the names of places.

El Paran, which is near the desert

This phrase helps readers understand where El Paran was.

It can be translated as a separate sentence if necessary.

Alternate translation: "El Paran. El Paran is near the desert"

Genesis 14:7

General Information:

Verses 8 and 9 repeats what was said in Genesis 14:3 and continues to tell what happened when the kings came together to fight.

they turned and came

The word "they" refers to the four foreign kings who were attacking the region of Canaan. Their names were Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, and Tidal. Alternate translation: "they turned and went"

the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar

This phrase tells which Amorite people were defeated.

There were other Amorite people who lived in other places.

Genesis 14:8

the king of Bela (also called Zoar)

The city of Bela was also called Zoar. This information could also be put at the end of the sentence. "the king of Bela went out and prepared for battle. Bela is also called Zoar."

prepared for battle

"joined battle" or "drew up battle lines." Some translators may need to also say that the armies fought, as the UDB does in verse 9.

Genesis 14:9

four kings against the five

Since the five kings were listed first, some languages might prefer to translate this as "five kings against four."

Genesis 14:10

Now

This word introduces background information about the valley of Siddim. Your language may have another way of introducing background information.

was full of tar pits

"had many tar pits." These were holes in the ground that had tar in them.

tar

a thick, sticky, black liquid that comes up from the ground.  
See how this is translated in Genesis 11:3.

the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah

Here the kings represent themselves and their armies.

Alternate translation: the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies"

they fell in there

Possible meanings are 1) some of their soldiers fell in the tar pits or 2) the kings themselves fell in the tar pits. Since [Genesis 14:17]

Those who were left

"Those who did not die in battle and did not fall in the pits"

Genesis 14:11

the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah

The words "Sodom" and "Gomorrah" are metonyms for the people who lived in those cities. Alternate translation: "the wealth of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" or "the property of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah"

their provisions

"their food and drink"

went their way

"they went away"

Genesis 14:12

they also took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who was living in Sodom, along with all his possessions

The phrases "Abram's brother's son" and "who was living in Sodom" remind the reader of things that were written earlier about Lot. Alternate translation: "they also took Lot, along with all his possessions. Lot was Abram's brother's son and was living in Sodom at that time"

Genesis 14:13

One who had escaped came

"A man escaped from the battle and came"

He was living

"Abram was living." This introduces background information.

were all allies of Abram

"were treaty-partners with Abram" or "had a peace agreement with Abram"

Genesis 14:14

his relative

This is a reference to Abram's nephew Lot.

318 trained men

"three hundred and eighteen trained men"

trained men

"men who were trained to fight"

men who had been born in his house

"men who were born in Abram's household." They were children of Abram's servants.

pursued them

"chased them"

Dan

This is a city in the far north of Canaan, far from Abram's camp.

Genesis 14:15

He divided his men against them at night, he and his servants, and

This elliptical statement probably refers to a battle strategy.

Alternate translation: "At night Abram divided his men—he



attacked them from one side and his servants attacked them from another—and"

servants

"men of war." They served him by fighting for him.

Genesis 14:16

all the possessions

This refers to the things that the enemies had stolen from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

his goods

"Lot's property that the enemies had stolen from Lot"

as well as the women and the other people

"as well as the women and other people that the four kings had captured"

Genesis 14:17

returned

The implied information about where he was returning to can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "returned to where he was living"

Genesis 14:18

Melchizedek, king of Salem

This is the first time this king is mentioned.

bread and wine

People commonly ate bread and wine. See how you translated "bread" in Genesis 3:19 and "wine" in Genesis 9:21.

Genesis 14:19

He blessed him

King Melchizedek blessed Abram.

Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"May God Most High, the Creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram"

heaven

This refers to the place where God lives.

Genesis 14:20

God Most High, who has given

"God Most High, because he has given." The phrase starting

with "who has given" tells us something more about God Most High.

Blessed be God Most High

This is a way of praising God. See how you translated "blessed be" in Genesis 9:26.

into your hand

"into your control" or "into your power"

Genesis 14:21

Give me the people

The phrase "the people" may refer to the people of Sodom that the enemies had captured. Abram rescued them when he rescued Lot.

Genesis 14:22

I have lifted up my hand

This means "I have taken an oath" or "I have made a promise."

Genesis 14:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 14:24

I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten

This double negative emphasizes that what the young men have eaten is all that Abram would take. Alternate translation: "I will take from you only what my young men have eaten."

what the young men have eaten

It seems that Abram's soldiers had eaten some of the supplies during the journey back to Sodom after the battle. the share of the men that went with me

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "the share of the recovered property that belongs to the men who helped me get it back"

Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre

These are the allies of Abram (Genesis 14:13). Because they were Abram's allies they fought battles alongside him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "my allies Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre"

---

## Chapter 15

# Genesis 15 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Inheritance

In the ancient Near East, a person's children inherited the property and land of their parents. Abram doubted the fulfillment of God's covenant because he did not have any children to whom to give his land. This showed a lack of faith. (See: inherit and fulfill, covenant and faith)

### Fulfilling a promise

In the ancient Near East, two people performed a similar sacrifice by dividing animals in half. It was a way to say to the other person, "may this happen to me if I do not fulfill my promise." The event recorded here indicates that God will fulfill his promise and only he is responsible for bringing it about. (See: fulfill and promise)

### God's covenant with Abram

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abram needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. This covenant has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety.

## Links:

[Genesis 15:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 15:1

After these things

"These things" refers to when the kings fought and Abram rescued Lot.

the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear

The idiom "the word of Yahweh came to" is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate

translation: "Yahweh gave a message to Abram in a vision. He said, 'Fear' or 'Yahweh spoke this message to Abram in a vision: 'Fear'"

shield ... reward

God used these two metaphors to tell Abram about his character and his relationship to Abram.

I am your shield

Soldiers use a shield to protect themselves from their enemies. Alternate translation: "I will protect you like shield" or "I am your shield to protect you"

I am ... your very great reward

Possible meanings are 1) "I myself will be all that you need" or 2) "I will give you all you need."

reward

the result of a person's actions. This seems to be a metonym for the gracious blessing God would give Abram.

Genesis 15:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 15:3

Abram said, "Since you have given me

"Abram continued speaking and said, 'Since you have given me'"

Genesis 15:4

Then, behold

The word "behold" emphasizes the fact that the word of Yahweh came to Abraham again.

the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This

The idiom "The word of Yahweh came to" is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this idiom in [Genesis 15:1]

This man

This refers to Eliezer of Damascus.

the one who will come from your own body

"the one that you will father" or "your very own son."

Abram's own son would become his heir.

Genesis 15:5

number the stars

"count the stars"

So will your descendants be

Just as Abram would not be able to count all the stars, he would not be able to count all his descendants because there would be so many.

Genesis 15:6

He believed Yahweh

This means he accepted and trusted what Yahweh said was true.

he counted it to him as righteousness

"Yahweh counted Abram's belief as righteousness" or

"Yahweh considered Abram righteous because Abram believed him"

Genesis 15:7

I am Yahweh, who brought you out of Ur

Yahweh was reminding Abraham of what he had already done so that Abraham would know that Yahweh had the power to give Abram what he promised him.

to inherit it

"to receive it" or "so that you will possess it"

Genesis 15:8

how will I know

Abram was asking for more proof that Yahweh would give him the land.

Genesis 15:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 15:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 15:11

the carcasses

"the dead bodies of the animals and birds"

Abram drove them away

"Abram chased the birds away." He made sure the birds did not eat the dead animals.

Genesis 15:12

Abram fell sound asleep

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Abraham slept deeply"

a deep and terrifying darkness

"an extreme darkness that terrified him"

overwhelmed him

"surrounded him"

Genesis 15:13

strangers

people who are at home in one place but have to live in another place

will be enslaved and oppressed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the owners of that land will enslave your descendants and oppress them"

Genesis 15:14

General Information:

Yahweh continued to speak to Abram while Abram dreamed.

I will judge

Here "judge" is a metonym for what will happen after God makes the judgment. Alternate translation: "I will punish"

that they will serve

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "that your descendants will serve"

abundant possessions

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "many possessions" or "great wealth"

Genesis 15:15

you will go to your fathers

This is a polite way of saying "you will die."

fathers

The word "fathers" is a synecdoche for all ancestors.

Alternate translation: "ancestors" or "ancestral fathers"

you will be buried in a good old age

"you will be very old when you die and your family buries

your body"

Genesis 15:16

In the fourth generation

Here one generation refers to a lifespan of 100 years. "After four hundred years"

they will come here again

"your descendants will come back here." Abraham's descendants would come to the land where Abram was then living, the land that Yahweh had promised to give to him.

has not yet reached its limit

"is not yet complete" or "will get much worse before I punish them"

Genesis 15:17

behold

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

a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces

God did this to show Abram that he was making a covenant with him.

passed between the pieces

"passed through between the two rows of animal pieces"

Genesis 15:18

covenant

In this covenant God promises to bless Abram, and he will continue to bless him as long as Abram follows him.

I hereby give this land

By saying this, God was giving the land to Abram's descendants. God was doing this then, but the descendants would not go into the land until many years later.

Genesis 15:19

the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land.

Genesis 15:20

the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaites

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land.

Genesis 15:21

the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites

These are the names of groups of people who lived in that land. God would allow Abraham's descendants to conquer these people and take their land.

---

## Chapter 16

# Genesis 16 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 16:11-12.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Plural marriage

Abram married Hagar while he was also married to Sarai. Even though Abram had his wife's permission, this was an immoral and sinful action. It also showed a lack of faith in God. Sarai quickly became jealous of Hagar.

## Links:

[Genesis 16:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 16:1

Now

This word is used in English to introduce a new part of the story and background information about Sarai.

female servant

"slave-girl." This type of slave would serve the woman of the household.

Genesis 16:2

See now, Yahweh

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: Yahweh" See how you translated similar words in Genesis 12:11.

from having children

"from giving birth to children"

Please go to my servant

This is a polite way of telling him to have sexual relations with her servant. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. Alternate translation: "Please have sexual relations with my servant" or "Please lie with my servant"

I will have children by her

"I will build my family through her"

Abram listened to the voice of Sarai

"Abram did what Sarai said"

Genesis 16:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 16:4

So he went to Hagar

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with Hagar. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

she looked with contempt on her mistress

"she despised her mistress" or "she thought that she was more valuable than her mistress"

her mistress

Here this refers to Sarai. A mistress has authority over her slave. Alternate translation: "her owner" or "Sarai"

Genesis 16:5

This wrong on me

"This injustice against me"

is because of you

"is your responsibility" or "is your fault"

I gave my servant woman into your embrace

Sarai used the word "embrace" here to refer to him sleeping with her. Alternate translation: "I gave you my servant so that you would sleep with her"

I was despised in her eyes

This can be active. Alternate translation: "she hated me" or "she began to hate me" or "she thought she was better than me"

Let Yahweh judge between me and you

"I want Yahweh to say whether this is my fault or your fault" or "I want Yahweh to decide which one of us is right."

The phrase "to judge between" means to decide which person is right in a dispute between them.

Genesis 16:6

See here

"Listen to me" or "Pay attention"

in your power

"under your authority"

Sarai dealt harshly with her

"Sarai treated Hagar very badly"

she fled from her

"Hagar fled from Sarai"

Genesis 16:7

The angel of Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or 2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or 3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel."

wilderness

The wilderness area she went to was a desert. Alternate translation: "desert"

Shur

This was the name of a place south of Canaan and east of Egypt.

Genesis 16:8

my mistress

Here this refers to Sarai. A mistress has authority over her slave. See how "her mistress" is translated in Genesis 16:4. Alternate translation: "my owner"

Genesis 16:9

The angel of Yahweh said to her

"The angel of Yahweh said to Hagar"

your mistress

Sarai. See how "her mistress" is translated in Genesis 16:4.

Genesis 16:10

the angel of Yahweh

See the note about this phrase in Genesis 16:7.

the angel of Yahweh said to her, "I

When he said "I," he was referring to Yahweh. When translating what is in the quote, do it as the angel of Yahweh did and use the word "I" when referring to Yahweh.

I will greatly multiply your descendants

"I will give you very many descendants"

too numerous to count

"so many that no one will be able to count them"

Genesis 16:11

The angel of Yahweh

See the note about this phrase in Genesis 16:7.

Behold

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention"

bear a son

"give birth to a son"

you will call his name

"you will name him." The word "you" refers to Hagar.

Ishmael, because Yahweh has heard

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name 'Ishmael' means 'God has heard.'"

affliction

She has been afflicted by distress and suffering.

Genesis 16:12

He will be a wild donkey of a man

This was not an insult. It may mean that Ishmael would be independent and strong like a wild donkey. Alternate translation: "He will be like a wild donkey among men"

He will be hostile against every man

"He will be every man's enemy"

every man will be hostile to him

"everyone will be his enemy"

he will live apart from

This can also mean "he will live in hostility with."

his brothers

"his relatives" or "the other members of his family"

Genesis 16:13

Yahweh who spoke to her

"Yahweh, because he spoke to her"

Do I really continue to see, ... me?

Hagar used this rhetorical question to express her amazement that she was still alive even after she met God. People expected that if they met God, they would die. Here seeing represents living. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that I am still alive, ... me."

Genesis 16:14

Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi

Translators may add a footnote that says "Beer Lahai Roi means 'the well of the living one who sees me.'"

behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered

The word "behold" here draws attention to the fact that the well was in a place that the author and his readers knew.

Alternate translation: "in fact, it is between Kadesh and Bered"

Genesis 16:15

Hagar gave birth

Hagar's return to Sarai and Abram is implicit. You can make this more explicit. Alternate translation: "So Hagar went back and gave birth"

named his son, whom Hagar bore

"named his son by Hagar" or "named his and Hagar's son"

Genesis 16:16

Abram was

This introduces background information about Abram's age when these things happened. Your language may have a special way to mark background information.

bore Ishmael to Abram

This means "gave birth to Abram's son, Ishmael." The focus

is on Abram having a son.

---

## Chapter 17

# Genesis 17 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

"The father of a multitude of nations"

Abram came to have many descendants. He had so many descendants that many of his immediate descendants became large people groups and nations.

God's covenant with Abram

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was not conditioned upon anything that Abram needed to do, but the fulfillment of its promises is conditioned upon the actions of each generation of his descendants. It has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. It is important to note in this chapter that Isaac is the son who receives the promises associated with the covenant and not Ishmael. (See: covenant and fulfill and promise)

Circumcision

Circumcision was an unusual practice in the ancient Near East. It served to separate the Hebrew people from the rest of the world. This chapter records the beginning of this practice among Abram and his descendants. (See: circumcision)

Name change

In this chapter, God changed Abram's name to "Abraham." In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The beginning of the practice of circumcision was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

## Links:

[Genesis 17:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 17:1

When Abram was ninety-nine years old

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.

God Almighty

"the all-powerful God" or "the God who has all power"

Walk before me

Walking is a metaphor for living, and "before me" or "in my presence" here is a metaphor for obedience. Alternate translation: "Live the way I want you to" or "Obey me"

### Genesis 17:2

Then I will confirm

"If you do this, then I will confirm"

I will confirm my covenant

"I will give my covenant" or "I will make my covenant" covenant

In this covenant God promises to bless Abram, but he also requires Abram to obey him.

multiply you exceedingly

Here "multiply you" is an idiom that means he will give him more descendants. Alternate translation: "greatly increase the number of your descendants" or "give you very many descendants"

### Genesis 17:3

Abram bowed low with his face to the ground

"Abram threw himself face down on the ground" or "Abraham immediately lay down with his face to the ground." He did this to show that he respected God and would obey him.

### Genesis 17:4

As for me

God used this phrase to introduce what he would do for Abram as part of his covenant with Abram.

behold, my covenant is with you

The word "behold" here says that what comes next is certain: "my covenant is certainly with you."

the father of a multitude of nations

"the father of a great number of nations" or "the one after whom many nations name themselves"

### Genesis 17:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

### Genesis 17:6

I will make you exceedingly fruitful

"I will cause you to have very many descendants"

I will make nations of you

"I will cause your descendants to become nations"

kings will descend from you

"among your descendants there will be kings" or "some of your descendants will be kings"

### Genesis 17:7

General Information:

God continues speaking to Abraham.

throughout their generations

"for each generation"

for an everlasting covenant

"as a covenant that will last forever"

to be God to you and to your descendants after you

"to be your God and your descendants' God" or "covenant"

### Genesis 17:8

Canaan, for an everlasting possession

"Canaan, as an everlasting possession" or "Canaan, to possess forever"

### Genesis 17:9

As for you

God uses this phrase to introduce what Abram would have to do as part of God's covenant with him.

keep my covenant  
 "observe my covenant" or "honor my covenant" or "obey my covenant"  
 Genesis 17:10  
 This is my covenant  
 "This is a requirement of my covenant" or "This is part of my covenant." This sentence introduces the part of the covenant that Abram must do.  
 Every male among you must be circumcised  
 This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "You must circumcise every male among you"  
 Every male  
 This refers to human males.  
 Genesis 17:11  
 You must be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin  
 Some communities may prefer a less descriptive expression such as "You must be circumcised." If your translation of "be circumcised" already includes the word for "foreskin", you do not need to repeat it. This can be made active.  
 Alternate translation: "You must circumcise every male among you"  
 the sign of the covenant  
 "the sign that shows that the covenant exists"  
 the sign  
 Possible meanings are 1) "the sign" or 2) "a sign." The first means that there was one sign, and the second means that there may have been more than one sign. Here the word "sign" means a reminder of something that God had promised.  
 Genesis 17:12  
 General Information:  
 God continues speaking to Abraham.  
 Every male  
 "Every human male"  
 throughout your people's generations  
 "in every generation"  
 him who is bought with money  
 This refers to slaves. This can be stated in active form.  
 Alternate translation: "any male that you buy"  
 Genesis 17:13  
 my covenant will be in your flesh  
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will mark my covenant in your flesh"  
 for an everlasting covenant  
 "as a permanent covenant." Because it was marked in flesh, no one could easily erase it.  
 Genesis 17:14  
 uncircumcised male who is not circumcised  
 This can be stated in active form, and you may leave out words that will give wrong meaning in your language.  
 Alternate translation: "male whom you have not circumcised"  
 Any uncircumcised male ... foreskin will be cut off from his people  
 Possible meanings are 1) "I will cut off any uncircumcised male ... foreskin from his people" or 2) "I want you to cut off any uncircumcised male ... foreskin from his people."  
 cut off from his people  
 Possible meanings are 1) "killed" or 2) "sent away from the community."

He has broken my covenant  
 "He has not obeyed the rules of my covenant." This is the reason that he would be cut off from his people.  
 Genesis 17:15  
 As for Sarai  
 The words "As for" introduce the next person God talks about.  
 Genesis 17:16  
 I will give you a son by her  
 "I will make her bear a son for you"  
 she will become the mother of nations  
 "she will be the ancestor of many nations" or "her descendants will become nations"  
 Kings of peoples will come from her  
 "Kings of peoples will descend from her" or "Some of her descendants will be kings of peoples"  
 Genesis 17:17  
 said in his heart  
 "thought to himself" or "said to himself silently"  
 Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?  
 Abraham used this rhetorical question because he did not believe that this could happen. Alternate translation: "Surely a man who is a hundred years old cannot father a child!"  
 How can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a son?  
 Again Abraham used a rhetorical question because he did not believe this could happen. The phrase "who is ninety years old" tells why Abraham did not believe that Sarah could bear a son. Alternate translation: "Sarah is ninety years old. Could she bear a son?" or "Sarah is ninety years old. Surely she could not bear a son!"  
 Genesis 17:18  
 Oh that Ishmael might live before you  
 "Please let Ishmael inherit the covenant that you have made with me" or "Perhaps Ishmael could receive your covenant blessing." Abraham suggested something that he believed really could happen.  
 Genesis 17:19  
 No, but Sarah your wife will bear  
 God said this to correct Abraham's belief that Sarah could not have a son.  
 you must name him  
 The word "you" refers to Abraham.  
 Genesis 17:20  
 As for Ishmael  
 The words "As for" show that God is switching from talking about the baby that would be born to talking about Ishmael.  
 Behold  
 "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"  
 will make him fruitful  
 This is an idiom that means "will cause him to have many children."  
 will multiply him abundantly  
 "I will cause him to have many descendants"  
 princes  
 "chiefs" or "rulers." Ishmael's twelve sons are different from the twelve sons of Jacob who were the fathers of the

twelve tribes of Israel.

Genesis 17:21

But my covenant I will establish with Isaac

God returns to talking about his covenant with Abraham and emphasizes that he would fulfill his promise with Isaac, not with Ishmael.

Genesis 17:22

When he had finished talking with him

"When God had finished talking with Abraham"

God went up from Abraham

"God left Abraham"

Genesis 17:23

every male among the men of Abraham's household

"every human male in Abraham's household" or "every male person in Abraham's household." It refers to human males of all ages: babies, boys, and men.

Genesis 17:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 17:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 17:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 17:27

including those born into the household and those bought with money from a foreigner

"This includes those who were born in his household and those he had bought from foreigners"

those bought with money from a foreigner

This refers to servants or slaves.

those bought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom he had bought"

---

## Chapter 18

# Genesis 18 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Three men

The three men who visited Abraham were probably angels. This is evident from Abraham's reaction to them. Also, it appears Abraham knew that he was speaking directly to Yahweh through these men.

### Disbelief

When Sarah heard the news that she was going to have a baby, she laughed in disbelief because she was considered too old to have a baby. She also asked a rhetorical question in order to further show her disbelief. This would have been considered an insult to God.

In his exchange with God, Abraham did not show any sign of unbelief. Instead, he is asking God for mercy because he trusted in the character of God. He does not question God's power to accomplish things as Sarah had done. (See: trust)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### Sarah's age

It should be apparent that Sarah was physically no longer able to have children because of her age. There is a natural period in a woman's life when she stops being able to have children. The text assumes the reader understands that Sarah has already experienced this event. In English, this is called "menopause."

## Links:

[Genesis 18:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 18:1

Mamre

This was the name of the man who owned the oak trees.

in the tent doorway

"at the opening of the tent" or "at the entrance of the tent"

heat of the day

"hottest time of day"

Genesis 18:2

He looked up and, behold, he saw three men standing

"He looked up and saw, and behold, three men were standing"

behold, he saw

"he was surprised because he saw"

across from him

"nearby" or "there." They were near him, but far enough away for him to run to them.

bowed

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and

honor toward someone.

Genesis 18:3

Lord

This is a title of respect. Possible meanings are 1) Abraham knew that one of these men was God or 2) Abraham knew that these men came on behalf of God.

if I have found favor in your sight

Here "found favor" is an idiom that means be approved of or that the Lord is pleased with him, and "your sight" is a metaphor representing the Lord's evaluation. Alternate translation: "if you have evaluated me and approve" or "if you are pleased with me"

in your sight

Abraham is speaking to one of the men.

do not pass by

"please do not keep on going past"

your servant

"me." Abraham refers to himself this way in order to show

respect to his guest.

Genesis 18:4

Let a little water be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let me bring you some water" or "My servant will bring you some water"

a little water

"some water." Saying "little" was a polite way of showing generosity. Abraham would give them more than enough water.

wash your feet

This custom helped tired travelers to refresh themselves after walking long distances.

Genesis 18:5

a little food

"some food." Saying "little" was a polite way of showing generosity. Abraham would give them more than enough food.

your ... you

Abraham speaks to all three of the men, so "you" and "your" are plural.

Genesis 18:6

three seahs

about 22 liters

bread

This bread was probably cooked quickly on a hot stone. It may have been flat or round like small loaves or rolls.

Genesis 18:7

he hurried

"the servant hurried"

to prepare it

"to cut it up and roast it"

Genesis 18:8

curds

This refers to the solid part of fermented milk. It may have been yogurt or cheese.

the calf that had been prepared

"the roasted calf"

before them

"before the three visitors"

Genesis 18:9

They said to him

"Then they said to Abraham"

Genesis 18:10

He said, "I will certainly return to you

The word "He" refers to the man whom Abraham called "Lord" in Genesis 18:3.

in the springtime

"when this same season comes next year" or "about this time next year"

see

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

in the tent doorway

"at the opening of the tent" or "at the entrance of the tent"

Genesis 18:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 18:12

After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?

You may want to make explicit that Sarah is speaking of the pleasure of having a baby. Sarah used this rhetorical question because she did not believe that she could have a child. Alternate translation: "I am worn out and my master is old, so I cannot believe that I will experience the joy of having a child.""

I am worn out

"I am too old to conceive a child"

my master is old

This means "since my husband is also old."

my master

This is a title of respect that Sarah gave to her husband Abraham.

Genesis 18:13

Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really bear a child, when I am old'?

God used this rhetorical question to show that he knew what Sarah was thinking and that he was not pleased with it. He repeats Sarah's rhetorical question

Genesis 18:14

Is anything too hard for Yahweh?

"Is there anything that Yahweh cannot do?" Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were speaking of someone else to remind Abraham that he, Yahweh, is great and can do anything.

Alternate translation: "There is nothing that I, Yahweh, cannot do!"

At the time appointed by me, in the spring

"At the time I have appointed, which is in the spring"

Genesis 18:15

Then Sarah denied it and said

"The Sarah denied it by saying"

He replied

"Yahweh replied"

No, you did laugh

"Yes, you did laugh." This means "No, that is not true; you did in fact laugh."

Genesis 18:16

to see them on their way

"to send them on their way" or "to say 'Farewell' to them." It was polite to go some distance with guests as they were leaving.

Genesis 18:17

Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do

God used this rhetorical question to say that he was going to talk to Abraham about something very important and that it was best for him to do so. Alternate translation: "I should not and will not hide from Abraham what I am about to do" or "I should and will tell Abraham what I am about to do"

Genesis 18:18

Connecting Statement:

The rhetorical question that begins with the words "Should I hide" in verse 17 ends here.

since Abraham ... in him?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words "Should I hide" in verse 17 ends here. God uses this rhetorical question to say that he was going to talk to Abraham about something very important and that it was best for him to do



so. "I should not and will not hide ... since Abraham in him."  
or "I should and will tell ... since Abraham in him"  
since ... him?  
"This is because ... him"  
all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I  
will bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham"  
will be blessed in him  
"will be blessed because of Abraham" or "will be blessed  
because I have blessed Abraham." For translating "in him"  
see how you translated "through you" in Genesis 12:3.  
Genesis 18:19  
that he may instruct  
"that he will direct" or "so that he will command"  
to keep the way of Yahweh ... Yahweh may bring ... he has said  
Yahweh is speaking about himself as if he were another  
person. Alternate translation: "to obey what I, Yahweh,  
require ... I, Yahweh, may bring ... I have said"  
to keep the way of Yahweh  
"to obey the commands of Yahweh"  
to do righteousness and justice  
"by doing righteousness and justice." This tells how to keep  
the way of Yahweh.  
so that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham what he has said to him  
"so that Yahweh may bless Abraham just as he said he  
would." This refers to the covenant promise to bless  
Abraham and make him a great nation.  
Genesis 18:20  
the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great  
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "outcry" is  
expressed as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "so  
many people have been accusing the people of Sodom and  
Gomorrah of doing evil things"  
their sin is so serious  
"they have sinned so much"  
Genesis 18:21  
I will now go down there  
"I will now go down to Sodom and Gomorrah"  
go down there and see  
"go down there to find out" or "go down there to decide"  
see the outcry ... that has come to me  
Yahweh speaks as if he knew about this matter because he  
had heard the cries and accusations coming from the  
people who had suffered. This can be reworded so that the  
abstract noun "outcry" is expressed as the verb "accuse."  
Alternate translation: "as wicked as those who are accusing  
them say that they are"  
If not  
"If they are not as wicked as the outcry suggests"  
Genesis 18:22  
turned from there  
"went out from Abraham's camp"  
Abraham remained standing before Yahweh  
"Abraham and Yahweh remained together"  
Genesis 18:23  
approached and said  
"approached Yahweh and said" or "stepped closer to  
Yahweh and said"  
sweep away

Abraham speaks of destroying people as if it were sweeping  
dirt with a broom. Alternate translation: "destroy"  
the righteous with the wicked  
"the righteous people with the wicked people"  
Genesis 18:24  
General Information:  
Abraham continues talking to Yahweh.  
Perhaps there are  
"Suppose there are"  
Will you sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty  
righteous that are there?  
Abraham was hoping that Yahweh would say, "I will not  
sweep it away." Alternate translation: "I think you would  
not sweep it away. Instead, you would spare the place for  
the sake of the fifty righteous that are there"  
sweep it away  
"destroy it." Abraham speaks of destroying people as if it  
were sweeping dirt with a broom. Alternate translation:  
"destroy the people who live there"  
not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous that are there?  
Abraham was hoping that God would say "I will spare the  
place for the sake of the fifty righteous people there."  
spare the place  
"let the people live"  
for the sake of  
"because of"  
Genesis 18:25  
Far be it from you to do such a thing  
Here "Far be it from you" is an idiom that means the person  
should never do something like that. Alternate translation:  
"I would never want you to do something like that" or "You  
should not want to do something like that"  
such a thing, killing  
"such a thing as killing" or "such a thing, that is, killing"  
the righteous should be treated the same as the wicked  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:  
"you should treat the righteous the same way you treat the  
wicked"  
Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?  
Abraham used this rhetorical question to say what he  
expected God to do. Alternate translation: "The Judge of all  
the earth will certainly do what is just!" or "Since you are  
the Judge of all the earth, you will surely do what is right!"  
Judge  
God is often referred to as a judge because he is the one  
perfect judge who makes the final decisions about what is  
right or wrong.  
Genesis 18:26  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 18:27  
See now, I  
The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite  
request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen  
carefully: I" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis  
12:11.  
I have undertaken to speak  
"Pardon me for being so bold as to speak to you" or "Excuse  
me for daring to speak"

to my Lord  
 Abraham shows his respect to Yahweh by speaking to Yahweh as if he were speaking to someone else. Alternate translation: "to you, my Lord"  
 only dust and ashes  
 This metaphor describes Abraham as a human being, who will die and whose body will turn into to dust and ashes. Alternate translation: "only a mortal man" or "as unimportant as dust and ashes"  
 Genesis 18:28  
 five less than fifty righteous  
 "only forty-five righteous people"  
 for lack of five  
 "if there are five fewer righteous people"  
 I will not destroy it  
 "I will not destroy Sodom"  
 Genesis 18:29  
 He spoke to him  
 "Abraham spoke to Yahweh"  
 if there are forty found there  
 This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "if you find forty righteous people there"  
 for the forty's sake  
 "for the sake of the forty" or "if I find forty there." You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "for the sake of the forty righteous people" or "if I find forty righteous people there"  
 He replied  
 "Yahweh answered"  
 I will not do it for the forty's sake  
 "I will not destroy the cities if I find forty righteous people there"  
 Genesis 18:30  
 thirty will be found there  
 This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill

in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "you will find thirty righteous people there"  
 Genesis 18:31  
 See now, I  
 The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: I" See how you translated similar words in Genesis 12:11.  
 I have undertaken to speak  
 "Pardon me for being so bold as to speak to you" or "Excuse me for daring to speak." See how this is translated in Genesis 18:27.  
 twenty will be found there  
 This can be translated in active form. You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "you will find twenty righteous people there"  
 for the twenty's sake  
 "for the sake of the twenty" or "if I find twenty there." You may have to fill in the ellipsis, "righteous people." Alternate translation: "for the sake of the twenty righteous people" or "if I find twenty righteous people there"  
 Genesis 18:32  
 Perhaps ten will be found there  
 "Perhaps you will find ten righteous people there"  
 Perhaps ten  
 "Perhaps ten righteous people" or "ten good people"  
 Then he said  
 "And Yahweh answered"  
 for the ten's sake  
 "if I find ten righteous people there"  
 Genesis 18:33  
 Yahweh went on his way  
 Here "went on his way" is an idiom that means he left, or he continued his journey. Yahweh appeared to Abraham in human form as a traveler. Alternate translation: "Yahweh departed" or "Yahweh continued on his journey"

## Chapter 19

# Genesis 19 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

The evil desires of the Sodomites

The men of Sodom desired to forcibly have sexual relations with the angels who came to the city appearing as men. Such action is known as "rape." Their desire was viewed as especially evil because Lot was obligated to protect his guests at all costs, even that of sacrificing his own children for his guests. (See: evil)

Hospitality

Hospitality, or being kind to a visitor, was very important in the Ancient Near East. Lot showed his guests loyalty by doing his utmost to protect them from the people of Sodom.

## Important figures of speech in this chapter

Contrasts

It is probable that Abraham's faith and actions in chapter 18 are intended to contrast with the actions of the worldly Sodomites. (See: faith)

## Links:

[Genesis 19:1 Notes](#)

Genesis 19:1

The two angels

The two men who have gone to Sodom (Genesis 18:22) are

really angels.

the gate of Sodom

"the entrance to the city of Sodom." The city had a wall

around it, and people had to go through a gate to get into it. This was a very important place in a city. Important people often spent time there.

bowed down with his face to the ground

He put his knees on the ground then touched his forehead and nose to the ground.

Genesis 19:2

See now, my masters

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: my masters" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 12:11.

my masters

This was a term of respect Lot used for the angels.

please turn aside into your servant's house

"Please come and stay in your servant's house"

your servant's house

Lot refers to himself as their servant in order to show them respect.

wash your feet

People liked to wash their feet after traveling.

rise up early

"wake up early"

we will spend the night

When the two angels said this, they were referring only to themselves, not to Lot. The two of them planned to spend the night in the square. Some languages would use the exclusive form of "we" here.

town square

This is a public, outdoor place in the town.

Genesis 19:3

they went with him

"they turned and went with him"

Genesis 19:4

before they lay down

"before the people in Lot's house lay down to go to sleep"

the men of the city, the men of Sodom

"the men of the city, that is, the men of Sodom" or just "the men of the city of Sodom"

the house

"Lot's house"

both young and old

"from the youngest to the oldest." This means "men of all ages" and refers to the men of Sodom who were surrounding Lot's house.

Genesis 19:5

that came in to you

"that went into your house"

that we may know them

The phrase "know them" is a polite way of saying "have sexual relations with them." The men probably were not trying to be polite.

Genesis 19:6

after himself

"behind him" or "after he went through"

Genesis 19:7

I beg you, my brothers

"I plead with you, my brothers"

my brothers

Lot spoke in a friendly way to the men of the city hoping that they would listen to him. Alternate translation: "my friends"

do not act so wickedly

"do not do something so wicked" or "do not do such a wicked thing"

Genesis 19:8

See now, I

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: I" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 12:11.

who have not known any man

This is a polite way of saying that the daughters had not had sexual relations with any man. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. See how you translated similar words in [Genesis 4:1]

whatever is good in your eyes

"whatever you desire" or "whatever you think is right"

under the shadow of my roof

The two men were guests in Lot's home, so he needed to protect them. The word "roof" is a synecdoche for the whole house and a metaphor for Lot protecting them.

Alternate translation: "into my house, and God expects me to protect them"

Genesis 19:9

Stand back!

"Step aside!" or "Get out of our way!"

This one came here to live as a foreigner

"This one came here as an outsider" or "This foreigner came to live here"

This one

"Lot." The men are speaking to each other. If this would be unclear in your language, you may have the men speak to Lot here, as in UDB.

and now

The speaker would not expect a foreigner to judge the people of that land. Alternate translation: "but even though he has no good reason to"

he has become our judge

Here "has become our judge" is an idiom that means Lot is acting as if he can tell the men what actions are right or wrong. Alternate translation: "he acts as if he has the authority to tell us what is right and what is wrong"

Now we

"Because you are telling us that what we are doing is wrong, we"

we will deal worse with you than with them

The men are angry that Lot said, "Do not act so wickedly" (Genesis 19:7), so they are threatening to act more wickedly than Lot had feared at first. Alternate translation: "we will act more wickedly with you than we will with them"

They pressed hard against the man, against Lot, and came near to break down the door

Possible meanings are 1) "They kept coming closer to the man, to Lot, until they were close enough to break down the door" or 2) they physically pushed Lot up against the wall or door of the house and were about to break the door down.

the man ... Lot

This is two ways of referring to Lot.

Genesis 19:10

But the men

"But Lot's two guests" or "But the two angels"

the men reached out their hands and brought ... them and shut

Your language may need to add that the men opened the door first. Alternate translation: 'the men opened the door far enough so they could reach out their hands and pull ... them, and then they shut'

Genesis 19:11

Lot's visitors struck with blindness the men

The phrase "struck with blindness" is a metaphor; the visitors did not physically hit the men. Alternate translation: "Lot's visitors blinded the men" or "they took away their sight"

both small and great

Possible meanings are 1) this refers to age. Alternate translation: "both the young men and the old men" or 2) this refers to status. Alternate translation: "both the unimportant men and the important men"

both small and great

This merism emphasizes that the visitors blinded all the men. Alternate translation: "men of all ages" or "men of every status"

Genesis 19:12

Then the men said

"Then the two men said" or "Then the angels said"

Do you have anyone else here?

"Are there any other members of your family in the city?" or "Do you have any other family members in this place?"

whoever you have in the city

"any other members of your family living in this city"

Genesis 19:13

we are about to destroy

The word "we" here is exclusive. Only the two angels would destroy the city; Lot would not destroy it. If your language has an exclusive form of "we," use it here.

the accusations against it before Yahweh have become so loud

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun

"accusations" is expressed as a verb. See how similar words are translated in [Genesis 18:20]

Genesis 19:14

Lot went out

"So Lot left the house"

his sons-in-law, the men who had promised to marry his daughters

The phrase "the men who had promised to marry his daughters" explains what "sons-in-law" means here.

Alternate translation: "the men who were going to marry his daughters" or "his daughters' fiancés"

Genesis 19:15

When dawn came

"Just before the sun came up"

Get going

"Go now"

you are not swept away in the punishment of the city

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so Yahweh does not also destroy you when he punishes the people of this city"

not swept away in the punishment

God destroying the people of the city is spoken of as if a person were sweeping away dust.

of the city

Here "city" stands for the people.

Genesis 19:16

But he lingered

"But Lot hesitated" or "But Lot did not start to leave"

So the men grabbed

"So the two men grabbed" or "So the angels grabbed"

was merciful to him

"had compassion on Lot." Yahweh is described as being "merciful" because he was sparing the lives of Lot and his family instead of destroying them when he destroyed the people of Sodom for the wrong they had done.

Genesis 19:17

When they had brought them out

"When the two men had brought Lot's family out"

Run for your lives!

This is a way of telling them to run so that they do not die.

Alternate translation: "Run away and save your lives!"

Do not look back

The phrase "at the city" is understood. Alternate translation: "Do not look back at the city" or "Do not look back at Sodom"

on the plain

This means the plain of the Jordan River. This refers to the general region of the Jordan River.

so you are not swept away

It is understood that they would swept away with the people of the city. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "or else God will destroy you along with the people of the city"

not swept away

God destroying the people of the city is spoken of as if a person were sweeping away dust.

Genesis 19:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 19:19

See now, your servant

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: your servant" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 12:11.

your servant has found favor in your eyes

The phrase "found favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Here "eyes" are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. Alternate translation: "you have been pleased with me"

your servant has

Lot was showing respect by referring to himself as "your servant." Alternate translation: "I, your servant, have"

you have shown me great kindness in saving my life

The abstract noun "kindness" can be stated as "kind."

Alternate translation: "you have been very kind to me by saving my life"

I cannot escape to the mountains, because the disaster will overtake me, and I will die

Being unable to get far enough away from Sodom when God destroys the city is spoken of as if "disaster" is a person that will chase and catch up with Lot. Alternate translation: "My family and I will certainly die when God destroys the people of Sodom, because the mountains are too far away for us to get there safely"

my life ... I cannot escape ... overtake me, and I will die  
It is implied that Lot's family would die along with him.  
Alternate translation: "our lives ... we cannot escape ... overtake us, and we will die"

Genesis 19:20

See now, the city

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: the city" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 12:11.

let me escape there—Is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved  
Lot used this rhetorical question to get the angels to notice that the city really is a small one. Alternate translation: "let me escape there. You can see how small it is. If you let us go there we will live"

let me escape there

Lot's full request can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "instead of destroying that city, let me escape there"

my life will be saved

It is implied that the lives of Lot's family will be saved along with his. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that we will live" or "so that we will survive"

Genesis 19:21

I am granting this request also

"I will do what you have asked"

Genesis 19:22

cannot do anything

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "cannot destroy the other cities"

Zoar

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Zoar sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'little.' Lot called this town 'little' in Genesis 19:20."

Genesis 19:23

The sun had risen upon the earth

"The sun had risen over the earth." The phrase "upon the earth" can be left implicit as it is in the UDB where it is not translated.

when Lot reached Zoar

It is implied that Lot's family is with him. Alternate translation: "when Lot and his family arrived at Zoar"

Genesis 19:24

Yahweh rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from Yahweh out of the sky

The phrase "from Yahweh" stands for God's power to cause the sulfur and fire to fall on the city. Alternate translation: "Yahweh caused sulfur and fire to fall from the sky onto Sodom and Gomorrah"

sulfur and fire

These two words are used together to describe one object. Alternate translation: "burning sulfur" or "fiery rain"

Genesis 19:25

those cities

This refers primarily to Sodom and Gomorrah, but also to three other towns.

the inhabitants of the cities

"the people who lived in the cities"

Genesis 19:26

she became a pillar of salt

"she became like a statue of salt" or "her body became like a tall stone of salt." Because she disobeyed the angel who told them not to look back at the city, God caused her to become something like a statue made out of rock salt.

Genesis 19:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 19:28

behold

The word "behold" draws attention to the surprising information that follows.

like the smoke of a furnace

This shows that it was a very large amount of smoke.

Alternate translation: "like the smoke from a very large fire"

Genesis 19:29

General Information:

Verse 29 is a summary of this chapter.

God called Abraham to mind

This tells why God rescued Lot. To "call to mind" is a way of saying "remember." This does not imply that God forgot about Abraham. It means he considered Abraham and had mercy on him. Alternate translation: "God thought about Abraham and had mercy on him"

out of the midst of the destruction

"away from the destruction" or "away from danger"

Genesis 19:30

Lot went up from Zoar to live in the mountains

The phrase "went up from" is used because Lot went to a higher elevation in the mountains.

Genesis 19:31

The firstborn ... the younger

Here "firstborn" and "younger" are nominal adjectives that refer to Lot's two daughters according to their birth order.

Alternate translation: "Lot's first daughter ... Lot's last daughter" or "The older daughter ... the younger daughter" to lie with us

These words are a euphemism for sexual relations.

according to the way of all the world

Here "the world" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "as people everywhere do"

Genesis 19:32

drink wine

It can be made explicit that their goal was to get him drunk. Alternate translation: "drink wine until he gets drunk" or "get drunk with wine"

we will lie with him

To "lie with" someone is a euphemism for having sexual relations with that person. Alternate translation: "we will have sexual relations with him"

so that we may keep our family line alive through our father

This speaks about giving Lot descendants as if his family were a line that they are making longer. Alternate translation: "so that we can bear children who will be our father's descendants"

Genesis 19:33

lay with her father

This is probably a euphemism for sexual activity. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with her father"

when she lay down

Possible meanings are 1) these words are literal, a complement to "when she got up," or 2) they are a euphemism for sexual relations. Alternate translation: "when she had sexual relations with him"

Genesis 19:34

I lay last night with my father ... lie with him

The phrase "lay with" is a euphemism meaning that she had sexual relations with her father. Alternate translation: "I had sexual relations with my father ... have sexual relations with him"

Let us make him drink wine ... family line

See how you translated these phrases in [Genesis 19:32](#).

drink wine

It can be made explicit that their goal was to get him drunk. Alternate translation: "drink wine until he gets drunk" or "get drunk with wine"

so that we may keep our family line alive through our father

This speaks about giving Lot descendants as if his family were a line that they are making longer. Alternate translation: "so that we can bear children who will be our father's descendants"

Genesis 19:35

So they made ... or when she got up

See how you translated similar phrases in [Genesis 19:33](#).

lay with him

This is probably a euphemism for sexual activity. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with him"

when she lay down

Possible meanings are 1) these words are literal, a complement to "when she got up," or 2) they are a euphemism for sexual relations. See how these words are translated in Genesis 19:33. Alternate translation: "when she had sexual relations with him"

Genesis 19:36

conceived by their father

"became pregnant by their father" or "conceived children with their father"

Genesis 19:37

He became

"He is"

the Moabites of today

"the Moab people who are now living"

of today

The word "today" refers to the time when the author of Genesis was living. The author was born and wrote this many years after Lot's family lived and died.

Genesis 19:38

Ben-Ammi

This is a male name.

the people of Ammon

"the descendants of Ammon" or "the Ammon people"

---

## Chapter 20

# Genesis 20 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

"She is my sister"

Abraham was afraid the people of Gerar would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Sarah to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Abraham's sister, they would have shown favor to him. (See: and favor)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### Irony

Abraham believed that the people of Gerar did not fear Yahweh, but when confronted by Yahweh, the king showed that he feared Yahweh. Instead, it was Abraham who did not show any fear of Yahweh when he sinned. This is irony. (See: fear and sin)

## Links:

[Genesis 20:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 20:1

Shur

This is a desert region on the eastern border of Egypt.

Genesis 20:2

sent for Sarah and took her

"made his men go get Sarah and bring her to him"

Genesis 20:3

God came to Abimelek

"God appeared to Abimelek"

Behold

"pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true

and important: "

you are a dead man

This is a strong way of saying the king will die. Alternate translation: "you will certainly die soon" or "I will kill you"

a man's wife

"a married woman"

Genesis 20:4

Now ... her

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to information about Abimelech.

Abimelek had not come near her

This is a polite way of saying he did not have sex with her.  
Alternate translation: "Abimelek had not had sexual relations with Sarah"

even a righteous nation

Here "nation" stands for the people. Abimelech is worried that God will punish not only him, but his people also.

Alternate translation: "even a people who are innocent"  
Genesis 20:5

Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister?' Even she herself said, 'He is my brother.'

This has quotations within a quotation. They can be stated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Did he himself not tell me that she is his sister? Even she herself told me that he is her brother."

Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister?'

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to remind God of something God already knew. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Abraham himself told me, 'She is my sister.'" or "Abraham said that she is his sister."

Did he not himself say ... Even she herself

The words "he himself" and "she herself" are used for emphasis to bring attention to Abraham and Sarah and to blame them for what happened.

I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands

Here "heart" stands for his thoughts or intentions. Also "hands" stands for his actions. Alternate translation: "I have done this with good intentions and actions" or "I have done this with no evil thoughts or actions"

Genesis 20:6

God said to him

"God said to Abimelech"

in the integrity of your heart you did this

Here "heart" stands for his thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: "you did this with good intentions" or "you did this without evil intentions"

to touch her

This is a euphemism for having sex with Sarah. Alternate translation: "to sleep with her"

Genesis 20:7

the man's wife

"Abraham's wife"

you will live

"I will let you live"

all who are yours

"all of your people"

Genesis 20:8

He told all these things to them

"He told them everything that God had told him"

Genesis 20:9

What have you done to us?

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to accuse Abraham. Alternate translation: "You have done something bad to us!" or "Look what you have done to us!"

to us

The word "us" here is exclusive and does not include Abraham and Sarah. If your language uses an exclusive form of "we" or "us," use it here.

How have I sinned against you, that you have brought ... sin?

Abimelech used this rhetorical question to remind Abraham that he had not sinned against Abraham.

Alternate translation: "I have done nothing against you to cause you to bring ... sin."

that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin

To cause someone to be guilty of sinning is spoken of as if "sin" was a thing that could be placed on a person.

Alternate translation: "that you should make me and my kingdom guilty of such a terrible sin"

on my kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "on the people of my kingdom"

You have done to me deeds that ought not to be done

"You should not have done this to me"

Genesis 20:10

What prompted you to do this thing?

"What caused you to do this?" or "Why did you do this?"

What Abraham did can be stated explicitly. Alternate

translation: "Why did you tell me that Sarah is your sister?"

Genesis 20:11

Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Because I thought that since no one here fears God, someone may kill me so they can take my wife."

no fear of God in this place

Here "place" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "no one here in Gerar fears God"

fear of God

This means to deeply respect God and show that respect by obeying him.

Genesis 20:12

Besides, she is indeed my sister

"Also, it is true that Sarah is my sister" or "Also, Sarah really is my sister"

the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother

"we have the same father, but we have different mothers"

Genesis 20:13

General Information:

Verse 13 is a continuation of Abraham's answer to Abimelech.

my father's house

Here "house" stands for Abraham's family. Alternate translation: "my father and the rest of my family" or "my father's household"

I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "He is my brother."'

This has quotations within quotations. They can be stated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "I said to Sarah that I wanted her to be faithful to me by telling people everywhere we go that I am her brother"

Genesis 20:14

Abimelek took

"Abimelek brought some"

Genesis 20:15

Abimelek said

"Abimelek said to Abraham"

Look

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

my land is before you

This is a way of saying "I make all of my land available to you"

Settle wherever it pleases you

"Live wherever you want"

Genesis 20:16

a thousand

"1,000"

It is to cover any offense against you in the eyes of all who are with you

Giving money to prove to others that Sarah is innocent is spoken of as if he is placing a cover over an offense so no one can see it. Alternate translation: "I am giving this to him, so that those who are with you will know that you have done nothing wrong"

in the eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts

or judgment. Alternate translation: "in the opinion" or "in the judgement"

before everyone, you are completely made right

The passive phrase "made right" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone will know that you are innocent"

Genesis 20:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 20:18

closed all the wombs of the household of Abimelek

"made all the women of Abimelek's household totally unable to have children"

because of Sarah, Abraham's wife

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because Abimelech had taken Abraham's wife Sarah"

---

## Chapter 21

# Genesis 21 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

Sarah's anger

After Sarah was able to have her own child, and he survived infancy, she began to get angry with Abraham's other son, Ishmael. He would have been a constant reminder of her own sin. God blessed Ishmael, but he was not able to inherit the promises given to Abraham. (See: sin, inherit and promise and bless)

Abandoning Ishmael

According to the law at this time, Hagar was able to gain her freedom from slavery by abandoning any claim to receive an inheritance. This is why Hagar would have abandoned her son under the tree.

Treaty

The Gentile king, Abimelech, made a covenant or treaty with Abraham. It is possible that he did this because he recognized the power of Abraham's God, but his exact reasons are unknown. (See: covenant)

## Links:

[Genesis 21:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 21:1

Yahweh paid attention to Sarah

Here the phrase "paid attention to" refers to Yahweh helping Sarah have a baby. Alternate translation: "Yahweh helped Sarah"

Genesis 21:2

bore a son to Abraham

"gave birth to Abraham's son"

in his old age

"when Abraham was very old"

at the set time of which God had spoken to him

"at the exact time that God had told him it would happen"

Genesis 21:3

Abraham named his son, the one who had been born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac

"Abraham named his newborn son, the one Sarah gave birth to, Isaac" or "Abraham named their newborn son Isaac"

Genesis 21:4

Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old

"When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him"

eight days

"8 days"

had commanded him

"had commanded Abraham to do"

Genesis 21:5

one hundred

"100"

Genesis 21:6

God has made me laugh

Sarah was laughing because she was surprised and happy.

This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God has caused me to laugh joyfully"

every one who hears

What people would hear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "everyone who hears about what God has done for me"

Genesis 21:7

Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "No one would have ever said to Abraham that Sarah will nurse children"

nurse children



This is a polite way of referring to breast-feeding babies.

Alternate translation: "feed a baby her own milk"

Genesis 21:8

The child grew and ... Isaac was weaned

"Wean" here is a polite way of saying the child was finished with breast feeding. Alternate translation: "Isaac grew, and when he no longer needed his mother's milk, Abraham had a large feast"

Genesis 21:9

the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham

The name of Hagar's son can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian and Abraham"

mocking

It can be stated explicitly that he was jeering or laughing at Isaac. Alternate translation: "laughing at Isaac"

Genesis 21:10

she said to Abraham

"Sarah said to Abraham"

Drive out

"send away" or "get rid of"

this slave woman and her son

This refers to Hagar and Ishmael. Sarah probably did not refer to them by name because she was angry with them.

with my son, with Isaac

"with my son Isaac"

Genesis 21:11

This thing was very grievous to Abraham

"Abraham was very unhappy about what Sarah said"

because of his son

"because it was about his son." It is implied that this means his son, Ishmael.

Genesis 21:12

Do not be grieved because of the young man and because of your servant girl

"Do not be upset about the boy and your handmaid"

Listen to Sarah's words in all she says to you about this matter

"Do everything that Sarah says to you about them"

it is through Isaac that your descendants will be named

The phrase "will be named" means those born through Isaac are the ones God considers to be the descendants that he promised Abraham. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "Isaac is the one who will be the forefather of the descendants I promised to give you"

Genesis 21:13

I will also make the son of the servant woman into a nation

The word "nation" means God will give him many descendants so that they become a great nation of people.

Alternate translation: "I will make the servant woman's son also become the father of a great nation"

Genesis 21:14

took bread

These words could refer to 1) food in general or 2) bread specifically.

a skin of water

"a bag of water." The water container was made out of animal skin.

Genesis 21:15

When the water in the waterskin was gone

"When the water bag was empty" or "When they had drank all of the water"

Genesis 21:16

about the distance of a bowshot away

This refers to the distance that a person could shoot an arrow with a bow. This is about 100 meters.

Let me not look upon the death of the child

The abstract noun "death" can be stated as "die." Alternate translation: "I do not want to watch the boy die"

she lifted up her voice and wept

Here "voice" stands for the sound of her crying. To "life up her voice" means to cry loudly. Alternate translation: "she cried out loudly and wept" or "she wept loudly"

Genesis 21:17

the voice of the young man

"the young man's voice." Here "voice" stands for the sound of the young man crying or speaking. Alternate translation: "the sound of Ishmael"

the angel of God

"a messenger from God" or "God's messenger"

out of heaven

Here "heaven" means the place where God lives.

What troubles you

"What is wrong" or "Why are you crying"

the voice of the young man where he is

Here "voice" stands for the sound of the young man crying or speaking. Alternate translation: "the sound of the young man lying over there"

Genesis 21:18

raise up the young man

"help the young man stand up"

I will make him into a great nation

To make Ishmael into a great nation means God will give him many descendants who will become a great nation.

Alternate translation: "I will make his descendants become a great nation" or "I will make him become the ancestor of a great nation"

Genesis 21:19

God opened her eyes, and she saw

God making Hagar aware of the well is spoken of as if he literally opened her eyes. Alternate translation: "God caused Hagar to see" or "God showed her"

the skin

"the container made of skin" or "the bag"

the young man

"the boy" or "Ishmael"

Genesis 21:20

God was with the young man

Here the phrase "was with" is an idiom that means God helped or blessed the young man. Alternate translation: "God guided the young man" or "God blessed the young man"

became an archer

"became very skilled at using a bow and arrows"

Genesis 21:21

got a wife

"found a wife"

Genesis 21:22

It came about at that time

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.

Phicol

This is the name of a man.

captain of his army

"commander of his army"

his army

The word "his" refers to Abimelech.

God is with you in all that you do

Here the phrase "is with you" is an idiom that means God helps or blesses Abraham. Alternate translation: "God blesses everything you do"

Genesis 21:23

Now therefore

The word "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Alternate translation: "Therefore"

swear to me here by God

This is an idiom meaning to make a solemn oath witnessed by a higher authority, in this instance, God. Alternate translation: "promise me with God as your witness"

that you will not deal falsely with me

"that you will not lie to me"

will not deal falsely ... with my descendants

"will deal honestly with me and my descendants"

Show to me ... covenant faithfulness that I have shown to you

The two men had made a covenant with each other. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful" or "loyal." Alternate translation: "Be as faithful to me and to the land as I have been to you"

to the land

Here "land" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "to the people of the land"

Genesis 21:24

I swear

This can be stated with the understood information.

Alternate translation: "I swear to be as faithful to you and your people as you have been to me"

Genesis 21:25

Abraham also complained to Abimelek

Possible meanings are 1) Abraham was complaining about what happened or 2) "Abraham also rebuked Abimelek"

concerning a well of water that Abimelek's servants had seized from him

"because Abimelek's servants had taken one of Abraham's wells"

seized from him

"taken from Abraham" or "had taken control of"

Genesis 21:26

I have not heard of it until today

"This is the first time I have heard about it"

Genesis 21:27

Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelek

This is a sign of friendship and that Abraham agrees to make covenant with Abimelek.

Genesis 21:28

Abraham set seven female lambs of the flock by themselves

"Abraham separated seven female lambs from the flock"

Genesis 21:29

What is the meaning of these seven female lambs that you have set by themselves?

"Why have you separated these seven lambs from the flock?"

Genesis 21:30

you will receive

"you will take"

from my hand

Here "hand" stands for Abraham. Alternate translation: "from me"

it may be a witness

The word "it" refers to the gift of seven lambs.

so that it may be a witness for me

The abstract noun "witness" can be stated as "to prove."

Alternate translation: "to prove to everyone"

Genesis 21:31

he called that place

"Abraham called that place"

Beersheba

Translators may add a footnote saying "Beersheba can mean either "well of the oath" or "well of seven."

they both

"Abraham and Abimelech"

Genesis 21:32

Phicol

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in Genesis 21:22.

Genesis 21:33

a tamarisk tree

This is an evergreen tree that can grow in the desert. It can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "a tree"

the eternal God

"the God who lives forever"

Genesis 21:34

many days

"for a long time"

---

## Chapter 22

# Genesis 22 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Sacrificing his son

Although Isaac was not Abraham's only son, he was the son who was to inherit Abraham's promised blessings. It is possible this parallels God's actual sacrifice of his son, Jesus, for the sins of man. (See: inherit and promise and sin)

### Covenant affirmation

After important events, it is common for Scripture to affirm the tenets of a covenant. This serves as a reminder of the covenant and affirms it. (See: covenant)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### God tests Abraham

Extra care should be taken when translating "testing." It is best to avoid using the same word used for "tempting" even though they overlap in meaning. This is because Scripture also says God does not tempt anyone. (See: test and tempt and [James 2:13](#))

### Links:

[Genesis 22:1 Notes](#)

#### Genesis 22:1

It came about

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.

after these things

This phrase refers to the events in chapter 21.

God tested Abraham

It is implied that God tests Abraham to learn if Abraham will be faithful to him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: God tested Abraham's faithfulness"

Here I am

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?"

#### Genesis 22:2

your only son

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "your only son whom I have promised"

whom you love

This emphasizes Abraham's love for his son, Isaac.

the land of Moriah

"the land called Moriah"

#### Genesis 22:3

saddled his donkey

"loaded his donkey" or "put on his donkey what he needed for the journey"

young men

"servants"

set out on his journey

"started his journey" or "started traveling"

#### Genesis 22:4

On the third day

The word "third" is the ordinal number for three. Alternate translation: "After traveling for three days"

saw the place afar off

"saw far away the place that God had spoken of"

#### Genesis 22:5

young men

"servants"

We will worship

The word "we" refers only to Abraham and Isaac, but not to the young men.

come again to you

"return to you"

#### Genesis 22:6

put it on Isaac his son

"had Isaac, his son, carry it"

He took in his own hand

Here "his own hand" emphasizes that Abraham himself carried these things. Alternate translation: "Abraham himself carried"

the fire

Here "fire" stands for a pan containing burning coals or a torch or lamp. Alternate translation: "something for starting a fire"

they went both of them together

"they left together" or "the two of them went together"

#### Genesis 22:7

My father

This is a loving way for a son to speak to his father.

Here I am

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you translated this in Genesis 22:1.

my son

This is a loving way for a father to speak to his son.

the fire

Here "fire" stands for a pan containing burning coals or a torch or lamp. See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:6]

the lamb for the burnt offering

"the lamb that you will give as a burnt offering"

#### Genesis 22:8

God himself

Here "himself" emphasizes that it is God who will provide the lamb.

will provide

"will give us"

#### Genesis 22:9

When they came to the place

"When Abraham and Isaac arrived at the place"

he bound

"he tied up"

on the altar, on top of the wood

"on top of the wood that was on the altar"

#### Genesis 22:10

reached out with his hand and took up the knife

"picked up the knife"

#### Genesis 22:11

the angel of Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or 2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or 3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel." See the note about this phrase in Genesis 16:7.

from heaven

This refers to the place where God lives.

Here I am

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you translated this in Genesis 22:1.

Genesis 22:12

Do not lay your hand upon the young man, nor do anything to harm him

The phrase "Do not lay your hand upon" is a way of saying "do not harm." God said basically the same thing twice to emphasize that Abraham should not hurt Isaac. Alternate translation: "Do not hurt the boy in any way"

now I know ... from me

The words "I" and "me" refer to Yahweh. When translating what is in the quote, do it as the angel of Yahweh did and use the words "I" and "me" when referring to Yahweh.

you fear God

This refers to deeply respecting God and showing that respect by obeying him.

seeing that

"because I see that"

you have not withheld your son ... from me

"you have not held back your son ... from me." or "you were willing to offer your son ... to me"

your son, your only son

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 22:2]

Genesis 22:13

behold

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

was a ram caught in the bushes by his horns

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"was a ram whose horns were stuck in the bushes" or "was a ram stuck in the bushes"

went and took the ram

"Abraham went over to the ram and took it"

Genesis 22:14

will provide ... will be provided

Use the same word for "provide" as you used in Genesis 22:8.

to this day

"even now." This means even to the time that the author was writing this book.

it will be provided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will provide"

Genesis 22:15

The angel of Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh made himself look like an angel or 2) this was one of Yahweh's angels or 3) this was a special messenger from God (some scholars think it was Jesus). Since the phrase is not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "The angel of Yahweh" using the normal word that you use for "angel." See the note about this phrase in Genesis 16:7.

a second time

The word "second" is the ordinal number for two. Alternate translation: "again"

from heaven

Here the word "heaven" refers to the place where God lives. Genesis 22:16

said—this is Yahweh's declaration

"spoke this message from Yahweh" or "declared these words of Yahweh." This is a formal way of saying that the words that follow come directly from Yahweh.

by myself I have sworn

"I have promised and I am my witness." To swear means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made. There is nothing more powerful for Yahweh to swear by than himself.

you have done this thing

"you obeyed me"

have not withheld your son

"have not kept back your son" or "were willing to offer your son to me"

your son, your only son

It is implied that God knows that Abraham has another son, Ishmael. This emphasizes that Isaac is the son that God promised to give Abraham. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 22:2]

Genesis 22:17

surely bless

"certainly bless"

I will greatly multiply your descendants

"I will cause your descendants to increase again and again" or "I will cause your descendants to be very many"

as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore  
God compared Abraham's descendants to the stars and the sand. Just as people cannot count the huge number of stars or the grains of sand, so there would be so many of Abraham's descendants that people would not be able to count them. Alternate translation: "beyond what you can count"

as the stars of the heavens

Here the word "heavens" refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars.

will possess the gate of their enemies

Here "gate" represents the whole city. To "possess the gate of their enemies" means destroying their enemies.

Alternate translation: "will completely triumph over their enemies"

Genesis 22:18

General Information:

The angel of Yahweh continues speaking to Abraham.

all the nations of the earth will be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, the Lord, will bless all the people living everywhere"

nations of the earth

Here "nations" stands for the people of the nations.

you have obeyed my voice

Here "voice" stands for what God said. Alternate translation: "you have obeyed what I said" or "you have obeyed me"

Genesis 22:19

Abraham returned

Only Abraham was named because he was the father, but it was implied that his son went with him. The full meaning

of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Abraham and his son went back"  
young men  
"servants"  
they departed  
"they left that place"  
he lived at Beersheba  
Only Abraham was mentioned because he was the leader of his family and servants, but it was implied that they were with him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Abraham and his people stayed in Beersheba"  
Genesis 22:20  
It came about after these things  
"After these events." The phrase "these things" refers to the events of Genesis 22:1-19.  
Abraham was told  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone told Abraham"  
Milkah has borne children, as well  
"Milkah has also borne children"  
Milkah  
This is the name of a woman.  
Genesis 22:21  
They were Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother  
"The name of his firstborn was Uz, and the names of the

rest of his children were Buz his brother"  
Uz ... Buz ... Kemuel ... Aram  
These are all names of men. Translate this so that it is clear that all of these except Aram are the sons of Nahor and Milkah.  
Genesis 22:22  
Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel  
These are all names of men. Translate this so that it is clear that all of these are the sons of Nahor and Milkah.  
Genesis 22:23  
Bethuel became the father of Rebekah  
"Later Bethel became the father of Rebekah"  
These were the eight children that Milkah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother  
"These were the eight children of Milkah and Nahor, Abraham's brother." This refers to the children that were listed in [Genesis 22:21-22](#).  
Genesis 22:24  
His concubine  
"Nahor's concubine"  
Reumah  
This is the name of a woman.  
also bore  
"also gave birth to"  
Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maakah  
These are all names of men.

---

## Chapter 23

# Genesis 23 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Abraham's character

Abraham's interaction with the people show that he was greatly respected. This would have been unusual for a foreigner and indicates that Abraham was a man of great character.

### Burial

Burial was a common practice when Abraham lived, but only the wealthy were able to bury their dead relatives in this way.

## Links:

[Genesis 23:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 23:1

These were the years of the life of Sarah  
Some translations do not include this sentence.  
Genesis 23:2  
Kiriath Arba  
This is the name of a city.  
Abraham mourned and wept for Sarah  
"Abraham was very sad and cried because Sarah died"  
Genesis 23:3  
rose up and went from his dead wife  
"got up and left his wife's body"  
the sons of Heth  
Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth.  
Alternate translation: "the descendants of Heth" or "the Hittites"  
Genesis 23:4  
among you  
This idea may be expressed in terms of location. "in your

country" or "here"

Please grant me a property  
"Sell me some land" or "Allow me to buy a piece of land"  
my dead  
The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as an adjective or a verb. Alternate translation: "my dead wife" or "my wife who has died"  
Genesis 23:5  
The sons of Heth  
Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]  
Genesis 23:6  
my master  
This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.  
a prince of God  
This is an idiom. This probably means "a powerful man" or "a mighty leader."  
your dead

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as a verb or simply as "wife." Alternate translation: "your wife who has died" or "your wife"

the choicest of our tombs

"the best of our burial places"

refuse you his tomb

"withhold his burial place from you" or "refuse to give to you his tomb"

Genesis 23:7

bowed down

This means to bend over or kneel down very low to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth

"to the sons of Heth who lived in the area"

the sons of Heth

Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]

Genesis 23:8

my dead

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as a verb or simply as "wife." Alternate translation: "my wife who has died" or "my wife"

Ephron ... Zohar

These are names of men.

Genesis 23:9

the cave of Machpelah, which he owns, which is at the end of his field

"his cave that is at the end of his field in Machpelah"

the cave of Machpelah

"the cave in Machpela." Machpela was the name of an area or region. Ephron owned a field in Machpela and the cave that was in the field.

which he owns

This tells something about the cave. Ephron owned the cave.

which is at the end of his field

This also tells something about the cave. The cave was at the end of Ephron's field.

sell it to me publicly

"sell it to me in front of you all" or "sell it to me in your presence"

as a property

"as a piece of land that I may own and use"

Genesis 23:10

Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth

Here "Now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Ephron.

Ephron

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8]

the sons of Heth

Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]

in the hearing of the sons of Heth

The abstract noun "the hearing" can be stated as "hear" or "listening." Alternate translation: "so that all the sons of Heth could hear him" or "while all the sons of Heth were listening"

all those who had come into the gate of his city

This tells which sons of Heth were listening. Alternate

translation: "all those who had gathered at the gate of his city"

gate of his city

The city gate was where the leaders of the city would meet to make important decisions.

his city

"the city where he lived." This phrase shows that Ephron belonged to that city. It does not mean that he owned it.

Genesis 23:11

my master

This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.

in the presence of the sons of my people

Here "presence" stands for the people serving as witnesses.

Alternate translation: "with my fellow countrymen as my witnesses"

sons of my people

This means "my fellow countrymen" or "my fellow Hittites"

my people

This phrase shows that Ephron was part of that group of people. It does not mean that he was their leader.

I give it to you to bury your dead

"I give it to you. Bury your dead"

your dead

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as a verb or simply as "wife." Alternate translation: "your wife who has died" or "your wife"

Genesis 23:12

bowed down

This means to bend over or kneel down very low to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

people of the land

"people who lived in that area"

Genesis 23:13

in the hearing of the people of the land

The abstract noun "the hearing" can be stated as "hear" or "listening" Alternate translation: "so that the people who lived in the area could hear" or "while the people who lived in the area were listening"

But if you are willing

The word "but" shows a contrast. Ephron wanted to give the field to Abraham; Abraham wanted to pay for it.

Alternate translation: "No, but if you are willing" or "No, but if you agree with this"

I will pay for the field

"I will give you money for the field"

my dead

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as a verb or simply as "wife." Alternate translation: "my wife who has died" or "my wife"

Genesis 23:14

Ephron

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8]

Genesis 23:15

Please, my master, listen to me

"Hear me, my master" or "Listen to me, kind sir"

my master

This phrase is used to show respect to Abraham.

A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that

between me and you?

Ephron meant that since he and Abraham were both so wealthy, 400 pieces of silver was a small amount. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The piece of land is worth only four hundred shekels of silver. For you and me, that is nothing." four hundred shekels of silver This is about 4.5 kilograms of silver.

four hundred  
"400"

Bury your dead

The nominal adjective "dead" can be stated as a verb or simply as "wife." Alternate translation: "Go bury your wife who has died" or "Go bury your wife"

Genesis 23:16

Abraham weighed out to Ephron the amount of silver  
"Abraham weighed the silver and gave Ephron the amount" or "Abraham counted out to Ephron the amount of silver" the amount of silver that he had spoken  
"the amount of silver that Ephron had said"

in the hearing of the sons of Heth

The abstract noun "the hearing" can be stated as "hear" or "listening." Alternate translation: "so that all the sons of Heth could hear him" or "while all the sons of Heth were listening"

the sons of Heth

Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]

according to the standard measurement of the merchants

"using the standard measurement of weight that merchants used." This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "He weighed the silver the same way that the merchants used to weigh it"

Genesis 23:17

Machpelah

Machpela was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9]

Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there.

that is, the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees

This phrase explains what the author meant when he wrote "the field of Ephron." It was not only the field, but also the cave and trees in the field.

passed

"became property that belonged"

Genesis 23:18

to Abraham by purchase

These words complete the idea that begins with the word "passed" in verse 17. "became Abraham's possession when he purchased it" or "belonged to Abraham after he bought it"

in the presence of the sons of Heth

Here "presence" stands for the people serving as witnesses.

Alternate translation: "with the people of Heth watching as witnesses"

the sons of Heth

Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]

all those who had come into the gate of his city

This tells which sons of Heth saw Abraham buy the property. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:10]

gate of his city

The city gate was where the leaders of the city would meet to make important decisions.

his city

"the city where he lived." This phrase shows that Ephron belonged to that city. It does not mean that he owned it.

Genesis 23:19

After this

"After he bought the field"

the cave of the field

"the cave in the field"

the field of Machpelah

"the field in Machpelah"

that is, Hebron

Possible meanings are 1) Mamre was another name for

Hebron or 2) Hebron was formerly called Mamre or 3)

Mamre was very near the larger city of Hebron, so people usually called it Hebron.

Genesis 23:20

passed to Abraham as a property for a burial place from the sons of Heth

"became Abraham's property for a burial ground when he bought it from the sons of Heth"

the sons of Heth

Here "sons" stands for those who descended from Heth. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:3]

---

## Chapter 24

# Genesis 24 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 24:60.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Intermarriage

Abraham would not allow his son to marry anyone from the people of Canaan. This is because it would cause his son to worship other gods. Intermarriage and worshiping false gods are things that frequently caused Abraham's descendants to struggle. (See: falsegod)

### Abraham's wealth

There are many instances recorded in this chapter which highlight Abraham's significant wealth. He owned more than 10

camels and had large amounts of gold.

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Put your hand under my thigh"

Many scholars believe this is a euphemism. Putting one's hand on a man's genitals was a way to make an important oath. It represented power and progeny.

## Links:

[Genesis 24:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 24:1

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

### Genesis 24:2

Put your hand under my thigh

Abraham was about to ask the servant to swear to do something. Putting his hand under Abraham's thigh would show that he would certainly do what he would swear to do.

### Genesis 24:3

I will make you swear

This can be expressed as a command. Alternate translation: "swear"

swear by Yahweh

The term "swear by" means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made. "promise me with Yahweh as your witness"

the God of heaven and the God of the earth

"the God of heaven and earth." The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean every thing that God created. Alternate translation: "the God of everything in heaven and earth"

heaven

This refers to the place where God lives.

from the daughters of the Canaanites

"from the Canaanite women" or "from the Canaanites." This refers to Canaanite females.

among whom I make my home

"among whom I live." Here, "I" stands for Abraham and all of his family and servants. Alternate translation: "among whom we live"

### Genesis 24:4

But you will go

This can be stated as a command. Alternate translation:

"Swear that you will go" or "But go"

my relatives

"my family"

### Genesis 24:5

What if

"What should I do if"

will not be willing to follow me

"will not follow me" or "refuses to come back with me"

Must I take your son back to the land from which you came

"Should I take you son to live in the land from which you came"

### Genesis 24:6

Make sure that you do not take my son back there

The phrase "Make sure" emphasizes the command that follows. "Be careful not to take my son back there" or "You

definitely must not take my son there"

### Genesis 24:7

who took me from my father's house

Here "house" stands for the people in his family. Alternate translation: "who took me from my father and the rest of my family"

promised me with a solemn oath

"swore an oath to me"

saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that he would give this land to my descendants"

he will send his angel

The words "he" and "his" refer to Yahweh.

### Genesis 24:8

General Information:

Verse 8 is a continuation of the instructions Abraham gave his servant.

But if the woman is not willing to follow you

"But if the woman refuses to come with you." Abraham was answering the servant's question from Genesis 24:5.

you will be free from this oath of mine

"you will be released from the oath you made to me." Not having to fulfill an oath is spoken of as if the person is free from an object to which he was bound. Alternate translation: "you will not have to do what you swore to me that you would do"

### Genesis 24:9

put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master

This was to show that he would certainly do what he was swearing to do.

swore to him

"made an oath to him"

concerning this matter

"concerning Abraham's request" or "that he would do what Abraham said"

### Genesis 24:10

departed. He also took

The sentence starting with "He also took" gives additional information about what the servant took with him on the journey. He gathered them before he departed.

He also took with him all kinds of goods from his master

This means he also took many good things that his master wanted to give to the woman's family.

departed and went

"set out and went" or "he left and went"

the city of Nahor

Possible meanings are 1) the city where Nahor lived" or 2) "the city called Nahor." If you can translate it without choosing a meaning, do so.



Genesis 24:11

He made the camels kneel down

Camels are tall animals with long legs. He made them bend their legs and lower their bodies to the ground. "He made the camels lie down"

well of water

"water well" or "well"

draw water

"get water"

Genesis 24:12

Then he said

"Then the servant said"

grant me success today and show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham

You can state this with the connecting word "by." This makes clear how the servant wants God to show covenant faithfulness. Alternate translation: "Show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham by granting me success today"

grant me success

"give me success." The servant wanted to find a good wife for Abraham's son. The abstract noun "success" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "help me to succeed" or "make me able to do what I have come here to do"

show covenant faithfulness to my master Abraham

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." Alternate translation: "be faithful to the covenant you have with my master Abraham" or "be faithful to my master Abraham"

Genesis 24:13

Look, here I am standing

"You can see me standing here"

the spring of water

"the spring" or "the well"

the daughters of the men of the city

"the young women of the city"

Genesis 24:14

Let it happen like this

"Let it happen this way" or "Make this happen"

When I say to a young woman, 'Please lower your pitcher so that I may drink,'

This is a quotation within a quotation. This can be expressed with an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "When I ask a young woman to let me have a drink of water from her jar"

Please lower your pitcher

The women carried the pitchers on their shoulder. She would have to lower it to give the man a drink.

pitcher

a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids

that you have shown covenant faithfulness to my master

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "been faithful." Alternate translation: "that you have been faithful to the covenant you have with my master Abraham" or "you have been faithful to my master Abraham"

Genesis 24:15

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.

behold

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

pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in Genesis 24:14.

Rebekah was born to Bethuel son of Milkah, the wife of Nahor,

Abraham's brother

"Rebekah's father was Bethuel. Bethuel's parents were Milkah and Nahor. Nahor was Abraham's brother"

Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22]

Nahor

This is the name of a man. See how you translated his name in [Genesis 11:22]

Milkah

Milkah was Nahor's wife and Bethuel's mother. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 11:29]

Genesis 24:16

No man had ever known her

This is a polite way of saying that she had not had sexual relations with any man. You may need to use another euphemism in your language.

She went down to the spring ... and came up

The spring was somewhere lower in elevation than where the servant was standing.

Genesis 24:17

to meet her

"to meet the young woman"

a little drink of water

"a little water"

pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in Genesis 24:14.

Genesis 24:18

my master

"sir." Here the woman uses this term of respect to refer to the man, though she is not his slave.

she quickly let down her pitcher on her hand

"she quickly lowered her pitcher." She was carrying the pitcher on her shoulder. She had to lower it to get water for the servant.

Genesis 24:19

I will draw water

"I will get water"

Genesis 24:20

So she hurried and emptied her pitcher

"So she quickly emptied her pitcher"

the trough

"the animals' water trough." A trough is a long open container for holding water for animals to drink.

Genesis 24:21

The man

"The servant"

watched her  
 "watched Rebekah" or "watched the young woman"  
 to see  
 Learning something is often spoken of as if it were seeing.  
 Alternate translation: "to know" or "to determine"  
 had prospered his journey  
 "had fulfilled the purpose of his journey" or "had made his journey successful." You can make explicit what specifically the servant was trying to determine. Alternate translation: "was showing him the woman who would become Isaac's wife"  
 or not  
 You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "or not prospered his journey"  
 Genesis 24:22  
 a gold nose ring weighing half a shekel  
 "a gold nose ring that weighed six grams." The weight indicates the value of the ring. Alternate translation: "an expensive gold nose ring"  
 two gold bracelets for her arms weighing ten shekels  
 "two gold bracelets for her arms that weighed 110 grams." The weight shows their size and value. Alternate translation: "two large gold bracelets for her arms"  
 Genesis 24:23  
 Whose daughter are you  
 "Who is your father"  
 is there room in your father's house  
 "is there a place in your father's house"  
 for us  
 Apparently other men went on this journey with Abraham's servant. Here "us" refers to the servant and those traveling with him, but not to those to whom he was speaking.  
 to spend the night  
 "to stay tonight" or "to stay for the night"  
 Genesis 24:24  
 She said  
 "Rebekah said" or "the young woman said"  
 to him  
 "to the servant"  
 I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, whom she bore to Nahor  
 "Bethuel is my father, and his parents are Milkah and Nahor"  
 Genesis 24:25  
 We have plenty of both straw and feed  
 It is understood that the straw and feed are for the camels. You can make clear this understood information. Alternate translation: "We have plenty of straw and feed for the camels"  
 for you to spend the night  
 "for you to stay tonight" or "where you can stay for the night"  
 for you  
 Here "you" refers to the servant and those traveling with him.  
 Genesis 24:26  
 the man  
 "the servant"  
 bowed down

This is a sign of humility before God.  
 Genesis 24:27  
 has not abandoned his covenant faithfulness and his trustworthiness toward my master  
 "has not stopped showing his covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness to my master." The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "trustworthiness" can be stated as "to be faithful and trustworthy." Alternate translation: "has not stopped being faithful to his covenant and trustworthy toward my master" or "has not stopped being faithful and trustworthy to my master"  
 has not abandoned  
 This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "continues to show"  
 my master's relatives  
 "my master's family" or "my master's clan"  
 Genesis 24:28  
 ran and told her mother's household  
 Here "household" stands for all the people living in her mother's house. Alternate translation: "ran to the house and told her mother and everyone there"  
 all of these things  
 "everything that had just happened"  
 Genesis 24:29  
 Now  
 This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the author tells background information about Rebekah. The author introduces her brother, Laban, to the story.  
 Genesis 24:30  
 When he had seen the nose ring ... and when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister  
 These things happened before he ran out to the man. This tells why Laban ran out to the man.  
 when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "This is what the man said to me,"  
 This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "when he had heard his sister Rebekah tell what the man had said to her"  
 behold, he  
 The word "behold" here adds emphasis to what follows. "it was just as she had said: he"  
 Genesis 24:31  
 Come, you  
 "Come in, you" or "Enter, you"  
 you blessed of Yahweh  
 "you whom Yahweh has blessed"  
 you  
 Here the word "you" refers to Abraham's servant.  
 Why are you standing outside?  
 Laban used this question to invite Abraham's servant into his house. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You do not need to stay outside."  
 Genesis 24:32  
 So the man came to the house  
 The word "came" can be translated as "went."  
 he unloaded the camels  
 It is not clear who did this work. This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Laban's servants

unloaded the camels" or "the camels were unloaded"  
The camels were given straw and feed, and water was provided  
This does not say who did the work. If you state this in active form use "Laban's servants" as the subject. Alternate translation: "Laban's servants gave straw and feed to the camels, and they provided water"

to wash his feet ... him

"for Abraham's servant and the men who were with him to wash their feet"

Genesis 24:33

They set

Here, the word "they" refers to Laban's family members or to the household servants.

set food before him

"gave food to the servant"

said what I have to say

"spoken my words" or "told you why I am here"

Genesis 24:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 24:35

he has become great

Here the word "he" refers to Abraham.

become great

"become very wealthy"

He has given

The word "he" refers to Yahweh.

Genesis 24:36

General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

bore a son to my master

"gave birth to a son"

he has given ... to him

"my master has given ... to his son"

Genesis 24:37

My master made me swear, saying

"My master made me swear that I would do what he told me to do. He said"

from the daughters of the Canaanites

This refers to Canaanite females. Alternate translation:

"from the Canaanite women" or "from the Canaanites"

in whose land I make my home

"among whom I live." Here, "I" stands for Abraham and all of his family and servants. Alternate translation: "among whom we live"

Genesis 24:38

to my relatives

"to my own clan"

Genesis 24:39

General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.

Perhaps the woman will not follow me.

This is something that could possibly happen. The servant wanted to know what he should do if that happened.

Alternate translation: "What if the woman will not come back with me?" or "What should I do if the woman will not come back with me?"

Genesis 24:40

before whom I walk

Serving Yahweh is spoken of as if Abraham were walking in Yahweh's presence. Alternate translation: "whom I serve"

he will prosper your way

"he will make your journey successful"

family line

"family"

Genesis 24:41

you will be free from my oath

"you will be released from the oath you made to me." Not having to fulfill an oath is spoken of as if the person is free from an object to which he was bound. Alternate translation: "you will not have to do what you swore to me that you would do"

if you come to my relatives

Languages use the words come and go differently. Alternate translation: "if you arrive at my relatives' home" or "if you go to my relatives"

Genesis 24:42

General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family. the spring

"the well"

Genesis 24:43

let the young woman who comes ... the woman to whom I say

The servant goes back to stating his request. These are the first two things he has to say about the woman whom he hopes will come.

to draw water

"to get water"

pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in Genesis 24:14.

Genesis 24:44

the woman who says to me, "Drink ... camels"

The thought that begins with the words "let the young woman who comes" in verse 43 ends here. This is the third of the three things the servant has to say about the woman whom he hopes will come.

let her be the woman

The servant finishes his request.

Genesis 24:45

General Information:

Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family. speaking in my heart

To pray silently in one's mind is spoken of as if he were speaking in his heart. The word "heart" refers to his thoughts and his mind. Alternate translation: "praying" or "praying quietly"

behold, Rebekah came

"suddenly Rebekah came" or "I was surprised because I saw Rebekah coming"

pitcher

This is a medium-size jar made of clay used for holding and pouring liquids. See how you translated this in Genesis 24:14.

she went down to the spring

The phrase "went down" is used because the spring was somewhere lower than where the servant was standing.

spring  
opening in the ground from which fresh water comes  
Genesis 24:46  
watered the camels  
"gave water to the camels"  
Genesis 24:47  
General Information:  
Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.  
The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milkah bore to him  
"My father is Bethuel. His parents are Nahor and Milkah"  
ring ... bracelets  
In this story, all of these items were made of gold. See how  
you translated these in Genesis 24:22.  
Genesis 24:48  
I bowed down  
This is a sign of humility before God.  
led me by the way that is right  
"brought me here"  
who had led me  
The connecting word "because" can be used to show this is  
why the servant worshiped God. Alternate translation:  
"because Yahweh led me"  
my master's relative  
This refers to Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother Nahor.  
Genesis 24:49  
General Information:  
Abraham's servant continues speaking to Rebekah's family.  
Now therefore  
"Now." Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is  
used to draw attention to the important point that follows.  
if you are prepared to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my  
master, tell me  
The abstract nouns "love" and "faithfulness" can be stated  
with the verb "love" and the adjective "faithful." Also, you  
could state explicitly how they could show the "steadfast  
love and faithfulness." Alternate translation: "tell me if you  
will love my master and be faithful to him by giving  
Rebekah to be his son's wife"  
you  
The word "you" refers to Laban and Bethuel.  
But if not  
The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate  
translation: "But if you are not prepared to treat my master  
with steadfast love and faithfulness"  
so that I may turn to the right hand or to the left  
Possible meanings are 1) deciding what to do is spoken of  
as if the person will physically turn one direction or  
another. Alternate translation: "so that I will know what  
do" or 2) the servant wants to know if he needs to travel  
somewhere else. Alternate translation: "so that I may  
continue on my journey"  
Genesis 24:50  
Bethuel  
This was the father of Laban and Rebekah.  
The thing has come from Yahweh  
"Yahweh has caused all of this to happen"  
we cannot speak to you either bad or good  
They are saying they do not have the authority to decide  
whether what God has done is good or bad. Alternate

translation: "we dare not judge what Yahweh is doing"  
Genesis 24:51  
Look, Rebekah is  
"You can see Rebekah here"  
Rebekah is before you  
"Here is Rebekah"  
Genesis 24:52  
their words  
"what Laban and Bethuel said"  
he bowed down  
Bowing down before God is an expression of worship to  
him.  
Genesis 24:53  
articles of silver and articles of gold  
"silver and gold items" or "things made of silver and gold"  
precious gifts  
"expensive gifts" or "valuable gifts"  
Genesis 24:54  
he and the men who were with him  
"Abraham's servant and his men"  
stayed there overnight  
"slept there that night"  
arose in the morning  
"got up the next morning"  
Send me away  
"Let me leave and return"  
Genesis 24:55  
a few more days, at least ten  
"at least ten more days"  
After that  
"Then"  
Genesis 24:56  
he said  
"Abraham's servant said"  
to them  
"to Rebekah's brother and mother"  
Do not hinder me  
"Do not delay me" or "Do not make me wait"  
Yahweh has prospered my way  
Here "way" stands for a journey. Alternate translation:  
"Yahweh has caused me to succeed in the purpose my  
journey"  
Send me on my way  
"Allow me to leave"  
Genesis 24:57  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 24:58  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 24:59  
So they sent their sister Rebekah  
"So the family sent Rebekah"  
their sister  
Rebekah was Laban's sister. Alternate translation: "their  
relative" or "Laban's sister"  
her female servant  
This refers to the female servant who had fed Rebekah  
when she was a baby, cared for her when she was a child,

and still served her.

Genesis 24:60

Our sister

Rebekah was not the sister to everyone in her family. But they called her this to show that they loved her. Alternate translation: "Our dear Rebekah"

may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands

Here "mother" stands for ancestor. Alternate translation:

"may you be the ancestor of millions of people" or "may you have very many descendants"

thousands of ten thousands

This means a very large number or an uncountable number.

may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them

Armies would break through the gate of their enemies' cities and conquer the people. Alternate translation: "may your descendants completely defeat those who hate them"

Genesis 24:61

Then Rebekah arose, and she and her servant girls mounted the camels

"Then Rebekah and her servant girls went and got on the camels"

Thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way

"In this way Abraham's servant took Rebekah with him and returned to where he had come from"

Genesis 24:62

Now

This word marks a change in the story. It was telling about the servant finding a wife, and now it will tell about Isaac.

Beer Lahai Roi

This is the name of a water well in the Negev. See how you translated it in Genesis 16:14.

Genesis 24:63

Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening

"One evening Isaac went out to the field to think." This must have been a long time after the servant and Rebekah left her home since they had to travel a long distance.

When he looked up and saw, behold, there were camels coming!

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the

surprising information that follows. "When he looked up he was surprised to see camels coming"

Genesis 24:64

Rebekah looked

"Rebekah looked up"

she jumped down from the camel

"she quickly got off the camel"

Genesis 24:65

So she took her veil, and covered herself

"So she covered her face with her veil." This is a sign of respect and modesty towards the man she will marry. The full meaning of this can be made explicit.

veil

a piece of cloth used to cover a person's head, shoulders and face

Genesis 24:66

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 24:67

took Rebekah, and she became his wife

Both of these phrases mean that Isaac married Rebekah.

Alternate translation: "married Rebekah" or "took her as his wife"

So Isaac was comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Rebekah comforted Isaac"

---

## Chapter 25

# Genesis 25 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 25:23.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Polygamy

Abraham married another wife. This was sinful of him. Many other Hebrew leaders came to marry multiple wives. This is known as "polygamy." It has never been an acceptable practice. (See: sin)

### Inheritance

In the ancient Near East, inheritance was passed on through the eldest son. Even though Esau and Jacob were twins, it is very important that Esau was born first. It was his birthright to receive his inheritance, but he foolishly gave it up. (See: inherit and birthright and foolish)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### God fulfills his promise

God begins to fulfill the promise he gave to Abraham about making his descendants numerous. Many of these children through his concubines would become large people groups. This may not be easy to understand without the remainder of the Old Testament and the history it records.

## Links:

[Genesis 25:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 25:1

General Information:

See.

Genesis 25:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:4

All these

This refers to the people named in verses 2-4.

Genesis 25:5

Abraham gave all that he owned to Isaac

"Isaac inherited all that Abraham owned." It was normal for the father to divide his wealth when he was old and not leave that for others to do after he died.

Genesis 25:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:7

These were the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, 175 years

"These were ... he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years." Abraham lived 175 years.

Genesis 25:8

Abraham breathed his last and died

"Abraham took his last breath and died." The phrases "breathed his last" and "died" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Abraham died"

breathed his last

This is a polite way of saying a person died.

at a good old age, an old man with a full life

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Abraham lived a very long time. Alternate translation: "when he had lived a very long time and was very old"

an old man with a full life

Living a long life is spoken of as if life were a container that becomes full.

he was gathered to his people

This means that after Abraham died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he joined his family members who had already died"

Genesis 25:9

the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron

Ephron owned a field in Machpelah and the cave that was in that field. Abraham bought the field from Ephron.

Machpelah

Machpelah was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9]

Ephron ... Zohar

These are names of men. See how you translated these men's names in [Genesis 23:8]

which is near Mamre

Machpela was near Mamre.

Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this place name in [Genesis 23:17]

Genesis 25:10

This field Abraham had bought

"Abraham had bought this field"

sons of Heth

"the descendants of Heth" or "the Hittites." See how you translated this in Genesis 23:5.

Abraham was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"They buried Abraham"

Genesis 25:11

Beer Lahai Roi

This name means "the well of the living one who sees me."

See how you translated this place name in [Genesis 16:14]

Genesis 25:12

Now

This word is used in English to introduce a new part of the story and information about Ishmael.

Genesis 25:13

General Information:

See.

Genesis 25:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:16

These were Ishmael's sons, and these were their names, by their

villages, and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their tribes

This can be stated as two sentences. "These were the names of Ishmael's twelve sons. They led tribes that were named after them, and they each had their own villages and campsites"

twelve

"12"

princes

Here the word "princes" means that the men were leaders or rulers of the tribes; it does not mean that they were the sons of a king.

Genesis 25:17

These were the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years

"These were ... Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years." Ishmael lived 137 years.

breathed his last and died

The terms "breathed his last" and "died" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "died"

was gathered to his people

This means that after Ishmael died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he joined his family members who had already died"

Genesis 25:18

They lived

"His descendants settled"

from Havilah to Ashhur

"between Havilah and Ashhur"

Havilah

Havilah was located somewhere in the Arabian Desert. See how you translated this in [Genesis 2:11]

as one goes toward  
 "in the direction of"

They lived in hostility with each other  
 Possible meanings are 1) "they did not live in peace together," or 2) "they lived away from their other relatives."  
 Genesis 25:19

General Information:  
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 25:20  
 forty years old  
 "40 years old"

when he took as his wife Rebekah  
 "when he married Rebekah"

Bethuel  
 Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22]

Paddan Aram  
 This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq.

Genesis 25:21  
 she was barren  
 "she was unable to become pregnant"

Rebekah his wife conceived  
 It can be made explicit that Rebekah was pregnant with two babies at the same time: "Rebekah, his wife, became pregnant with twins"

Genesis 25:22  
 The children struggled together within her  
 "the babies inside her kept bumping against each other" or  
 "The babies pushed against each other within her"

The children ... within her  
 Rebekah was pregnant with twins.

She went to ask Yahweh about this  
 "She went and asked Yahweh about this." It is not clear where she went. She may have gone somewhere private to pray, or she may have gone somewhere to offer a sacrifice.

Genesis 25:23  
 said to her  
 "said to Rebekah"

Two nations ... serve the younger  
 This is poetic language. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here.

Two nations are in your womb  
 Here "two nations" stands for the two children. Each child will be the father of a nation. Alternate translation: "Two nations will come from the twins within you"

two peoples will be separated from within you  
 Here "two peoples" stands for the two children. Each child will be the father of a people. This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "when you give birth to these two children they will be rivals"

the older will serve the younger  
 Possible meanings are 1) "the older son will serve the younger son" or 2) "the descendants of the older son will serve the descendants of the younger son." If possible, translate it so that people could understand either meaning.

Genesis 25:24  
 behold, there

"she was surprised to learn that there"

Genesis 25:25  
 red all over like a hairy garment  
 Possible meanings are 1) his skin was red and he had a lot of hair on his body or 2) he had a lot of red hair on his body. Alternate translation: "red and hairy like a garment made of animal hair"

Esau  
 Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Esau sounds like the word 'hairy.'"

Genesis 25:26  
 grasping Esau's heel  
 "holding the back part of Esau's foot"

Jacob  
 Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Jacob means 'he grasps the heel.'"

sixty years old  
 "60 years old"

Genesis 25:27  
 became a skillful hunter  
 "became good at hunting and killing animals for food"

a quiet man  
 "a peaceful man" or "a less active man"

who spent his time in the tents  
 This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that someone could spend. Alternate translation: "who remained in the tents much of the time"

Genesis 25:28  
 Now  
 This word is used to mark a change in focus, shifting from the story to background information about Isaac and Rebekah.

Isaac loved  
 Here the word "loved" means "favored" or "preferred." because he ate the animals that he had hunted  
 "because he ate the animals that Esau had hunted" or  
 "because he enjoyed eating the wild animal meat that Esau caught"

Genesis 25:29  
 Jacob cooked  
 Since this is the beginning of a story about something that happened one time, some translators may want to start it with a phrase like "One day, Jacob cooked" in a similar manner to the UDB.

cooked some stew  
 "boiled some food" or "cooked some soup." This stew was made of boiled lentils (Genesis 25:34).

he was weak from hunger  
 "he was weak because he was very hungry" or "he was very hungry"

Genesis 25:30  
 I am exhausted  
 "I am weak from hunger" or "I am very hungry"

Edom  
 Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Edom means 'red.'"

Genesis 25:31  
 birthright  
 right as firstborn to inherit most of the father's wealth

Genesis 25:32

I am about to die

Esau was exaggerating to emphasize how hungry he was.

Alternate translation: "I am so hungry I feel like I could die"

What good is the birthright to me?

Esau used a question to emphasize that eating was more

important than a birthright. This can be translated as a

statement. Alternate translation: "My inheritance is no good to me if I die of hunger!"

Genesis 25:33

First swear to me

What Jacob wanted Esau to swear can be stated explicitly.

Alternate translation: "First swear to me that you will sell me your birthright"

Genesis 25:34

lentils

These are like beans, but their seeds are very small, round, and somewhat flat.

Esau despised his birthright

"Esau showed that he did not value his birthright"

---

Chapter 26

## Genesis 26 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

When things in the land were bad, Isaac did not trust in Yahweh. Instead, he ran to the safety of Egypt. Even when Abraham's descendants did not trust in Yahweh's faithfulness to fulfill his covenant, Yahweh remained faithful to his covenant and blessed Isaac. (See: trust, faithful and fulfill and covenant)

Wells

In the ancient Near East, wells were very important strategically. Therefore, they were a sign of power and a sign of God's blessing being upon Isaac.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"She is my sister"

Isaac was afraid the Egyptians would see him as a foreigner and upon seeing his beautiful wife, they would try to kill him. This would free Rebekah to marry someone else. Apparently, it would have been easy for them to kill a foreigner without punishment. If she was Isaac's sister, they would have shown favor to him. This is the same thing his father, Abraham, did. (See: and favor)

Links:

[Genesis 26:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 26:1

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

a famine happened

"there was a famine" or "there was another famine"

in the land

You can state explicitly the land to which this refers.

Alternate translation: "in the land where Isaac and his family lived"

that had been in the days of Abraham

"that had happened during Abraham's life" or "that had happened while Abraham was alive"

Genesis 26:2

General Information:

Yahweh begins to speak to Isaac.

appeared to him

"appeared to Isaac"

Do not go down to Egypt

It was common to speak of leaving the promised land as "going down" to another place.

Genesis 26:3

for to you and to your descendants, I will give all these lands

"for I will give all these lands to you and your descendants"

I will fulfill the oath that I swore to Abraham your father

"I will do what I promised Abraham your father I would do"

Genesis 26:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Isaac.

I will multiply your descendants

"I will cause you to have very many descendants."

like the stars of heaven

This speaks about the number of Isaac's descendants as if they were the same as the number of stars. See how you translated this in [Genesis 22:17]

heaven

This refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars.

all the nations of the earth will be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the nations of the earth"

Genesis 26:5

Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my instructions, my

commandments, my statutes, and my laws

The phrases "obeyed my voice" and "kept my instructions, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" mean

basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Abraham obeyed me and did everything I commanded him to do"

obeyed my voice

Here "voice" stands for Yahweh. Alternate translation:

"obeyed me"

Genesis 26:6

So Isaac settled in Gerar

Only Isaac is mentioned because he is the leader of the



family, but his whole family was with him. Alternate translation: "So Isaac and his family settled in Gerar" Genesis 26:7

He feared to say

Here "fear" refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others. "He was afraid to say"

to get Rebekah

"in order to take Rebekah"

Genesis 26:8

He saw, behold, Isaac

The word "behold" shows that what Abimelech saw surprised him. Alternate translation: "And he was surprised to see that Isaac"

was caressing Rebekah

Possible meanings are 1) he was touching her the way a husband touches his wife or 2) he was laughing and talking with her the way a husband talks with his wife.

Genesis 26:9

Abimelek called Isaac to him

Abimelek probably sent someone to tell Isaac that Abimelek wanted to see him. Alternate translation: "Abimelek sent someone to bring Isaac to him"

Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Why did you say that she is your sister?"

to get her

"so he could take her"

Genesis 26:10

What is this you have done to us?

Abimelech used this question to scold Isaac. Alternate translation: "You should not have done this to us!"

might easily have lain with your wife

The word "lain" here is a euphemism for "had sexual relations."

you would have brought guilt upon us

This speaks about causing someone to be guilty as if "guilt" were an object that is placed on someone. Alternate translation: "you would have caused us to be guilty of taking a man's wife"

upon us

Here "us" refers to Abimelech and his people.

Genesis 26:11

Whoever touches this man

Here "touches" means to touch in a harmful way. Alternate translation: "Whoever harms this man"

will surely be put to death

Abimelech may have intended to tell someone to kill anyone who might harm Isaac or Rebekah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will put him to death" or "I will order my men to kill him"

Genesis 26:12

General Information:

This begins a new part of the story. It changes from telling about Isaac calling Rebekah his sister, and it starts to tell about how Isaac became very rich and the Philistines were jealous of him.

in that land

"in Gerar"

a hundredfold

This means "one hundred times as much as he planted." It can be translated more generally as "a very large crop."

Genesis 26:13

The man became rich

"Isaac became rich" or "He became rich"

grew more and more until he became very great

"he gained more and more until he became very wealthy"

Genesis 26:14

sheep

This may also include goats.

a large household

Here "household" stands for workers or servants. Alternate translation: "many servants"

The Philistines envied him

"The Philistines were jealous of him"

Genesis 26:15

Now

Here this word does not mean "at this moment." It is indicating where the action in the story begins. It can be translated with the connecting word "So" to show that this is a result of what happened in [Genesis 26:12-14]

in the days of Abraham his father

The phrase "in the days of" stands for a person's lifetime. Alternate translation: "when Abraham, his father, was living" or "during his father Abraham's lifetime"

Genesis 26:16

Abimelek said

Possible meanings are 1) this is another action to force Isaac and his people to leave. Alternate translation: "Then Abimelek said" or "Finally Abimelek said" or 2) Abimelek made this decision because he saw that his people were jealous and acting in a hostile way towards Isaac. Alternate translation: "Therefore Abimelek said"

much mightier than we

"much stronger than we are"

Genesis 26:17

So Isaac departed

Only Isaac is mentioned because he is the leader, but his family and servants went with him. Alternate translation: "So Isaac and his household left"

Genesis 26:18

Isaac dug out

Here "Isaac" stands for Isaac and his servants. Alternate translation: "Isaac and his servants dug out"

which they had dug

"which Abraham's servants had dug"

in the days of Abraham his father

"during his father Abraham's lifetime" or "when Abraham, his father, was living"

The Philistines had stopped them up

This was the reason that Isaac dug them out. Possible ways to translate this are: 1) Since this happened first, this sentence can come before the sentence about Isaac digging them out, as in the UDB. or 2) This sentence can start with "Isaac did this because the Philistines had stopped them up."

had stopped them up

"had filled them with earth"

Genesis 26:19

flowing water

This phrase refers to a natural spring they uncovered when they were digging a new well. It provided a continuous flow of fresh drinking water. Alternate translation: "fresh water"

Genesis 26:20

herdsmen

men who tended livestock

This water is ours

Here "ours" refers to the herdsmen of Gerar.

Esek

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Esek means 'quarrel' or 'argue.'"

Genesis 26:21

Then they dug

"Then Isaac's servants dug"

they quarreled

"the herdsmen of Gerar argued with Isaac's herdsmen"

so he gave it

"so Isaac gave it"

Sitnah

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Sitnah means 'oppose' or 'accuse.'"

Genesis 26:22

Rehoboth

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Rehoboth means 'make room for' or 'empty place.'"

us ... we

Isaac was speaking about himself and his household.

Genesis 26:23

Isaac went up from there to Beersheba

Here "went up" is probably a reference to going north. Say that he departed in the most natural way for your language. Alternate translation: "Isaac left there and went to Beersheba"

Genesis 26:24

multiply your descendants

"will cause your descendants to increase greatly" or "will cause your descendants to be very many"

for my servant Abraham's sake

"for my servant Abraham" or you can make the full meaning explicit. Alternate translation: "because I promised my servant Abraham that I would do this"

Genesis 26:25

Isaac built an altar there

You can make explicit why Isaac built an altar. Alternate translation: "Isaac built an altar there to sacrifice to Yahweh"

called on the name of Yahweh

To "call on" means to pray or to worship. Here "name" stands for Yahweh. Alternate translation: "prayed to Yahweh" or "worshiped Yahweh"

Genesis 26:26

went to him

"went to Isaac"

Ahuzzath

This is the name of a man.

his friend

Possible meanings are 1) "Abimelech's friend" or 2)

"Abimelech's advisor."

Phicol

This is the name of a man. See how you translated his name in Genesis 21:22.

Genesis 26:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 26:28

they said

This refers to Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol. One of them spoke and the other two agreed with what he said. It does not mean they all spoke at the same time. Alternate translation: "one of them said"

We have clearly seen

"We know" or "We are certain"

So let us make a covenant

"So we want to make a covenant"

Genesis 26:29

and as we have treated you well

This can also be translated as the beginning of a new sentence. "We have done only good to you"

you are blessed by Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has blessed you"

Genesis 26:30

Isaac made a feast for them, and they ate and drank

Eating a meal together was a part of making a covenant with one another.

for them

Here "them" refers to "Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol"

they ate

Here "they" refers to Isaac, Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol. Alternate translation: "they all ate"

Genesis 26:31

They rose early

"They awoke early"

Genesis 26:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 26:33

He called the well Shibah

"So he called the well Shibah." Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Shibah sounds like the word that means 'oath.'"

Beersheba

Translators may add a footnote saying "Beersheba can mean either 'well of the oath' or 'well of seven.'" (See note on Genesis 21:32)

Genesis 26:34

General Information:

Most of Genesis 26 was about Isaac. These verses are about his older son Esau.

forty

"40"

he took a wife

"he married." You can state explicitly that he married two women. Alternate translation: "he took two wives"

Judith ... Basemath

These are the names of Esau's wives.

Beerli ... Elon

These are names of men.

the Hittite

"the descendant of Heth" or "a descendant of Heth." The Hittite people were the descendants of Heth.

Genesis 26:35

They brought sorrow to Isaac and Rebekah

Here "they" refers to Judith and Basemath. To make someone sorrowful or miserable is spoken of as if "sorrow" were an object that a person could bring to another person. Alternate translation: "They made Isaac and Rebekah sorrowful" or "Isaac and Rebekah were miserable because of them"

---

## Chapter 27

# Genesis 27 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 27:27-29 and in 27:39-40.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Blessing

In the ancient Near East, a father's blessing was very important. This spoken blessing was legally binding. Jacob previously received the birthright from Esau and was guaranteed the double portion of land money that was supposed to be inherited by the older son, Esau. In this chapter, Jacob tricks Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. This means that he is to inherit the promises of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham. (See: bless, birthright, inherit and promise and covenant)

## Links:

[Genesis 27:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 27:1

his eyes were dim

This speaks about being nearly blind as if the eyes were a lamp and the light has nearly gone out. Alternate translation: "he was nearly blind" or "he was almost blind"

Here I am

"I am here" or "I am listening." See how you translated this in Genesis 22:1.

### Genesis 27:2

See now, I

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: I" See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 12:11.

I do not know the day of my death

It is implied that Isaac knows he will die soon. Alternate translation: "I may die any day now"

death

This refers to physical death.

### Genesis 27:3

General Information:

Isaac continues giving instructions to his older son Isaac. your weapons

"your hunting equipment"

your quiver

A quiver is a case for holding arrows. Alternate translation: "your quiver of arrows"

hunt game for me

"hunt a wild animal for me"

### Genesis 27:4

Make delicious food for me, the sort that I love

The word "delicious" refers to something that tastes very good. Alternate translation: "Cook for me the tasty meat that I love"

bless you

In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.

### Genesis 27:5

Connecting Statement:

This verse is background information for the description of the events that follow.

Now

This verse is background information for the description of the events that follow. The word "now" shows that the author is going to begin to talk about Rebekah and Jacob. Rebekah heard it when Isaac spoke to Esau his son "Rebekah heard Isaac speaking to his son Esau"

to Esau his son

Esau was the son of both Isaac and Rebekah. The author calls Esau "his son" to emphasize that Isaac preferred Esau over Isaac.

### Genesis 27:6

Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the background information that begins with the words "Now Rebekah heard" in verse 5. It is background information for the description of the events that follow.

Rebekah spoke to Jacob

This verse continues the background information that begins with the words "Esau went ... bring it back" in verse 5. It is background information for the description of the events that follow. After Esau leaves, Rebekah speaks to Jacob because of what she has heard. "So when Esau went ... bring it back, Rebekah spoke to Jacob"

to Jacob her son

Jacob was the son of both Isaac and Rebekah. The author calls Jacob "her son" here to emphasize that Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau.

See here

The phrase "see here" adds emphasis to what follows.

Alternate translation: "Listen carefully"

Genesis 27:7

'Bring me game and make me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of Yahweh before my death.'

These are the words that the author introduces with the words "He said" in verse 6. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "He told Esau to hunt a wild animal, and to make the tasty meat that he loves. Then before he dies, your father will bless Esau in the presence of Yahweh."

Bring me game

"Bring me a wild animal that you hunt and kill"

make me delicious food

"cook for me the tasty meat that I love." See how this was translated in Genesis 27:4.

bless you in the presence of Yahweh

"bless you before Yahweh"

before my death

"before I die"

Genesis 27:8

General Information:

Rebekah continues to speak to her younger son Jacob.

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

obey my voice as I command you

Rebekah said "my voice" to refer to what she was saying.

Alternate translation: "obey me and do what I tell you"

Genesis 27:9

I will make delicious food from them for your father, just like he loves

The word "delicious" refers to something that tastes very good. See how a similar sentence was translated in Genesis 27:4.

Genesis 27:10

You will take it to your father

"Then take it to your father"

so that he may eat it, so that he may bless you

"and after he eats it, he will bless you"

he may bless you

The word "bless" refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

before his death

"before he dies"

Genesis 27:11

I am a smooth man

"I am a man with smooth skin" or "I am not hairy"

Genesis 27:12

I will seem to him as a deceiver

"he will think that I am a liar" or "he will know that I am deceiving him"

I will bring a curse upon me and not a blessing

Being cursed or blessed is spoken of as if a curse and a blessing are objects that are placed on a person. Alternate translation: "Then because of this, he will curse me and not bless me"

Genesis 27:13

My son, let any curse fall on me

"let your curse be on me, my son." Being cursed is spoken of as if the curse were on object that is placed on the person.

Alternate translation: "let your father curse me instead of you, my son"

obey my voice

Rebekah said "my voice" to refer to what she was saying.

Alternate translation: "obey what I tell you" or "obey me" bring them to me

"bring me the young goats"

Genesis 27:14

made delicious food, just like his father loved

The word "delicious" refers to something that tastes very good. See how a similar sentence was translated in Genesis 27:4.

Genesis 27:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 27:16

She put the skins of the kids on his hands

The goat skins still had the hair on them.

Genesis 27:17

She put the delicious food and the bread that she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob

"She gave to her son Jacob the delicious food and bread which she had prepared"

Genesis 27:18

Here I am

"Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you translated this in Genesis 22:1.

Genesis 27:19

I have done as you said to me

"I have done what you told me to do"

some of my game

The word "game" refers to wild animals that someone hunts and kills. See how "game" was translated in Genesis 27:3.

Genesis 27:20

He said

"Jacob replied"

brought it to me

This is an idiom meaning that God caused it to happen.

Alternate translation: "helped me to succeed while hunting"

Genesis 27:21

whether you are my true son Esau or not

"if you are really my son Esau"

Genesis 27:22

Jacob went over to Isaac his father

"Jacob approached Isaac his father"

The voice is Jacob's voice

Here Issac speaks of Jacob's voice as representing Jacob.

Alternate translation: "You sound like Jacob"

but the hands are the hands of Esau

Here Issac speaks of Esau's hands as representing Esau.

Alternate translation: "but your hands feel like Esau's hands"

Genesis 27:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 27:24

He said

Isaac asks this question before blessing his son. Alternate translation: "But first Isaac asked"

Genesis 27:25

eat of your game

The word "game" refers to a wild animal that people hunt and kill. See how "game" was translated in Genesis 27:7.

he drank

"Isaac drank it"

Genesis 27:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 27:27

he smelled the smell of his clothes and blessed him

It can be made explicit that the clothes smelled like Esau's clothes. Alternate translation: "he smelled his clothes and they smelled like Esau's clothes, so Isaac blessed him"

he smelled

"Isaac smelled"

the smell

"the scent"

blessed him

"then he blessed him." This refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

See, the smell of my son

The word "see" is used as an emphatic figure of speech to mean "it is true." Alternate translation: "Truly, the smell of my son"

that Yahweh has blessed

Here the word "blessed" means that Yahweh has caused good things to happen to the field and it has become fruitful. Alternate translation: "that Yahweh has caused to be very productive"

Genesis 27:28

General Information:

This is Isaac's blessing. He thought he was speaking to Esau, but he was speaking to Jacob.

give you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Jacob. But the blessing would also apply to Jacob's descendants.

dew of heaven

"Dew" is drops of water that form on the plants during the night. This can be made explicit in the translation.

Alternate translation: "night mist from heaven to water your crops"

fatness of the earth

Having fertile land is spoken of as if the earth were fat or rich. Alternate translation: "good soil for producing crops" plenty of grain and new wine

If "grain" and "wine" are unknown, this can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "plenty of food and drink"

Genesis 27:29

you ... your

Here these pronouns are singular and refer to Jacob. But the blessing also applies to Jacob's descendants.

nations bow down

Here "nations" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "people from all nations bow down"

bow down

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

Be master over your brothers

"Become a master over your brothers"

your brothers ... your mother's sons

Isaac is speaking this blessing directly to Jacob. But, it also applies to Jacob's descendants who will rule over the descendants of Esau and the descendants of any other of Jacob's brothers that he may have.

may your mother's sons bow down to you

"your mother's sons will bow down to you"

May every one who curses you be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"May God curse everyone who curses you"

may every one who blesses you be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"May God bless everyone who blesses you"

Genesis 27:30

had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father

"had just left the tent of Isaac his father"

Genesis 27:31

delicious food

"tasty meat that I love." See how this was translated in

Genesis 27:3.

some of your son's game

Here "your son's" was a polite way of Esau referring to his own food he prepared.

your son's game

The word "game" refers to wild animals that people hunt to eat. See how "game" was translated in Genesis 27:7.

bless me

This refers to the formal blessing a father pronounces on his children.

Genesis 27:32

said to him

"said to Esau"

Genesis 27:33

Isaac trembled

"Isaac began to shake"

hunted this game

Game refers to a wild animal that people hunt and kill. See how "game" was translated in Genesis 27:7.

Genesis 27:34

he cried with a very great and bitter cry

Esau's anguish was similar to the taste of something bitter.

Alternate translation: "he cried loudly"

Genesis 27:35

has taken away your blessing

This is a figure of speech meaning Jacob took what was Esau's. Alternate translation: "I have blessed him instead of you"

Genesis 27:36

Is he not rightly named Jacob?

Esau uses a question to emphasize his anger at Jacob.

Alternate translation: "Jacob is certainly the right name for my brother!"

Jacob

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Jacob means 'he grasps the heel.' In the original language

the name 'Jacob' also sounds like the word for 'he deceives.'"

He took away my birthright

This speaks about a birthright as if it were an object that a person could take away. Alternate translation: "What was once my birthright is now his because he tricked me"

now he has taken away my blessing

This speaks about a blessing as if it were an object that person could take away. Alternate translation: "now he has tricked you into blessing him instead of me"

Have you not reserved a blessing for me

Esau knows that his father cannot bless him with the same things that he blessed Jacob. Esau is asking if there is anything left to say to him that Isaac did not say while blessing Jacob.

Genesis 27:37

What more can I do for you, my son?

Isaac uses a question to emphasize that there is nothing else he can do. Alternate translation: "There is nothing else I can do for you!"

Genesis 27:38

Have you not even one blessing for me, my father

This can be stated in positive form. "My father, do you have one more blessing for me"

Genesis 27:39

said to him

"said to Esau"

Look, the place

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

far from the richness of the earth

This is a figure of speech referring to the earth's fertility.

Alternate translation: "far from the fertile soil"

dew of the sky above

"Dew" is drops of water that form on the plants during the night. This can be made explicit in the translation.

Alternate translation: "the night mist from the sky to water your crops"

Genesis 27:40

your ... you

In 27:39-40 these pronouns are singular and refer to Esau, but what Isaac says also applies to Esau's descendants

By your sword you will live

Here "sword" stands for violence. Alternate translation:

"You will rob and kill people in order to get what you need to live"

you will break his yoke off of your neck

This speaks about someone having a master as if the master's control over the person were a yoke that the person had to carry. Alternate translation: "you will free yourself from his control"

Genesis 27:41

Esau bore a grudge against Jacob

Esau believed that Jacob had wronged him, and so Esau did not want to forgive Jacob.

Esau said in his heart

Here "heart" stands for Esau himself. Alternate translation: "Esau said to himself"

days of mourning for my father are near

This refers to a number of days a person grieves when a family member dies.

Genesis 27:42

The words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone told Rebekah about Esau's plan"

See

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

is consoling himself

"is making himself feel better"

Genesis 27:43

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

flee to Laban

"leave here quickly and go to Laban"

Genesis 27:44

for a while

"for a period of time"

until your brother's fury subsides

"until you brother calms down"

Genesis 27:45

until your brother's anger turns away from you

No longer being angry is spoken of as if the anger turns to a different direction away from the person. Alternate translation: "until he is no longer angry with you"

Why should I lose you both in one day?

Rebekah uses a question to emphasize her concern.

Alternate translation: "I do not want to lose both of you in one day!"

I lose you both in one day

It is implied that if Esau kills Jacob, then they will execute Esau as a murderer.

I lose

This is a polite way of referring to her sons dying.

Genesis 27:46

I abhor life

Rebekah is exaggerating to emphasize how upset she is about the Hittite women that Esau married. Alternate translation: "I am terribly upset"

the daughters of Heth

"these Hittite women" or "descendants of Heth"

like these women, some of the daughters of the land

The phrase "daughters of the land" means the local females.

Alternate translation: "like these women who live in this land"

what good will my life be to me?

Rebekah uses a question to emphasize how upset she would be if Jacob marries a Hittite woman. Alternate translation: "My life will be awful!"

---

## Chapter 28

# Genesis 28 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

Even though Jacob tricked his father in order to receive Esau's blessing, the chapter repeats the blessing, ensuring he inherits the blessings promised to Abraham. (See: bless and inherit and promise)

## Special concepts in this chapter

Jacob's dream

Jacob had a dream or received a vision. The purpose of this dream is to show that, despite Jacob's sin, God is giving Abraham's covenant promises to Jacob and his descendants. (See: sin and covenant and promise)

Bethel

This was an important city for Abraham and his descendants. It is possible that there is some theological significance to the city of Bethel.

## Links:

[Genesis 28:1 Notes](#)

Genesis 28:1

You must not take

"Do not take"

Genesis 28:2

Arise, go

"Go right away"

Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20]

house of

This refers to a person's descendants or other relatives.

Alternate translation: "family"

Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22]

your mother's father

"your grandfather"

one of the daughters

"from the daughters"

your mother's brother

"your uncle"

Genesis 28:3

General Information:

Isaac continues speaking to Jacob

make you fruitful and multiply you

The word "multiply" explains how God would make Jacob "fruitful." Alternate translation: "give you many children and descendants"

Genesis 28:4

May he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your descendants after you

This speaks about blessing someone as if a blessing were an object that a person can give. The abstract noun "the blessing" can be stated as "bless." Alternate translation: "May God bless you and your descendants as he blessed Abraham" or "May God give to you and your descendants what he promised to Abraham"

that you may inherit the land

God giving the land of Canaan to Jacob and his descendants is spoken of as if a child were inheriting money or possessions from his father.

the land where you have been sojourning

"the land where you have been staying"

which God gave to Abraham

"which God promised to Abraham"

Genesis 28:5

Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20]

Bethuel

Bethuel was Rebekah's father. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 22:22]

Genesis 28:6

General Information:

The story changes from Jacob to Esau

Now

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Esau.

Paddan Aram

This was another name for the region of Mesopotamia, which about the same location as modern Iraq. See how this was translated in [Genesis 25:20]

to take a wife

"to take a wife for himself"

He also saw that Isaac had blessed him

"Esau also saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob"

You must not take

"Do not take"

women of Canaan

"daughters of Canaan" or "Canaanite women"

Genesis 28:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 28:8

General Information:

This continues the background information about Esau.

Esau saw

"Esau realized"

the women of Canaan did not please Isaac his father

"his father Isaac did not approve of the women of Canaan"

women of Canaan

"daughters of Canaan" or "the Canaanite women"

Genesis 28:9

So he went

"Because of that, he went"

besides the wives that he had

"in addition to the wives that he already had"  
 Mahalath  
 This is the name of one of Ishmael's daughters.  
 Nebaioth  
 This is the name of one of Ishmael's sons.  
 Genesis 28:10  
 General Information:  
 The story switches back to Jacob  
 Genesis 28:11  
 He came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set  
 "He came to a certain place and, because the sun had set, he decided to stay for the night"  
 Genesis 28:12  
 He dreamed  
 "Jacob had a dream"  
 set up on the earth  
 "with the bottom of it touching the ground"  
 reached to heaven  
 This refers to the place where God lives.  
 Genesis 28:13  
 Behold  
 The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.  
 Yahweh stood above it  
 Possible meanings are 1) "Yahweh was standing at the top of the stairway" or 2) "Yahweh was standing next to Jacob"  
 Abraham your father  
 Here "father" means "ancestor." Alternate translation: "Abraham your ancestor" or "Abraham your forefather"  
 Genesis 28:14  
 General Information:  
 God continues to talk to Jacob in a dream.  
 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth  
 God compares Jacob's descendants to the dust of the earth to emphasize their huge number. Alternate translation: "You will have more descendants than you can count"  
 you will spread far out to the west  
 The word "you" is singular and refers to Jacob. Here Jacob represents his descendants. Alternate translation: "your descendants will spread out to the west"  
 you will spread far out  
 This means the people will extend the borders of their land and occupy more territory.  
 to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south  
 This phrases are used together to mean "all directions."  
 Alternate translation: "in all directions"  
 Through you and through your descendants will all the families of the earth be blessed  
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all families on the earth through you and your descendants"  
 Genesis 28:15  
 Behold, I am  
 "Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: I am"  
 for I will not leave you. I will do all  
 "for I will not leave you until I have done all"  
 I will keep you

"I will keep you safe" or "I will protect you"  
 I will bring you into this land again  
 "I will bring you back to this land"  
 Genesis 28:16  
 awoke out of his sleep  
 "woke up from his sleep"  
 Genesis 28:17  
 the house of God ... the gate of heaven  
 The phrase "the gate of heaven" explains that this place is the entrance to "the house of God" and "the entrance to where God lives."  
 This is the gate of heaven  
 This speaks about the entrance to the place where God lives as if it were a literal kingdom that had a gate that someone has to open to let people in.  
 Genesis 28:18  
 pillar  
 This is a memorial pillar, that is, simply a large stone or boulder set up on its end.  
 poured oil upon the top of it  
 This action symbolizes that Jacob is dedicating the pillar to God. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "poured oil on the top of it in order to dedicate the pillar to God"  
 Genesis 28:19  
 Bethel  
 Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Bethel means 'house of God.'"  
 Luz  
 This is the name of a city.  
 Genesis 28:20  
 Connecting Statement:  
 Jacob begins to make a vow to Yahweh.  
 vowed a vow  
 "made a vow" or "solemnly promised God"  
 If God will ... clothes to wear  
 Jacob is speaking to God in the third person. This can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: "If you will ... clothes to wear"  
 on this road on which I am walking  
 This stands for Jacob's journey to find a wife and to return home. Alternate translation: "on this journey"  
 will give me bread to eat  
 Here "bread" stands for food in general.  
 Genesis 28:21  
 Connecting Statement:  
 The vow that began with the words "If God will ... clothes to wear" in verse 20 continues here.  
 so that I return safely ... then Yahweh will be my God  
 The vow that began with the words "If God will ... clothes to wear" in verse 20 continues here. Jacob is speaking to God in the third person. This can be stated in the second person.  
 "If you will ... clothes to wear ... so that I return safely ... then you, Yahweh, will be the God that I will worship"  
 to my father's house  
 Here "house" stands for Jacob's family. Alternate translation: "to my father and the rest of my family"  
 Genesis 28:22  
 a sacred stone



This means that the stone will mark the place where God appeared to him and it will be a place where people can

worship God. Alternate translation: "God's house" or "God's place"

---

## Chapter 29

# Genesis 29 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter records the conflict between Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah. This account continues into the next chapter.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Shepherds

Although the exact reasoning for the shepherds' unwillingness to give water to the sheep is unknown, it is probable they were being lazy. The actions of these shepherds contrast Jacob's actions.

### Kissing

It was common in the ancient Near East for relatives to greet each other with a kiss. There was nothing sexual about this type of kissing.

### Marriage

It was customary in the ancient Near East for a man to work for a woman's father in order to earn the right to marry her. It is unknown how common it was for a father to have his younger daughter marry before an older daughter. It was also sinful for Jacob to marry more than one wife. (See: sin)

## Links:

[Genesis 29:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 29:1

the people of the east

This means the people of Paddan Aram, which is a land east of the land of Canaan.

### Genesis 29:2

and, behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there by it

The word "behold" marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

For out of that well

"For from that well." This phrase marks a change from the story to background information about how the shepherds watered the flocks.

they would water

"the shepherds would water" or "those taking care of the sheep would water"

the well's mouth

Here "mouth" is a way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: "the opening of the well"

### Genesis 29:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

### Genesis 29:4

Jacob said to them

"Jacob said to the shepherds"

My brothers

This is a polite way to greet a stranger.

### Genesis 29:5

Laban son of Nahor

Here "son" refers to a male descendant. Another possible meaning is "Laban the grandson of Nahor."

### Genesis 29:6

and, look there, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep

"Now look! Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep"

### Genesis 29:7

it is the middle of the day

"the sun is still high in the sky" or "the sun is still shining brightly"

for the flocks to be gathered together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for you to gather the flocks"

to be gathered together

This means to gather them together inside a fence for them to stay for the night. The full meaning of this can be made explicit.

let them graze

"let them eat grass in the field"

### Genesis 29:8

We cannot water them

"We have to wait to water them." This has to do with timing, not permission.

until all the flocks are gathered together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"until the other shepherds gather their flocks"

from the well's mouth

Here "mouth" is way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: "from the well" or "from the opening of the well"

and we will water the sheep

"then we will water the sheep"

### Genesis 29:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

### Genesis 29:10

his mother's brother

"his uncle"

the well's mouth

Here "mouth" is a way of referring to an opening. Alternate translation: "the well" or "the opening of the well"

### Genesis 29:11

Jacob kissed Rachel

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a

kiss. However, it is normally done between men. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

wept loudly

Jacob weeps because he is so happy. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Genesis 29:12

her father's relative

"related to her father"

Genesis 29:13

his sister's son

"his nephew"

embraced him

"hugged him"

kissed him

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a kiss. However, it is normally done between men. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

Jacob told Laban all these things

"then Jacob told Laban everything he told Rachel"

Genesis 29:14

my bone and my flesh

This phrase means they are directly related. Alternate translation: "my relative" or "a member of my family"

Genesis 29:15

Should you serve me for nothing ... my relative?

Laban uses a question to emphasize that he should pay Jacob for working for him. The question can be translated as a statement. This can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "It is certainly right that I should pay you for working for me even though you are my relative."

Genesis 29:16

Now Laban had

The word "now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Laban and his daughters.

Genesis 29:17

Leah's eyes were tender

Possible meanings are 1) "Leah's eyes were pretty" or 2) "Leah's eyes were plain"

Genesis 29:18

Jacob loved Rachel

Here the word "loved" refers to a romantic attraction between a man and a woman.

Genesis 29:19

than that I should give her to another man

"rather than give her to another man"

Genesis 29:20

and they seemed to him only a few days

"but the time seemed to him to be only a few days"

for the love he had for her

"on account of the love he had for her" or "because of his love for her"

Genesis 29:21

for my days have been completed

The phrase "my days" refers to the seven years Jacob had to work for Laban. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for my days of working for you have been

completed" or "For I have completed the length of time that I was to work for you"

so that I may go to her

This is a polite way of referring to having sexual relations with her. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

Genesis 29:22

made a feast

"prepared a wedding feast." Most likely Laban had others prepare the feast. Alternate translation: "had others prepare a wedding feast"

Genesis 29:23

who went to her

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with her. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

Genesis 29:24

Laban gave his female servant Zilpah ... her servant

Here the author gives background information about Laban giving Zilpah to Leah. Most likely he gave Zilpah to Leah before the wedding.

Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant.

Genesis 29:25

behold, it was Leah

"Jacob was surprised to see it was Leah in bed with him." The word "behold" here shows that Jacob was surprised by what he saw.

What is this you have done to me?

Jacob uses a question to express his anger and surprise. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe you did this to me!"

Did I not serve you for Rachel?

Jacob uses these questions to express his hurt that Laban had tricked him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I served you for seven years to marry Rachel!"

Genesis 29:26

It is not our custom to give

"In our family we do not give"

Genesis 29:27

Complete the bridal week of this daughter

"Finish celebrating Leah's bridal week"

we will give you the other also

The full meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "next week we will give you Rachel also"

Genesis 29:28

Jacob did so, and completed Leah's week

"And Jacob did what Laban asked, and finished celebrating Leah's bridal week"

Genesis 29:29

Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant.

Genesis 29:30

Jacob went to Rachel

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with her. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

he loved Rachel

This refers to the romantic love between a man and a woman.  
Genesis 29:31  
Leah was not loved  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:  
"Jacob did not love Leah"  
not loved  
This is an exaggeration to emphasize that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Alternate translation: "loved less than Rachel"  
so he opened her womb  
God causing Leah to be able to become pregnant is spoken of as if God is opening her womb.  
was barren  
"was not able to become pregnant"  
Genesis 29:32  
Leah conceived and bore a son  
"Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son"  
she called his name Reuben  
Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Reuben means 'See, a son.'"  
Yahweh has looked upon my affliction  
Leah was experiencing emotional pain because Jacob had rejected her. The abstract noun "affliction" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Yahweh saw that I was suffering"  
Genesis 29:33

Then she conceived  
"Then Leah became pregnant"  
bore a son  
"gave birth to a son"  
Yahweh has heard that I am unloved  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:  
"Yahweh has heard that my husband does not love me"  
she called his name Simeon  
Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Simeon means 'heard.'"  
Genesis 29:34  
will my husband be attached to me  
"my husband will embrace me"  
I have borne him three sons  
"I have given birth to three sons for him"  
his name was called Levi  
Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Levi means 'attached.'"  
Genesis 29:35  
She conceived again  
"Leah became pregnant again"  
bore a son  
"gave birth to a son"  
she called his name Judah  
Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Judah means 'praise.'"

---

## Chapter 30

# Genesis 30 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the story of the conflict between Rachel and Leah.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Women and their children

In the ancient Near East, it was important for a married woman to have many children. If a woman did not have many children, people believed it brought shame upon her. This is one of the reasons why Rachel and Leah were always jealous of each other. (See: jealous)

### Speckled and spotted

Speckled and spotted sheep were considered to be imperfect. Therefore, they were considered to be much less valuable than the spotless sheep. Despite Jacob's fair offer, Laban once again tried to cheat him out of something he deserved. Jacob anticipated Laban's cheating.

## Links:

[Genesis 30:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 30:1

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children  
"When Rachel realized that she was unable to become pregnant"  
I will die  
Rachel is exaggerating to show how upset she is about not having children. Alternate translation: "I will feel completely worthless"  
Give me children  
"Cause me to become pregnant"  
Genesis 30:2  
Jacob's anger burned against Rachel  
Jacob's anger is spoken of as if it were a fire. Alternate

translation: "Jacob was very angry with Rachel"  
Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?  
This is a rhetorical question that Jacob uses to scold Rachel. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am not God! I am not the one who is preventing you from having children!"  
Genesis 30:3  
She said  
"Rachel said"  
See  
"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

there is my servant Bilhah ... I will have children by her  
At that time, this was an acceptable way for a barren woman to have children that would legally belong to her. The full meaning of this may be made explicit.

Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in Genesis 29:29.

Go to her

This is a polite way of asking him to have sexual relations with her servant. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

on my knees

This is a way of saying that the child that Bilhah gives birth to will belong to Rachel. Alternate translation: "for me"

I will have children by her

"and in this way she will cause me to have children"

Genesis 30:4

Jacob went to her

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with Bilhah. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

Genesis 30:5

Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in Genesis 29:29.

bore Jacob a son

"gave birth to a son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:6

she called his name

"Rachel gave him the name"

called his name Dan

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Dan means 'he judged.'"

Genesis 30:7

Bilhah ... conceived again

"Bilhah ... became pregnant again"

bore Jacob a second son

"gave birth to a second son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:8

With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister

The phrase "wrestlings have I wrestled" is an idiom used for emphasis. It is also a metaphor that speaks of Rachel's attempts to have a child like her sister as if she were having a physical fight with Leah. Alternate translation: "I have had a great struggle to have children like my older sister, Leah"

have prevailed

"I have won" or "I have succeeded"

called his name Naphtali

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Naphtali means 'my struggle.'"

Genesis 30:9

When Leah saw that

"When Leah became aware that"

she took Zilpah, her servant, and gave her to Jacob as a wife

"she gave Zilpah, her servant, to Jacob as a wife"

Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this in Genesis 29:24.

Genesis 30:10

bore Jacob a son

"gave birth to a son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:11

This is fortunate!

"How fortunate!" or "What good luck!"

called his name Gad

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Gad means 'fortunate.'"

Genesis 30:12

Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24]

bore Jacob a second son

"gave birth to a second son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:13

I am happy!

"How blessed I am!" or "How happy I am!"

the daughters

"the women" or "the young women"

called his name Asher

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Asher means 'happy.'"

Genesis 30:14

Reuben went

"Reuben went out"

in the days of wheat harvest

Here the phrase "in the days of" is an idiom that refers to the season or time of year. Alternate translation: "at the time of year of the wheat harvest" or "during the wheat harvest"

mandrakes

This is a fruit that was said to increase fertility and the desire to sleep with one's lover. Alternate translation: "love fruit"

Genesis 30:15

Is it a small matter to you ... my husband?

"Do you not care ... my husband?" This is a rhetorical question used to scold Rachel. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is bad enough ... my husband."

Do you now want ... too?

This is a rhetorical question, used to scold Rachel. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Now you want ... too!"

Then he will lie with you

Here "lie with" is a euphemism. Alternate translation:

"Then Jacob will have sexual relations with you"

Genesis 30:16

You must come to me

Here "come to" is a euphemism for sexual relations.

Alternate translation: "You must have sexual intercourse with me"

with my son's mandrakes

"for the price of my son's mandrakes." See how you translated "mandrake" in Genesis 30:14.

Jacob lay with Leah

Here "lay with" is a euphemism. Alternate translation:

"Jacob had sexual relations with Leah"

Genesis 30:17

she conceived

"She became pregnant"

bore Jacob a fifth son

"gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:18

God has given me my wages

God rewarding Leah is spoken of as if he were a boss paying wages to someone who works for him. Alternate translation: "God has given my due" or "God has rewarded me"

She called his name Issachar

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Issachar means 'there is a reward.'"

Genesis 30:19

Leah conceived again

"Leah became pregnant again"

bore a sixth son to Jacob

"gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob"

Genesis 30:20

She called his name Zebulun

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Zebulun means 'honor.'"

Genesis 30:21

called her name Dinah

This is the name of Leah's daughter.

Genesis 30:22

God called Rachel to mind and listened to her

The phrase "call to mind" means to remember. This does not mean God forgot about Rachel. It means he considered her request. Alternate translation: "God considered Rachel and granted to her what she wanted"

Genesis 30:23

God has taken away my shame

God causing Rachel to no longer feel ashamed is spoken of as if "shame" were an object that person could take away from someone else. The abstract noun "shame" can be stated as "ashamed." Alternate translation: "God has caused me to no longer feel ashamed"

Genesis 30:24

She called his name Joseph

Translators may also add a footnote that says: "The name Joseph means 'may he add.'"

Yahweh has added to me another son

Rachel's first sons were through her female servant Bilhah.

Genesis 30:25

After Rachel had borne Joseph

"After Rachel gave birth to Joseph"

Genesis 30:26

and let me go

"so I can go"

you know the service I have given you

Jacob is reminding Laban of their contract

Genesis 30:27

Laban said to him

"Laban said to Jacob"

If now I have found favor in your eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "If I have found favor

with you" or "If you are pleased with me"

found favor

This is an idiom that means that someone is approved of by someone else.

wait, because

"please stay, because"

I have learned by using divination

"I have discovered by my own spiritual and magical practices"

for your sake

"because of you"

Genesis 30:28

Name your wages

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "Tell me how much I have to pay to keep you here"

Genesis 30:29

Jacob said to him

"Jacob said to Laban"

how your livestock have fared with me

"how well your livestock have done since I started taking care of them"

Genesis 30:30

For you had little before I came

"your herds were small before I worked for you"

and it has increased abundantly

"but now your wealth has greatly increased"

Now when will I provide for my own household also?

"Now when will I take care of my own family?" Jacob uses a question to emphasize that he wants to start providing for his own family. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Now I want to take care of my family!"

Genesis 30:31

What will I pay you

"What can I pay you" or "What can I give you." This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "What can I pay you so that you stay and work for me"

If you will do this thing for me

The connecting word "But" can be used at the beginning to show that what Jacob is about to say contrasts with what he just said. Alternate translation: "But if you will do this thing for me"

this thing

The phrase "this thing" refers to what Jacob will propose in verse 32.

feed your flock and keep it

"feed and take care of your flock"

Genesis 30:32

removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats "and remove every sheep with spots, every black sheep, and every goat with spots"

These will be my wages

"This will be the cost of keeping me here"

Genesis 30:33

My integrity will testify for me later on

The word "integrity" means "honesty." This speaks about integrity as if it were a person who could testify for or against another person. Alternate translation: "And later

you will know if I have been honest with you or not"

Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, if any are found with me, will be considered to be stolen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If you find any goats without spots or any sheep that are not black, you can consider them stolen"

Genesis 30:34

Let it be according to your word

"Let it be as you say" or "We will do what you have said"

Genesis 30:35

that were striped and spotted

"that had stripes and spots"

that were speckled and spotted

"that had spots"

every one that had white in it

"every goat that had some white in it"

all the black ones among the sheep

"all the black sheep"

gave them into the hand

Here "hand" stands for control or care. Alternate

translation: "had his sons take care of them"

Genesis 30:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 30:37

poplar, almond, and plane trees

These are all trees with white wood.

he peeled white streaks in them and made the white inner wood appear that was in the sticks

"he peeled off pieces of bark so that the white wood underneath would show"

Genesis 30:38

the watering troughs

long open containers for holding water for animals to drink

Genesis 30:39

The flocks bred

"The animals of the flocks conceived" or "The animals mated"

produced striped, speckled, and spotted young

"gave birth to babies with stripes and spots"

Genesis 30:40

Jacob separated

It can be made explicit that this happened over several years. Alternate translation: "During the several years following, Jacob separated"

face toward

"look toward"

he separated out his flocks for himself alone

"he set his flocks apart"

Genesis 30:41

before the eyes of the flock

Here the flock's "eyes" represent the sheep and emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: "so that the flock could see them"

among the sticks

"in front of the sticks"

Genesis 30:42

the feebleness animals

"the weaker animals"

So the feebleness animals were Laban's, and the stronger were Jacob's

"So the weaker offspring belonged to Laban, while the stronger offspring belonged to Jacob." You can make this even more explicit. Alternate translation: "So the weaker offspring did not have stripes or spots and so belonged to Laban, while the stronger offspring did have stripes or spots and so belonged to Jacob"

Genesis 30:43

The man

"Jacob"

became very prosperous

"greatly prospered" or "became very wealthy"

---

## Chapter 31

# Genesis 31 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### God's blessing

When Jacob left Paddan Aram, he left very wealthy. Despite his punishment of exile from Canaan, God still blessed Jacob and his family. (See: bless)

### Household gods

Although a few scholars believe the possession of the household gods was a sign of inheritance, this seems unlikely. It is probable that Rachel believed these idols would bring them "good luck" and would bring them great blessing. This was sinful because they were to trust in Yahweh, who already promised to bless them. (See: falsegod and inherit and sin)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

### Irony

Laban's sons complained that Jacob cheated them out of their father's possessions. It was their father who tried to cheat Jacob out of what he promised to give Jacob. Jacob treated his brother Esau in the same way. Jacob cheated Esau out of their father's blessing.

## Links:

[Genesis 31:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 31:1

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, that they said  
 "Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying"  
 Jacob has taken away all that was our father's  
 Laban's sons were exaggerating because they were angry.  
 Alternate translation: "Everything that Jacob has taken  
 belonged to our father"  
 Genesis 31:2  
 Jacob saw the look on Laban's face. He saw that his attitude toward him  
 had changed  
 These two sentences mean basically the same thing. The  
 second explains the look that Jacob saw on Laban's face.  
 Alternate translation: "Jacob noticed that Laban was no  
 longer pleased with him"  
 Genesis 31:3  
 your fathers  
 "your father Isaac and your grandfather Abraham"  
 Genesis 31:4  
 Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock  
 "Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah and told them to meet him  
 out in the field with the flocks"  
 Genesis 31:5  
 and said to them  
 You can start a new sentence here. Alternate translation:  
 "He said to them"  
 I see your father's attitude toward me has changed  
 "I have noticed your father is no longer pleased with me"  
 Genesis 31:6  
 You know that it is with all my strength that I have served your father  
 The word "you" here refers to both Rachel and Leah. It also  
 adds emphasis. Alternate translation: "You yourselves know  
 that I have served your father with all my strength"  
 Genesis 31:7  
 has deceived me  
 "has lied to me" or "has not treated me fairly"  
 my wages  
 "what he said he would pay me"  
 to hurt me  
 Possible meanings are 1) physical harm or 2) to cause Jacob  
 to suffer in any way.  
 Genesis 31:8  
 The speckled animals  
 "The animals with spots"  
 the flock bore  
 "the flock gave birth to"  
 The striped  
 "The animals with stripes"  
 Genesis 31:9  
 In this way God has taken away the livestock of your father and given  
 them to me  
 "This is how God gave your father's animals to me"  
 Genesis 31:10  
 General Information:  
 Jacob continues his story to his wives Leah and Rachel.  
 Once at the time of breeding season  
 "During the breeding season"  
 mating with the flock  
 Here "flock" represents only the female goats. Alternate  
 translation: "mating with the female goats of the flock"  
 were striped, speckled, and spotted

"had stripes, little spots, and big spots"  
 Genesis 31:11  
 angel of God  
 Possible meanings are 1) God himself appeared as a man or  
 2) one of God's messengers appeared. Since the phrase is  
 not well understood, it is best to simply translate it as "the  
 angel of God," using the normal word that you use for  
 "angel."  
 I said  
 "And I answered"  
 Here I am  
 "Yes, I am listening" or "Yes, what is it?" See how you  
 translated this in Genesis 22:1.  
 Genesis 31:12  
 General Information:  
 The angel of the Lord continues to talk to Jacob (Genesis  
 31:10).  
 Lift up your eyes  
 This is a way of saying "Look up."  
 that are breeding with the flock  
 Here "flock" stands for only the female goats. Alternate  
 translation: "that are breeding with the female goats of the  
 flock"  
 are striped, speckled, and spotted  
 "have stripes and spots"  
 Genesis 31:13  
 where you anointed a pillar  
 Jacob poured oil on the pillar to dedicate it to God.  
 the land of your birth  
 "the land where you were born"  
 Genesis 31:14  
 Rachel and Leah answered and said to him  
 This does not mean they talked at the same time. It  
 emphasizes they agreed with each other.  
 Is there any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?  
 Rachel and Leah use a question to emphasize that there is  
 nothing left for their father to give. Alternate translation:  
 "There is absolutely nothing left for us to inherit from our  
 father!"  
 Genesis 31:15  
 Are we not treated by him as foreigners?  
 They use a question to show their anger about how their  
 father treats them. This can be stated in active form.  
 Alternate translation: "Our father treats us like a foreign  
 women instead of daughters!"  
 For he has sold us  
 This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "He  
 has sold us for his own gain"  
 has also completely devoured our money  
 Laban completely using up the money that he should have  
 given to his daughters is spoken of as if he were a wild  
 beast that ate the money as if it were food. Alternate  
 translation: "he completely used up our money"  
 Genesis 31:16  
 are now ours and our children's  
 "belongs to us and to our children"  
 Now then  
 Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to  
 draw attention to the important point that follows.

whatever God has said to you, do it

"do all that God has told you"

Genesis 31:17

his sons

Jacob took all of his children. It only mentions the sons because they are important as his heirs. Alternate translation: "his children"

Genesis 31:18

He drove all his livestock

"He drove all his cattle." Here "livestock" is referring to all his domesticated animals.

including the livestock he had acquired in Paddan Aram

"and the other herd of cattle which he took ownership of when he was in Paddan Aram"

Then he set out to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan

"He went to the land of Canaan, where his father Isaac lived"

Genesis 31:19

When Laban had gone to shear his flock

"When Laban had left to cut the wool off of the sheep in his flock"

Genesis 31:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 31:21

the River

This refers to the Euphrates River.

headed toward

"traveled toward"

the hill country of Gilead

"the mountains of Gilead" or "Mount Gilead"

Genesis 31:22

On the third day

It was Jewish custom to count the day of departure as day one. Alternate translation: "Two days after they had left"

Laban was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone told Laban"

that Jacob had fled

Only Jacob is mentioned because he is the leader of the family. It can be made explicit that his family went with him. Alternate translation: "that Jacob had fled with his wives and children"

Genesis 31:23

So he took

"So Laban took"

pursued him

"chased after Jacob"

for a seven days' journey

Laban spent seven days walking to catch up to Jacob.

He overtook him

"He caught up to him"

Genesis 31:24

Now God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night

The word "now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Laban. Alternate translation: "That night God came to Laban in a dream"

Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad

The phrase "good nor bad" are used together to mean

"anything." Alternate translation: "Do not say anything to try and stop Jacob from leaving"

Genesis 31:25

Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country. Laban also camped with his relatives in the hill country of Gilead

The word "now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jacob and Laban. Alternate translation: "When Laban caught up with Jacob, Jacob had set up camp in the hill country. Then Laban and his relatives also camped in the hill country of Gilead"

Genesis 31:26

carried away my daughters like captives of the sword

Laban speaks about Jacob taking his family with him back to the land of Canaan as if Jacob took them as prisoners after a battle and is forcing them to go with him. Laban is exaggerating because he is angry and is trying to make Jacob feel guilty for what he did.

Genesis 31:27

flee secretly

"run away in secret"

with celebration

"with joy"

with tambourine and with harps

These instruments stand for music. Alternate translation: "and with music"

tambourine

a musical instrument with a head like a drum that can be hit and with pieces of metal around the side that sound when the instrument is shaken

Genesis 31:28

to kiss my grandsons

Here "grandsons" would include all grandchildren whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to kiss my grandchildren"

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Genesis 31:29

It is in my power to do you harm

The word "you" is plural and refers to everyone with Jacob.

Alternate translation: "I have enough people with me to harm all of you"

Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad

The words "good nor bad" are used together to mean

"anything." See how you translated this in [Genesis 31:24]

Genesis 31:30

you have gone away

This "you" is singular and refers to Jacob.

to your father's house

Here "house" stands for family. Alternate translation: "to be home with your father and the rest of your family"

my gods

"my idols"

Genesis 31:31

General Information

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 31:32

Whoever has stolen your gods will not continue to live



This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:  
"We will kill whoever has stolen your gods"

In the presence of our relatives

The word "our" refers to Jacob's relatives and includes Laban's relatives. All the relatives will watch to make sure everything is fair and honest.

identify whatever with me is yours and take it

"look for whatever we have that is yours and take it"

For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them

This changes from the story to background information about Jacob.

Genesis 31:33

the two female servants

This refers to Zilpah and Bilhah.

he did not find them

"he did not find his idols"

Genesis 31:34

Now Rachel ... upon them

The word "now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Rachel.

saddle

a seat placed on the back of an animal so a person can ride on it

Genesis 31:35

my master

Calling someone "my master" is a way of honoring them.

that I cannot stand up before you

"because I am unable to stand up in your presence"

for I am having my period

This refers to the time of the month when a woman bleeds from her womb.

Genesis 31:36

He said to him

"Jacob said to Laban"

What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?

The phrases "What is my offense" and "What is my sin" mean basically the same thing. Jacob is asking Laban to tell him what he did wrong. Alternate translation: "What have I done wrong that you should pursue me like this?"

hotly pursued me

Here the word "hotly" means Laban urgently chased Jacob intending to capture him.

Genesis 31:37

What have you found of all your household goods?

"What have you found that belongs to you?"

Set them here before our relatives

Here the word "our" refers to Jacob's relatives and includes Laban's relatives. Alternate translation: "Lay anything you have found in front of our relatives"

they may judge between the two of us

Here "two of us" refers to Jacob and Laban. The phrase "to judge between" means to decide which person is right in a dispute. Alternate translation: "they may judge between the two of us"

Genesis 31:38

General Information:

Jacob continues to speak to Laban.

twenty years

"20 years"

ewes

female sheep

have not miscarried

This means they have not had a pregnancy end early and unexpectedly with the lamb or kid born dead.

Genesis 31:39

What was torn by beasts I did not bring to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I did not bring to you any of your animals that a wild beast tore apart" or "When a wild animal killed any of your animals I did not bring it to you"

I bore the loss of it

For Jacob to count Laban's dead animals as a loss from his own flock is spoken of as if it was a burden he would bear on his shoulders. Alternate translation: "Instead of counting it a loss from your flock, I counted it as a loss from my flock"

You demanded payment from my hand

It can be made explicit what Jacob had to pay for. Alternate translation "You demanded that I pay you for any animal of yours that was missing"

whether stolen by day or stolen by night

"whether it was taken during the day or at night". Possible meanings are 1) "whether someone stole it during the day or at night" or 2) "whether an animal took it during the day or night."

Genesis 31:40

There I was; in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night

Suffering in the hot and cold temperatures is spoken of as if the temperatures were animals that were eating Jacob.

Alternate translation: "I stayed with your flocks even during hottest part of the day and the coldest part of the night"

Genesis 31:41

General Information:

Jacob continues to speak to Laban.

These twenty years

"These last 20 years"

fourteen years

"14 years"

changed my wages ten times

"changed what he said he would pay me ten times." See how you translated "my wages" in Genesis 31:7.

Genesis 31:42

Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the one Isaac fears, had been with me

Jacob is referring to the same God not to three different gods. Alternate translation: "If the God of Abraham and Isaac, my father, had not been with me"

the God of my father

Here the word "father" refers to his parent, Isaac.

the one Isaac fears

Here the word "fears" refers to the "fear of Yahweh," which means to deeply respect him and show that respect by obeying him.

empty-handed

This stands for having nothing. Alternate translation: "with absolutely nothing"

God has seen my affliction and my toil

The abstract noun "affliction" can be stated as "afflicted."  
Alternate translation: "God has seen how hard I worked and how you afflicted me"

Genesis 31:43

But what can I do today to these my daughters, or to their children whom they have borne?

Laban uses a question to emphasize that there is nothing he can do. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But, there is nothing I can do to bring my daughters and grandchildren back with me."

Genesis 31:44

let it be for a witness

Here the word "witness" does not refer to a person, but it is used figuratively and refers to the covenant that Jacob and Laban are making. The covenant is spoken of as if it were a person who is there when they agree to act peacefully to one another.

Genesis 31:45

pillar

This means that a large stone was simply set up on its end to mark the place where this important event happened.

Genesis 31:46

made a pile

"stacked them on top of each other"

Then they ate there by the pile

Eating a meal together was a part of making the covenant with one another. The full meaning of this may be made explicit.

Genesis 31:47

Jegar Sahadutha

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Jegar Sahadutha means 'heap of witness' in Laban's language."

Galeed

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Galeed means 'heap of witness' in Jacob's language."

Genesis 31:48

This pile is a witness between me and you

The stones do not actually bear witness as a person.

Alternate translation: "This pile will be a reminder between me and you"

Galeed

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Galeed means 'heap of witness' in Jacob's language. See how you translated this in [Genesis 31:47]"

Genesis 31:49

Mizpah

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Mizpah means 'watchtower.'"

when we are out of sight one from another

Here "out of sight" stands for no longer being in each other's presence. Alternate translation: "when we are no longer with each other"

Genesis 31:50

although no one else is with us

Here "us" refers to Laban and Jacob. Alternate translation: "even if no one else is there to see us"

see

"look" or "remember" or "pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

Genesis 31:51

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 31:52

This pile is a witness, and the pillar is a witness

These piles of stones were to act as a remembrance and a boundary marker for Jacob and Laban regarding their peace agreement. They are spoken of as if they are human witnesses.

Genesis 31:53

May the God of Abraham, and the god of Nahor, the gods of their father, judge between us

Abraham is Jacob's grandfather. Nahor is Laban's grandfather. The father of Abraham and Nahor is Terah. Not all of them worshipped Yahweh.

the Fear of his father Isaac

Here the word "Fear" refers to Yahweh, who Isaac deeply respected and showed that respect by obeying him.

Genesis 31:54

called his relatives to eat a meal

Eating a meal together was part of making the covenant with one another. The full meaning of this may be made explicit.

Genesis 31:55

Early in the morning ... returned home

Verse 55 is the first verse of chapter 32 in the original Hebrew text, but the last verse of chapter 31 in most modern Bibles. We suggest that you follow the numbering of Bibles in your national language.

blessed

This means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to someone.

---

## Chapter 32

# Genesis 32 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

Jacob does not trust Yahweh

Jacob does not trust in Yahweh. Instead, he fears that his brother Esau could kill him and his family. He should have known that Yahweh would continue to bless him and protect his family. He should have trusted in Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. (See: bless and trust and covenantfaith)

Name change

In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The return of Jacob to Canaan was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"A man wrestled with him"

Scholars are divided over the identity of the person Jacob wrestled with. It was probably an angel, but some believe he wrestled with Jesus before he came to earth. The translator will probably have difficulty trying to keep ambiguity in identifying this individual because the word "man" usually indicates a normal, living person.

## Links:

[Genesis 32:1 Notes](#)

Genesis 32:1

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 32:2

Mahanaim

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Mahanaim means 'two camps.'"

Genesis 32:3

Seir

This is a mountainous area in the region of Edom.

Genesis 32:4

This is what you will say to my master Esau: This is what your servant Jacob says: 'I have been ... have delayed my return until now.

This has a quotation within a quotation. The direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "'This is what I want you to tell my master Esau. Tell him that I have been ... have delayed my return until now.'"

my master Esau

Jacob is using polite language and refers to his brother as "my master."

your servant Jacob

Jacob is using polite language and refers to himself as "your servant."

Genesis 32:5

I have cattle ... in your eyes.

This continues the quotation within a quotation that begins with the words "I have been" in verse 4. The direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. "This is what I want you to tell my master Esau. Tell him that I have been ... Tell him that I have cattle ... in his eyes."

that I may find favor in your eyes

When a person finds favor in the eyes of another, the second person approves of the first person. Here "eyes" are a metonym for the person seeing something, and seeing a person is a metaphor for deciding whether what that person sees is good or bad. Alternate translation: "that you may approve of me"

Genesis 32:6

four hundred men

"400 men"

Genesis 32:7

afraid

This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others.

upset

distressed, troubled

Genesis 32:8

to one camp and attacks it, then the camp that remains will escape

Here "camp" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "to attack the people in one camp, then the people in the other

camp will escape"

Genesis 32:9

God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh

This does not refer to different gods, but to the one God they all worship. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, who is God of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac"

Yahweh, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will prosper you,'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, you who said that I should return to my country and to my kindred, and that you would prosper me,"

to your kindred

"to your family"

I will prosper you

"I will do good for you" or "I will treat you well"

Genesis 32:10

I am not worthy of all your acts of covenant faithfulness and of all the trustworthiness that you have done for your servant

The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "trustworthiness" can be stated as "faithful" and "loyal." Alternate translation: "I do not deserve for you to remain faithful to your covenant or for you to be loyal to me, your servant"

your servant

This is a polite way of saying "me."

now I have become two camps

Here the phrase "I have become" is an idiom meaning what he now possesses. Alternate translation: "and now I have enough people, flocks, and possessions with me to make two camps"

Genesis 32:11

rescue me

"save me"

from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau

Here the word "hand" refers to power. The two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second clarifies that the brother whom Jacob intended was Esau. Alternate translation: "from the power of my brother, Esau" or "from my brother, Esau"

I am afraid of him, that he will

"I am afraid that he will"

Genesis 32:12

But you said, 'I will certainly make you prosper. I will make your descendants ... number.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But you said that you would certainly prosper me, and that you would make my descendants ... number"

make you prosper

"do good to you" or "treat you well"

I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea

This speaks about the very large number of Jacob's descendants as if their number will be like the grains of sand on the seashore.

which cannot be numbered for their number

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which no one can count because of their number"

Genesis 32:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 32:14

two hundred

"200"

twenty

"20"

Genesis 32:15

thirty ... forty ... ten

"30 ... 40 ... 10"

their colts

"their young"

Genesis 32:16

These he gave into the hand of his servants, every herd by itself

Here "into the hand" means to give control over them.

Alternate translation: "He divided them into small herds, and gave each of his servants control over one herd"

put a space between each of the herds

"let each herd travel at a distance from the other herds"

Genesis 32:17

He instructed

"He commanded"

asks you ... that are in front of you?"

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "asks you who your master is, where you are going, and who owns these animals that are ahead of you"

To whom do you belong?

"Who is your master?"

Whose animals are these that are in front of you?

"Who owns these animals that are in front of you?"

Genesis 32:18

Then you will say, "They are your servant Jacob's. They are a gift sent to my master Esau. See, he is also coming after us."

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then I want you to tell him that all of these things belong to Jacob, his servant, and he is giving them to his master, Esau. And tell him that Jacob is on the way to meet him"

your servant Jacob's

Jacob is referring to himself in a polite way as Esau's servant.

to my master Esau

Jacob is referring to Esau in a polite way as his master.

coming after us

Here "us" refers to the servant speaking and the other servants bringing herds to Esau.

Genesis 32:19

gave instructions to the second group

"commanded the second group"

Genesis 32:20

You must also say, 'Your servant Jacob

Possible meanings are 1) "You will say also, 'Your servant Jacob'" or 2) "You will say, 'Also, Your servant Jacob.'"

I will appease him

"I will calm him down" or "I will make his anger go away"

he will receive me

"he will welcome me kindly"

Genesis 32:21

So the gifts went on ahead of him

Here "gifts" stands for the servants taking the gifts.

He himself stayed

Here "himself" emphasizes that Jacob did not go with the servants.

Genesis 32:22

his two women servants

"his two servant wives." This means Zilpah and Bilhah.

ford

a shallow place in a river that is easy to cross

Jabbok

This is the name of a river.

Genesis 32:23

all his possessions

"all that he had"

Genesis 32:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 32:25

he struck Jacob's hip, so that his hip was dislocated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he struck Jacob's hip and dislocated it" or "he struck Jacob's hip and injured it"

his hip was dislocated

Possible meanings are that 1) the top of Jacob's leg bone moved out of the hole in the hip where it normally is, or 2) a muscle or something that attaches the top of the leg to the hip was torn.

Genesis 32:26

for the dawn is breaking

"the sun will rise soon"

bless

Here "bless" means to pronounce a formal blessing on someone and to cause good things to happen to that person.

I will not let you go unless you bless me

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will let you go only if you bless me" or "Absolutely not! You must bless me first, then I will let you go"

Genesis 32:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 32:28

Israel

Translators may add a footnote that says "The name Israel means 'He struggles with God.'"

with men

Here "men" means "people" in general.

Genesis 32:29

He said, "Why is it that you ask my name?"

"He said, 'Why would you ask about my name?'" This rhetorical question was meant to shock, rebuke and cause Jacob to ponder over what just happened between him and

the other man he just wrestled with. Alternate translation:  
"Do not ask me for my name!"

Genesis 32:30

Peniel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Peniel means 'the face of God.'"

face to face

Being "face to face" means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.

and my life is delivered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "yet he spared my life"

Genesis 32:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 32:32

That is why to this day

This marks a change from the story to background information about the descendants of Israel.

to this day

This means to the day that the author was writing this.

ligaments of the hip

This refers to the muscle that connects the thigh bone to the thigh socket.

hip joint

"thigh socket"

while dislocating

"while striking"

---

Chapter 33

## Genesis 33 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Jacob's fear

Jacob feared his brother. He showed Esau great respect and sought to protect his family from Esau's power. He did not fear and trust Yahweh. (See: fear and trust)

Favoritism

Jacob showed favoritism towards Rachel and Joseph. He arranged the family according to those he loved the most. Rachel and Joseph were the most protected from a potential attack by Esau. He would have rather had everyone else die, in order to spare their lives.

Links:

[Genesis 33:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 33:1

behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to a surprising new part of the story.

four hundred men

"400 men"

Jacob divided the children ... female servants

This does not mean Jacob divided the children evenly so that each woman had the same amount of children with her. Jacob divided the children so that each one went with his or her mother.

female servants

"servant wives." This refers to Bilhah and Zilpah.

Genesis 33:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 33:3

He himself went on ahead of them

Here "himself" emphasizes that Jacob went alone in front of the others.

He bowed

Here the word "bow" means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

Genesis 33:4

meet him

"meet Jacob"

embraced him, hugged his neck, and kissed him

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Esau put his arms around Jacob, hugged him,

and kissed him"

Then they wept

This can be translated more explicitly. Alternate translation: "Then Esau and Jacob cried because they were happy to see each other again"

Genesis 33:5

he saw the women and the children

"he saw the women and children who were with Jacob"

The children whom God has graciously given your servant

The phrase "your servant" is a polite way for Jacob to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "These are the children God has kindly given me, your servant"

Genesis 33:6

female servants

"servant wives." This refers to Bilhah and Zilpah.

bowed down

This is a sign of humility and respect before another person.

Genesis 33:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 33:8

What do you mean by all these groups that I met?

The phrase "all these groups" refers to the groups of servants that Jacob sent to give gifts to Esau. Alternate translation: "Why did you send all of those different groups to meet me?"

To find favor in the sight of my master

The phrase "find favor" is an idiom which means to be

approved of by someone. Also, sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "So that you, my master, would be pleased with me"

my master

The phrase "my master" is a polite way of referring to Esau. Genesis 33:9

I have enough

The word "animals" or "property" is understood. Alternate translation: "I have enough animals" or "I have enough property"

Genesis 33:10

if I have found favor in your eyes

The phrase "found favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Here "eyes" are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. Alternate translation: "if you are pleased with me"

my gift from my hand

Here "hand" refers to Jacob. Alternate translation: "this gift that I am giving to you"

my hand, for indeed

This can be translated as a new sentence: "my hand. For certainly"

I have seen your face, and it is like seeing the face of God

The meaning of this simile is unclear. Possible meanings are 1) Jacob is happy that Esau has forgiven him like God has forgiven him or 2) Jacob is amazed to see his brother again like he was amazed to see God or 3) Jacob is humbled to be in Esau's presence like he was humbled to be in God's presence.

I have seen your face

Here "face" stands for Esau. It may be best to translate as "face" because of the importance of the word "face" here with "face of God" and "face to face" in Genesis 32:30.

Genesis 33:11

that was brought to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that my servants brought to you"

God has dealt graciously with me

"God has treated me very well" or "God has blessed me very much"

Thus Jacob urged him, and Esau accepted it

It was customary to refuse a gift first, but then to accept the gift before the giver was offended.

Genesis 33:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 33:13

My master knows

This is a polite and formal way of referring to Esau.

Alternate translation: "You, my master, know"

the children are young

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: "the children are too young to travel fast"

If they are driven hard even one day

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If

we force them to go too fast even for one day"

Genesis 33:14

Please let my master go on ahead of his servant

This is a polite and formal way of Jacob referring to himself. Alternate translation: "My lord, I am your servant. Please go ahead of me"

at the pace of the livestock that are before me

"at the speed the animals I am looking after can go"

Seir

This is a mountainous area in the region of Edom. See how you translated this in [Genesis 32:3]

Genesis 33:15

Why do that?

Jacob uses a question to emphasize that Esau does not need to leave men. Alternate translation: "Do not do that!" or "You do not need to do that!"

my lord

This is a polite and formal way of referring to Esau.

Alternate translation: "you, my lord"

Genesis 33:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 33:17

Sukkoth

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name Sukkoth means 'shelters.'"

built himself a house

It is implied that the house is also for his family. Alternate translation: "built a house for himself and his family"

for his livestock

"for the animals he looked after"

Genesis 33:18

General Information:

This starts a new part of the story. The author describes what Jacob did after he rested in Sukkoth.

When Jacob came from Paddan Aram

"After Jacob left Paddan Aram"

When Jacob ... he arrived ... He camped

This only mentions Jacob because he is the leader of the family. It is implied that his family was with him.

He camped near

"He set up his camp near"

Genesis 33:19

piece of ground

"piece of land"

Hamor

This is the name of a man.

Shechem's father

Shechem is the name of a city and the name of a man.

a hundred

"100"

Genesis 33:20

El Elohe Israel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name El Elohe Israel means 'God, the God of Israel.'"

## Chapter 34

# Genesis 34 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Israel

Jacob's name was changed to Israel. It is his descendants who inherited the promised blessings given to him and to Isaac and Abraham. This is the first time his descendants are collectively referred to as the people group Israel. The people group Israel is identified through the covenant of circumcision. (See: inherit, promise, bless and covenant and circumcise)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Implicit information

Jacob's reacted to the rape of Dinah with indifference. This is possibly because she was not a daughter of Rachel. His reaction was both unwise and improper. This action brought shame on the whole family. Therefore, Jacob's sons corrected this wrong and plotted against Hamor and Shechem.

Shechem raped Dinah, but then he said he loved her. By raping her, he ensured that no one else would want to marry her. This is not love.

## Links:

[Genesis 34:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 34:1

Now

Here this word is used to mark a new part of the story.

Dinah

This is the name of Leah's daughter. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 30:21]

### Genesis 34:2

the Hivite

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated the similar word "Hivites" in [Genesis 10:17]

the prince of the land

This is referring to Hamor not Shechem. Also, "prince" here does not mean son of a king. It means Hamor was the leader of the people in that area.

He took her and lay with her

Possible meanings are 1) "took" and "lay with" are two separate actions. Alternate translation: "he grabbed her and had sexual relations with her" or 2) "took" and "lay with" are a hendiadys, two words used to describe one action, Alternate translation: "raped her"

lay with her

This is a polite way of speaking of sexual relations. You may have to use other words in your translation. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with her"

### Genesis 34:3

He was drawn to Dinah

"He was very attracted to her." This speaks about Shechem loving Dinah and wanting to be with her as if something were forcing him to come to Dinah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He wanted very much to be with Dinah"

spoke tenderly to her

He tried to convince her that he loved her and that he wanted her to love him also.

### Genesis 34:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

### Genesis 34:5

Now Jacob

"Now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jacob.

Jacob heard that he

The word "he" refers to Shechem.

he had defiled

This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him.

held his peace

This is a way of saying that Jacob did not say or do anything about the matter.

### Genesis 34:6

Hamor ... went out to Jacob

"Hamor ... went to meet Jacob"

### Genesis 34:7

The men were offended

"The men were very insulted" or "They were shocked"

he had disgraced Israel

Here the word "Israel" refers to every member of Jacob's family. Israel as a people group was disgraced. Alternate translation: "he had humiliated the family of Israel" or "he had brought shame on the people of Israel"

lying with Jacob's daughter

Here "lying with" is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "having sexual relations with Jacob's daughter"

for such a thing should not have been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for he should not have done such a terrible thing"

### Genesis 34:8

Hamor spoke with them

"Hamor spoke with Jacob and his sons"

loves your daughter

Here the word "love" refers to romantic love between a man and a woman. Alternate translation: "loves her and wants to marry her"

give her to him as a wife

In some cultures, the parents decide whom their children will marry.

### Genesis 34:9

Intermarry with us

To intermarry is to marry a member of a different racial, social, religious or tribal group. Alternate translation:

"Allow marriages between your people and ours"

### Genesis 34:10

the land will be open to you

"the land will be available to you"

Genesis 34:11

Shechem said to her father

"Shechem said to Dinah's father Jacob"

Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you tell me I will give

The phrase "find favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "If you will approve of me, then I will give you whatever you ask"

Genesis 34:12

bride price

In some cultures, it is customary for a man to give money, property, cattle, and other gifts to the bride's family at the time of marriage.

Genesis 34:13

The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with deceit

The abstract noun "deceit" can be stated as the verb "lied."

Alternate translation: "But the sons of Jacob lied to Shechem and Hamor when they answered them"

Shechem had defiled Dinah

This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him. See how you translated "defiled" in Genesis 34:5.

Genesis 34:14

They said to them

"Jacob's sons said to Shechem and Hamor"

We cannot do this thing, to give our sister

"We cannot agree to give Dinah in marriage"

for that would be a disgrace to us

"for that would cause us shame." Here "us" refers to Jacob's sons and all the people of Israel.

Genesis 34:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 34:16

give our daughters to you ... take your daughters to ourselves

This means they will allow a person from Jacob's family to marry a person who lives in Hamor's land.

Genesis 34:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 34:18

Their words pleased Hamor and his son Shechem

"Hamor and his son Shechem agreed with what Jacob's sons said"

Genesis 34:19

to do what they said

"to become circumcised"

Jacob's daughter

"Jacob's daughter Dinah"

because he was the most honored person in all his father's household

This can be translated as a new sentence. It can be made explicit that Shechem knew the other men would agree to be circumcised because they greatly respected him.

Alternate translation: "Shechem knew all the men in his father's household would agree with him because he was the most honored among them"

Genesis 34:20

the gate of their city

It was common for leaders to meet at the city gate to make official decisions.

Genesis 34:21

These men

"Jacob, his sons, and the people of Israel"

peace with us

Here "us" includes Hamor, his son and all the people they spoke with at the city gate.

let them live in the land and trade in it

"let them live and trade in the land"

for, really, the land is large enough for them

Shechem uses the word "really" to add emphasis to his statement. "because, certainly, the land is large enough for them" or "because, indeed, there is plenty of land for them" take their daughters ... give them our daughters

This refers to marriages between the women of one group and the men of the other group. See how you translated similar phrases in Genesis 34:9.

Genesis 34:22

General Information:

Hamor and Shechem his son continue to talk to the city elders.

Only on this condition will the men agree to live with us and become one people: If every male among us is circumcised, as they are circumcised

"Only if every man among us is circumcised, as the men of Israel are circumcised, will they agree to live among us and unite with us as one people"

Genesis 34:23

Will not their livestock and their property—all their animals be ours?

Shechem uses a question to emphasize that Jacob's livestock and property will belong to the people of Shechem. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "All of their animals and property will be ours."

Genesis 34:24

All who went out to the gates of his city

This refers to men old enough to gather at the city gates to discuss community affairs. The word "his" probably refers to Hamor, who was the king.

All males were circumcised

The meaning of this statement is clarified, not contradicted, by the words "all who went out to the gates." If a literal translation would be misunderstood, you can specify that this refers only to adult males. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All adult males were circumcised" or "So Hamor and Shechem had someone circumcise all the adult men"

Genesis 34:25

On the third day

"third" is the ordinal number for three. It can be stated without the ordinal number. Alternate translation: "After two days"

when they were still in pain

"when the men of the city were still in pain"

each took his sword

"took their swords"

they attacked the city

Here "city" stands for the people. Alternate translation:

"they attacked the people of the city"



security, and they killed all the males  
This can be translated as a new sentence. "security. Simeon and Levi killed all the men of the city"  
Genesis 34:26  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 34:27  
the dead bodies  
"the dead bodies of Hamor, Shechem, and their men"  
plundered the city  
"stole everything in the city that was valuable"  
because the people had defiled their sister  
Shechem alone had defiled Dinah, but Jacob's sons considered Shechem's entire family and everyone in the city responsible for this act.  
had defiled  
This means that Shechem had greatly dishonored and disgraced Dinah by forcing her to sleep with him. See how you translated "defiled" in Genesis 34:5.  
Genesis 34:28  
They took their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, and everything  
"Jacob's sons took the people's flocks, herds, and donkeys, as well as everything"  
Genesis 34:29  
They captured all their wealth, all their children, and their wives  
"They took all their wealth, and they captured all their children and their wives"  
their wealth ... their children ... their wives  
The word "their" refers to the people of Shechem.  
all their wealth  
"all their possessions and money"

Genesis 34:30  
brought trouble on me  
Causing someone to experience trouble is spoken of as if trouble were an object that is brought and placed on a person. Alternate translation: "caused great problems for me"  
to make me stink to the inhabitants of the land  
Causing the people in the surrounding areas to hate Jacob is spoken of as if Jacob's sons made him smell bad physically. This can be translated as a new sentence.  
Alternate translation: "You have made me repulsive to the people who live in the land"  
I am few in number ... against me and attack me, then I will be destroyed, I and my household  
Here the words "I" and "me" refer to all of Jacob's household. Jacob only says "I" or "me" since he is the leader.  
Alternate translation: "My household is small ... against us and attack us, then they will destroy all of us"  
gather themselves together against me and attack me  
"form an army and attack me" or "form an army and attack us"  
then I will be destroyed  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will destroy me" or "they will destroy us"  
Genesis 34:31  
Should Shechem have dealt with our sister as with a prostitute?  
Simeon and Levi use a question to emphasize that Shechem did what was wrong and deserved to die. Alternate translation: "Shechem should not have treated our sister as if she were a prostitute!"

---

## Chapter 35

# Genesis 35 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Name change

In Scripture, a change in name always occurs at a highly significant point in a person's life. The return of Jacob to Canaan was a significant event in the history of the Hebrew people.

### Covenant

The covenant God made with Abraham is repeated here. It indicates that all of Jacob's descendants will inherit the promises of this covenant. (See: covenant and inherit and promise)

## Links:

[Genesis 35:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 35:1  
go up to Bethel  
The phrase "go up" is used because Bethel is higher in elevation than Shechem.  
dwell there  
"live there"  
Build an altar there to God  
God speaks about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "Build an altar there to me, your God"  
Genesis 35:2  
said to his household  
"said to his family"  
Get rid of the foreign gods that are among you

"Throw away your idols" or "Get rid of your false gods"  
purify yourselves, and change your clothes  
This was the custom of cleansing oneself morally and physically before going to worship God.  
change your clothes  
Putting on a new clothes was a sign that they had made themselves clean before approaching God.  
Genesis 35:3  
in the day of my distress  
"in the time of my distress" or "when I was in trouble"  
Genesis 35:4  
So they gave  
"so everyone in Jacob's household gave" or "so all of his

family and servants gave"

that were in their hand

Here "in their hand" stands for what they own. Alternate translation: "that were in their possession" or "that they had"

the rings that were in their ears

"their earrings." Possible meanings are 1) the gold in the earrings could have been used to make more idols or 2) they took these earrings from the city of Shechem after they attacked it and killed all the people. The earrings would have reminded them of their sin.

Genesis 35:5

God made panic to fall on the cities

God causing the people of the cities to be afraid of Jacob and his family is spoken of as if panic were an object that fell on the cities. The abstract noun "panic" can be stated as "afraid." Alternate translation: "God made the people in the surrounding cities afraid of Jacob and those with him" on the cities

Here "cities" stands for the people who live in the cities.

the sons of Jacob

It is implied that no one attacked anyone in Jacob's family. But two of the sons, Simeon and Levi had attacked the Canaanites relatives of Shechem after he seized and slept with Jacob's daughter. Jacob was afraid they would seek revenge in [Genesis 34:30]

Genesis 35:6

Luz

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Genesis 28:19]

Genesis 35:7

El Bethel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name El Bethel means 'God of Bethel.'"

there God had revealed himself to him

"there God made himself known to Jacob"

Genesis 35:8

Deborah

This is the name of a woman.

Rebekah's nurse

A nurse is a woman who takes care of another woman's child. The nurse was highly honored and important to the family.

She was buried down from Bethel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They buried her down from Bethel"

down from Bethel

The phrase "down from" is used because they buried her in a place that was lower in elevation than Bethel.

Allon Bakuth

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Allon Bakuth means 'Oak tree where there is weeping.'"

Genesis 35:9

When Jacob came from Paddan Aram

It can be made explicit that they were in Bethel. Alternate translation: "After Jacob left Paddan Aram, and while he was in Bethel"

blessed

Here "bless" means to pronounce a formal blessing on

someone and to cause good things to happen to that person.

Genesis 35:10

but your name will no longer be called Jacob

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but your name will no longer be Jacob"

Genesis 35:11

God said to him

"God said to Jacob"

Be fruitful and multiply

God told Jacob to produce children so that there would be many of them. The word "multiply" explains how he was to be "fruitful." See how you translated this in [Genesis 1:22]

A nation and a company of nations will come from you

Here "nation" and "nations" refer to Jacob's descendants who will establish these nations.

Genesis 35:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 35:13

God went up from him

Here "went up" is used because where God dwells is typically thought of as being up or above the world.

Alternate translation: "God left him"

Genesis 35:14

pillar

This is a memorial pillar which was simply a large stone or boulder set up on its end.

He poured out a drink offering over it and poured oil on it

This is a sign that he is dedicating the pillar to God.

Genesis 35:15

Bethel

Translators may also add a footnote that says "The name Bethel means 'house of God.'"

Genesis 35:16

Ephrath

This is another name for the town of Bethlehem.

She had hard labor

"She was having a very difficult time giving birth to the child"

Genesis 35:17

While she was in hardest labor

"When the labor pain was at its worst"

midwife

a person who helps a woman when she is giving birth to a child

Genesis 35:18

As she was dying, with her dying breath

A "dying breath" is a person's last breath before he or she dies. Alternate translation: "Just before she died, as she was taking her last breath"

Ben-Oni

Translator may add a footnote that says "The name Ben-Oni means 'son of my sorrow.'"

Benjamin

Translator may add a footnote that says "The name Benjamin means 'son of the right hand.'" The phrase "right hand" indicates a place of special favor.

Genesis 35:19

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they buried her"

on the way

"alongside the road"

Genesis 35:20

It is the marker of Rachel's grave to this day

"It marks Rachel's grave still to this day"

to this day

"up to the present time." This means to the time that the author was writing this.

Genesis 35:21

Israel traveled on

It is implied that Israel's family and servants are with him.

The full meaning of this information can be made explicit.

the watchtower of the flock

Some English translations understand this phrase as a proper name, either "Migdal Eder" or "the tower of Eder."

Genesis 35:22

lay with

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "had sexual relations with"

Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29]

Now Jacob had twelve sons

This sentence begins a new paragraph, which continues into the following verses.

twelve sons

"12 sons"

Genesis 35:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 35:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 35:25

Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29]

Genesis 35:26

Zilpah

This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you

translated this name in [Genesis 29:24]

who were born to him in Paddan Aram

It is implied that this does not include Benjamin who was

born in the land of Canaan near Bethlehem. It only

mentions Paddan Aram since that is where most of them

were born. The full meaning of this can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "who were born to him in Paddan

Aram, except Benjamin who was born in the land of Canaan"

Genesis 35:27

Jacob came to Isaac

Here "came" can be stated as "went."

Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18]

Kiriath Arba

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in

[Genesis 23:2]

Genesis 35:28

one hundred eighty years

"180 years"

Genesis 35:29

Isaac breathed his last and died

"Isaac took his last breath and died." The phrases "breathed his last" and "died" mean basically the same thing. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 25:8]

breathed his last

This is a polite way of saying a person died. See how you translated this in [Genesis 25:8]

was gathered to his ancestors

This means that after Isaac died, his soul went to the same place as his relatives who died before him. This can be

stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he joined his family members who had already died"

an old man full of days

The phrases "old man" and "full of days" mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that Isaac lived a very long time. Alternate translation: "after he had lived a very long time and was very old"

---

## Chapter 36

# Genesis 36 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

Esau's descendants

Esau's descendants became known as the Edomite people group. They also become a great nation. This nation is prominent in the rest of the Old Testament. God graciously blessed Esau and he had many descendants. (See: grace and bless)

## Links:

[Genesis 36:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 36:1

These were the descendants of Esau (also called Edom)

"These are the descendants of Esau, who is also called

Edom." This sentence introduces the account of Esau's

descendants in Genesis 36:1-8. Alternate translation: "This

is an account of the descendants of Esau, who is also called Edom"

Genesis 36:2

Adah ... Oholibamah

These are names of Esau's wives.

Elon the Hittite

"Elon the descendant of Heth" or "Elon a descendant of Heth." This is the name of a man. See how you translate this in Genesis 26:34.

Anah ... Zibeon

These are names of men.

Hivite

This refers to a larger group of people. See how you translated it in Genesis 10:17.

Genesis 36:3

Nebaioth

a man's name

Basemath

This is the name of one of Esau's wives. See how you translated this in Genesis 26:34.

Nebaioth

This is the name of one of Ishmael's sons. See how you translated this in Genesis 28:9.

Genesis 36:4

Adah ... Basemath

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2-3]

Eliphaz ... Reuel

These are names of Esau's sons.

Genesis 36:5

Oholibamah

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2]

Jeush ... Jalam ... Korah

These are names of Esau's sons.

Genesis 36:6

which he had gathered in the land of Canaan

This refers to all of the things that he had accumulated while living in the land of Canaan. Alternate translation: "which he had accumulated while living in the land of Canaan"

went into a land

This means to moved to another place and live there. Alternate translation: "went to live in another land"

Genesis 36:7

their possessions

"Esau's and Jacob's possessions"

could not support them because of their livestock

The land was not large enough to support all of the livestock that Jacob and Esau owned. Alternate translation: "was not big enough to support all of their livestock" or "was not big enough for both Esau's flocks and Jacob's flocks"

where they were sojourning

The word "settled" means to move somewhere and live there. Alternate translation: "where they were living as foreigners"

Genesis 36:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 36:9

These were the descendants of Esau

This sentence introduces the account of Esau's descendants in Genesis 36:9-43. Alternate translation: "This is an account

of the descendants of Esau"

in the hill country of Seir

This means that they lived in the hill country of Seir. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. Alternate translation: "who lived in the hill country of Seir"

Genesis 36:10

Eliphaz ... Reuel

These are names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:4]

Adah ... Basemath

These are names of Esau's wives. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:2-3]

Genesis 36:11

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz

These are names of the sons of Eliphaz.

Genesis 36:12

Amalek

a son of Eliphaz

Timna

This is the name of Eliphaz's concubine.

Genesis 36:13

Reuel

This is the name of a son of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:4]

Nahath ... Zerah ... Shammah ... Mizzah

These are names of Reuel's sons.

Basemath

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated this in [Genesis 36:3](#).

Genesis 36:14

Oholibamah

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated these in [Genesis 36:2]

Anah ... Zibeon

These are the names of men.

Jeush, Jalam, and Korah

These are names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:5](#).

Genesis 36:15

Eliphaz

This is the name of one of Esau's sons. See how you translated his name in [Genesis 36:4]

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz

These are names of Eliphaz's sons.

Genesis 36:16

Korah, Gatam, and Amalek

These are names of Eliphaz's sons.

Adah

This is the name of one of Esau's wives. See how you translated her name in [Genesis 36:2](#).

Genesis 36:17

Reuel

This is the name of a son of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:4]

Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah

These are the names of Reuel's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:13]

in the land of Edom

This means that they lived in the land of Edom. Alternate

translation: "who lived in the land of Edom"

Basemath

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:3]

Genesis 36:18

Oholibamah

This is the name of a wife of Esau. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:2]

Jeush, Jalam, Korah

These are the names of Esau's sons. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:5]

Anah

This the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:2]

Genesis 36:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 36:20

Seir

The word "Seir" is the name of a man and of a country. the Horite

The word "Horite" refers to a people group. See how you translated it in Genesis 14:6.

the inhabitants of the land

"who lived in the land of Seir, which is also called Edom"

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah

These are names of men.

Genesis 36:21

Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan

These are names of men.

Genesis 36:22

Lotan ... Hori and Heman

These are names of men.

Timna

This is the name of a woman.

Genesis 36:23

Shobal

This is the name of man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:20]

Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam

These are names of men.

Genesis 36:24

Zibeon

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:20]

Aiah and Anah

These are names of men.

Genesis 36:25

Anah ... Dishon

These are names of men. See how you translated "Anah" in [Genesis 36:20](#).

Oholibamah

This is the name of a woman.

Genesis 36:26

Dishon ... Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran

These are names of men. See how you translated "Dishon" in [Genesis 36:21]

Genesis 36:27

Ezer ... Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan

These are names of men. See how you translated "Ezer" in [Genesis 36:20-21]

Genesis 36:28

Dishan ... Uz and Aran

These are names of men. See how you translated "Dishan" in [Genesis 36:21]

Genesis 36:29

the Horites

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated this in [Genesis 14:6]

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah

These are the names of men. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:20]

Genesis 36:30

Dishon, Ezer, Dishan

These are the names of men. See how you translated these names in [Genesis 36:21]

in the land of Seir

This means that they lived in the land of Seir. Alternate translation: "of those who lived in the land of Seir"

Genesis 36:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 36:32

Bela ... Beor

These are names of men.

the name of his city

This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: "the name of the city where he lived"

Dinhabah

This is the name of a place.

Genesis 36:33

Bela ... Jobab ... Zerah

These are names of men.

Bozrah

This is the name of a place.

reigned in his place

"reigned in Bela's place" or "reigned instead of Bela." This means that Jobab became king after Bela. Alternate translation: "succeeded Bela as king" or "became king after him"

Genesis 36:34

Jobab

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:33]

Husham

This is the name of a man.

Husham who was of the land of the Temanites

This means that Husham lived in the land of the Temanites. Alternate translation: "Husham who lived in the land of the Temanites"

Temanites

descendants of a man named Teman

Genesis 36:35

Husham ... Hadad ... Bedad

These are names of men.

The name of his city

This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: "The name of the city where he lived"

Avith  
These are names of places.  
Genesis 36:36  
Hadad ... Samlah  
These are names of men.  
Samlah of Masrekah  
"Samlah from Masrekah"  
Masrekah  
These are names of places.  
Genesis 36:37  
Samlah  
This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 36:36]  
then Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place  
Shaul lived in Rehoboth. Rehoboth was by the Euphrates river. This information may be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "then Shaul reigned in his place. He was from Rehoboth which is by the Euphrates River"  
Shaul  
This is the name of a man.  
Rehoboth  
This is the name of a place.  
Genesis 36:38  
Shaul ... Baal-Hanan ... Akbor  
These are names of men.  
Genesis 36:39  
Baal-Hanan ... Akbor ... Hadar ... Matred ... Me-Zahab  
These are names of men.  
The name of his city  
This means that this was the city where he lived. Alternate translation: "The name of the city where he lived"  
Pau

These are names of places.  
Mehetabel  
This is the name of a woman.  
the daughter of Matred, the granddaughter of Me-Zahab  
"she was the daughter of Matred, and the granddaughter of Me-Zahab"  
Genesis 36:40  
the heads of clans  
"the leaders of the clans"  
according to their clans and their regions, by their names  
The clans and the regions were named after the heads of the clans. Alternate translation: "the names of their clans and the regions where they lived were named after them.  
These are their names"  
Timna, Alvah, Jetheth  
These are names of people groups.  
Genesis 36:41  
Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon  
These are names of people groups.  
Genesis 36:42  
Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar  
These are names of people groups.  
Genesis 36:43  
Magdiel, and Iram  
These are names of people groups.  
their settlements  
"their dwelling places" or "the places they lived"  
This was Esau  
This list is said "to be" Esau, which means that it is the whole list of his descendants. Alternate translation: "This is the list of the descendants of Esau"

---

## Chapter 37

# Genesis 37 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to record the account of Jacob's sons. The rest of the book of Genesis focuses on Jacob's sons, especially Joseph. This chapter also references Jacob as "Israel" beginning in this chapter.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Favoritism

Jacob's favoritism became a great problem for his sons. They are always jealous of Joseph because he is the favorite son. The beautiful garment Jacob gave to Joseph greatly strained the relationship between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph dreams he will rule all of his brothers, even though he is not the oldest son. (See: favor)

### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: peopleofgod and bless)

## Links:

[Genesis 37:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 37:1  
the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan  
"in the land of Canaan where his father had lived as a foreigner"  
Genesis 37:2  
seventeen years old  
"17 years old"  
Bilhah

This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29]  
Zilpah  
This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24]  
wives  
These women were servants of Leah and Rachel whom they had given to Jacob to produce children.

an unfavorable report about them  
"a bad report about his brothers"

Genesis 37:3

Now

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Israel and Joseph.

loved

This refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

of his old age

This means that Joseph was born when Israel was an old man. Alternate translation: "who was born when Israel was an old man"

He made him

"Israel made Joseph"

a beautifully decorated garment

"a beautiful robe"

Genesis 37:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 37:5

Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told his brothers about it. They hated him even more

This is a summary of the events that will happen in 37:6-11.

They hated him even more

"And Joseph's brothers hated him even more than they hated him before"

Genesis 37:6

Please listen to this dream which I dreamed

"Please listen to this dream that I had"

Genesis 37:7

General Information:

Joseph tells his brothers about his dream.

Behold

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

we were

The word "we" refers to Joseph and includes all of his brothers.

tying bundles of grain

When grain is reaped it is tied into bundles and stacked until it is time to separate the grain from the straw.

behold

Here the word "behold" here shows that Joseph was surprised by what he saw.

my bundle rose and stood upright ... your bundles came around and bowed down

Here the bundles of grain are standing and kneeling as if they were people. These bundle represent Joseph and his brothers.

Genesis 37:8

Will you really reign over us? Will you actually rule over us?

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing.

Joseph's brothers are using questions to mock Joseph. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You will never be our king, and we will never bow down to you!"

reign over us

The word "us" refers to Joseph's brothers but not Joseph.

for his dreams and for his words

"because of his dreams and what he said"

Genesis 37:9

He dreamed another dream

"Joseph had another dream"

eleven stars

"11 stars"

Genesis 37:10

his father rebuked him. He said to him

"Israel scolded him, saying"

What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will your mother ... to the ground to you?

Israel uses questions to correct Joseph. This can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "This dream you had is not real. Your mother, brothers, and I will not bow down before you!"

Genesis 37:11

jealous

This means being angry because someone else is successful or more popular.

kept the matter in mind

The means that he kept thinking about the meaning of Joseph's dream. Alternate translation: "kept thinking about what the dream might mean"

Genesis 37:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 37:13

Are not your brothers tending the flock in Shechem?

Israel uses a question to begin a conversation. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You brothers are tending the flock in Shechem."

Come

Here it is implied that Israel is asking Joseph to prepare himself to leave and go see his brothers. Alternate translation: "Get ready"

I am ready

He is ready to leave. "I am ready to go"

Genesis 37:14

He said to him

"Israel said to Joseph"

bring me word

Israel wants Joseph to come back and tell him about how his brother and flocks are doing. Alternate translation: "come tell me what you find out" or "give me a report"

out of the Valley

"from the Valley"

Genesis 37:15

A certain man found Joseph. Behold, Joseph was wandering in a field "A certain man found Joseph wandering in a field"

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.

What do you seek?

"What are you looking for?"

Genesis 37:16

Tell me, please, where

"Please tell me where"  
tending the flock  
"shepherding their flock"  
Genesis 37:17  
Dothan  
This is the name of a place that is about 22 kilometers from Shechem.  
Genesis 37:18  
They saw him from a distance  
"Joseph's brothers saw him while he was far away"  
they plotted against him to kill him  
"they made evil plans to kill him"  
Genesis 37:19  
this master of dreams is approaching  
"here comes the wonderful person who has great dreams."  
The phrase "this master of dreams" is sarcastic. If your language has a way of showing that the brothers used these words to show that they hated Joseph, you may want to use it here.  
Genesis 37:20  
Come now, therefore  
This wording shows that the brothers acted upon their plans. Alternate translation: "So now"  
wild animal  
"dangerous animal" or "ferocious animal"  
devoured  
to eagerly have eaten  
We will see what will become of his dreams  
His brothers planned to kill him, therefore it is ironic that they would speak of his dream coming true, since he would be dead. Alternate translation: "That way we will make sure his dreams do not come true"  
Genesis 37:21  
heard it  
"heard what they were saying"  
from their hand  
The phrase "their hand" refers to the brothers' plan to kill him. Alternate translation: "from them" or "from their plans"  
Let us not take his life  
The phrase "take his life" is a euphemism for killing someone. Alternate translation: "Let us not kill Joseph"  
Genesis 37:22  
Shed no blood  
The negation can be placed on the verb. Also, "shedding blood" is a euphemism for killing someone. Alternate translation: "Do not spill any blood" or "Do not kill him" that he might rescue him  
This can be translated as a new sentence: "Rueben said this so that he might rescue Joseph"  
out of their hand  
The phrase "their hand" refers to the brothers' plan to kill him. Alternate translation: "from them" or "from their plans"  
to bring him back  
"and return him"  
Genesis 37:23  
It came about that when  
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.  
they stripped him of his beautifully decorated garment  
"they tore his beautiful garment off of him"  
beautifully decorated garment  
"beautiful robe." See how you translated this in Genesis 37:3.  
Genesis 37:24  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 37:25  
They sat down to eat bread  
"Bread" represents food in general. Alternate translation: "They sat down to eat food" or "Joseph's brothers sat down to eat"  
They lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan  
Here looking up is spoken of as if a person literally lifted up his eyes. Also, the word "behold" is used here to draw the reader's attention to what the men saw. Alternate translation: "They looked up and they suddenly saw a caravan"  
bearing  
carrying  
spices  
seasonings  
balm  
an oily substance with a sweet smell used for healing and protecting skin. "medicine"  
traveling to carry them down to Egypt  
"bringing them down to Egypt." This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "bringing them down to Egypt to sell them"  
Genesis 37:26  
What profit is it if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?  
This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We do not gain a profit by killing our brother and covering up his blood"  
cover up his blood  
This is a figure of speech referring to hiding Joseph's death. Alternate translation: "hide his murder"  
Genesis 37:27  
to the Ishmaelites  
"to these men who are descendants of Ishmael"  
not lay our hands upon him  
This means not to harm or injure him. Alternate translation: "not hurt him"  
he is our brother, our flesh  
The word "flesh" is a metonym that stands for a relative. Alternate translation: "he is our blood relative"  
His brothers listened to him  
"Judah's brothers listened to him" or "Judah's brothers agreed with him"  
Genesis 37:28  
Midianite ... Ishmaelites  
Both names refer to the same group of traders that Joseph's brothers meet.  
for twenty pieces of silver  
"for the price of 20 pieces of silver"  
carried Joseph into Egypt



"took Joseph to Egypt"

Genesis 37:29

Reuben returned to the pit, and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit  
"Reuben returned to the pit, and was surprised to see that Joseph was not there." The word "behold" here shows that Reuben was surprised to find out Joseph was gone.

He tore his clothes

This is an act of deep distress and grief. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "He was so grieved that he tore his clothes"

Genesis 37:30

The boy is not there! And I, where can I go?

Reuben uses questions for emphasis the problem that Joseph was missing. These can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "The boy is gone! I cannot go back home now!"

Genesis 37:31

Joseph's garment

This refers to the beautiful garment that his father made for him.

the blood

"the goat's blood"

Genesis 37:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 37:33

has devoured him

"has eaten him"

Joseph has certainly been torn to pieces

Jacob thinks that a wild animal has torn Joseph's body apart. Alternate translation: "It has certainly torn Joseph to pieces"

Genesis 37:34

Jacob tore his garments

This is an act of deep distress and grief. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "Jacob was so grieved that he tore his garments"

put sackcloth upon his loins

Here "loins" refers to the middle part of the body or the waist. Alternate translation: "put on sackcloth"

Genesis 37:35

rose up

Here the childrens' coming to their father is spoke of as "rising up." Alternate translation: "came to him"

but he refused to be comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but he would not let them comfort him"

Indeed I will go down to Sheol mourning

The means that he be mourning from now until when he dies. Alternate translation: "Indeed when I die and go down to Sheol I will still be mourning"

Genesis 37:36

The Midianites sold him

"The Midianites sold Joseph"

the captain of the bodyguard

"the leader of the soldiers who guarded the king"

---

## Chapter 38

# Genesis 38 General Notes

## Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on Jacob's son Judah.

## Special concepts in this chapter

"Spilling his seed"

Onan was to provide for his brother's widow and give her an heir. This phrase indicates that he used Tamar to fulfill his own sexual desires rather than help her. This was sinful. (See: and sin)

God preserves Judah's line

The Canaanite woman, Tamar, deceived her father-in-law, Judah, into having sexual relations with her. If it had not been for this act, Judah would not have any descendants to carry on his family line. Although her actions were wrong, God used them to protect his people. (See: peopleofgod)

## Links:

[Genesis 38:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 38:1

It came about at that time that Judah

This introduces a new part of the story that focuses on Judah.

a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah

Hirah is the name of a man who lived in the village of Adullam.

Genesis 38:2

whose name was Shua

Shua is a Canaanite woman who married Judah.

he ... went to her

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with her. See how you translated a similar phrase in

[Genesis 16:2]

Genesis 38:3

She conceived

"Judah's wife became pregnant"

He was named Er

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation:

"His father named him Er"

Er

Judah's son

Genesis 38:4

called his name

"named him"

Onan

Judah's son  
Genesis 38:5

Shelah  
Judah's son

Kezib  
This is the name of a place.  
Genesis 38:6

Er  
This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:3]

Genesis 38:7  
was wicked in the sight of Yahweh  
The phrase "in the sight" refers to Yahweh seeing Er's wickedness. Alternate translation: "was wicked and Yahweh saw it"  
Yahweh killed him  
Yahweh killed him because he was wicked. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "So Yahweh killed him"  
Genesis 38:8

Onan  
This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:4]  
Go to your brother's wife  
This is a polite way of telling him to have sexual relations with his brother's wife. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]  
Do the duty of a brother-in-law to her  
This refers to a custom that when the oldest brother dies before he and his wife have a son, the next oldest brother would marry and have sexual relations with the widow. When the widow gave birth to the first son, that son was considered the son of the oldest brother and he would receive the oldest brother's inheritance.  
Genesis 38:9

he went to his brother's wife  
This is a polite way of referring to having sexual relations with her. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]  
he wasted it on the ground  
You may need to make explicit that the word "it" refers to Onan's semen. Alternate translation: "he destroyed his semen by having it flow on the ground" or "he did not send his semen into her"

on the ground  
This is probably a euphemism for any place that it should not have gone.  
Genesis 38:10

was evil in the sight of Yahweh  
The phrase "in the sight" refers to Yahweh seeing Onan's wickedness. Alternate translation: "was evil and Yahweh saw it"  
Yahweh killed him also  
Yahweh killed him because what he did was evil. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "So Yahweh killed him also"

Genesis 38:11  
his daughter-in-law  
"his oldest son's wife"  
in your father's house

This means her to live in here father's house. Alternate translation: "and live in your father's house"  
until Shelah, my son, grows up  
Judah intends for Tamar to marry Shelah when he grows up. Alternate translation: "and when Shelah, my son, grows up, he can marry you"

Shelah  
This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:5]

For he feared, "He might also die, just like his brothers  
Judah feared that if Shelah married Tamar he would also die like his brothers did. Alternate translation: "For he feared, 'If he marries her he may also die like his brothers did'"  
Genesis 38:12

Shua's  
This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:2]  
Judah was comforted and  
"When Judah was no longer grieving, he"  
the shearers of his sheep at Timnah  
"Timnah, where his men were shearing sheep"

Timnah  
This is the name of a place.  
he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite  
"His friend Hiram, from Adullam, went with him"  
Hirah the Adullamite  
"Hiram" is the name of a man, and "Adullam" is the name of a village where he lived. See how you translated this name in Genesis 38:1.

Genesis 38:13  
Tamar was told  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Tamar"

Look, your father-in-law  
"Listen." Here the word "look" is used to get Tamar attention.  
your father-in-law  
"your husband's father"

Genesis 38:14  
Enaim  
This is the name of a place.  
of her widowhood  
"that widows wear"

veil  
a very thin material used to cover a woman's head and face wrapped herself  
This means that she hid herself with her clothing so that people would not recognize her. Traditionally, part of women's clothing were large pieces of cloth they wrapped themselves with. Alternate translation: "wrapped herself in her clothing so that people would not recognize her"

by the road  
"along the road" or "on the way"  
she had not been given to him as a wife  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Judah had not given her to Shelah as a wife"  
Genesis 38:15

When Judah saw her

The word "her" here refers to Tamar, but your reader should understand that Judah did not know that the woman he was looking at was Tamar.

because she had covered her face

Judah did not think she was a prostitute just because her face was covered but also because she was sitting in the gate. Alternate translation: "because she had covered her head and sat where prostitutes often sat"

Genesis 38:16

He went to her by the road

Tamar was sitting by the road. Alternate translation: "He went to where she was sitting by the road"

Come, please

"Come with me, please" or "Come now, please"

please let me come to you

This is a polite way of asking her to have sexual relations with him. You may need to use another euphemism in your language. Alternate translation: "Please have sexual relations with me" or "Please lie with me"

Genesis 38:17

from the flock

"from my flock of goats"

Genesis 38:18

seal and cord ... staff

A "seal" is similar to a coin with a design engraved on it, used to imprint melted wax. The "cord" was put through the seal so the owner could wear it around his neck. A staff was long wooden stick that helped in walking over rough ground.

he went to her

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with Hagar. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 16:2]

she conceived by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he caused her to become pregnant"

Genesis 38:19

veil

This was a very thin material used to cover a woman's head and face. See how you translated these in Genesis 38:14.

clothing of her widowhood

"clothing that widows wear." See how you translated these in Genesis 38:14.

Genesis 38:20

Adullamite

a person who lives in the village of Adullam. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:1]

receive the pledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"take back the pledge"

from the woman's hand

Here "hand" emphasizes that they were in here possession. The woman's hand refers to the woman. Alternate translation: "from the woman"

Genesis 38:21

Adullamite

a person who lives in the village of Adullam. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:1]

the men of the place

"some of the men who lived there"

cultic prostitute

"prostitute who serves in the temple"

Enaim

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [Genesis 38:14]

Genesis 38:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 38:23

that we not be put to shame

When people found out what had happened they would ridicule Judah and laugh at him. This can be made clear and stated in active form. Alternate translation: "or else people will laugh at us when they find out what happened"

Genesis 38:24

It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

it was told to Judah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone told Judah"

Tamar your daughter-in-law

"Tamar, your oldest son's wife"

she is pregnant by it

Here the word "it" refers to the "prostitution" that she committed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it has made her pregnant" or "she is pregnant"

Bring her here

"Bring her out"

let her be burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we will burn her to death"

Genesis 38:25

When she was brought out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When they brought her out"

her father-in-law

"her husband's father"

seal and cords and staff

A "seal" is similar to a coin with a design engraved on it, used to make an impression in melted wax. The "cord" was put through the seal so the owner could wear it around his neck. A staff was long wooden stick that helped in walking over rough ground. See how you translated this in Genesis 38:18.

Genesis 38:26

Shelah

This is the name of one of Judah's sons. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 38:5]

He did not know her again

This is a polite way of saying that Judah did not have sexual relations with her again. You may need to use another euphemism in your language.

Genesis 38:27

It came about at the time

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

behold

The word "behold" alerts us to the surprise that Tamar was carrying twins, which was previously unknown.

Genesis 38:28

It came about as she was giving birth

This phrase "It came about" marks an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

one put out a hand

"one of the babies put out his hand"

midwife

This is a person who helps a woman when she is giving birth to a child. See how you translated this in Genesis 35:17.

scarlet thread

"bright red thread"

on his hand

"around his wrist"

Genesis 38:29

behold

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

How you have broken out!

This shows the midwife's surprise to seeing the second baby come out first. Alternate translation: "So this is how you break your way out first!" or "You have burst out first!"

he was named

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she named him"

Perez

This is the name of a boy. Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Perez means 'breaking out.'"

Genesis 38:30

Zerah

This is the name of a boy. Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Zerah means 'scarlet or bright red.'"

---

## Chapter 39

# Genesis 39 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. This is a sign of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. (See: peopleofgod, bless and sign and covenantfaith)

### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. He chose to do what was right, even when it could cause him harm. (See: sin)

## Links:

[Genesis 39:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 39:1

Joseph was brought down to Egypt

Traveling to Egypt is always considered as going "down" in contrast to going "up" to the promised land. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Ishmaelites had taken Joseph to Egypt"

### Genesis 39:2

Yahweh was with Joseph

This means that Yahweh helped Joseph and was always with him. Alternate translation: "Yahweh guided Joseph and helped him"

He lived in the house

Here the author speaks of working in the master's house as if it were living in the master's house. Only the most trusted servants were permitted to work in their master's house. Alternate translation: "he worked in the house"

his Egyptian master

Joseph was now Potiphar's slave.

### Genesis 39:3

His master saw that Yahweh was with him

This means that the master saw how Yahweh was helping Joseph. Alternate translation: "His master saw that Yahweh was helping him"

that Yahweh prospered everything that he did

"Yahweh caused everything that Joseph did to prosper"

---

### Genesis 39:4

Joseph found favor in his sight

"To find favor" means to be approved by someone. The idiom "in his sight" refers to a person's opinion. Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "Potiphar was pleased with Joseph" or 2) Alternate translation: "Yahweh was pleased with Joseph"

He served Potiphar

This means that he was Potiphar's personal servant.

Potiphar made Joseph manager over his house, and everything that he possessed

"Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and everything that belonged to Potiphar"

put under his care

When something is "put under someone's care," it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping. Alternate translation: "he had Joseph care for"

### Genesis 39:5

It came about from the time that he made him manager over his house and over everything he possessed, that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph

You may need to use the words "Joseph" and "the Egyptian" before using pronouns to refer to them. "The Egyptian made Joseph manager over his house and over everything he possessed, and it came about from the time that that

Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph"

It came about

This phrase is used here to tell the reader that these two verses are background information for the next event.

he made him manager over his house and over everything he possessed  
"Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and everything that belonged to him"

blessed

Here "blessed" means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

The blessing of Yahweh was on

Here the author speaks of the blessing that Yahweh gave as if it were a physical covering put over something. Alternate translation: "Yahweh blessed"

everything that Potiphar had in the house and in the field

This refers his household and his crops and livestock. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "Potiphar's household and all of his crops and livestock"

Genesis 39:6

Potiphar put everything that he had under Joseph's care

When something is "put under someone's care," it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping. Alternate translation: "So Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything that he had"

He did not have to think about anything except the food that he ate  
This double negative emphasizes that the food that he ate was the only thing he had to think about. This is probably an exaggeration or metaphor to say that Joseph took care of all the important business of the house while Potiphar thought only about minor personal affairs. Alternate translation: "The only thing he had to think about was the food that he ate"

Now

The word "now" marks a stop in the story as the author gives background information about Joseph.

handsome and attractive

Both of the words have same meaning. They refer to Joseph's pleasing appearance. He was likely good-looking and strong. Alternate translation: "handsome and strong"

Genesis 39:7

It came about after this that

"And so." This phrase is used here to mark a new event.

Lie with me

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "Have sexual relations with me"

Genesis 39:8

Look

"Listen." Joseph uses this word to get Potiphar's wife's attention.

my master does not pay attention to what I do in the house

"my master has no concern about his household with me in charge" or "my master trusts me with his household"

he has put everything that he owns under my care

When something is "put under someone's care," it means that the person is responsible for its care and safe-keeping.

Alternate translation: "he has put me in charge of everything that belongs to him"

Genesis 39:9

No one is greater in this house than I am

Here the author speaks of authority as if it were greatness. Alternate translation: "I have more authority in this house than anyone else"

He has not kept back anything from me but you

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "He has given me everything except you"

How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

Joseph uses a question for emphasis. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I certainly cannot do such a wicked thing and sin against God."

Genesis 39:10

She spoke to Joseph day after day

This means that she kept asking him to sleep with her. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "She kept on asking Joseph to sleep with her"

to lie with her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "to have sexual relations with her"

to be with her

"to be near her"

Genesis 39:11

It came about

"And so." This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story.

None of the men of the house

"None of the other men who worked in the house"

Genesis 39:12

Lie with me

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "Have sexual relations with me"

fled, and went outside

"and quickly ran outside" or "and quickly ran out of the house"

Genesis 39:13

It came about

"Then" The phrase "it came about" is used here to mark the next event in the story.

had fled outside

"had quickly ran out of the house"

Genesis 39:14

the men of her house

"the men who worked in her house"

See

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

He came to me to lie with me

Here Potiphar's wife is accusing Joseph of trying to seize her and have sexual relations with her. Alternate translation: "He came into my room to have sexual relations with me"

Genesis 39:15

It came about when he heard me scream, that he

"When he heard me scream, he." The phrase "it came about" is used here to mark the next event in the story.

Genesis 39:16

his master

"Joseph's master." This refers to Potiphar.

Genesis 39:17

She told him this explanation

"She explained it like this"

brought to us

The word "us" refers to Potiphar, his wife, and includes the rest of the household.

came in to mock me

"came in to make a fool of me." Here, the word "mock" is a euphemism for "to seize and to sleep with." Alternate translation: "came into where I was and tried to force me to sleep with him"

Genesis 39:18

It came about that

"Then." Potiphar's wife uses this phrase to mark the next event in the account she is telling him about Joseph trying to sleep with her.

fled outside

"ran quickly out of the house"

Genesis 39:19

It came about that

"And so." This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story.

his master

"Joseph's master." This refers to Potiphar. This information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Joseph's master, Potiphar"

heard the explanation his wife told him

"heard his wife explain to him." The word "his" and "him" here refer to Potiphar.

he became very angry

"Potiphar became very angry"

Genesis 39:20

the place where the king's prisoners were confined

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place where the king put his prisoners"

He was there

"Joseph stayed there"

Genesis 39:21

But Yahweh was with Joseph

This refers to how Yahweh took care of Joseph and was kind to him. Alternate translation: "But Yahweh was kind to Joseph" or "But Yahweh took care of Joseph"

showed covenant faithfulness to him

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful" or "faithfully." Alternate translation: "was faithful to his covenant with him" or "faithfully loved him"

He gave him favor in the sight of the prison warden

This means Yahweh caused the prison warden to approve of Joseph and to treat him well. Alternate translation:

"Yahweh caused the prison warden to be pleased with

Joseph"

the prison warden

"the prison manager" or "the man in charge of the prison"

Genesis 39:22

gave into Joseph's hand

Here "hand" represents Joseph's power or trust. Alternate translation: "put Joseph in charge of"

Whatever they did there, Joseph was in charge of it

"Joseph was in charge of everything they did there"

Genesis 39:23

because Yahweh was with him

This refers to how Yahweh helped Joseph and guided him.

Alternate translation: "because Yahweh guided Joseph"

Whatever he did, Yahweh prospered

"Yahweh caused everything that Joseph did to prosper"

---

## Chapter 40

# Genesis 40 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: peopleofgod and bless)

### Interpretation of dreams

The interpretation of dreams was important in the ancient Near East. It was seen as possible only through divine power. Yahweh gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams in order to bring himself glory and to protect Joseph and the Hebrew people. (See: glory)

## Links:

[Genesis 40:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 40:1

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark a new event in the story.

the cupbearer

This is the person who brought drinks to the king.

king's baker

This is the person who made food for the king.

offended their master

"upset their master"

Genesis 40:2

the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the bakers

"the leading cupbearer and the leading baker"

Genesis 40:3

He put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard

"He put them in the prison that was in the house that was overseen by the captain of the guard"

He put them

The king did not put them in prison but rather he commanded for them to be imprisoned. Alternate

translation: "He had them put" or "He commanded his

guard to put"  
in the same prison where Joseph was confined  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:  
"This was the same prison that Joseph was in" or "This was  
the same prison Potiphar put Joseph in"  
Genesis 40:4  
They remained in custody for some time  
"They remained in prison for a long time"  
Genesis 40:5  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.  
Genesis 40:6  
Joseph came to them  
"Joseph came to the cupbearer and the baker"  
Behold, they were upset  
The word "behold" here shows that Joseph was surprised  
by what he saw. Alternate translation: "He was surprised to  
see that they were upset"  
Genesis 40:7  
Pharaoh's officials who were with him  
This refers to the cupbearer and the baker.  
in custody in his master's house  
"In prison in his master's house." "His master" refers to  
Joseph's master, the captain of the guard.  
Genesis 40:8  
Do not interpretations belong to God?  
Joseph uses a question for emphasis. This can be written as  
a statement. Alternate translation: "Interpretations belong  
to God!" or "It is God who can tell the meaning of dreams!"  
Tell me, please  
Joseph asks for them to tell him their dreams. Alternate  
translation: "Tell me the dreams, please"  
Genesis 40:9  
The chief of the cupbearers  
The most important person who brings drinks to the king.  
See how you translated this in Genesis 40:2.  
In my dream, behold, a vine was in front of me  
"In my dream, I saw a vine in front of me!" The cupbearer  
uses word "behold" here to show that he was surprised by  
what he saw in his dream and to alert Joseph to pay  
attention.  
Genesis 40:10  
the clusters of grapes ripened  
"its clusters ripened into grapes"  
Genesis 40:11  
squeezed them  
This means that he squeezed the juice out of them.  
Alternate translation: "squeezed the juice from them"  
Genesis 40:12  
This is the interpretation of it  
"Here is what the dream means"  
The three branches are three days  
"The three branches represent three days"  
Genesis 40:13  
Within three days  
"In three more days"  
will lift up your head  
Here "lift up your head" is a metaphor for "restore your  
honor." If the meaning is not clear, it can be explained in

the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: "will lift up  
your head in honor"  
restore you to your office  
"will give you back your job"  
just as when  
"just as you did when"  
Genesis 40:14  
please show kindness to me  
"please be kind to me"  
Mention me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this prison  
Joseph means for the cupbearer to tell Pharaoh about him  
so that Pharaoh will release him from prison. Alternate  
translation: "Help me get out of this prison by telling  
Pharaoh about me"  
Genesis 40:15  
For indeed I was abducted  
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For  
indeed people took me" or "For indeed the Ishmaelites took  
me"  
the land of the Hebrews  
"the land where the Hebrew people live"  
Here also have I done nothing that they should put me in this dungeon  
"and also while I have been here in Egypt, I have done  
nothing for which I deserved to be put in prison"  
Genesis 40:16  
the chief of the bakers  
This refers to the leading person who made food for the  
king. See how this was translated in Genesis 40:2.  
I also had a dream, and  
"I also had a dream, and in my dream,"  
behold, three baskets of bread were on my head  
"there were three baskets of bread on my head!" The baker  
uses word "behold" here to show that he was surprised by  
what he saw in his dream and to alert Joseph to pay  
attention.  
Genesis 40:17  
baked goods for Pharaoh  
"baked foods for Pharaoh"  
Genesis 40:18  
This is the interpretation  
"Here is what the dream means"  
The three baskets are three days  
"The three baskets represent three days"  
Genesis 40:19  
will lift up your head from you  
In verse 13 Joseph said "lift up your head," but there it had  
a different meaning. Here "lift up your head from you"  
means either that the prisoner's head would be cut off his  
body, or the prisoner's head would be lifted when a noose  
was put around his neck and he was hanged. Alternate  
translation: "will lift up your head with a knife" or "will lift  
up your head with a noose"  
flesh  
Here "flesh" literally means the soft tissue on a person's  
body.  
Genesis 40:20  
It came about on the third day that  
"Afterward, on the third day." The phrase "it came about" is  
used here to mark a new event in the story.

He made a feast  
"He had a feast"

He lifted up the head of the chief of the cupbearers and the head of the chief of the bakers

The author writes that Pharaoh lifted up both men's heads so that it would sound like he did the same thing to both men. But the meaning of "lift up the head" for each man is different and is explained in verses 21 and 22. This can also be shortened. Alternate translation: "He lifted up the heads of the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the bakers"

the chief of the cupbearers

This was the leading person who prepared and served drinks to the king. See how these were translated in Genesis 40:2.

the chief of the bakers

This refers to the leading person who made food for the king. See how this was translated in Genesis 40:2.

Genesis 40:21

He restored the chief of the cupbearers to his responsibility  
The chief of the cupbearer's "responsibility" refers to his job as chief of the cupbearers. Alternate translation: "He gave the chief of the cupbearers his job back"

Genesis 40:22

But he hanged the chief of the bakers

Pharaoh did not personally hang the baker, rather he commanded for him to be hanged. Alternate translation: "But he commanded for the chief of the bakers to be hanged" or "But he commanded his guards to hang the chief of the bakers"

just as Joseph had interpreted to them

This refers to when Joseph interpreted their dreams. Alternate translation: "just as Joseph had said would happen when he interpreted the two men's dreams"

Genesis 40:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

## Chapter 41

# Genesis 41 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: peopleofgod and bless)

### Interpretation of dreams

The interpretation of dreams was important in the ancient Near East. It was seen as possible only through divine power. Yahweh gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams in order to bring himself glory and to protect Joseph and the Hebrew people. (See: glory)

### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. It gained him great favor in the eyes of Pharaoh and helped to save his people. (See: sin, righteous and save)

## Links:

[Genesis 41:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 41:1

It came about

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.

at the end of two full years

Two years passed after Joseph correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, who had been in prison with Joseph.

Behold, he stood

The word "behold" here marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "He was surprised because he was standing"

he stood

"Pharaoh was standing"

### Genesis 41:2

desirable and fat

"healthy and fat"

grazed in the reeds

"were eating the grass along the side of the river"

reeds

tall, thin grasses that grow in wet areas

### Genesis 41:3

Behold, seven other cows

The word "behold" here shows that Pharaoh was again surprised by what he saw.

undesirable and thin

"sick and thin"

bank of the river

"beside the river" or "riverside." This is the higher ground along the edge of a river.

### Genesis 41:4

undesirable and thin

"weak and skinny." See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 41:3.

desirable and fat

"healthy and well-fed." See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 41:2.

woke up

"awakened"

### Genesis 41:5



a second time

The word "second" is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: "again"

Behold, seven heads

The word "behold" here shows that Pharaoh was surprised by what he saw.

heads of grain

The heads are parts of the corn plant on which the seeds grow.

came up on one stalk

"grew up on one stem." The stalk is the thick or tall part of a plant.

on one stalk, wholesome and good

"on one stock and they were healthy and beautiful"

Genesis 41:6

thin and scorched by the east wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that were thin and burned because of the hot wind from the east"

the east wind

Wind from the east blew in from the desert. The heat of the east wind was often very destructive.

sprouted up

"grew up" or "developed"

Genesis 41:7

The thin heads

The words "of grain" are understood. Alternate translation: "The thin heads of grain"

swallowed up

"ate." Pharaoh is dreaming that unhealthy corn could eat healthy corn just like a person eats food.

wholesome and full heads

"healthy and good heads." See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:5.

woke up

"awakened"

behold

The word "behold" here shows that Pharaoh was surprised by what he had seen.

it was a dream

"he had been dreaming"

Genesis 41:8

It came about

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.

his spirit was troubled

Here the word "spirit" refers to his inner being or his emotions. Alternate translation: "he was troubled in his inner being" or "he was troubled"

He sent and called

It is understood that he sent servants. Alternate translation: "He sent his servants to call" or "He sent his servants to summon"

all the magicians and wise men of Egypt

Ancient kings and rulers used magicians and wise men as advisers.

Genesis 41:9

chief cupbearer

The most important person who brings drinks to the king.

See how you translated this in Genesis 40:2.

I have remembered my sins today

"I realize now that I have sinned." The phrase "my sins" is used for emphasis. His "sins" are that he should have told Pharaoh something much earlier but he did not.

Genesis 41:10

Pharaoh was angry

The cupbearer is referring to Pharaoh in third person. This is a common way for someone with less power to speak to someone with greater power. Alternate translation: "You, Pharaoh, were angry"

with his servants

Here "his" refers to Pharaoh. Here "servants" refers to the cupbearer and the chief baker. Alternate translation: "with us, your servants"

put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, the chief baker and me

"put the chief baker and me in the prison where the captain of the guard was in charge." Here "house" refers to the prison.

the captain of the guard

The soldier in charge of the royal guards. See how you translated this in Genesis 40:3.

the chief baker

The most important person who made food for the king. See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 40:2. Genesis 41:11

We dreamed a dream the same night, he and I

"One night we both had dreams"

We dreamed

Here "We" refers to the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.

We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream "Our dreams had different meanings"

Genesis 41:12

General Information:

The chief cupbearer continues to speak to Pharaoh.

There was with us there

"In prison there was with the chief baker and me"

the captain of the guard

The soldier in charge of the royal guards. See how you translated this in Genesis 40:3.

We told him and he interpreted for us our dreams

"We told him our dreams and he explained their meanings to us"

He interpreted for each of us according to his dream

Here "his" refers to the cupbearer and baker individually, not to the one interpreting the dream. Alternate translation: "He explained what was going to happen to both of us"

Genesis 41:13

It came about

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.

as he interpreted for us, so it happened

"what he explained about the dreams is what later happened"

Pharaoh restored me to my post  
 Here the cupbearer uses Pharaoh's title in speaking to him as a way of honoring him. Alternate translation: "You allowed me to return to my job"  
 the other one  
 "the chief baker"  
 he hanged  
 Here "he" refers to Pharaoh. And, it stands for the soldiers that Pharaoh commanded to hang the chief baker.  
 Alternate translation: "you ordered your soldiers to hang"  
 Genesis 41:14  
 Pharaoh sent and called for  
 It is understood that Pharaoh sent servants. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh sent his servants to get Joseph" out of the dungeon  
 "out of the jail" or "out of the prison"  
 He shaved himself  
 It was common practice to shave both the facial and head hair when preparing to go before Pharaoh.  
 came in to Pharaoh  
 Here "came" can be stated as "went." Alternate translation: "went before Pharaoh"  
 Genesis 41:15  
 there is no interpreter for it  
 "no one can explain the meaning"  
 you can interpret it  
 "you can explain its meaning"  
 Genesis 41:16  
 It is not in me  
 "I am not the one who can explain the meaning"  
 God will answer Pharaoh with favor  
 "God will answer Pharaoh favorably"  
 Genesis 41:17  
 behold, I stood  
 Pharaoh uses the word "behold" to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.  
 bank of the Nile  
 This is the higher ground along the edge of the Nile River. See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:3.  
 Alternate translation: "beside the Nile"  
 Genesis 41:18  
 Behold, seven cows  
 Pharaoh uses the word "Behold" to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.  
 fat and desirable  
 "well-fed and healthy." See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 41:2.  
 grazed among the reeds  
 "were eating the grass along the side of the river." See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:2.  
 Genesis 41:19  
 Behold, seven other cows  
 Pharaoh uses the word "Behold" to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.  
 undesirable, and thin  
 "weak, and skinny." See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 41:3.  
 such undesirableness  
 The abstract noun "undesirableness" can be translated with

an adjective. Alternate translation: "such ugly cows" or "such worthless looking cows"  
 Genesis 41:20  
 fat cows  
 "well-fed cows." See how you translated this phrase in Genesis 41:2.  
 Genesis 41:21  
 it could not be known that they had eaten them  
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one would have been able to tell that the thin cows had eaten the fat cows"  
 Genesis 41:22  
 General Information:  
 Pharaoh continues telling Joseph his dreams.  
 I looked in my dream  
 This begins Pharaoh's next dream after he woke up and went back to sleep. Alternate translation: "Then I dreamed again"  
 behold, seven heads  
 Pharaoh uses the word "Behold" to make Joseph pay attention to surprising information.  
 seven heads  
 The words "of grain" are understood. Alternate translation: "seven heads of grain"  
 came up upon one stalk  
 "grew up on one stem." The stalk is the thick or tall part of a plant. See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:5.  
 Genesis 41:23  
 withered  
 dead and dried  
 sprang up  
 "grew up" or "developed"  
 Genesis 41:24  
 The thin heads  
 The words "of grain" are understood. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:7]  
 swallowed up  
 "ate." Pharaoh is dreaming that unhealthy corn could eat healthy corn just like a person eats food. See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:7.  
 there was none that could  
 "there was not a single one that could" or "none of them could"  
 Genesis 41:25  
 The dreams of Pharaoh are the same  
 It is implied that the meanings are the same. Alternate translation: "Both dreams mean the same thing"  
 What God is about to do, he has declared to Pharaoh  
 Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in the third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: "God is showing you what he will soon do"  
 Genesis 41:26  
 seven good heads  
 The words "of grain" are understood. Alternate translation: "seven good heads of grain"  
 Genesis 41:27  
 General Information:

Joseph continues his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams thin and undesirable cows  
"skinny and weak cows." See how you translated a similar phrase in Genesis 41:3.

seven thin heads scorched by the east wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "seven thin heads of grain scorched because of the hot wind from the east"

Genesis 41:28

That is the thing which I spoke to Pharaoh ... revealed to Pharaoh  
Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in the third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in second person.

Alternate translation: "These events will happen just as I have told you ... revealed to you, Pharaoh"

he has revealed

"he has made known"

Genesis 41:29

Look, seven

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

seven years of great abundance will come throughout all the land of Egypt

This speaks about the years of abundance as if time is something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "there will be seven years in which there will be plenty of food throughout the land of Egypt"

Genesis 41:30

General Information:

Joseph continues interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.

Seven years of famine will come after them

This speaks about the seven years of famine as if they are something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "Then there will be seven years when there is very little food"

all the abundance will be forgotten ... and the famine will devastate the land

Joseph expresses an idea in two ways to emphasize its importance.

all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt

Here "land" refers to the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Egypt will forget about the years in which there was plenty of food"

will devastate the land

Here "land" refers to the soil, the people, and the entire country.

Genesis 41:31

The abundance will not be remembered ... because of the famine that will follow

Joseph expresses an idea in two ways to emphasize its importance.

because of the famine that will follow

This speaks about the famine as if it were a thing that travels and follows behind something else. Alternate translation: "because of the time of famine that will happen afterwards"

Genesis 41:32

That the dream was repeated to Pharaoh is because the matter has been established by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God gave you two dreams to show you that he will certainly cause these things to happen"

Genesis 41:33

General Information:

Joseph continues to address Pharaoh

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

let Pharaoh look

Joseph speaks to Pharaoh in third person. This is a way of showing respect. It can be stated in second person.

Alternate translation: "You, Pharaoh, should look"

put him over the land of Egypt

The phrase "put him over" means to give someone authority. Alternate translation: "give him authority over the kingdom of Egypt" or "put him in charge of the kingdom of Egypt"

land of Egypt

Here "land" stands for all the people and everything in Egypt.

Genesis 41:34

let them take a fifth of the crops of Egypt

The word "fifth" is a fraction. Alternate translation: "let them divide the crops of Egypt into five equal parts, then take one of those parts"

in the seven abundant years

"during the seven years in which there is plenty of food"

Genesis 41:35

General Information:

Joseph continues to counsel Pharaoh

Let them gather

"Allow the overseers to gather"

of these good years that are coming

This speaks of years as if they are something that travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "during the good years that will soon happen"

store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh

The phrase "under the authority of Pharaoh" means Pharaoh gives them authority. Alternate translation: "use the authority of Pharaoh to store the grain"

They should preserve it

The word "they" refers to the overseers and represents the soldiers that they should command to guard the grain.

Alternate translation: "The overseers should leave soldiers there to guard the grain"

Genesis 41:36

The food will be a supply for the land

Here "land" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "This food will be for the people"

In this way the land will not be devastated by the famine

Here "land" stands for the people. This can be stated in

active form. Alternate translation: "This way the people will not starve during the famine"

Genesis 41:37

This advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh and his servants thought this was a good plan"

his servants

This means Pharaoh's officials.

Genesis 41:38

such a man as this

"a man like the one Joseph described"

in whom is the Spirit of God

"in whom the Spirit of God lives"

Genesis 41:39

there is none so discerning

"no one else is as capable in making decisions." See how you translated "discerning" in Genesis 41:33.

Genesis 41:40

You will be over my house

Here "house" stands for Pharaoh's palace and the people in the palace. The phrase "will be over" means Joseph will have authority over. Alternate translation: "You will be in charge of everyone in my palace"

according to your word will all my people be ruled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you will rule over my people and they will do what you command"

Only in the throne

Here "throne" stands for Pharaoh's rule as king. Alternate translation: "Only in my role as king"

Genesis 41:41

See, I have put you

The word "See" adds emphasis to what Pharaoh says next.

Alternate translation: "Look, I have put you"

I have put you over all the land of Egypt

The phrase "put you over" means to give authority. Here "land" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "I put you in charge of everyone in Egypt"

Genesis 41:42

Pharaoh took off his signet ring ... gold chain on his neck

All of these actions symbolize that Pharaoh is giving Joseph the authority to do everything that Joseph planned.

signet ring

This ring had Pharaoh's seal engraved on it. This gave Joseph the authority and money needed to carry out his plans.

clothes of fine linen

"Linen" here is a smooth, strong cloth made from the blue-flowered flax plant.

Genesis 41:43

He had him ride in the second chariot which he possessed

This act makes clear to the people that Joseph is second only to Pharaoh.

Bend the knee

"Bow down and honor Joseph." To bend the knee and bow down was a sign of honor and respect.

Pharaoh put him over all the land

The phrase "put you over" means to give authority. Here "land" refers to the people. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Genesis 41:41]

Genesis 41:44

I am Pharaoh, and apart from you

Pharaoh is emphasizing his authority. Alternate translation: "As Pharaoh, I command that apart from you"

apart from you, no man will lift his hand or his foot in all the land of

Egypt

Here "hand" and "foot" stand for a person's actions.

Alternate translation: "no person in Egypt will do anything without your permission" or "every person in Egypt must ask your permission before they do anything"

no man

Here "man" refers to any person in general, whether male or female.

Genesis 41:45

Zaphenath-Paneah

Translators may add the following footnote: The name Zaphenath-Paneah means "a revealer of secrets."

He gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphra priest of On, as a wife. Priests in Egypt were the highest and most privileged caste. This marriage signifies Joseph's place of honor and privilege.

gave him Asenath

"Asenath" is the name of the woman whom Pharaoh gave to Joseph as his wife.

daughter of Potiphra

"Potiphra" is the father of Asenath.

priest of On

On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was "the City of the Sun" and the center of worship of the sun god Ra.

Joseph went out over the land of Egypt

Joseph traveled over the land to supervise the preparations for the coming drought.

Genesis 41:46

thirty years old

"30 years old"

when he stood before Pharaoh

Here "stood before" stands for Joseph starting to serve Pharaoh. Alternate translation: "when he started to serve Pharaoh"

went throughout all the land of Egypt

Joseph is inspecting the country as he prepares to carry out his plans.

Genesis 41:47

In the seven bountiful years

"During the seven good years"

the land produced abundantly

"the land produced big harvests"

Genesis 41:48

He gathered up ... He put

Here "He" stands for Joseph's servants. Alternate translation: "Joseph ordered his servants to gather ... They put"

Genesis 41:49

Joseph stored up grain like the sand of the sea

This compares the grain to the sand of sea to emphasize its great quantity. Alternate translation: "The grain that Joseph stored was as plentiful as the sand on the seashore"

Joseph stored up ... he stopped

Here "Joseph" and "he" stand for Joseph's servants.

Alternate translation: "Joseph had his servants store up ... they stopped"

Genesis 41:50

before the years of famine came

This speaks about years as if they are something that

travels and comes to a place. Alternate translation: "before the seven years of the famine began"

Asenath

a woman's name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]

daughter of Potiphra

"Potiphra" is the father of Asenath. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]

priest of On

On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was "the City of the Sun" and the center of worship of the sun god Ra. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]

Genesis 41:51

Manasseh

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name 'Manasseh' means 'to cause to forget.'"

father's household

This refers to Joseph's father Jacob and his family.

Genesis 41:52

Ephraim

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name 'Ephraim' means 'to be fruitful' or 'to have children.'"

made me fruitful

Here "fruitful" means to prosper or to have children.

in the land of my affliction

The abstract noun "affliction" can be stated as "I have suffered." Alternate translation: "in this land where I have suffered"

Genesis 41:53

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 41:54

in all lands

In all the surrounding nations beyond Egypt, including the land of Canaan.

but in all the land of Egypt there was food

It is implied that there was food because of Joseph commanded his people to store food during the seven good years.

Genesis 41:55

When all the land of Egypt was famished

Here "land" stands for the people. Alternate translation:

"When all the Egyptians were starving"

Genesis 41:56

The famine was over all the face of the whole land

The word "face" refers to the surface of the land. Alternate

translation: "The famine had spread throughout the land"

Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians

Here "Joseph" stands for Joseph's servants. Alternate

translation: "Joseph had his servants open all the

storehouses and sell grain to the Egyptians"

Genesis 41:57

All the earth was coming to Egypt

Here "earth" stands for the people from all regions.

Alternate translation: "People were coming to Egypt from all the surrounding regions"

in all the earth

"throughout the land." It is likely that all the different trading partners and nations that were part of the Egyptian trading routes effected by the drought came to Egypt for grain.

---

## Chapter 42

# Genesis 42 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Famine

Apparently this famine extended beyond Egypt and encompassed the land of Canaan too. Because of Egypt's size and power, it would not have been unusual for people to go there in times of need.

### Joseph's test

Joseph tests his brothers to see if they are good. They treat their brother Benjamin better than they treated Joseph and tried to protect him.

## Links:

[Genesis 42:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 42:1

Now Jacob became

The word "Now" marks a new part of the story.

Why do you look at one another?

Jacob uses a question to scold his sons for not doing anything about the grain. Alternate translation: "Do not just sit here!"

Genesis 42:2

Go down there

It was common to speak of going from Canaan to Egypt as going "down."

Genesis 42:3

went down

It was common to speak of going from Canaan to Egypt as going "down."

from Egypt

Here "Egypt" refers to the people selling grain. Alternate translation: "from those selling grain in Egypt"

Genesis 42:4

Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers Benjamin and Joseph had the same father and mother; their mother was different from the mothers of the other brothers. Jacob did not want to risk sending Rachel's last son.

Genesis 42:5

The sons of Israel came to buy among those who came

The word "came" can be translated as "went." Also, the words "grain" and "Egypt" are understood. Alternate translation: "The sons of Israel went to by grain along with other people who went to Egypt"

Genesis 42:6

Now Joseph

"Now" marks a change from the story to background information about Joseph.

over the land

Here "land" refers to Egypt. Alternate translation: "over Egypt"

all the people of the land

Here "land" includes Egypt and other surrounding countries. Alternate translation: "all the people of all the nations that came to buy grain"

Joseph's brothers came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

bowed down to him with their faces to the ground

This is a way of showing respect.

Genesis 42:7

Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them

"When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them"

he disguised himself to them

"he acted like he was not their brother" or "he did not let them know that he was their brother"

Where have you come from?

This was not a rhetorical question even though Joseph knew the answer. It was part of his choice to keep his identity from his brothers.

Genesis 42:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 42:9

You are spies

Spies are people who secretly try to get information about a country to help another country.

You have come to see the undefended parts of the land

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "You have come to find out where we are not guarding our land so that you can attack us"

Genesis 42:10

my master

This is a way to refer to someone to honor them.

Your servants have

The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "We, your servants, have" or "We have"

Genesis 42:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 42:12

He said to them

"Joseph said to his brothers"

No, you have come to see the undefended parts of the land

The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "No, you have come to find out where we are not guarding our land so that you can attack us"

Genesis 42:13

twelve brothers

"12 brothers"

See, the youngest

"Listen to us, the youngest." The word "See" is used to emphasize what they say next.

the youngest is this day with our father

"right now our youngest brother is with our father"

Genesis 42:14

It is what I said to you; you are spies

"like I already said, you are spies." See how you translated "spies" in Genesis 42:9.

Genesis 42:15

By this you will be tested

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This is how I will test you"

By the life of Pharaoh

This phrase indicates a solemn oath. Alternate translation:

"I swear by the life of Pharaoh"

Genesis 42:16

Send one of yourselves and let him get your brother

"Choose one of you to go get your brother"

You will remain in prison

"The rest of you will remain in prison"

that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that I may find out if you are telling the truth"

Genesis 42:17

in custody

"in prison"

Genesis 42:18

on the third day

The word "third" is an ordinal number. Alternate translation: "after the second day"

Do this and live

"If you will do what I say, I will let you live"

fear God

This refers to deeply respecting God and showing that respect by obeying him.

Genesis 42:19

let one of your brothers be confined in this prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"leave one of your brothers here in prison"

but you go

Here "you" is plural and refers to all the brothers that will not stay in prison. Alternate translation: "but the rest of you go"

carry grain for the famine of your houses

Here "houses" stands for families. Alternate translation:

"carry grain home to help your family during this famine"

Genesis 42:20

so your words will be verified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so I may know what you say is true"

you will not die

This implies that Joseph would have his soldiers execute the brothers if he finds out they are spies.

Genesis 42:21

in that we saw the distress of his soul

The word "soul" stands for Joseph. Alternate translation:

"because we saw how distressed Joseph was" or "because we saw that Joseph was suffering"

Therefore this distress has come upon us

The abstract noun "distress" can be stated as the verb "suffering." Alternate translation: "That is why we are suffering like this now"

Genesis 42:22

Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy,' but you would not listen? Reuben uses a question to scold his brothers. Alternate translation: "I told you not to hurt the boy, but you would not listen!"

Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy,' but

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy, but" or "I told you not to harm the boy, but"

Now, see

Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but both "Now" and "see" are used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

his blood is required of us

Here "blood" stands for Joseph's death. His brothers thought Joseph was dead. The phrase "is required of us" means they must be punished for what they did. Alternate translation: "we are getting what we deserve for his death" or "we are suffering for having killed him"

Genesis 42:23

They did not know ... an interpreter between them

This changes from the main story to background information that explains why the brothers thought Joseph could not understand them.

an interpreter

An "interpreter" is someone who translates what one person says into another language. Joseph placed an interpreter between himself and his brothers to make it seem like he did not speak their language.

Genesis 42:24

He turned from them and wept

It is implied that Joseph wept because he was emotional after hearing what his brothers said.

spoke to them

Joseph was still speaking a different language and using the interpreter to speak to his brothers.

bound him before their eyes

Here the people are represented by their "eyes" to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: "bound him in their sight" or "bound him as they watched"

Genesis 42:25

to give them provisions

"to give them the supplies they needed"

It was done for them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The servants did for them everything that Joseph commanded"

Genesis 42:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 42:27

As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed in the lodging

place, he saw his money. Behold, it was in the opening of his sack

"When they stopped at a place for the night, one of the brothers opened his sack to get food for his donkey. In the sack he saw his money!"

Behold

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

Genesis 42:28

My money has been put back

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone has put my money back"

Look at it

"Look in my sack!"

Their hearts sank

To become afraid is spoken of as if their heart were sinking.

Here "hearts" stands for courage. Alternate translation:

"They became very afraid"

Genesis 42:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 42:30

lord of the land

"the lord of Egypt"

spoke roughly

"spoke harshly"

we were spies

Spies are people who secretly try to get information about a country to help another country. See how you translated "spies" in Genesis 42:9.

Genesis 42:31

We said to him, 'We are honest men. We are not spies.

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "We told him that we are honest men and not spies."

Genesis 42:32

We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no longer alive ... land of Canaan.'

The quotation within a quotation that began with the words "We said to him, 'We are honest men ... not spies. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "We told him that we are honest men ... not spies. We said that we are twelve brothers, sons of our father, and that one brother is no longer alive ... land of Canaan"

One is no longer alive

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation: "One brother is no longer alive"

the youngest is this day with our father

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation: "the youngest brother is with our father right now"

Genesis 42:33

the lord of the land

"The lord of Egypt"

take grain for the famine in your houses

Here "houses" stands for "family." Alternate translation:

"take grain to help your family during the famine"

go your way

"go home" or "leave"

Genesis 42:34

you will trade in the land

"I will allow you to buy and sell in this land"

Genesis 42:35

It came about

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.

behold, every

"they were surprised because every"

Genesis 42:36

You have bereaved me of my children

"you have deprived me of my children" or "you have caused me to lose two of my children"

All these things are against me

"all these things hurt me"

Genesis 42:37

Put him in my hands

This is a request for Reuben to take Joseph with him and to care for him on the journey. Alternate translation: "Put me in charge of him" or "Let me take care of him"

Genesis 42:38

My son will not go down with you

It was common to use the phrase "go down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation:

"My son, Benjamin, will not go with you to Egypt"

with you

Here "you" is plural and refers to Jacob's older sons.

For his brother is dead and he alone is left

The full meaning can be made explicit. Alternate

translation: "For my wife, Rachel, only had two children.

Joseph is dead and Benjamin is the only one left"

on the road in which you go

"while you are traveling to Egypt and back" or "while you are away." Here "road" stands for traveling.

then you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

To "bring down ... to Sheol" is way of saying they will cause

him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word "down"

because it was commonly believed sheol is somewhere

underground. Alternate translation: "then you will cause

me, an old man, to die of sorrow"

my gray hair

This stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: "me, an old man"

---

## Chapter 43

# Genesis 43 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Israel's concern

Israel is concerned over his favored son, Benjamin. He is also confused about the reason the Egyptian official treated them so kindly. This caused him some concern. It is possible he thought his sons were lying to him. (See: favor)

## Links:

[Genesis 43:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 43:1

The famine was severe in the land

The word "Canaan" is understood. This information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "The famine was severe in the land of Canaan"

Genesis 43:2

It came about

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.

when they had eaten

"when Jacob and his family had eaten"

they had brought

"Jacob's older sons had brought"

buy us

Here "us" refers to Jacob, his sons, and the rest of the family.

Genesis 43:3

Judah told him

"Judah told his father Jacob"

The man

This refers to Joseph, but the brothers did not know it was Joseph. They referred to him as "the man" or "the man, the lord of the land" as in Genesis 42:30.

warned us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.'

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as

an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "warned us that we would not see his face unless we brought our youngest brother with us"

solemnly warned us

"was very serious when he warned us, saying"

You will not see my face

Judah uses this phrase twice in 43:3-5 to emphasize to his father that they cannot return to Egypt without Benjamin.

The phrase "my face" refers to the man, who is Joseph.

Alternate translation: "You will not see me"

your brother is with you

Judah is referring to Benjamin, Rachel's last born before she died.

Genesis 43:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 43:5

we will not go down

It was common to use the phrase "go down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 43:6

Why did you treat me so badly

"Why did you cause me so much trouble"

Genesis 43:7

The man asked details

"The man asked many questions"



about us

Here "us" is exclusive and refers to the brothers who went to Egypt and spoke with "the man."

He said, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "He asked us directly if our father was still alive and if we had another brother."

We answered him according to these questions

"We answered the questions he asked us"

How could we have known that he would say ... down?

The sons use a question emphasize that they did not know what the man would tell them to do. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We did not know he would say ... down!"

he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he would tell us to bring our brother down to Egypt."

Bring your brother down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 43:8

We will rise and go that we may live and not die, both we, you, and also our children

The phrases "we may live" and "not die" mean the same thing. Judah is emphasizing that they have to buy food in Egypt in order to survive. Alternate translation: "We will go now to Egypt and get grain so our whole family will live"

We will rise

Here "We" refers to the brothers who will travel to Egypt. we may live

Here "we" refers to the brothers, Israel, and the whole family.

both we

Here "we" refers to the brothers.

we, you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Israel.

also our children

Here "our" refers to the brothers. This refers to the small children who were most likely to die during a famine.

Genesis 43:9

I will be a guarantee for him

The abstract noun "guarantee" can be stated as the verb "promise." Alternate translation: "I will promise to bring him back"

You will hold me responsible

How Jacob will hold Judah responsible can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "You will make me answer to you about what happens to Benjamin"

let me bear the blame

This speaks about "blame" as if it were an object that a person has to carry. Alternate translation: "you may blame me"

Genesis 43:10

For if we had not delayed, surely by now we would have come back here a second time

They delayed because their father waited so long to send his sons to Egypt to get more food. Judah is complaining

that they could not go sooner. He wishes that they had not delayed.

we would have come back here a second time

"we could have gone and returned twice"

Genesis 43:11

If it be so, now do this

"If this is our only choice, then do it"

Carry down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

balm

an oily substance with a sweet smell used for healing and protecting skin. See how you translated this word in Genesis 37:25. Alternate translation: "medicine"

spices

seasonings. See how you translated these words in Genesis 37:25.

pistachio nuts

small, green tree nuts

almonds

tree nuts with a sweet flavor

Genesis 43:12

Take double money in your hand

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "Take double the money with you"

The money that was returned in the opening of your sacks, carry again in your hand

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. The phrase "that was returned" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "take back to Egypt the money someone put in your sacks"

Genesis 43:13

Take also your brother

"Take also Benjamin"

go again

"return"

Genesis 43:14

May God Almighty give you mercy before the man

The abstract noun "mercy" can be stated as the adjective "kind." Alternate translation: "May God Almighty cause the man to be kind to you"

your other brother

"Simeon"

If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved

"If I lose my children, then I lose my children." This means that Jacob knows he must accept whatever happens to his sons.

Genesis 43:15

in their hand they took

Here "hand" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "they took"

went down to Egypt

It was common to use the phrase "went down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 43:16

Benjamin with them

"Benjamin with Joseph's older brothers"

the steward of his house

The "steward" was responsible for managing Joseph's

household activities.

Genesis 43:17

He brought the men

Here "brought" can be translated as "took."

to Joseph's house

"into Joseph's house"

Genesis 43:18

The men were afraid

"Joseph's brothers were afraid"

they were brought to Joseph's house

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they were going into Joseph's house" or "the steward was taking them into Joseph's house"

It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time we were brought in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The steward is bringing us into the house because of the money that someone put back in our sacks"

that he may seek an opportunity against us. He might arrest us

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "He is waiting for the opportunity to accuse us, so that he might arrest us"

Genesis 43:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 43:20

we came down

It is common to use the phrase "came down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 43:21

Connecting Statement:

The brothers continue speaking to the steward of the house.

It came about

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.

when we reached the lodging place

"when we came to the place that we were going to stay for the night"

behold

The word "behold" here shows that the brothers were surprised by what they saw.

every man's money was in the opening of his sack, our money in full weight

"each one of us found the full amount of his money in his sack"

We have brought it back in our hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "We have brought the money back with us"

Genesis 43:22

Other money we have also brought down in our hand to buy food

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "We have also brought more money to buy food"

brought down

It common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 43:23

Peace be to you

The abstract noun "Peace" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Relax" or "Calm yourselves"

Your God and the God of your father

The stewards is not speaking about two different Gods.

Alternate translation: "Your God, the God your father worships"

Genesis 43:24

washed their feet

This custom helped tired travelers to refresh themselves after walking long distances. The full meaning of this statement may be made explicit.

feed to their donkeys

"Feed" is dry food that is set aside for animals

Genesis 43:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 43:26

they brought the gifts which were in their hand

Here "hand" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "the brothers brought the gifts they had with them"

bowed down before him

This is a way of showing honor and respect.

Genesis 43:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 43:28

Your servant our father

They refer to their father as "Your servant" to show respect.

Alternate translation: "Our father who serves you"

they bowed down and gave him honor

They lay down in front of the man to show him respect.

Genesis 43:29

he lifted up his eyes

This means "he looked up."

his mother's son, and he said

This can be translated with a new sentence. Alternate translation: "his mother's son. Joseph said"

Is this your youngest brother ... me?

Possible meanings are 1) Joseph is truly asking a question to confirm that this man is Benjamin, or 2) it is a rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "So this is your youngest brother ... me."

my son

This is a friendly way one man speaks to another man of lower rank. Alternate translation: "young man"

Genesis 43:30

hurried to go out of the room

"hurried out of the room"

for he was deeply moved about his brother

The phrase "deeply moved" refers to having a strong feeling or emotion when something important happens. Alternate translation: "for he had strong feelings of compassion for his brother" or "for he had strong feelings of affection for his brother"

Genesis 43:31

saying

It can be made explicit to whom Joseph is speaking.

Alternate translation: "and said to his servants"

Serve the food

This means to distribute the food so that people may eat.

Genesis 43:32

The servants served Joseph by himself and the brothers by themselves.

The Egyptians there ate with him by themselves

This means that Joseph, the brothers, and the other Egyptians are eating in three different places within the same room. Alternate translation: "The servants served Joseph by himself and the brothers by themselves and the Egyptians, who were eating with him, by themselves"

The Egyptians there ate with him by themselves

These are probably other Egyptian officials who ate with Joseph, but they still sat separately from him and the Hebrew brothers.

because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is detestable to the Egyptians

This can be translated as a new sentence: "They did this because the Egyptians thought it was shameful to eat with the Hebrews"

could not eat bread

Here "bread" stands for food in general.

Genesis 43:33

The brothers sat before him

It is implied that Joseph had arranged where each brother would sit. You can make clear the implied information.

Alternate translation: "The brothers sat across from the man, according to how he arranged their places"

the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth

The "firstborn" and the "youngest" are used together to mean all the brothers were sitting in order according to their age.

The men were astonished together

"The men were very surprised when they realized this"

Genesis 43:34

But Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of his brothers

The phrase "five times" can be stated more generally.

Alternate translation: "But Benjamin received a portion that was much bigger than what his brothers received"

---

## Chapter 44

# Genesis 44 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

Judah's sacrifice

Judah is willing to sacrifice himself in order to save Benjamin, the favored son of Jacob. Judah's descendants will become the leaders of the Israelites and the godliest of the twelve tribes of Israel. (See: favor and godly)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Joseph's test

Joseph tests his brothers to see if they are good. They treat their brother Benjamin better than they treated Joseph and tried to protect him. (See: test)

## Links:

[Genesis 44:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 44:1

General Information:

This begins a new event in the story. Most likely this is the next morning after the feast.

steward of his house

The "steward" was responsible for managing Joseph's household activities.

every man's money

Their money was silver coins most likely in a small bag.

in his sack's opening

"in his sack"

Genesis 44:2

Put my cup, the silver cup

"Put my silver cup"

in the sack's opening of the youngest

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation: "in the youngest brother's sack"

Genesis 44:3

The morning dawned

"The morning light shown"

the men were sent away, they and their donkeys

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they sent the men away, along with their donkeys"

---

### Genesis 44:4

Why have you returned evil for good?

This question is used to scold the brothers. Alternate translation: "You have treated us badly, after we were good to you!"

Genesis 44:5

Is this not the cup from which my master drinks, and the cup that he uses for divination?

This question is used to scold the brothers. Alternate translation: "You already know that this is the cup that my master uses for drinking and for fortune telling!"

You have done evil, this thing that you have done

This repeats "you have done" for emphasis. Alternate translation: "What you have done is very evil"

Genesis 44:6

spoke these words to them

"spoke what Joseph told him to say"

Genesis 44:7

Why does my master speak such words as these?

Here "words" stands for what was said. The brothers refer to the steward as "my master." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: "Why are you

saying this, my master?"

Far be it from your servants that they would do such a thing.

The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants" and "they." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "We would never do such a thing!"

Far be it from your servants

Something that a person would never do is spoken of as if it were an object that person wants to put very far from himself.

Genesis 44:8

Look, the money

"Listen to what we are about to say and you will see that we are speaking the truth: the money"

the money that we found in our sacks' openings

"you know the money that we found in our sacks"

we brought again to you out of the land of Canaan

"we brought back to you from Canaan"

How then could we steal out of your master's house silver or gold?

The brothers use a question to emphasize that they would not steal from the lord of Egypt. Alternate translation: "So we would never take anything from your master's house!"

silver or gold

These words are used together to mean that they would not steal anything of any value.

Genesis 44:9

If any of your servants is found with it

The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the first person. Also, "is found with it" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If you find that one of us has stolen the cup"

we also will be my master's slaves

The phrase "my master" refers to the steward. This can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: "you may take us as your slaves"

Genesis 44:10

Now also let it be according to your words

"Very well. I will do what you said." Here "now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

He with whom the cup is found will be my slave

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If I find the cup in one of your sacks, that person will be my slave"

Genesis 44:11

brought his sack down

"lowered his sack"

Genesis 44:12

the oldest ... the youngest

The word "brother" is understood. Alternate translation:

"the oldest brother ... the youngest brother"

youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack

This can be translated as a new sentence and in active form. Alternate translation: "youngest. The steward found the cup in Benjamin's sack"

Genesis 44:13

Then they tore their clothes

The word "they" refers to the brothers. Tearing clothes was

a sign of great distress and sorrow.

donkey and returned

"donkey, and they returned"

Genesis 44:14

He was still there

"Joseph was still there"

they bowed before him

"they fell before him." This is a sign of the brothers wanting the lord to be merciful to them.

Genesis 44:15

Do you not know that a man like me practices divination?

Joseph uses a question to scold his brothers. Alternate

translation: "Surely you know that a man like me can learn things by magic!"

Genesis 44:16

What can we say to my master? What can we speak? Or how can we justify ourselves?

All 3 questions mean basically the same thing. They use these questions to emphasize that there is nothing they can say to explain what happened. Alternate translation: "We have nothing to say, my master. We cannot speak anything of value. We cannot justify ourselves."

What can we say to my master ... my master's slaves

Here "my master" refers to Joseph. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "What can we say to you ... your slaves"

God has found out the iniquity of your servants

Here "found out" does not mean God just found out what the brothers did. It means God is now punishing them for what they did. Alternate translation: "God is punishing us for our past sins"

the iniquity of your servants

The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "our iniquity"

he also in whose hand the cup was found

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Also, "was found" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who had your cup"

Genesis 44:17

Far be it from me that I should do so

Something that a person would never do is spoken of as if it were an object the person wants put far away from him.

Alternate translation: "It is not like me to do something like that"

The man in whose hand the cup was found

Here "hand" stands for the whole person. Also, "was found" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The man who had my cup"

Genesis 44:18

came near to

"approached"

let your servant

Judah refers to himself as "your servant." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "let me, your servant"

speaking a word in my master's ears

The word "ear" is a synecdoche that stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "speak to you, my master" in my master's ears

Here "my master" refers to Joseph. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "to you" do not let your anger burn against your servant

Being angry is spoke of as if it were a burning fire. Alternate translation: "please do not be angry with me, your servant"

for you are just like Pharaoh

Judah compares the master to Pharaoh to emphasize the great power that the master has. He is also implying that he does want the master to become angry and execute him. Alternate translation: "for you are as powerful as Pharaoh and could have your soldiers kill me"

Genesis 44:19

My master asked his servants, saying, 'Do you have a father or a brother?'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "My master asked us if we have a father or a brother."

My master asked his servants

Judah refers to Joseph with the words "my master" and "his." He also refers to himself and his brothers as "his servants." Alternate translation: "You, my master, asked us, your servants" or "You asked us"

Genesis 44:20

General Information:

Judah continues to speak before Joseph

We said to my master, 'We have a father ... his father loves him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And we said to my master that we have a father ... his father loves him" his father loves him

This refers to love for a friend or family member.

Genesis 44:21

Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may see him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And you said to your servants that we should bring our youngest brother to you so that you may see him"

Then you said to your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as "your servants." Alternate translation: "Then you said to us, your servants"

Bring him down to me

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: "Bring him to me"

Genesis 44:22

we said to my master

Judah refers to Joseph as "my master." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "we said to you, my master"

After that, we said to my master, 'The boy cannot ... father would die.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "In response, we

said to my master that the boy cannot ... father would die"

his father would die

It is implied that their father would die from sorrow.

Genesis 44:23

General Information:

Judah continues his story to Joseph

Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then you said to your servants that unless our youngest brother comes with us, we would not see you again."

Then you said to your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as "your servants."

This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "Then you said to us, your servants"

comes down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

you will not see my face again

Here "face" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "you will not see me again"

Genesis 44:24

Then it came about

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.

we went up to your servant my father

It was common to use the phrase "went up" when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

we told him the words of my master

Judah refers to Joseph as "my master." Alternate translation: "we told him what you said, my master"

Genesis 44:25

Our father said, 'Go again, buy us some food.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Our father told us to go again to Egypt to buy food for us and our families."

Genesis 44:26

go down

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Then we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother ... is with us.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then we said to him that we cannot go down to Egypt. We told him that if our youngest brother is with us ... is with us"

to see the man's face

Here "face" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "to see the man"

Genesis 44:27

General Information:

Judah continues his story to Joseph.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a three-level quote.

said to us

Here "us" does not include Joseph.

You know

Here "You" is plural and refers to the brothers.

Genesis 44:28

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quote that began in verse 27 continues.

he is torn in pieces

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a wild animal has torn him to pieces"

Genesis 44:29

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quote that began in verse 27 ends here.

Now if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

The three-level quote that began with the words "Your servant ... said to us, 'You know ... two sons' in verse 27 and continued with the words "and I said, 'Surely ... since' in verse 28 ends here. You may need to change one or more of these levels to indirect quotes. "This is what your servant my father said to us: 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. One of them went out from me and I said that surely he had been torn in pieces, and I have not seen him since. Now if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol.'" or "Your servant my father told us that we knew that his wife had borne him two sons. One of them went out from him, and he said that surely that son had been torn in pieces, and he has not seen him since. He then said that if we also took this one from him, and harm came to him, we would bring down his gray hair with sorrow to Sheol."

harm comes to him

Something bad happening to a person is spoken of as if "harm" were something that travels and comes to a person. you will bring down my gray hair with sorrow to Sheol

To "bring down ... to Sheol" is way of saying they will cause him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word "down" because it was commonly believed Sheol is somewhere underground. Alternate translation: "then you will cause me, an old man, to die of sorrow"

my gray hair

This stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: "me, an old man"

Genesis 44:30

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

therefore, when I come to your servant my father

Judah begins to describe what he expects will happen to Jacob if he returns to Jacob without Benjamin. Here "come" can be translated as "go" or "return."

since his life is bound up in the boy's life

The father saying he would die if his son died is spoken of as if their two lives were physically bound together.

Alternate translation: "since he said he would die if the boy did not come back"

Genesis 44:31

Connecting Statement:

Judah finishes describing what he expects to happen to Jacob if he returns to Jacob without Benjamin.

Your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol

To "bring down ... to Sheol" is way of saying they will cause him to die and go to Sheol. He uses the word "down" because it was commonly believed Sheol is somewhere underground. Alternate translation: "And we your servants will have caused our old father to die of sorrow"

Your servants

Judah refers to himself and his brothers as "your servants."

This is a formal way of speaking to someone who has greater authority. Alternate translation: "And we, your servants" or "And we"

the gray hair of your servant our father

Here "gray hair" stands for Jacob and emphasizes his old age. Alternate translation: "our old father"

Genesis 44:32

For your servant became a guarantee for the boy to my father

The abstract noun "guarantee" can be stated with the verb "promised." Alternate translation: "For I promised my father concerning the boy"

For your servant

Judah refers to himself as "your servant." Alternate translation: "For I, your servant" or "For I"

then I will bear the guilt to my father

Being considered guilty is spoken of as if "guilt" were something that a person carries. Alternate translation: "then my father may blame me"

Genesis 44:33

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

let your servant stay instead of the boy as slave to my master

"let your servant remain as a slave to my master instead of the boy"

let your servant

Judah refers to himself as "your servant." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority.

Alternate translation: "let me, your servant" or "let me" to my master

Judah refers to Joseph as "my master." Alternate

translation: "to you, my master" or "to you"

let the boy go up

It was going to use the phrase "go up" when speaking about traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

Genesis 44:34

For how can I go up to my father if the boy is not with me?

Judah uses a question to emphasize the grief he would have if Benjamin did not return home. Alternate translation: "I cannot return to my father if the boy is not with me."

I am afraid to see the evil that would come on my father

A person suffering terribly is spoken of as if "evil" were a thing that comes upon a person. Alternate translation: "I am afraid to see how much my father would suffer"

## Genesis 45 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers in this chapter. This chapter forms the conclusion of the story which began in chapter 43.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### God's power

The account of Joseph focuses on the power of God. God is able to protect his people despite the evil actions of some. He also is able to continue to bless them despite their circumstances. (See: [peopleofgod](#) and [bless](#))

#### Joseph's character

Genesis just recorded a period of time where Joseph's ancestors and brothers struggled with sin. Joseph's character in this chapter is upright. It gained him great favor in the eyes of Pharaoh and helped to save his people. (See: [sin save](#))

### Links:

[Genesis 45:1 Notes](#)

---

#### Genesis 45:1

could not control himself

This means he could not control his emotions. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "was about to start crying"

by him

"near him"

#### Genesis 45:2

house of Pharaoh

Here "house" stands for the people in the Pharaoh's palace. Alternate translation: "everyone in Pharaoh's palace"

#### Genesis 45:3

shocked in his presence

"terrified of him"

#### Genesis 45:4

whom you sold into Egypt

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: "whom you sold as a slave to the trader who brought me to Egypt"

#### Genesis 45:5

Do not be grieved

"do not be upset" or "do not be distressed"

that you sold me here

The meaning can be stated more explicitly. Alternate translation: "that you sold me as a slave and sent me here to Egypt"

to preserve life

Here "life" stands for the people that Joseph saved from dying during the famine. Alternate translation: "so I could save many lives"

#### Genesis 45:6

there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest

"there will be five more years without planting or harvesting." Here "neither plowing nor harvest" stands for the fact that the crops still will not grow because of the famine. Alternate translation: "and the famine will last five more years"

#### Genesis 45:7

to preserve you as a remnant in the earth

"so that you and your families would not completely perish

from the earth" or "to make sure your descendants would survive"

to keep you alive by a great deliverance

The abstract noun "deliverance" can be stated as "rescuing."

Alternate translation: "to keep you alive by rescuing you in a mighty way"

#### Genesis 45:8

he has made me a father to Pharaoh

Joseph advising and helping Pharaoh is spoken of as if Joseph were Pharaoh's father. Alternate translation: "he has made me a guide to Pharaoh" or "he has made me the chief adviser to Pharaoh"

of all his house

Here "house" stands for the people who live in his palace.

Alternate translation: "of all his household" or "of all his palace"

ruler of all the land of Egypt

Here "land" stands for the people. Alternate translation:

"ruler over all the people of Egypt"

ruler

Here Joseph means that he is ruler in second place to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. This understood information can be made clear.

#### Genesis 45:9

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a three-level quotation.

go up to my father

It was common to use the phrase "go up" when speaking about going from Egypt to Canaan. Alternate translation: "go back to my father"

Come down to me

It was common to use the phrase "come down" when speaking about going from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: "Come here to me"

#### Genesis 45:10

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that began in verse 9 continues here.

#### Genesis 45:11

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that began in verse 9 ends here.

I will provide ... all that you have

The three-level quotation that began with the words "say to him" in verse 9 ends here. You may need to reduce the number of levels by making some levels indirect quotes.

"say to him that his son Joseph says that God has made him master of all Egypt, so he must go down to Joseph and not delay. He will live in the land of Goshen, and he will be near Joseph, he and his children and his children's children, and his flocks and his herds, and all that he has. Joseph will provide for him there, for there are still five years of famine, so that he does not come to poverty, him, his household, and all that he has." or "say to him, 'Your son Joseph says that God has made him master of all Egypt, so he must go down to Joseph and not delay. He will live in the land of Goshen, and he will be near Joseph, he and his children and his children's children, and his flocks and his herds, and all that he has. Joseph will provide for him there, for there are still five years of famine, so that he does not come to poverty, him, his household, and all that he has.'"

come to poverty

This speaks about "poverty" as if it were a destination.

Alternate translation: "waste away" or "starve"

Genesis 45:12

your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin

The word "eyes" stands for the entire person. Alternate

translation: "All of you and Benjamin can see"

that it is my mouth that speaks to you

The word "mouth" stands for the entire person. Alternate

translation: "that I, Joseph, am speaking to you"

Genesis 45:13

about all my honor in Egypt

"how the people in Egypt greatly honor me"

my father down here

It was common to use the word "down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt. Alternate translation: "my father here to me"

Genesis 45:14

He hugged his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck

"Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both wept"

Genesis 45:15

He kissed all his brothers

In ancient Near East, it is common to greet a relative with a kiss. If your language has an affectionate greeting for a relative, use that. If not, use what is appropriate.

wept over them

This means Joseph was crying while he kissed them.

After that his brothers talked with him

Earlier they were too afraid to speak. Now they feel they can speak freely. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "After that his brothers talked freely with him"

Genesis 45:16

The news of the matter was told in Pharaoh's house: "Joseph's brothers have come."

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. It may also be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "Everyone in Pharaoh's palace heard

that Joseph's brothers had come."

Pharaoh's house

This stands for Pharaoh's palace.

Genesis 45:17

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

Genesis 45:18

Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 17 ends here.

Get your father ... fat of the land.'

The two-level quotation that began in verse 17 ends here.

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an

indirect quotation. "Pharaoh told Joseph to tell his brothers,

'Do this: Load your animals and go to the land of Canaan.

Get your father and your households and come to me. I will

give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the

fat of the land.'" or "Pharaoh to Joseph to tell his brothers to

do this: to load their animals and go to the land of Canaan,

and also to get their father and their households and go to

him. Pharaoh would give them the good of the land of

Egypt, and they would eat the fat of the land."

I will give you the good of the land of Egypt

"I will give you the best land in Egypt"

you will eat the fat of the land

The best food that a land produces is spoken of as if it were

the fat portion of the land. Alternate translation: "you will

eat the best food in the land"

Genesis 45:19

General Information:

Pharaoh continues to tell Joseph what to tell his brothers.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

you are commanded

This can be stated in active form. You may also need to add

the words "to tell them," which the writer left out of this

ellipsis. Alternate translation: "I also command you to tell

them" or "also tell them"

take carts out

"Carts" are wagons with two or four wheels. Animals pull the carts.

Genesis 45:20

Connecting Statement:

The two-level quote that began in verse 19 ends here.

Do not be concerned about your possessions, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.'

The two-level quote that began in verse 19 ends here. This

is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an

indirect quotation. "Now you are commanded to tell them

to take carts out of the land of Egypt for their children and

for their wives, to get their father, and to come. They are

not to be concerned about their possessions, for the good of

all the land of Egypt will be theirs."

Genesis 45:21

gave them provisions for the journey

"gave them what they needed for traveling"

Genesis 45:22



he gave each man changes of clothing  
Each man received a set of clothes except for Benjamin  
who received 5 sets of clothes.  
three hundred pieces  
"300 pieces"  
Genesis 45:23  
ten donkeys ... and ten female donkeys  
The donkeys were included as part of the gift.  
Genesis 45:24  
do not quarrel  
Possible meanings include 1) "do not argue" and 2) "do not  
become afraid"  
Genesis 45:25  
went up out of Egypt  
It was common to use the word "up" when speaking of  
traveling from Egypt to Canaan.  
Genesis 45:26  
he is ruler over all the land of Egypt  
Here "land of Egypt" stands for the people of Egypt.

Alternate translation: "he rules all the people of Egypt"  
His heart was astonished  
Here "heart" stands for the whole person. Alternate  
translation: "and he was astonished" or "he was very  
surprised"  
he could not believe what they told him  
"he did not accept that what they said was true"  
Genesis 45:27  
They told him  
"They told Jacob"  
all the words of Joseph that he had said to them  
"everything that Joseph had said to them"  
the spirit of Jacob their father revived  
The word "spirit" stands for the whole person. Alternate  
translation: "Jacob their father recovered" or "Jacob their  
father became very excited"  
Genesis 45:28  
General Information:  
This page has intentionally been left blank.

---

## Chapter 46

# Genesis 46 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Going to Egypt

Yahweh allowed Israel to go to Egypt. He was to trust in Yahweh and his covenant faithfulness. God continued to bless them in Egypt. (See: trust and covenantfaith and bless)

### Shepherds

Because of the regular flooding of the Nile River, Egypt's economy revolved around farming more than raising animals. Therefore, the Egyptians despised the nomadic lifestyle of shepherds. Joseph's instructions permitted the Hebrew people to live separately from the Egyptians.

## Links:

[Genesis 46:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 46:1

went to Beersheba

"came to Beersheba"

### Genesis 46:2

Here I am

"Yes, I am listening"

### Genesis 46:3

to go down to Egypt

It was common to use the phrase "go down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

I will make you a great nation

The "you" is singular and refers to Jacob. Here Jacob refers to his descendants that will become a large nation.

Alternate translation: "I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation"

### Genesis 46:4

into Egypt

"to Egypt"

I will surely bring you up again

The promise was made to Jacob, but the promise would be fulfilled to all of Israel's descendants. Alternate translation: "I will surely bring your descendants out of Egypt again"

bring you up again

It was common to use the word "up" when speaking about

traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

Joseph will close your eyes with his own hand

The phrase "close your eyes with his own hand" is a way of saying that Joseph will be present when Israel dies and it will be Joseph who will close Jacob's eyelids at the time of his death. Alternate translation: "Joseph will even be present with you at the time of your death"

will close your eyes

It was a custom to pull down the eyelids when a person died with their eyes open. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

### Genesis 46:5

rose up from

"set out from"

in the carts

"Carts" are wagons with two or four wheels. Animals pull the carts. See how you translated "carts" in Genesis 45:19.

### Genesis 46:6

they had accumulated

"they had acquired" or "they had gained"

### Genesis 46:7

He brought with him

"Jacob brought with him"

his sons' sons

"his grandsons"  
 his sons' daughters  
 "his granddaughters"  
 Genesis 46:8  
 These are the names  
 This refers to the names of the people that the author is about to list.  
 Genesis 46:9  
 Hanok, Pallu, Hezron, and Karmi  
 These are all names of men.  
 Genesis 46:10  
 Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul  
 These are all names of men.  
 Genesis 46:11  
 Gershon, Kohath, and Merari  
 These are all names of men.  
 Genesis 46:12  
 Er, Onan, Shelah  
 These were the sons of Judah by his wife, Shua. See how you translated these names in Genesis 38:3-5.  
 Perez, and Zerah  
 These were the sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. See how you translated these names in Genesis 38:29-30.  
 Hezron ... Hamul  
 These are all names of men.  
 Genesis 46:13  
 Tola, Puah, Jashub ... Shimron  
 These are all names of men. . "Jashub" is spelled as "Lob" or "Tob" in some versions.  
 Genesis 46:14  
 Sered, Elon ... Jahleel  
 These are all names of men.  
 Genesis 46:15  
 Dinah  
 This is the name of Leah's daughter. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 30:21]  
 His sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three  
 Here "sons" and "daughters" refer to Jacob's sons, daughters, and grandchildren related to Leah. Alternate translation: "Altogether he had 33 sons, daughters, and grandchildren"  
 Genesis 46:16  
 Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi ... Areli  
 These are the names of men.  
 Genesis 46:17  
 Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi ... Beriah ... Heber ... Malkiel  
 These are the names of men.  
 Serah  
 This is the name of a woman.  
 Genesis 46:18  
 Zilpah  
 This is the name of Leah's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:24]  
 These sons she bore to Jacob—sixteen in all  
 This refers to 16 children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren that were related to Zilpah.  
 Genesis 46:19  
 General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.  
 Genesis 46:20  
 Asenath  
 a woman's name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]  
 Potiphera  
 a man's name. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]  
 priest of On  
 On is a city, also called Heliopolis, which was "the City of the Sun" and the center of worship of the sun god Ra. See how you translated this in [Genesis 41:45]  
 Genesis 46:21  
 Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard  
 These are names of men.  
 Genesis 46:22  
 fourteen in all  
 This refers to the 14 sons and grandsons related to Rachel.  
 Genesis 46:23  
 Hushim  
 This is the name of a man.  
 Genesis 46:24  
 Jahziel, Guni, Jezer ... Shillem  
 These are the names of men.  
 Genesis 46:25  
 Bilhah  
 This is the name of Rachel's female servant. See how you translated this name in [Genesis 29:29]  
 seven in all  
 This refers to the 7 children and grandchildren related to Bilhah.  
 Genesis 46:26  
 direct descendants  
 A person's "direct descendants" are natural sons, daughters, and grandchildren, not those who have become part of the family by marrying a direct descendant.  
 sixty-six  
 "66"  
 Genesis 46:27  
 seventy  
 "70"  
 Genesis 46:28  
 to show the way before him to Goshen  
 "to show them the way to Goshen"  
 Genesis 46:29  
 Joseph prepared his chariot and went up  
 Here "Joseph" stands for his servants. Alternate translation: "Joseph's servants prepared his chariot and Joseph went up"  
 went up to meet Israel  
 The phrase "went up" is used because Joseph is traveling to a higher elevation to meet his father. Alternate translation: "went to meet Israel"  
 hugged his neck, and wept on his neck a long time  
 "put his arms around his father, and wept for a long time"  
 Genesis 46:30  
 Now let me die  
 "Now I am ready to die" or "Now I will die happy"

since I have seen your face, that you are still alive  
Here "face" stands for the entire person. Jacob was expressing joy at seeing Joseph. Alternate translation: "since I have seen you alive again"

Genesis 46:31

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

his father's house

Here "house" stands for his family. Alternate translation: "his father's family" or "his father's household"

I will go up and tell Pharaoh

It was common to use the phrase "go up" when referring to someone going to speak with someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: "I will go tell Pharaoh"

Genesis 46:32

Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 31 ends here.

The men are shepherds ... all that they have

The two-level quotation that began with the words "I will go up" in verse 31 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Alternate translation: "I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say that my brothers and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. I will tell him that the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and that they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have."

Genesis 46:33

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a two-level quotation.

It will come about

This phrase is used here to mark an important event that is about to happen in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Genesis 46:34

Connecting Statement:

The two-level quotation that began in verse 33 ends here.

you should say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth until now, both we, and our forefathers.'

The two-level quotation that began with the words "when Pharaoh ... asks" in verse 33 ends here. This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. "when Pharaoh ... asks what your occupation is, that you should say that you have been keepers of livestock from your youth until now, both you and your forefathers. Do this"

Your servants

Joseph's family are to refer to themselves as "your servants" when they speak to Pharaoh. This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: "We, your servants"

every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians

The abstract noun "abomination" can be translated with the adjective "disgusting." Alternate translation: "Egyptians think shepherds are disgusting"

## Chapter 47

# Genesis 47 General Notes

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Abrahamic covenant

Part of the Abrahamic covenant was that Yahweh would bless those who bless Abraham's descendants. Since Pharaoh cared for the Hebrew people, Yahweh blessed the Egyptians while the Hebrew people lived in Egypt. The Hebrew people also multiplied greatly as this covenant promised. (See: covenant and bless and promise)

Jacob was not buried in Egypt

In the ancient Near east, a person was typically buried in their hometown. Since Egypt was not the Israelites' home, Jacob did not wish to be buried in Egypt. This was a lesson to the Israelites that Canaan was their true home, the promised land. (See: promisedland)

## Links:

[Genesis 47:1 Notes](#)

Genesis 47:1

Joseph went in and told Pharaoh

It is not clear whether Joseph went with his father and family from Canaan to Goshen and then alone from Goshen to see the Pharaoh, back to Goshen for his five brothers, and then back to Pharaoh, as the ULB implies, or whether he brought the five brothers with him the first time he went from Goshen to Pharaoh, as the UDB states.

Genesis 47:2

He took five of his brothers and introduced them

It is not clear whether Joseph went with his father and family from Canaan to Goshen and then alone from Goshen to see the Pharaoh, back to Goshen for his five brothers, and then back to Pharaoh, as the ULB implies, or whether

he brought the five brothers with him the first time he went from Goshen to Pharaoh, as the UDB states.

Genesis 47:3

Your servants are shepherds

"Your servants shepherd flocks"

Your servants

Joseph's brothers refer to themselves as "your servants." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with more authority. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "We, your servants" or "We"

as our ancestors

"both we and our forefathers" or "both we and our ancestors"

Genesis 47:4

We come as temporary residents in the land  
"We have come to stay for a while in Egypt"  
There is no pasture  
"There is no grass to eat"

now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Genesis 47:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 47:6

The land of Egypt is before you

"The land of Egypt is open to you" or "All of the land of Egypt is available to you"

Settle your father and your brothers in the best region, the land of Goshen

"Settle your father and your brothers in the land of Goshen, which is the best region"

If you know any capable men among them

It is implied that they are capable of taking care of animals.  
Alternate translation: "If you know of any men among them who have great skill taking care of animals"

Genesis 47:7

Jacob blessed Pharaoh

Here "blessed" means to express a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.

Genesis 47:8

How long have you lived?

"How old are you?"

Genesis 47:9

The years of my sojourning are 130

The phrase "years of my sojourning" refers to how long he has lived on the earth traveling from one place to another.  
Alternate translation: "I have lived as a foreigner in many places on the earth for 130 years"

The years of my life have been few ... not been as long as the days of my ancestors' sojourning

Jacob means his life is short compared to the lives of Abraham and Isaac.

painful

Jacob has experienced much pain and trouble during his life.

Genesis 47:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 47:11

Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers

"Then Joseph took care of his father and his brothers and helped them establish where they would live"

the land of Rameses

This is another name for the land of Goshen.

Genesis 47:12

according to the number of their little ones

Here, the word "little ones" means the small children in the family. Alternate translation: "according to how many small children were in their families"

Genesis 47:13

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story.

The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan

This refers to the people living in these lands. Alternate translation: "The people of Egypt and the people of Canaan" wasted away

"became thin and weak"

Genesis 47:14

Joseph gathered all the money that was in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, by selling grain to the inhabitants

"The people of Egypt and Canaan spent all of their money buying grain from Joseph"

Joseph gathered ... Joseph brought

Most likely Joseph ordered his servants to gather and bring the money.

Genesis 47:15

When all the money of the lands of Egypt and Canaan was spent

Here "lands" stands for the people who live in the lands.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When the people of Egypt and Canaan used up all their money"

of the lands of Egypt and Canaan

"from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan"

Why should we die in your presence because our money is gone?

The people used a question to emphasize how desperate they are to buy food. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Please, do not let us die because we have used up all of our money!"

Genesis 47:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 47:17

He fed them with bread

Here "bread" stands for food in general. Alternate translation: "He gave them food" or "He provided them with food"

Genesis 47:18

they came to him

"the people came to Joseph"

We will not hide from my master

The people refer to Joseph as "my master." This is a formal way of speaking to someone with greater authority. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "We will not hide from you, our master" or "We will not hide from you"

There is nothing left in the sight of my master, except our bodies and our land

This double negative emphasizes that the speakers' bodies and land were the only things they had left. Alternate translation: "The only things we have left in the sight of my master is our bodies and our land"

There is nothing left in the sight of my master

Here "sight" stands for Joseph himself. Alternate

translation: "We have nothing left to give you, our master"

Genesis 47:19

Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land?

The word "eyes" refers to Joseph's sight. The people use a question to emphasize how desperate they are to buy food. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Please do not just watch as we die and our

land is ruined!"

Why should we die ... both we and our land

The land becomes useless and ruined because there is no seed to plant; thus it is spoken of as if the land would die.

Genesis 47:20

In this way, the land became Pharaoh's

"So the land became Pharaoh's"

Genesis 47:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 47:22

It was only the land of the priests that Joseph did not buy

"But he did not buy the land of the priests"

the priests were given an allowance

An "allowance" is an amount of money or food that someone regularly gives to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh gave the priests a certain amount of food each day"

They ate from the allotment which Pharaoh gave them

"They ate from what Pharaoh gave them"

Genesis 47:23

and you will plant

"that you might sow"

Genesis 47:24

At the harvest, you must give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts will be your own

The word "fifth" is a fraction. Alternate translation: "At harvest time you will divide the crops into five parts. You will give one part back to Pharaoh for payment and the four parts are for your own"

for food for your households and your little ones

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "for food for your households and for food for your little ones"

Genesis 47:25

May we find favor in your eyes

The phrase "find favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "May you be pleased with us"

Genesis 47:26

in the land of Egypt

"over the land of Egypt" or "throughout the land of Egypt"

to this day

This means to the time that the author was writing this.

one-fifth

See how you translated "a fifth" in Genesis 47:24.

Genesis 47:27

They were fruitful and multiplied greatly

The word "multiplied" explains how they were "fruitful."

Alternate translation: "They had very many children" were fruitful

Here "fruitful" means to prosper or to have children.

Genesis 47:28

seventeen years

"17 years"

so the years of Jacob's life were one hundred forty-seven years

"so Jacob lived to be 147 years old"

Genesis 47:29

When the time approached for Israel to die

This speaks about time as if it travels and comes to a place.

Alternate translation: "When it was almost time for Israel to die"

If now I have found favor in your eyes

Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight, and "sight" stands for thoughts or opinions. Alternate translation: "If I have found favor with you" or "If I have pleased you"

now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

found favor

This means that someone is approved of by someone else.

put your hand under my thigh

This act is a sign of making a serious promise. See how you translated this in [Genesis 24:2]

show me faithfulness and trustworthiness

The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "trustworthiness" can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "treat me in a faithful and trustworthy manner"

Please do not bury me in Egypt

The word "please" adds emphasis to this request.

Genesis 47:30

When I lie down with my fathers

This is a polite way of saying that he will die. Alternate translation: "When I die and join my family members who died before me"

Genesis 47:31

Swear to me

"Promise me" or "Make an oath to me"

swore to him

"promised him" or "made an oath to him"

---

## Chapter 48

# Genesis 48 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 48:15-16, and in 48:20.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Blessing

The blessing of Jacob is given to Joseph, and his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. It is probably distinct from inheriting the promises Yahweh gave to Abraham because Scripture talks about all of Israel's descendants inheriting those promises. (See: bless and inherit and promise)

## Links:

[Genesis 48:1 Notes](#)

---

### Genesis 48:1

It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

one said to Joseph

"someone said to Joseph"

Look, your father

"Listen, your father." Here the word "look" is used to get Joseph's attention.

So he took

"So Joseph took"

### Genesis 48:2

When Jacob was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When someone told Jacob"

your son Joseph has arrived to see you

"your son Joseph has come to you"

Israel gathered strength and sat up in bed

Here the author speaks of Israel struggling to sit up in bed as if he were gathering "strength" as someone gathers actual things. Alternate translation: "Israel made a great effort to sit up in bed" or "Israel struggled as he sat up in bed"

### Genesis 48:3

Luz

This is the name of a city. See how you translated the name of this city in [Genesis 28:19]

in the land of Canaan. He blessed me

This can be translated with the new sentence starting in a different place. Alternate translation: "in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me"

blessed

This refers to God pronouncing a formal blessing on someone.

### Genesis 48:4

and said to me

This can be translated with the new sentence starting in a different place. Alternate translation: "And he said to me" said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful, and multiply you. I will make of you an assembly of nations. I will give this land to your descendants as an everlasting possession.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "said to me that he would make me fruitful and multiply me. And, he said that he would make me an assembly of nations and he would give this land to my descendants as an everlasting possession."

Behold

God used the word "behold" here to alert Jacob to pay attention to what he was about to tell him.

I will make you fruitful, and multiply you

The phrase "multiply you" explains how God would make Jacob "fruitful." Alternate translation: "I will give you very many descendants"

I will make of you an assembly of nations

Here "you" refers to Jacob, but it stands for Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "I will make your descendants into many nations"

an everlasting possession

"a permanent possession"

### Genesis 48:5

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine

Ephraim and Manasseh each will receive a portion of land just like Joseph's brothers.

### Genesis 48:6

they will be listed under the names of their brothers in their inheritance

Possible meanings are 1) the rest of Joseph's children would inherit land as part of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh or 2) Joseph will be given separate land from Ephraim and Manasseh and Joseph's other children will inherit that land. Alternate translation: "as for their inheritance, you will list them under the names of their brothers"

### Genesis 48:7

Ephrath

This is another name for the town of Bethlehem. See how you translated the name of this city in Genesis 35:16.

### Genesis 48:8

Whose are these?

"Whose sons are these?"

### Genesis 48:9

bless

A father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children or grandchildren.

### Genesis 48:10

Now Israel's eyes ... could not see

The word "Now" is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Israel.

he kissed them

"Israel kissed them"

### Genesis 48:11

to see your face again

Here "face" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "to see you again"

### Genesis 48:12

between Israel's knees

When Joseph placed his sons on Israel's lap or knees it was a sign that Israel was adopting them. This gave the children special inheritance rights from Jacob.

then he bowed with his face to the earth

Joseph bowed down to show honor to his father.

### Genesis 48:13

Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand

Joseph places the boys so that Israel will put his right hand on Manasseh. Manasseh was the oldest brother and the right hand was the sign he would receive the greater blessing.

Genesis 48:14

his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head

Placing the right hand on Ephraim's head was the sign that he would receive the greater blessing.

Genesis 48:15

Israel blessed Joseph

Here "Joseph" also stands for Ephraim and Manasseh. Since Joseph is the father, he is the only one mentioned here.

The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked

Serving God is spoken of as if it were walking before God.

Alternate translation: "The God who my grandfather Abraham and father Isaac served"

who has cared for me

God has taken care of Israel like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. Alternate translation: "who has cared for me like a shepherd cares for his animals"

Genesis 48:16

the angel

These words could refer to 1) the angel that God sent to protect Jacob or 2) God, who appeared in angel form to protect Jacob.

protected me

"delivered me"

May my name be named in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac

Here "name" stands for the person. The phrase "my name be named in them" is an idiom that means a person is remembered because of another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May people remember Abraham, Isaac, and me because of Ephraim and Manasseh"

May they grow into a multitude on the earth

Here "they" refers to Ephraim and Manasseh, but it stands for their descendants. Alternate translation: "May they have many descendants who will live all over the earth"

Genesis 48:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 48:18

Put your right hand upon his head

The right hand was the sign of the greater blessing which the oldest son was supposed to receive.

Genesis 48:19

He also will become a people, and he also will be great

Here "He" refers to Manasseh, but it stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "Your older son will have many descendants, and they will become a great people"

Genesis 48:20

that day with these words

"that day, saying"

The people of Israel will pronounce blessings by your names saying

"The people of Israel will speak your names when they are blessing others"

by your names saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "by your names.

They will ask God to make others like Ephraim and like Manasseh"

like Ephraim and like Manasseh

Israel saying Ephraim's name first is another way he indicates that Ephraim will be greater than Manasseh.

Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh

Giving Ephraim the greater blessing and making him more important than Manasseh is spoken of as if Israel physically put Ephraim in front of Manasseh.

Genesis 48:21

will be with you ... bring you back ... your fathers

Here "you" and "your" are plural and refer to all the people of Israel.

will be with you

This is an idiom that means God will help and bless the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "God will help you" or "God will bless you"

will bring you back

Here "bring" can be translated as "take."

land of your fathers

"land of your ancestors"

Genesis 48:22

To you, as one who is above your brothers, I give to you the mountain slope

Possible meanings are 1) Joseph having more honor and authority than his brothers is spoken of as if he were physically above them. Alternate translation: "To you, who is greater than your brothers, I give the mountain slope" or 2) Jacob means he is giving more land to Joseph than he is giving to Joseph's brothers. Alternate translation: "To you, I give one more ridge than I give your brothers. I give to you the mountain slope"

To you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Joseph.

the mountain slope that I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow

Here "sword" and "bow" stands for fighting in battle.

Alternate translation: "the portion of land I fought for and took from the Amorites"

---

## Chapter 49

# Genesis 49 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 49:1-27.

## Special concepts in this chapter

### Prophecies

These statements made by Jacob to his sons are probably prophecies. These prophecies are concerned with the

descendants of each of Jacob's sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. (See: prophet)

## Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The scepter will not depart from Judah"

This prophecy indicates Judah will be the ruling tribe of Israel. The future kings of Israel all come from the tribe of Judah.

"I buried Leah"

Since Moses wrote the book of Genesis, this is an editorial comment he makes in the text as the narrator.

## Links:

[Genesis 49:1 Notes](#)

### Genesis 49:1

General Information:

This begins Jacob's final blessings to his sons. This continues through Genesis 49:27. Jacob's blessings are written in poetic form.

#### Genesis 49:2

Assemble yourselves and listen, you sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father

Both sentences say the same thing for emphasis. Alternate translation: "Come and listen carefully to your father"

you sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father

Jacob is referring to himself in the third person. It can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: "my sons. Listen to me, your father"

#### Genesis 49:3

my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength

The phrases "my firstborn, my might" and "the beginning of my strength" mean the same thing. The words "might" and "strength" stand for Jacob's ability to produce children. The words "firstborn" and "beginning" mean that Reuben is his first child. Alternate translation: "my first child after I became a man"

outstanding in dignity, and outstanding in power

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "You are first in honor and power" or "You surpass everyone else in honor and power"

#### Genesis 49:4

Uncontrollable as rushing water

Jacob compares Reuben to water in a strong current to emphasize that he cannot control his anger and he is not stable.

you will not have the preeminence

"you shall not be first among your brothers"

because you went up to your father's bed. Then you defiled it; you went up to my couch

Here "bed" and "couch" stand for Jacob's concubine, Bilhah. Jacob is referring to when Reuben slept with Bilhah

you went up to your father's bed ... you went up to my couch

Both statements mean the same thing.

#### Genesis 49:5

Simeon and Levi are brothers

This does not just mean they are brothers by birth. Jacob is emphasizing that they worked together to kill the people of Shechem.

Weapons of violence are their swords

"They use their swords to hurt and to kill people"

#### Genesis 49:6

O my soul ... my glory

Jacob uses the words "soul" and "glory" to refer to himself

and is saying that other people, and perhaps God also, honor him so much that he does not wish to join with those who make plans to do evil.

they hamstrung oxen

This refers to Simeon and Levi crippling oxen just for fun. hamstrung

This refers to cutting the sinews of an animal's leg so that it cannot walk.

#### Genesis 49:7

May their anger be cursed, for it was fierce—and their fury, for it was severe

God cursing Simeon and Levi is spoken of as if God were cursing their anger and fury. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord says, 'I will curse them because of their fierce anger and their cruel fury' or 'I, the Lord, will curse them because of their fierce anger and their cruel fury'"

May their anger be cursed

In prophecy, the prophet will often speak the words of God as if God himself were speaking. This emphasizes how closely united the prophet and God are.

their fury, for it was severe

The words "I will curse" are understood. Alternate translation: "I will curse their fury, for it was cruel"

I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel

The word "I" refers to God. The word "them" refers to Simeon and Levi but they are a metonym standing for their descendants. The words "Jacob" and "Israel" are a metonym standing for all people of Israel. Alternate translation: "I will divide their descendants and scatter them among all the people of Israel"

#### Genesis 49:8

your brothers will praise you ... Your father's sons will bow down before you

These two statements mean the same thing.

will praise you. Your hand

The second sentence states the reason for the first sentence. This can be made clear with "for" or "because." Alternate translation: "will praise you. For your hand" or "will praise you because your hand"

Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies

This is a way of saying "You will conquer your enemies."

bow down

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone.

#### Genesis 49:9

Judah is a lion's cub

Jacob speaks about Judah as if he were a lion's cub. Jacob is emphasizing Judah's strength. Alternate translation: "Judah



is like a young lion"

My son, you have gone up from your victims

"You, my son, have come back from eating your prey"

like a lioness

Jacob also compares Judah to a female lion. The lioness is the primary hunter and protector of her cubs.

Who would dare to awaken him?

Jacob uses a question to emphasize how terrifying Judah is to other people. Alternate translation: "No one wants to wake him up."

Genesis 49:10

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet

The "scepter" and the "staff" are long decorated sticks that kings carried. Here they are metonymies that stand for the power to rule. And, "Judah" stands for his descendants.

Alternate translation: "The power to rule will always be with the descendants of Judah"

until Shiloh comes. The nations will obey him

Possible meanings are 1) "Shiloh" means "tribute."

Alternate translation: "until the nations obey him and bring him tribute" or 2) "Shiloh" refers to the city of Shiloh.

Alternate translation: "until the ruler comes to Shiloh. Then the nations will obey him" Many people consider this a prophecy about the Messiah, who is a descendant of King David. David is a descendant of Judah.

The nations will obey him

Here "nations" refer to the people. Alternate translation:

"The people of the nations will obey him"

Genesis 49:11

Binding his donkey ... to the choice vine

Both statements mean the same thing. It is implied that the vines are so full of grapes that the master does not mind that his donkey eats some of them.

his ... he

Possible meanings for all occurrences of "his" or "he" are 1) they refer to Judah's descendants. Alternate translation: "their ... they" or 2) they refer to the ruler in Genesis 49:10, which may refer to the Messiah.

he has washed ... in the blood of grapes

Both statements mean the same thing. It implies that there are so many grapes that they can wash their clothes in the juice.

he has washed

Often in prophecy events that will happen in the future are described as something that has already happened in the past. This emphasizes that this event will certainly happen.

Alternate translation: "they will wash" or "he will wash" the blood of grapes

This speaks about the grape juice as if it were blood. This emphasizes how red the juice is.

Genesis 49:12

His eyes will be as dark as wine

This refers to the color of a person's eyes to the red color of wine. Possible meanings are 1) dark eyes imply healthy eyes or 2) people eyes will be red from drinking too much of wine.

his teeth as white as milk

This compare the color of the person's teeth to the white

color of milk. This implies that there will be so many healthy cows they will have much milk to drink.

Genesis 49:13

Zebulun will live

This refers to the descendants of Zebulun. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Zebulun will live"

He will be a harbor

Here "He" stands for sea towns that the people of Zebulun will inhabit or build. These cities will provide shelter for ships.

harbor

a part of the sea that is next to land and is a safe place for ships

Genesis 49:14

Issachar is a strong donkey

Jacob speaks about Issachar and his descendants as if they are a donkey. This emphasizes that they will work very hard. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Issachar will be like a strong donkey"

Issachar is

Often in prophecy events that will happen in the future are described as something that is already happening. This emphasizes that the event will certainly happen. It can be stated in the future tense. Alternate translation: "Issachar will be" or "The descendants of Issachar will be"

lying down between the sheepfolds

Possible meanings are 1) "lying down between the packs they were carrying" or 2) "lying down between two sheep pens." Either way, Jacob speaks about Issachar's descendants as if they are donkeys that have worked hard and are lying down to rest.

Genesis 49:15

He sees ... He will

These words refer to the descendants of Issachar

a good resting place and the pleasant land

"a resting place that is good and that the land is pleasant"

He will bend his shoulder to the burden

The phrase "bend his shoulder to the burden" is a way of saying "work very hard to carry the load"

become a servant for forced labor

"will work for others as slaves"

Genesis 49:16

Dan will judge his people

Here "Dan" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Dan will judge their people"

his people

Possible meanings for "his people" are 1) "the people of Dan" or 2) "the people of Israel"

Genesis 49:17

Dan will be a snake beside the road

Jacob speaks about Dan and his descendants as if they were snakes. Though a snake is small, it can bring down a rider off his horse. So Dan, though a small tribe, is very dangerous to its enemies. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Dan will be like a snake beside the road"

Genesis 49:18

I wait for your salvation, Yahweh

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated as "save."

Alternate translation: "I wait for you, Yahweh, to save me"

I wait

The word "I" refers to Jacob.

Genesis 49:19

Gad ... attack him, but he

Here "Gad" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Gad ... attack them, but they"

at their heels

Here "heels" stands for the raiders who are running away from the descendants of Gad.

Genesis 49:20

Asher's food ... and he

Here "Asher" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "Asher's descendants' food ... and they"

food will be rich

Here "rich" is a way of saying "delicious."

Genesis 49:21

Naphtali is ... he will

Here "Naphtali" stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Naphtali are ... they will"

Naphtali is a doe let loose

Jacob speaks about the descendants of Naphtali as if they were a female deer that is free to run. This may emphasize that they will be swift messengers. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Naphtali will be like deer set free"

have beautiful fawns

A "fawn" is a baby deer. The meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear. Some versions translate it as "have beautiful words" or "speak beautiful things"

Genesis 49:22

Joseph is a fruitful bough

Here "Joseph" is a metonym that stands for his descendants. Jacob speaks about them as if they were a tree branch that produces a lot of fruit. This emphasizes that they will greatly increase in number. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Joseph are a fruitful bough"

bough

a main branch of a tree

whose branches climb over the wall

Branches that grow and extend over a wall are spoken of as if they were climbing.

Genesis 49:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 49:24

General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants.

his bow will remain steady

The person holding the bow steady is spoken of as if the bow itself will remain steady. It is implied he is holding it steady as he aims at his enemy. Alternate translation: "he will hold his bow steady as he aims at his enemy"

his bow ... his hands

Here "his" refers to Joseph who stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "their bow ... their hands"

his hands will be skillful

Here the whole person is represented by the "hands" since they are used to hold the bow. Alternate translation: "his

arms will remain strong as he aims his bow"

the hands of the Mighty One

The "hands" are expressing the power of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the power of the Mighty One"

because of the name of the Shepherd

Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of the Shepherd"

the Shepherd

Jacob speaks of Yahweh as if he were a "Shepherd." This emphasizes that Yahweh guides and protects his people.

the Rock

Jacob speaks of Yahweh as if he were a "Rock" that people can climb upon to find safety from enemies. This emphasizes that Yahweh protects his people.

Genesis 49:25

General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants

([Genesis 49:22-23](#)).

help you ... bless you

Here "you" refers to Joseph who stands for his descendants. Alternate translation: "help your descendants ... bless them"

blessings of the sky

Here "sky" stands for the rain that helps the crops to grow.

blessings of the deep that lies beneath

Here "deep" stands for the water underneath the ground that supplies rivers and wells.

blessings of the breasts and womb

Here "breasts and womb" stand for the ability for a mother to have children and feed them milk.

Genesis 49:26

General Information:

Jacob continues to bless Joseph and his descendants.

the ancient mountains

The meaning of the original language is not certain. Some Bible translations have "my ancestors" instead of "ancient mountains."

May they be on the head of Joseph

Here "they" refers to the blessings of his father.

upon the crown of the head of the prince of his brothers

Jacob desires for these blessings to be passed on to even the most important of his descendants. Alternate translation:

"on the head of the most important of Joseph's descendants"

prince of his brothers

"most important of his brothers"

Genesis 49:27

Benjamin is a hungry wolf

Here "Benjamin" is a metonym that stands for his descendants. Jacob speaks about Benjamin's descendants as if they were a hungry wolf. This emphasizes that they will be fierce warriors. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Benjamin will be like hungry wolves"

Genesis 49:28

These are the twelve tribes of Israel

"These" refers to the sons Jacob mentioned in 49:1-27. Each son became the leader of his own tribe.

when he blessed them

Here the word "blessed" refers to the speaking of formal blessings.

Each one he blessed with an appropriate blessing

"He gave each son a fitting blessing"

Genesis 49:29

he instructed them

"he commanded them"

I am about to go to my people

This is a polite way of saying he is about to die. Alternate translation: "I am about to die"

go to my people

Jacob is referring to where his inner man will go when he dies. He expects to join Abraham and Isaac in the afterlife.

Ephron the Hittite

This is the name of a man. "Hittite" means "descendent of Heth." See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8]

Genesis 49:30

Machpelah

Machpelah was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9]

Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18]

Genesis 49:31

General Information:

Jacob continues speaking to his sons.

Genesis 49:32

in it were purchased

The purchase can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "in it were purchased by Abraham"

from the people of Heth

"from the Hittites"

Genesis 49:33

finished these instructions to his sons

"finished instructing his sons" or "finished commanding his sons"

he pulled his feet into the bed

Jacob was sitting on the bed. Now, Jacob turns and puts his feet in the bed so he can lie down.

breathed his last

This is a polite way of saying a person died.

went to his people

After Jacob died, his inner man went to the same place as his relatives who died before him.

---

Chapter 50

## Genesis 50 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Embalming

Embalming was practiced in Egypt on very important people when they died. They removed the liquids from the body then wrapped it in an attempt to preserve the body from decay.

Joseph's character

Joseph's character was so upright that Pharaoh's officials went with him to Canaan to bury Jacob. This was a very large funeral procession. He also learned lessons from earlier in his life and unified his family. (See: righteous)

Links:

[Genesis 50:1 Notes](#)

---

Genesis 50:1

that he collapsed on the face of his father

The term "he collapsed" is an idiom for being overcome. Alternate translation: "that he fell on his father in grief"

Genesis 50:2

his servants the physicians

"his servants who took care of dead bodies"

to embalm his father

To "embalm" is a special way of preserving a dead body before it is buried. Alternate translation: "to prepare his father's body for burial"

Genesis 50:3

They took forty days

"They took 40 days"

seventy days

"70 days"

Genesis 50:4

Connecting Statement:

A three-level quotation is introduced with the words "Joseph spoke ... saying." The second level begins with the words "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh, saying."

days of weeping

"days of mourning him" or "days of weeping for him"

Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh

Here "house of Pharaoh" stands for the officials that make up Pharaoh's royal court. Alternate translation: "Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's officials"

If now I have found favor in your eyes

The phrase "find favor" is an idiom which means to be approved of by someone. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "If I have found favor with you" or "If you are pleased with me"

Genesis 50:5

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that began with the words

"Joseph spoke ... saying" in verse 4 continues. The second level of that quotation, which began with the words "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh, saying" in verse 4 continues.

My father made me swear, saying, "See, I am about to die. Bury me in my tomb that I dug for myself in the land of Canaan. There you will bury me." Now let me go up ... I will return.

This is the second level of the three-level quotation that begins with the words "If now I have" in verse 4. It contains a quote within it. This embedded quote can be translated as an indirect quote. "My father made me swear, saying that

he was about to die and that I was to bury him in his tomb that he dug for himself in the land of Canaan. I was to bury him there. Now let me go up ... I will return." The entire second-level quotation can also be translated as an indirect quote. "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh and tell him that my father made me swear, saying that he was about to die and that I was to bury him in his tomb that he dug for himself in the land of Canaan. I was to bury him there. Now let me go up ... I will return."

See, I am about to die ... you will bury me

This is the third level of the three-level quotation that begins with the words "If now I have" in verse 4.

See, I am about to die

"See, I am dying"

let me go up

It was common to use the phrase "go up" when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

Genesis 50:6

Pharaoh answered

It is implied that the members of the court spoke to Pharaoh, and now Pharaoh is replying to Joseph.

as he made you swear

"as you swore to him"

Genesis 50:7

Joseph went up

It was common to use the phrase "went up" when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan.

All the servants ... the elders ... the senior officials

All of Pharaoh's most important leaders attended the burial procession.

servants of Pharaoh

These were probably government officials, not household servants.

the elders of his household

Here "household" refers to Pharaoh's royal court.

Genesis 50:8

with all Joseph's household and his brothers, and his father's household

This can be translated as a new sentence: "Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's household also went with him"

Genesis 50:9

Chariots

Here this stands for the men riding in the chariots.

It was a very large group of people

"It was a very large gathering"

Genesis 50:10

When they came

The word "they" refers to the participants in the burial procession.

floor of Atad

Possible meanings are 1) the word "Atad" means "thorn" and it may refer to a place where large amounts of thorns grew, or 2) it may be the name of the person who owns the threshing floor.

they mourned with very great and grievous sorrow

"they were extremely sad and they mourned very much"

a seven-day

"a 7-day"

Genesis 50:11

at the threshing floor of Atad

Possible meanings are 1) "on the threshing floor that belonged to a man named Atad" or "in the threshing floor at a place called Atad"

This is a very sad occasion for the Egyptians

"The mourning of the Egyptians is very great"

Abel Mizraim

The translator can add a footnote that says: "The name Abel Mizraim means 'the mourning of Egypt.'"

Genesis 50:12

So his sons

"So Jacob's sons"

just as he had instructed them

"just as he had directed them"

Genesis 50:13

His sons carried him

"His sons took his body"

Machpelah

Machpela was the name of an area or region. See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:9]

Mamre

This was another name for the city of Hebron. It may have been named after Mamre, the friend of Abraham who lived there. See how you translated this in [Genesis 13:18]

Ephron the Hittite

This is the name of a man. "Hittite" means "descendent of Heth." See how you translated this in [Genesis 23:8]

Genesis 50:14

Joseph returned into Egypt

"Joseph returned to Egypt"

all who had accompanied him

"all who had come with him"

Genesis 50:15

What if Joseph continues to be angry against us

Here anger is spoken of as if it was something physical that Joseph could hold in his hands. Alternate translation:

"What if Joseph is actually still angry with us"

wants to repay us in full for all the evil we did to him

Avenging oneself against someone who harmed him is spoken of as if the person were paying the other person what they are owed. Alternate translation: "wants revenge for the evil thing we did to him"

Genesis 50:16

Connecting Statement:

A three-level quotation begins with the words "Your father gave."

Your father gave instructions before he died, saying

Jacob was the father of all the brothers. Here they say "your father" to emphasize that Joseph needs to pay attention to what his father said. Alternate translation: "Before our father died he said"

Genesis 50:17

Connecting Statement:

The three-level quotation that begins with the words "Your father gave" in verse 16 ends here.

Tell Joseph this, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin when they did evil to you."

The three-level quotation that begins with the words "Your father gave" in verse 16 ends here. This is the second-level

quotation, and it contains a third-level quotation that can be stated as an indirect quotation. "Tell Joseph to please forgive your transgression and your sin when you did evil to him." Both the second-level and third-level quotations can be translated as indirect quotations. "Your father instructed us before he died to tell you to please forgive our transgression and our sin when we did evil to you."

and their sin when they did evil to you

"for the wicked things they did to you"

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

please forgive the servants of the God of your father

The brothers are referring to themselves as "the servants of the God of your father." This can be stated in first person.

Alternate translation: "please forgive us, the servants of the God of our father"

Joseph wept when they spoke to him

"Joseph wept when he heard this message"

Genesis 50:18

lay facedown before him

They lay down with their faces toward the ground. This is a sign of humility and respect for Joseph.

Genesis 50:19

Am I in the place of God?

Joseph uses a question to comfort his brothers. Alternate translation: "I am not in the place of God." or "I am not God."

Genesis 50:20

you meant to harm me

"you intended to do evil against me"

God meant it for good

"God intended it for good"

Genesis 50:21

So now do not be afraid

"So do not fear me"

I will provide for you and your little children

"I will always make sure you and your children have enough to eat"

He comforted them in this way and spoke kindly to their hearts

Here "hearts" refers to the brothers. Alternate translation:

"He comforted them by speaking kindly to them"

Genesis 50:22

one hundred ten years

"110 years"

Genesis 50:23

Ephraim's children to the third generation

"Ephraim's children and grandchildren"

Makir

This is the name of Joseph's grandson.

who were placed on the knees of Joseph

This expression means that Joseph adopted these children of Machir as his own children. This means they would have special inheritance rights from Joseph.

Genesis 50:24

surely come to you

In [Genesis 50:24/26]

lead you up out of this land to the land

It was common to use the word "up" when speaking of traveling from Egypt to Canaan. Alternate translation:

"bring you out of this land and take you to the land"

Genesis 50:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Genesis 50:26

110 years

"one hundred and ten years"

They embalmed him

To "embalm" is a special way of preserving a dead body before it is buried. See how you translated "embalmed" in

Genesis 50:1.

he was placed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they placed him"

in a coffin

"in a chest" or "in a case." This is a box a dead person is placed in.