

English: Translation Notes for Hebrews

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>."

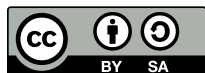
Attribution statements in derivative works should not in any way suggest that we endorse you or your use of this work.

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.



Introduction to Hebrews

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Hebrews

Jesus is superior to God's prophets and angels (1:1-4:13) Jesus is superior to the priests who serve in the temple in Jerusalem (4:14-7:28) Jesus's ministry is superior to the old covenant that God made with his people (8:1-10:39) What faith is like (11:1-40) Encouragement to be faithful to God (12:1-29) Concluding encouragements and greetings (13:1-25)

Who wrote the Book of Hebrews?

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. Scholars have suggested several different people who could possibly be the author. Possible authors are Paul, Luke, and Barnabas. The date of writing is also not known. Most scholars think it was written before A.D. 70. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the writer of this letter spoke about Jerusalem as if it had not yet been destroyed.

What is the Book of Hebrews about?

In the Book of Hebrews, the author shows that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. The author did this in order to encourage the Jewish Christians and to explain that Jesus is better than anything that the old covenant had to offer. Jesus is the perfect High Priest. Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. Animal sacrifices became useless because Jesus's sacrifice was once and for all time. Therefore, Jesus is the one and only way for people to be accepted by God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Hebrews." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter to the Hebrews" or "A Letter to the Jewish Christians."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Can readers understand this book without knowing about the sacrifices and the work of the priests required in the Old Testament?

It would be very difficult for readers to understand this book without understanding these matters. Translators might consider explaining some of these Old Testament concepts in notes or in an introduction to this book.

How is the idea of blood used in the Book of Hebrews?

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:7]

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:19]

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Hebrews in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God views Christians as sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people." Sometimes the meaning indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:10; 13:24) Sometimes the meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "sanctify," "set apart," "dedicated to," or "reserved for." (See: 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12)

The ULB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

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

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"you crowned him with glory and honor" (2:7). Some older translations read, "you crowned him with glory and honor and you have put him over the works of your hands." "those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed" (4:2). Some older translations read, "those who heard it without joining faith to it." "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come" (9:11). Some modern versions and older translations read, "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that are to come." "on those who were prisoners" (10:34). Some older translations read, "of me in my chains." "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword" (11:37). Some older translations read, "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were killed with the sword." "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned" (12:20). Some older translations read, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned or shot with an arrow."

Hebrews 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is more important to us than the angels are.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:5, 7-13, which is from the Old Testament.

"Our ancestors"

The writer wrote this letter to Christians who had grown up as Jews. This is why the letter is called "Hebrews."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of proving Jesus is better than the angels. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that God's Son is more important than any of the angels.

Poetry

Jewish teachers, like the Old Testament prophets, would put their most important teachings in the form of poetry so that the hearers would be able to learn and remember them.

Links:

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

Hebrews 1:1

General Information:

Although this letter does not mention to whom it was sent, the author wrote particularly to Hebrews (Jews), who would have understood the many Old Testament references. This prologue provides the background for the whole book: the unsurpassing greatness of the Son, who is greater than all. The book begins by emphasizing that the Son is better than the prophets and the angels.

Hebrews 1:2

in these last days

"in these final days." This phrase refers to the time when Jesus began his ministry, extending until God establishes his complete rule in his creation.

through a Son

"Son" here is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. to be the heir of all things

The author speaks of the Son as if he will inherit wealth and property from his Father. Alternate translation: "to possess all things"

It is through him that God also made the universe

"It is through the Son that God also made all things"

Hebrews 1:3

the brightness of God's glory

"the light of his glory." God's glory is associated with a very bright light. The author is saying that the Son embodies that light and fully represents God's glory.

glory, the exact representation of his being

"glory, the image of God's being." The phrase "the exact representation of his being" is similar in meaning to "the brightness of God's glory." The Son embodies the character and essence of God and fully represents everything that God is. Alternate translation: "glory and is just like God" or "glory, and what is true about God is true about the Son"

the word of his power

"his powerful word." Here "word" refers to a message or command. Alternate translation: "his powerful command"

After he had made cleansing for sins

The abstract noun "cleansing" can be expressed as a verb: "making clean." Alternate translation: "After he had finished making us clean from sins" or "After he had finished purifying us from our sins"

he had made cleansing for sins

The author speaks of forgiving sins as if it were making a person clean. Alternate translation: "he had made it possible for God to forgive our sins"

he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the Majesty on high"

the Majesty on high

Here "Majesty" refers to God. Alternate translation: "God Most High"

Hebrews 1:4

He has become

"The Son has become"

as the name he has inherited is more excellent than their name

Here "name" refers to honor and authority. Alternate translation: "as the honor and authority he has inherited is superior to their honor and authority"

he has inherited

The author speaks of receiving honor and authority from his father as if it were inheriting wealth and property from his father. Alternate translation: "he has received"

Hebrews 1:5

General Information:

The first prophetic quotation (You are my Son) comes from the Psalms. The prophet Samuel wrote the second one (I will be a Father to him). The words "You" and "he" refer to Jesus, and the words "I" and "me" refer to God the Father.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son ... a Son to me"?

This question emphasizes that God does not call any angel

his Son. Alternate translation: "For God never said to any of the angels, 'You are my Son ... a Son to me.'"

You are my Son ... I have become your Father

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing.

Hebrews 1:6

General Information:

The quotation, "All God's angels ... him," comes from one of the books that Moses wrote.

the firstborn

This means Jesus. The author refers to him as the "firstborn" to emphasize the Son's importance and authority over everyone else. It does not imply that there was a time before Jesus existed or that God has other sons like Jesus. Alternate translation: "his honored Son, his only Son"

he says

"God says"

Hebrews 1:7

General Information:

The quotation, "He is the one who makes ... fire," is from the Psalms.

He is the one who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire

Possible meanings are 1) "God has made his angels to be spirits who serve him with power like flames of fire" or 2) God makes the wind and flames of fire his messengers and servants. In the original language the word for "angel" is the same as "messenger," and the word for "spirits" is the same as "wind." With either possible meaning, the point is that the angels serve the Son because he is superior.

Hebrews 1:8

General Information:

This scriptural quotation comes from the Psalms.

But to the Son he says

"But God says this to the Son"

Son

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

Your throne, God, is forever and ever

The Son's throne represents his rule. Alternate translation: "You are God, and your reign will last forever and ever"

The scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom

Here "scepter" refers to the Son's rule. Alternate translation: "And you will rule over your kingdom with justice" or "And you will rule over the people of your kingdom justly"

Hebrews 1:9

has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions

Here "oil of joy" refers to the joy that the Son felt when God honored him. Alternate translation: "has honored you and made you more joyful than anyone else"

Hebrews 1:10

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

Connecting Statement:

The author continues explaining that Jesus is superior to the angels.

In the beginning

"Before anything existed"

you laid the earth's foundation

The author speaks of God creating the earth as if he built a building on a foundation. Alternate translation: "you created the earth"

The heavens are the work of your hands

Here "hands" refer to God's power and action. Alternate translation: "You made the heavens"

Hebrews 1:11

They will perish

"The heavens and earth will disappear" or "The heavens and earth will no longer exist"

wear out like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a piece of clothing that will get old and eventually become useless.

Hebrews 1:12

roll them up like a cloak

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a robe or another kind of outer garment.

they will be changed like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were clothing that could be exchanged for other clothing.

they will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you will change them"

your years do not end

Periods of time are used to represent God's eternal existence. Alternate translation: "your life will never end"

Hebrews 1:13

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

But to which of the angels has God said at any time ... feet?"

The author uses a question to emphasize that God has never said this to an angel. Alternate translation: "But God has never said to an angel at any time ... feet."

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet

Christ's enemies are spoken of as if they will become an object on which a king rests his feet. This image represents defeat and dishonor for his enemies.

Hebrews 1:14

Are not all angels spirits ... inherit salvation?

The author uses this question to remind the readers that angels are not as powerful as Christ, but they have a different role. Alternate translation: "All angels are spirits who ... inherit salvation."

for those who will inherit salvation

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "for those whom God will save"

Hebrews 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:6-8, 12-13, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

[Hebrews 2:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 2:1

Connecting Statement:

This is the first of five urgent warnings the author gives.
we must

Here "we" refers to the author and includes his audience.
so that we do not drift away from it

Possible meanings for this metaphor are 1) people who stop believing in God's word are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop believing it" or 2) people who stop obeying God's words are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop obeying it"

Hebrews 2:2

For if the message that was spoken through the angels

The Jews believed that God spoke his law to Moses through angels. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For if the message that God spoke through the angels"

For if the message

The author is certain that these things are true. Alternate translation: "Because the message"

every transgression and disobedience receives just repayment

Here "transgression" and "disobedience" stand for the people who are guilty of these sins. Alternate translation: "every person who sins and disobeys will receive just repayment"

transgression and disobedience

These two words mean basically the same thing.
repayment

This is a general term, but you may need to make explicit that the "repayment" here is just punishment. Alternate translation: "punishment"

Hebrews 2:3

how then can we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

The author uses a question to emphasize that the people will certainly receive punishment if they refuse God's salvation through Christ. Alternate translation: "then God will certainly punish us if we do not pay attention to his message about how God will save us!"

ignore

"pay no attention to" or "consider unimportant"

This is salvation that was first announced by the Lord and confirmed to us by those who heard it

This can be stated in active form. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "The Lord himself first announced the message about how God will save us and then those who heard the message confirmed it to us"

Hebrews 2:4

according to his will

"in just the way he wanted to do it"

Hebrews 2:5

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that the earth will one day be under the rule of the Lord Jesus.

For it was not to the angels that God subjected

"For God did not make the angels rulers over"
the world to come

Here "world" refers to the people who live there. And "to come" means that this is the world in the next age after Christ returns. Alternate translation: "the people who will live in the new world"

Hebrews 2:6

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It continues on through verse 8.

What is man, that you are mindful of him?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the insignificance of humans and expresses surprise that God would pay attention to them. Alternate translation: "Humans are insignificant, and yet you are mindful of them!"

Or a son of man, that you care for him?

The idiom "son of man" refers to human beings. This rhetorical question means basically the same thing as the first question. It expresses surprise that God would care for humans, who are insignificant. Alternate translation: "Human beings are of little importance, and yet you care for them!"

Or a son of man

The verb may be supplied from the previous question.

Alternate translation: "Or what is a son of man"

Hebrews 2:7

a little lower than the angels

The author speaks of people being less important than angels as if the people are standing in a position that is lower than the angels' position. Alternate translation: "less important than the angels"

made man ... crowned him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females.

Alternate translation: "made humans ... crowned them"

you crowned him with glory and honor

The gifts of glory and honor are spoken of as if they were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "you have given them great glory and honor"

Hebrews 2:8

his feet ... to him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females.

Alternate translation: "their feet ... to them"

You put everything in subjection under his feet

The author speaks of humans having control over everything as if they have stepped on everything with their feet. Alternate translation: "You have given them control over everything"

He did not leave anything not subjected to him

This double negative emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God made everything subject to him"

we do not yet see everything subjected to him

"we know that humans are not in control of everything yet"

Hebrews 2:9

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that Christ became lower than the angels when he came to earth to suffer death for forgiveness of sins, and that he became a merciful high priest to believers.

we see him

"we know there is one"

who was made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom God made"

lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor

See how you translated these words in Hebrews 2:7.

he might taste death

The experience of death is spoken of as if it were food that people can taste. Alternate translation: "he might experience death" or "he might die"

Hebrews 2:10

bring many sons to glory

The gift of glory is spoken of here as if it were a place to which people could be brought. Alternate translation: "save many sons"

many sons

Here this refers to believers in Christ, including males and females. Alternate translation: "many believers"

the founder of their salvation

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) the author speaks of Jesus as the one who establishes salvation, or makes it possible for God to save people. Alternate translation: "the one who makes their salvation possible" or 2) the word translated here as "founder" can mean "leader" and the writer speaks of salvation as if it were a destination and of Jesus as the person who goes before the people on the road and leads them to salvation. Alternate translation: "the one who leads people to salvation"

complete

Becoming mature and completely trained is spoken of as if a person were made complete, perhaps complete in all his body parts.

Hebrews 2:11

the one who sanctifies

"the one who makes others holy" or "the one who makes others pure from sin"

those who are sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom he makes holy" or "those whom he makes pure from sin"

have one source

Who that source is can be stated clearly. Alternate

translation: "have one source, God himself" or "have the same Father"

he is not ashamed

"Jesus is not ashamed"

is not ashamed to call them brothers

This litotes means that he will claim them as his brothers.

Alternate translation: "is pleased to call them brothers"

brothers

Here this refers to all who have believed in Jesus, including both men and women.

Hebrews 2:12

General Information:

This prophetic quotation comes from a Psalm of King David.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers

Here "name" refers to the person's reputation and what they have done. Alternate translation: "I will proclaim to my brothers the great things you have done"

from inside the assembly

"when believers come together to worship God"

Hebrews 2:13

General Information:

The prophet Isaiah wrote these quotations.

And again,

"And a prophet wrote in another scripture passage what Christ said about God:"

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like my children"

Hebrews 2:14

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like his children"

share in flesh and blood

The phrase "flesh and blood" refers to people's human nature. Alternate translation: "are all human beings"

he shared in those things in the same way

"Jesus in the same way shared in flesh and blood" or "Jesus became human in the same way they did"

through death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "by dying"

has the power of death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "has the power to cause people to die"

Hebrews 2:15

This was so that he would free all those who through fear of death lived

all their lives subject to slavery
The fear of death is spoken of as if it were making people live as slaves. Taking away someone's fear is spoken of as if were freeing that person from slavery. Alternate translation: "This was so he might free all people. For we lived like slaves because we were afraid of dying"
Hebrews 2:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Hebrews 2:17
it was necessary for him
"it was necessary for Jesus"
like his brothers

Here "brothers" refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "like human beings"
he could make atonement for the sins of the people
Christ's death on the cross means that God can forgive sins. Alternate translation: "he could make it possible for God to forgive people's sins"
Hebrews 2:18
was tempted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Satan tempted him"
who are tempted
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom Satan is tempting"

Chapter 3

Hebrews 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is about how Jesus is better than Moses, the greatest Israelite in the Old Testament. Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:7-11,15, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harden your hearts

A person who hardens his heart is a person who will not listen to or obey God.

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of warning his readers. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that they need to listen to God and obey him.

Links:

[Hebrews 3:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 3:1

Connecting Statement:

This second warning is longer and more detailed and includes chapters 3 and 4. The writer begins by showing that Christ is better than his servant Moses.

holy brothers

Here "brothers" refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "holy brothers and sisters" or "my holy fellow believers"

you share in a heavenly calling

Here "heavenly" represents God. Alternate translation: "God has called us together"

the apostle and high priest

Here the word "apostle" means someone who has been sent. In this passage, it does not refer to any of the twelve apostles. Alternate translation: "the one whom God sent and is the high priest"

of our confession

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "confession" is expressed as the verb "confess." Alternate translation: "whom we confess" or "in whom we believe"

Hebrews 3:2

in all the house of God

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "to all of God's people"

Hebrews 3:3

Jesus has been considered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has considered Jesus"

Hebrews 3:4

the one who built everything

God's acts of creating the world are spoken of as if they were the actions of building a house.

every house is built by someone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "every house has someone who built it"

Hebrews 3:5

in God's entire house

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:2]

house, bearing witness about the things

This phrase probably refers to all of Moses's work. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "house. Moses's life and work pointed to the things"

were to be spoken of in the future

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God would speak about in the future"

Hebrews 3:6

Son

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

who is in charge of the house of God

This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "who rules over God's people"

We are his house

This speaks of God's people as if they were a literal house.

Alternate translation: "We are God's people"

if we hold firmly to our courage and the hope of which we boast

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Here "courage" and "hope" are abstract nouns and can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "if we continue to be courageous and joyfully expect God to do what he has promised"

Hebrews 3:7

General Information:

This quotation comes from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

Connecting Statement:

The warning here is a reminder that the Israelites' unbelief kept almost all of them from entering into the land that God had promised them.

if you hear his voice

God's "voice" represents him speaking. Alternate translation: "when you hear God speak"

Hebrews 3:8

do not harden your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn.

Alternate translation: "do not be stubborn" or "do not refuse to listen"

as in the rebellion, in the time of testing in the wilderness

Here "rebellion" and "testing" can be stated as verbs.

Alternate translation: "as when your ancestors rebelled against God and tested him in the wilderness"

Hebrews 3:9

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms.

your ancestors

Here "your" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.

by testing me

Here "me" refers to God.

Hebrews 3:10

forty years

"40 years"

I was angry

"I was greatly unhappy"

They have always gone astray in their hearts

Here "gone astray in their hearts" is a metaphor for not being loyal to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for minds or desires. Alternate translation: "They have always rejected me" or "They have always refused to obey me"

They have not known my ways

This speaks of a manner of conducting one's life as if it were a way or a path. Alternate translation: "They have not

understood how I want them to conduct their lives"

Hebrews 3:11

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "I will never allow them to experience my blessings of rest"

Hebrews 3:12

brothers

Here this refers to fellow Christians, including males and females. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"

that none of you has an evil heart of unbelief, a heart that turns away from the living God

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents a person's mind or will. Refusing to believe and obey God is spoken of as if the heart did not believe and it physically turned away from God. Alternate translation: "that none of you refuses to believe the truth and stops obeying the living God"

the living God

"the true God who is really alive"

Hebrews 3:13

as long as it is called "today,"

"while there is still opportunity,"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the deceitfulness of sin will not harden any of you"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

Being stubborn is spoken of as being hard or having a hard heart. The hardness is a result of being deceived by sin.

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun

"deceitfulness" is expressed as the verb "deceive." Alternate translation: "no one among you will be deceived by sin and become stubborn" or "you do not sin, deceiving yourselves so that you become stubborn"

Hebrews 3:14

For we have become

Here "we" refers to both the writer and the readers.

if we firmly hold to our confidence in him

"if we continue to confidently trust in him"

from the beginning

"from when we first began to believe in him"

to the end

This is a polite way of referring to when a person dies.

Alternate translation: "until we die"

Hebrews 3:15

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the same psalm that was also quoted in Hebrews 3:7.

it has been said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the writer wrote"

if you hear his voice

God's "voice" represents him speaking. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

as in the rebellion

Here "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 3:16

Who was it who heard God and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt through Moses?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed.

Alternate translation: "All those who came out of Egypt with Moses heard God, yet they still rebelled."

Hebrews 3:17

With whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed.

Alternate translation: "For forty years, God was angry with those who sinned, and he let them die in the wilderness."

forty years

"40 years"

Hebrews 3:18

To whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if it was not to those who disobeyed him?

The author uses this question to teach his readers.

Alternate translation: "And it was to those who disobeyed that he swore they would not enter his rest."

they would not enter his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "they would not enter the place of rest" or "they would not experience his blessings of rest"

they

The word "they" refers to the disobedient Israelites.

Hebrews 3:19

General Information:

Here "we" refers to the author and readers.

because of unbelief

The abstract noun "unbelief" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because they did not believe him"

Chapter 4

Hebrews 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter tells why Jesus is the greatest high priest.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:3-4, 7, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's rest

The word "rest" seems to refer to at least two things in this chapter. It refers to a place or time when God will allow his people to rest from their work ([Hebrews 4:3](#)), and it refers to God resting on the seventh day ([Hebrews 4:4](#)).

Links:

[Hebrews 4:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Chapter 4 continues the warning to believers starting in Hebrews 3:7.

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true" or "Since God will certainly punish those who do not obey"

let us fear

This is probably a hyperbole that refers to being very careful. Alternate translation: "we must be very careful" entering his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to enter the place of rest" or "to experience God's blessings of rest"

none of you may seem to have fallen short of it

God's promise is spoken of as if it were a place to which people were trying to go. Alternate translation: "none of you fail to enter into God's rest, which he promised to us" or "God allows you all to enter into his rest as he promised us"

Hebrews 4:2

For we were told the good news just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For

we heard the good news just as they did"

as they were

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors who were alive during the time of Moses.

But that message did not benefit those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed

The author is talking about two groups of people, those who received God's covenant with faith, and those who heard it but did not believe. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "But that message benefited only those who believed and obeyed it"

unite

join

Hebrews 4:3

General Information:

Here the quotation, "As I swore ... rest," is from a psalm.

we who have believed

"we who believe"

we who have believed enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "we who have believed will enter the place of rest" or "we who have believed will experience God's blessings of rest"

just as he said

"just as God said"

As I swore in my wrath

"As I swore when I was very angry"

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "They will never experience my blessings of rest"

his works were finished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he finished creating" or "he finished his works of creation"

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "at the beginning of the world" or "from the time he created the world"

Hebrews 4:4

General Information:

The quotation, "God rested on ... works," is from Moses's writings.

the seventh day

The word "seventh" is the ordinal number for "seven."

Hebrews 4:5

General Information:

This quotation, "They will never enter ... rest," is from a psalm.

Hebrews 4:6

it remains for some to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God still allows some people to enter his place of rest" or "God still allows some people to experience his blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:7

General Information:

Here we find out that this quotation from the Psalms was written by David (Hebrews 3:7-8).

if you hear his voice

God's commands to Israel are spoken of as if he had given them in an audible voice. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

do not harden your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 4:8

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer warns believers not to disobey but to enter into the rest God offers. He reminds them that God's word will convict them and that they can come in prayer with the confidence that God will help them.

if Joshua had given them rest

A person causing someone to rest is spoken of as if the person were giving someone rest. Alternate translation: "if Joshua had been able to cause the people to rest" or "if the Israelites during the time of Joshua had experienced God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 4:10

he who enters into God's rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they are a place to enter. Alternate translation: "the person who enters into God's place of rest" or "the person who experiences God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:11

let us be eager to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were a place to enter. Alternate translation: "we should also do everything we can to rest with God where he is"

will fall into the kind of disobedience that they did

Disobedience is spoken of as if it were a hole that a person could physically fall into by accident. This passage can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disobedience" is expressed as the verb "disobey." Alternate translation: "will disobey in the same way as they did"

that they did

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors during the time of Moses.

Hebrews 4:12

the word of God is living ... It pierces ... is able

Here "word of God" refers to anything that God has communicated to humanity, whether through speech or through written messages. Alternate translation: "the words of God are living ... They pierce ... are able"

living and active

This speaks about God's word as if it were alive. It means when God speaks, it is powerful and effective.

sharper than any two-edged sword

A two-edged sword can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

two-edged sword

a sword with a blade that is sharp on both edges

It pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow

This continues speaking about God's word as if it were a sword. Here the sword is so sharp that it can cut through and divide parts of the human that are very difficult or even impossible to divide. This means that there is nothing inside us that we can hide from God.

soul and spirit

These are two different but closely related nonphysical parts of a human. The "soul" is what causes a person to be alive. The "spirit" is the part of a person that causes him to be able to know and believe in God.

joints and marrow

The "joint" is what holds two bones together. The "marrow" is the center part of the bone.

is able to discern

This speaks about God's word as if it were a person who could know something. Alternate translation: "exposes" the thoughts and intentions of the heart

"Heart" here is a metonym for "inner self." Alternate

translation: "what a person is thinking and intends to do"

Hebrews 4:13

No thing that has been created is hidden before God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Nothing that God has created can hide from him"

everything is bare and open

This speaks about all things as if they were a person

standing bare, or a box that is open. Alternate translation:

"everything is completely exposed"

bare and open

These two words mean basically the same thing and

emphasize that nothing is hidden from God.

to the eyes of the one to whom we must give an account

God is spoken of as if he had eyes. Alternate translation: "to

God, who will judge how we have lived"

Hebrews 4:14

who has passed through the heavens

"who has entered where God is"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

let us firmly hold to our confession

The word "confession" is a metonym for what a person

believes and confesses. This is spoken of as if it were an

object that a person could grasp firmly. Alternate

translation: "let us continue to believe confidently in him,

as we say that we do"

Hebrews 4:15

we do not have a high priest who cannot feel sympathy ... Rather, we have

This double negative is used to correct an incorrect idea

that the reader might have, that the high priest cannot feel

sympathy. Alternate translation: "we have a high priest who

can feel sympathy ... Rather, we have"

who has in all ways been tempted as we are

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"who has endured temptation in every way that we have"

or "whom the devil has tempted in every way that he

tempts us"

he is without sin

"he did not sin"

Hebrews 4:16

to the throne of grace

"to God's throne, where there is grace." Here "throne" refers

to God ruling as king. Alternate translation: "to where our

gracious God is sitting on his throne"

we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need

Here "mercy" and "grace" are spoken of as if they were

objects that can be given or can be found. Alternate

translation: "God may be merciful and gracious and help us

in time of need"

Chapter 5

Hebrews 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the teaching of the previous chapter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 5:5-6.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and solid food

The writer speaks of Christians who are only able to understand simple things about Jesus as if they were babies, who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food.

Links:

[Hebrews 5:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 5:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer describes the sinfulness of the Old Testament priests, and then he shows that Christ has a better kind of priesthood, one not based on Aaron's priesthood but on the priesthood of Melchizedek.

chosen from among people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom God chooses from among the people"

is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God appoints"

to act on the behalf of people

"to represent the people"

so that he may offer

The word "he" refers to a high priest.

Hebrews 5:2

He can deal gently

"The high priest can deal gently"

those ... who have been deceived

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those ... whom others have deceived" or "those ... who

believe what is false"

who have been deceived

"who believe false things and so behave badly"

is subject to weakness

The high priest's own weakness is spoken of as if it were a another person who rules over him. Alternate translation: "is spiritually weak" or "is weak against sin"

weakness

the desire to sin

Hebrews 5:3

he also is required

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God also requires him"

Hebrews 5:4

takes this honor

Honor is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp in his hands.

takes this honor

The "honor" or praise and respect that people gave to the high priest stand for his task.

he is called by God, just as Aaron was

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God calls him, just as he called Aaron"

Hebrews 5:5

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

the one speaking to him said

"God said to him"

You are my Son; today I have become your Father

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing. See how you translated them in [Hebrews 1:5]

Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

Hebrews 5:6

General Information:

This prophecy is from a Psalm of David.

he also says

To whom God is speaking can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he also says to Christ"

in another place

"in another place in the scriptures"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 5:7

During the days of his flesh

Here "the days" stands for a period of time. And, "flesh" stand for Jesus's earthly life. Alternate translation: "While he lived on earth"

prayers and requests

Both of these words mean basically the same thing.

the one able to save him from death

Possible meanings are 1) God was able to save Christ so that he would not die. Alternate translation: 'to save him from dying" or 2) God was able to save Christ after Christ's death by making him alive again. If possible, translate this in a way that allows both interpretations.

he was heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God heard him"

Hebrews 5:8

a Son

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

Hebrews 5:9

He was made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God made him perfect"

made perfect

Here this means being made mature, able to honor God in all aspects of life.

became, for everyone who obeys him, the cause of eternal salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "now he saves all who obey him and causes them to live forever"

Hebrews 5:10

He was designated by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God designated him" or "God appointed him"

as high priest after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "to be the sort of high priest that Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer begins his third warning. He warns these believers that they are still not mature and encourages them to learn God's word so they can understand right from wrong.

We have much to say

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation:

"I have much to say"

you have become dull in hearing

The ability to understand and obey is spoken of as if it were the ability to listen. And the ability to listen is spoken of as if it were a metal tool that becomes dull with use. Alternate translation: "you have trouble understanding it"

Hebrews 5:12

elementary principles of God's messages

Here "elementary principles" refers to the first things people should be able to understand. Alternate translation: "basic truths of God's messages" or "beginning lessons of God's word"

You need milk

Truths about God that are easy to understand are spoken of as if they were milk, the only food that infants can take.

Alternate translation: "You have become like babies and can drink only milk"

milk, not solid food

Truths about God that are difficult to understand are spoken of as if they were solid food, suitable for adults.

Alternate translation: "milk instead of solid food that adults can eat"

Hebrews 5:13

takes milk

Here "takes" stands for "drinks." Alternate translation: "drinks milk"

because he is still a little child

Spiritual maturity is compared with the kind of food that a growing child eats. Solid food is not for a tiny baby, and that is a figure describing a young Christian who only learns simple truths; but later, more solid food is given to the little child, just as when a person matures he can learn about matters that are more difficult.

Hebrews 5:14

who because of their maturity have their understanding trained for distinguishing good from evil

People trained to understand something are spoken of as if their ability to understand had been trained. Alternate translation: "who are mature and can distinguish between good and evil"

Chapter 6

Hebrews 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Abrahamic Covenant

In the covenant that God made with Abraham, God promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. He also promised to protect Abraham's descendants and to give them land of their own. (See: covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 6:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 6:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues with what immature Hebrew believers need to do to become mature Christians. He reminds them of the foundational teachings.

let us leave the beginning of the message of Christ and move forward to maturity

This speaks about the basic teachings as if they were the beginning of a journey and the mature teachings as if they were the end of a journey. Alternate translation: "let us stop only discussing what we first learned and start understanding more mature teachings as well"

Let us not lay again the foundation

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "Let us not repeat the basic teachings"

dead works

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the dead.

Hebrews 6:2

nor the foundation of teaching

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "nor the basic teachings"

laying on of hands

This practice was done to set someone apart for special service or position.

Hebrews 6:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:4

those who were once enlightened

Understanding is spoken of as if it were illumination. Alternate translation: "those who once understood the message about Christ"

who tasted the heavenly gift

Experiencing salvation is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who experienced God's saving power"

who were sharers of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, who comes to believers, is spoken of as if he were an object that people could share. Alternate translation: "who received the Holy Spirit"

Hebrews 6:5

who tasted God's good word

Learning God's message is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who learned about God's good message"

the powers of the age to come

This means the power of God when his kingdom is fully present in all the world. In this sense, "the powers" refer to God himself, who holds all power. Alternate translation: "how God will work powerfully in the future"

Hebrews 6:6

it is impossible to restore them again to repentance

"it is impossible to bring them back to repent again"

they crucify the Son of God for themselves again

When people turn away from God, it is as though they crucify Jesus again. Alternate translation: "it is like they crucify for themselves the very Son of God again"

Son of God

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

Hebrews 6:7

the land that drinks in the rain

Farmland that benefits from much rain is spoken of as if it were a person who drinks in the rainwater. Alternate translation: "the land that absorbs the rain"

that gives birth to the plants

Farmland that produces crops is spoken of as if it gives birth to them. Alternate translation: "that produces plants"

the land that receives a blessing from God

Rain and crops are seen as proof that God has helped the farmland. The farmland is spoken of as if it were a person who could receive God's blessing.

a blessing from God

Here "blessing" means help from God, not spoken words.

Hebrews 6:8

is near to a curse

This speaks of "curse" as if it were a place to which a person could draw near. Alternate translation: "is in danger of God cursing it"

Its end is in burning

The farmer will burn everything in the field.

Hebrews 6:9

we are convinced

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I am convinced" or "I am certain"

about better things concerning you

This means they are doing better than those who have rejected God, disobeyed him, and now can no longer repent so that God will forgive them ([Hebrews 6:4-6](#)). Alternate translation: "that you are doing better things than what I have mentioned"

things that concern salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "things that concern God saving you"

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unjust. He will not forget

This double negative can mean that God in his justice will remember what good things his people have done.

Alternate translation: "For God is just. He will certainly remember"

for his name

God's "name" is a metonym that stands for God himself.

Alternate translation: "for him"

Hebrews 6:11

We greatly desire

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I greatly desire"

diligence

careful, hard work

to the end

The implicit meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the end of your lives"

in order to make your hope certain

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "in order to have complete certainty that you will receive what God has promised you"

Hebrews 6:12

imitators

An "imitator" is someone who copies the behavior of someone else.

inherit the promises

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "receive what God promised them"

Hebrews 6:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:14

He said

God said

Hebrews 6:15

what was promised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God promised him"

Hebrews 6:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:17

to the heirs of the promise

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "to those who would receive what he promised"

the unchangeable quality of his purpose

"that his purpose would never change" or "that he would always do what he said he would do"

Hebrews 6:18

we, who have fled for refuge

Believers, who trust in God for him to protect them, are spoken of as if they were running to a safe place. Alternate translation: "we, who have trusted him"

will have a strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us

The phrase "to hold firmly to the hope set before us" is a metaphor meaning to continue to hope in what God has promised to do. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "will continue to trust in God just as he encouraged us to do"

set before us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has placed before us"

Hebrews 6:19

Connecting Statement:

Having finished his third warning and encouragement to the believers, the writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

as a secure and reliable anchor for the soul

Just as an anchor keeps a boat from drifting in the water, Jesus keeps us secure in God's presence. Alternate translation: "that causes us to live securely in God's presence"

a secure and reliable anchor

Here the words "secure" and "reliable" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the complete reliability of the anchor. Alternate translation: "a completely reliable anchor"

hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain

Confidence is spoken of as if it were a person who could go into the most holy place of the temple.

the inner place

This was the most holy place in the temple. It was thought to be the place where God was most intensely present among his people. In this passage, this place stands for heaven and God's throne room.

Hebrews 6:20

after the order of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:17, 21, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Links:

[Hebrews 7:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

Salem

This is the name of a city.

Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings

This is refers to when Abraham and his men went and defeated the armies of four kings in order to rescue his nephew, Lot, and his family.

Hebrews 7:2

It was to him

"It was to Melchizedek"

king of righteousness ... king of peace

"righteous king ... peaceful king"

Hebrews 7:3

He is without father, without mother, without ancestors, with neither beginning of days nor end of life

It is possible to think from this passage that Melchizedek was neither born nor did he die. However, it is likely that all the writer means is that the Scriptures provide no information about Melchizedek's ancestry, birth, or death.

Hebrews 7:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer states that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's priesthood and then reminds his readers that the priesthood of Aaron did not make anything perfect.

this man was

"Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 7:5

The descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office

The author says this because not all of Levi's sons became priests. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Levi who become priests"

from the people

"from the people of Israel"

from their brothers

Here "brothers" means they are all related to each other through Abraham. Alternate translation: "from their relatives"

Hebrews 7:6

whose descent was not traced from them

"who was not a descendant of Levi"

the one who had the promises

The things that God promised to do for Abraham are spoken of as if they were objects that he could possess.

Alternate translation: the one to whom God had spoken his promises"

Hebrews 7:7

the lesser person is blessed by the greater person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the more important person blesses the less important person"

Hebrews 7:8

In this case ... in that case

These phrases are used to compare the Levite priests with Melchizedek. Your language may have a way to emphasize that the author is making a comparison.

is testified that he lives on

It is never explicitly written in scripture that Melchizedek dies. The author of Hebrews speaks of this absence of information about Melchizedek's death in scripture as if it were a positive statement that he is still alive. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "scripture shows that he lives on"

Hebrews 7:9

Levi, who received tithes, also paid tithes through Abraham

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:10

Levi was in the body of his ancestor

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the manner of Melchizedek, and not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron?

This question emphasizes that it was unexpected that priests come after the order of Melchizedek. Alternate

translation: "no one would have needed another priest, one who was like Melchizedek and not like Aaron, to arise."

to arise

"to come" or "to appear"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not be after the manner of Aaron" or "who is not a priest like Aaron"

Hebrews 7:12

For when the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For when God changed the priesthood, he also had to change the law"

Hebrews 7:13

For the one

This refers to Jesus.

about whom these things are said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about whom I am speaking"

Hebrews 7:14

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

it is from Judah that our Lord was born

The words "our Lord" refer to Jesus.

from Judah

"from the tribe of Judah"

Hebrews 7:15

when another priest arises

"when another priest comes"

in the likeness of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 7:16

This one became a priest

The words "This one" refer to the one who became priest in the likeness of Melchizedek.

not based on a law of physical requirement

He became priest, but it was not because he met the physical requirement.

a law of physical requirement

This physical requirement is that only the descendants of priests could become priests. Alternate translation: "a law of human descent" or "a law that required priests to be descendants of priests"

Hebrews 7:17

General Information:

This quote comes from a psalm of King David.

For scripture witnesses about him

This speaks about scripture as if it were a person who could witness about something. Alternate translation: "For God witnesses about him through the scriptures" or "For this is what was written about him in the scripture"

according to the order of Melchizedek

There were two groups of priests. One was made up of the descendants of Levi. The other was made up of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "according to the line of Melchizedek" or "according to the priesthood of Melchizedek"

Hebrews 7:18

Connecting Statement:

The writer gives the first of two statements that explain [Hebrews 7:17](#).

has the former command been set aside

Here "set aside" is a metaphor for making something invalid. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has God made the commandment invalid"

Hebrews 7:19

Connecting Statement:

After a short statement that explains [Hebrews 7:18](#), the writer gives the second of two statements that explain [Hebrews 7:17](#).

the law made nothing perfect

The law is spoken of as if it were a person who could act.

Alternate translation: "no one could become perfect by obeying the law"

a better hope is introduced

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has introduced a better hope" or "God has given us reason for a more confident hope"

through which we come near to God

Worshiping God and having his favor are spoken of as coming near to him. Alternate translation: "and because of this hope we approach God" or "and because of this hope we worship God"

Hebrews 7:20

And it was not without an oath!

The word "it" refers to the act of God choosing Jesus to be the eternal priest. This can be stated in positive form, and it can be stated clearly who made the oath. Alternate translation: "And God did not choose this new priest without swearing an oath!" or "And God showed how important it was by swearing an oath!"

Hebrews 7:21

General Information:

This quote comes from the same psalm of David as

Hebrews 7:17.

Hebrews 7:22

has given the guarantee of a better covenant

"has told us that we can be sure that there will be a better covenant"

Hebrews 7:23

Connecting Statement:

The writer then assures these Jewish believers that Christ has the better priesthood because he lives forever and the priests that descended from Aaron all die, stopping them from continuing to be priests.

Hebrews 7:24

he has a permanent priesthood

A priest's work is spoken of as if it were an object that the priest possesses. This can be worded to avoid the abstract noun. Alternate translation: "he is a priest permanently"

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore he

You can make explicit what "Therefore" implies. Alternate translation: "Because Christ is our high priest who lives forever, he"

those who approach God through him

"those who come to God because of what Jesus has done"

Hebrews 7:26

exalted above the heavens

"whom God has raised up to the highest heavens." The author speaks of possessing more honor and power than anyone else as if it were a position that is up above all things. Alternate translation: "whom God has given more honor and power than anyone else"

Hebrews 7:27

General Information:

Here the words "He," "his," and "himself" refer to Christ.

Hebrews 7:28

the law appoints as high priests men who have weaknesses

Here "the law" is a metonym for the men who appointed

the high priests according to the law of Moses. The focus is not on the men who did this, but on the fact that they did this according to the law. Alternate translation: "according to the law, men appoint as high priests men who have weaknesses" or "for according to the law, men who have weaknesses are appointed as high priests"

men who have weaknesses

"men who are spiritually weak" or "men who are weak against sin"

the word of the oath, which came after the law, appointed a Son

The "word of the oath" represents God, who made the oath.

Alternate translation: "God appointed a Son by his oath, which he made after he gave the law, a Son" or "after he had given the law, God swore an oath and appointed his Son"

Son

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

who has been made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"who has completely obeyed God and become mature"

Chapter 8

Hebrews 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes describing how and why Jesus is the most important high priest. Then he begins to speak about how the new covenant is better to the covenant God made with Moses. (See: covenant)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 8:8-12, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

New covenant

The author tells how Jesus has established a new covenant that is better than the covenant that God established with the Israelites. (See: covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 8:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer, having shown that Christ's priesthood is better than the earthly priesthood, shows that the earthly priesthood was a pattern of heavenly things. Christ has a superior ministry, a superior covenant.

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

we are saying

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Because the writer does not include his readers here, the word "we" is exclusive. Alternate translation: "I am saying" or "I am writing"

We have a high priest

The author is including the readers here, so the word "we" is inclusive.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 8:2

the true tabernacle that the Lord, not a man, set up

People built the earthly tabernacle out of animal skins fastened to a wooden framework, and they set it up in the manner of a tent. Here "true tabernacle" means the heavenly tabernacle that God created.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God appoints every priest"

Hebrews 8:4

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

according to the law

"as God requires in the law"

Hebrews 8:5

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things

The words "copy" and "shadow" have similar meanings and are metaphors meaning that something is not the real thing but it is similar to the real thing. These words emphasize that the priesthood and the earthly temple were images of

Christ, the true high priest, and the heavenly temple.
Alternate translation: "They serve what is a vague image of the heavenly things" or "They serve what is only similar to the heavenly things"

It is just as Moses was warned by God when he was
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is just as God warned Moses when Moses was"
was about to construct the tabernacle

Moses did not construct the tabernacle himself. He ordered the people to construct it. Alternate translation: "was about to command the people to construct the tabernacle"

See that
"Make sure that"
to the pattern
"to the design"

that was shown to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I showed you"
on the mountain

You can make explicit that "mountain" refers to Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: "on Mount Sinai"

Hebrews 8:6

Connecting Statement:

This section begins to show that the new covenant is better than the old covenant with Israel and Judah.

Christ has received
"God has given Christ"

mediator of a better covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist.

covenant, which is based on better promises

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "covenant. It was this covenant that God made based on better promises" or "covenant. God promised better things when he made this covenant"

Hebrews 8:7

first ... second

The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers.
Alternate translation: "old covenant ... new covenant"

had been faultless

"had been perfect"

no occasion for a second would have been sought

The word "second" also describes a "covenant." Alternate translation: "no one would have sought a way to establish a second covenant" or "there would have been no reason to establish a second covenant"

Hebrews 8:8

General Information:

In this quotation the prophet Jeremiah foretold of a new covenant that God would make.

with the people

"with the people of Israel"

See

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

the house of Israel and with the house of Judah

The people of Israel and Judah are spoken of as if they were houses. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel and with the people of Judah"

Hebrews 8:9

I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt

This metaphor represents God's great love and concern.

Alternate translation: "I led them out of Egypt like a father leads his young child"

Hebrews 8:10

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.
the house of Israel

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a house.

Alternate translation: "the people of Israel"

after those days

"after that time"

I will put my laws into their minds

God's requirements are spoken of as if they were objects that could be placed somewhere. People's ability to think is spoken of as if it were a place. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to understand my laws"

I will also write them on their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "write them on their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to obey the law. Alternate translation: "I will also put them in their hearts" or "I will enable them to obey my law"

I will be their God

"I will be the God they worship"

they will be my people

"they will be the people for whom I care"

Hebrews 8:11

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.

They will not teach each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord.'

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Alternate translation: "They will not need to teach their neighbors or brothers to know me"

citizen ... brother

Both of these refer to a fellow Israelite.

Know the Lord ... will all know me

"Know" here stands for acknowledge.

Hebrews 8:12

toward their evil deeds

This stands for the people who committed these evil deeds.

Alternate translation: "to those who did evil deeds"

their sins I will not remember any longer

Here "remember" stands for "think about."

Hebrews 8:13

he declared the first covenant to be obsolete

"he declared that the first covenant was no longer useful"

what has become obsolete

"what is no longer useful"

obsolete

Something that is obsolete is no longer useful because people can now use something better.

Hebrews 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is better than the tabernacle and all its laws and rules. This chapter will be difficult to understand if the first five books of the Old Testament have not yet been translated.

Special concepts in this chapter

Will

A will is a legal document that describes what will happen to a person's property after he dies.

Blood

In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Israelites to offer sacrifices so that he would forgive their sins. Before they could offer these sacrifices, they had to kill animals and then offer not only the animal's body but also its blood. Shedding blood is a metaphor for killing an animal or person. Jesus offered his life, his blood, as a sacrifice when he allowed men to kill him. The writer of the Book of Hebrews is saying in this chapter that this sacrifice is better than the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (See: and covenant)

Return of Christ

Jesus will return to finish the work that he began when he died so that God would forgive his people's sins. He will finish saving those people who are waiting for him. (See: save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

First covenant

This refers to the covenant that God made with Moses. However, before he made this covenant, God had made a covenant with Abraham. But this was the first covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. You may decide to translate "the first covenant" as "the earlier covenant."

Links:

[Hebrews 9:1](#)

Hebrews 9:1

Connecting Statement:

The author begins a description of the place in which God's faithful people worshiped during the time of the old covenant. He is describing a "tabernacle," a place where people dwell, in which there are two sections, each of which he also calls a tabernacle.

General Information:

The writer makes clear to these Jewish believers that the laws and the tabernacle of the old covenant were only pictures of the better, new covenant.

Now

This word marks a new part of the teaching.

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

had regulations

"had detailed instructions" or "had rules"

Hebrews 9:2

For

The author is continuing the discussion from Hebrews 8:7. a tabernacle was prepared

A tabernacle was constructed and made ready for use. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites prepared a tabernacle"

tabernacle

Or "tent." This is perhaps a metaphor for a place in which the priests set the lampstand and other items.

The first room

"The first room." Some modern translations read the ellipsis as "The first room in the tabernacle" or "The first section of the tabernacle."

the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the presence

These objects are all accompanied by the definite article "the," because the author assumes that his readers already know about these things.

bread of the presence

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "presence" is expressed as the verb "display" or "present." Alternate translation: "bread on display before God" or "bread the priests presented to God"

Hebrews 9:3

Behind the second curtain

The first curtain was the outer wall of the tabernacle, so the "second curtain" was the curtain between the "holy place" and the "most holy place."

second

This is the ordinal word for the number two.

Hebrews 9:4

Inside it

"Inside the ark of the covenant"

Aaron's rod that budded

This was the rod Aaron had when God proved to the people of Israel that he had chosen Aaron as his priest by making Aaron's rod bud.

that budded

"from which leaves and flowers had grown"

tablets of the covenant

Here "tablets" are flat pieces of stone that had writing on them. This refers to the stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written.

Hebrews 9:5

glorious cherubim overshadowed the atonement lid

When the Israelites were making the ark of the covenant, God commanded them to carve two cherubim facing each other, with their wings touching, over the atonement lid of the ark of the covenant. Here they are spoken of as providing shade for the ark of the covenant. Alternate translation: "glorious cherubim covered the atonement lid with their wings"

cherubim

Here "cherubim" means figures of two cherubim.

which we cannot

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "which I cannot"

Hebrews 9:6

After these things were prepared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"After the priests prepared these things"

Hebrews 9:7

not without blood that he offered

Another possible meaning is "not without blood, which he offered."

not without blood

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "always with blood"

blood

This is the blood of the bull and goat that the high priest had to sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

Hebrews 9:8

the most holy place

Possible meanings are 1) the inner room of the tabernacle on earth or 2) God's presence in heaven.

the first tabernacle was still standing

Possible meanings are 1) "the outer room of the tabernacle was still standing" or 2) "the earthly tabernacle and the sacrificial system still existed."

Hebrews 9:9

This was an illustration

"This was a picture" or "This was a symbol"

for the present time

"for now"

that are now being offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that the priests now offer"

are not able to perfect the worshiper's conscience

The writer speaks of a person's conscience as if it were an object that could be made better and better until it was without fault. A person's conscience is his knowledge of right and wrong. It is also his awareness of whether or not he has done wrong. If he knows he has done wrong, we say that he feels guilty. Alternate translation: "are not able to make the worshiper free from guilt"

the worshiper's conscience

The writer appears to refer to only one worshiper, but he means all those who go to worship God at the tabernacle.

Hebrews 9:10

until the time of the new order

"until God creates the new order"

new order

"new covenant"

Hebrews 9:11

Connecting Statement:

Having described the service of the tabernacle under God's law, the writer makes clear that Christ's service under the new covenant is better because it is sealed with his blood. It is better also because Christ has entered the true "tabernacle," that is, God's own presence in heaven, instead of entering, as other high priests, into the earthly tabernacle, which was only an imperfect copy.

good things

This does not refer to material things. It means the good things that God promised in his new covenant.

the greater and more perfect tabernacle

This refers to the heavenly tent or tabernacle, which is more important and more perfect than the earthly tabernacle.

that was not made by human hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that humans hands did not make"

human hands

Here "hands" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "humans"

Hebrews 9:12

most holy place

This means the most holy place in the heavenly tabernacle. It is most holy because God himself lives there.

Hebrews 9:13

sprinkling of a heifer's ashes on those who have been defiled

The priest would drop small amounts of the ashes on the people who were defiled.

for the cleansing of their flesh

Here "flesh" refers to the entire body. Alternate translation:

"for the cleansing of their bodies"

Hebrews 9:14

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The author uses this question to emphasize that Christ's sacrifice was the most powerful. Alternate translation:

"then certainly Christ's blood will cleanse our conscience even more from dead works to serve the living God!"

Because, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself unblemished to God."

the blood of Christ

The "blood" of Christ stands for his death.

unblemished

A small, unusual spot or defect on a person's body is a metaphor for a small sin or moral fault. Alternate translation: "without even the smallest fault"

cleanse our conscience

Here "conscience" refers to a person's feeling of guilt.

Believers no longer have to feel guilty for the sins they have committed because Jesus sacrificed himself and has forgiven them.

cleanse

Here "cleanse" stands for the action of relieving our consciences from guilt for the sins we have committed.

dead works

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world

of the dead.

Hebrews 9:15

For this reason

"As a result" or "Because of this"

he is the mediator of a new covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated a similar phrase in Hebrews 8:6.

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

to redeem those under the first covenant from their transgressions

"to take away the transgressions of those who were under the first covenant." The abstract noun "transgressions" can be translated using the verb "transgress." Possible meanings are 1) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the guilt of their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the guilt of those who were under the first covenant." Or 2) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the punishment for their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the punishment that those who were under the first covenant deserved because they had transgressed"

those who are called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has called" or "those whom God has chosen to be his children"

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Hebrews 9:16

will

a legal document in which a person states who should receive his possessions when he himself dies

the death of the person who made it must be proven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone must prove that the person who made the will has died"

Hebrews 9:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 9:18

So not even the first covenant was established without blood

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "So God established even the first covenant with blood"

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

blood

The death of animals sacrificed to God is spoken of as if it were nothing but blood. Alternate translation: "the death of animals sacrificed to God"

Hebrews 9:19

took the blood ... with water ... and sprinkled ... the scroll ... and all the people

The priest dipped the hyssop in the blood and the water and then shook the hyssop so drops of blood and water would fall on the scroll and on the people. Sprinkling was a

symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. Here the scroll and the people's acceptability to God are renewed.

hyssop

a woody shrub with flowers in summer, used in ceremonial sprinkling

Hebrews 9:20

the blood of the covenant

Here "blood" refers to the death of the animals sacrificed to carry out the covenant's requirements. Alternate translation: "the blood that brings into effect the covenant" Hebrews 9:21

he sprinkled

"Moses sprinkled"

sprinkled

Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]

all the containers used in the ministry

A container is an object that can hold things. Here it may refer to any kind of utensil or tool. Alternate translation: "all the utensils used in the ministry"

used in the ministry

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests used in their work"

blood

Here the animal "blood" represents the animal's death.

Hebrews 9:22

almost everything is cleansed with blood

Making something acceptable to God is spoken of as if it were cleansing that thing. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests use blood to cleanse almost everything"

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness

Here "shedding of blood" refers to something dying as a sacrifice to God. This double negative can mean that all forgiveness comes through the shedding of blood. Alternate translation: "Forgiveness only comes when something dies as a sacrifice" or "God only forgives when something dies as a sacrifice"

forgiveness

You can state explicitly the implied meaning. Alternate translation: "forgiveness of the sins of the people"

Hebrews 9:23

the copies of the things in heaven should be cleansed with these animal sacrifices

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests should use these animal sacrifices to cleanse what are copies of things that are in heaven"

the heavenly things themselves had to be cleansed with much better sacrifices

That is, better than the sacrifices used to cleanse the earthly copies. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as for the heavenly things themselves, God had to cleanse them with much better sacrifices"

Hebrews 9:24

the most holy place made with hands, which

Here "with hands" means "by humans." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the most holy place, which humans made, and which"

of the true one

"of the true most holy place"

Hebrews 9:25

Connecting Statement:

The writer emphasizes that Christ (now in heaven interceding for us) had to die only once for sins and that he will return to earth a second time.

He did not go there

"He did not enter heaven"

year by year

"every year" or "each year"

with the blood of another

This means with the blood of an animal victim, not with his own blood.

Hebrews 9:26

If that had been the case

"If he had had to offer himself often"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set

on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself

Doing away with sin represents having God forgive it.

Alternate translation: "to cause God to forgive sins by sacrificing himself" or "to sacrifice himself so that God can forgive sin"

Hebrews 9:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 9:28

Christ was offered once

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Christ offered himself once"

to take away the sins

The act of making us innocent rather than guilty for our sins is spoken of as if our sins were physical objects that Christ could carry away from us. Alternate translation: "so that God would forgive the sins"

the sins

Here "sins" mean the guilt that people have before God because of the sins they committed.

Chapter 10

Hebrews 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the writer finishes describing how Jesus's sacrifice was better than the sacrifices offered in the Temple. (See: lawofmoses)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 10:5-7, 15-17, 37-38, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's judgment and reward

Holy living is important for Christians. God will hold people accountable for how they lived their Christian lives. Even though there will not be eternal condemnation for Christians, ungodly actions do and will have consequences. In addition, faithful living will be rewarded. (See: holy, godly and faithful and reward)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"

The sacrifices themselves had no redeeming power. They were effective because they were a display of faith, which was credited to the person offering the sacrifice. It is ultimately the sacrifice of Jesus that "takes away sins." (See: redeem and faith)

"The covenant that I will make"

It is unclear whether this prophecy was being fulfilled as the author was writing or whether it was to occur later. The translator should try to avoid making a claim about the time this covenant begins. (See: prophet and covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 10:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 10:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer shows the weakness of the law and its sacrifices, why God gave the law, and the perfection of the new priesthood and Christ's sacrifice.

the law is only a shadow of the good things to come

This speaks about the law as if it were a shadow. The author means the law is not the good things that God had promised. It only hints at the good things that God is going to do.

not the real forms of those things themselves

"not the real things themselves"

year after year

"every year"

Hebrews 10:2

would the sacrifices not have ceased to be offered?

The author uses a question to state that the sacrifices were limited in their power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they would have ceased offering those sacrifices."

ceased to be

"stopped being"

the worshipers would have been cleansed one time and would

Here being cleansed represents no longer being guilty of sin. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"the sacrifices would have taken away the worshipers' sin once, and they would" or "God would have made the worshipers no longer guilty of sin once, and they would"

would no longer have any consciousness of sin

"would no longer think that they are guilty of sin" or

"would know that they are no longer guilty of sin"

Hebrews 10:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that animal blood could sweep away as it flowed. Alternate translation: "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to cause God to forgive sins"

the blood of bulls and goats

Here "blood" refers to these animals dying as sacrifices to God.

Hebrews 10:5

General Information:

Christ's words when he was on earth were foretold in this quotation from a psalm of David.

you did not desire

Here "you" is singular and refers to God.

a body you have prepared

"you have made a body ready"

Hebrews 10:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:7

Then I said

Here "I" refers to Christ.

Hebrews 10:8

General Information:

Though changing the wording slightly, the author repeats these quotations from a psalm of David for emphasis.

sacrifices ... offerings

See how you translated these words in [Hebrews 10:5](#).

whole burnt offerings ... sin offerings

See how you translated similar words in [Hebrews 10:6](#).

that are offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that priests offer"

Hebrews 10:9

See

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

He takes away the first practice in order to establish the second practice

The abstract noun "practice" here refers to a way of atoning for sins. Stopping doing it is spoken of as if it were an object that could be taken away. Starting the second way of atoning for sins is spoken of as establishing that practice. Alternate translation: "He stops people atoning for sins the first way in order to atone for sins the second way"

first practice ... the second practice

The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers.

Alternate translation: "old practice ... the new practice"

Hebrews 10:10

we have been sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has sanctified us" or "God has dedicated us to himself" through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

The abstract noun "offering" can be expressed with the verb "offer" or "sacrifice." Alternate translation: "because Jesus Christ offered his body as a sacrifice" or "because Jesus Christ sacrificed his body"

Hebrews 10:11

Day after day

"Day by day" or "Every day"

can never take away sins

This speaks of "sins" as if they are an object that a person can take away. Alternate translation: "can never cause God to forgive sins"

Hebrews 10:12

he sat down at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 10:13

until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet

Christ's enemies being humiliated is spoken of as if they were made a place for him to rest his feet. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until God humiliates Christ's enemies and they become like a footstool for his feet"

Hebrews 10:14

those who are being sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom God is sanctifying" or "those whom God has dedicated to himself"

Hebrews 10:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:16

General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

with them

"with my people"

after those days

"when the time of the first covenant with my people has finished"

I will put my laws in their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "put my laws in their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to know his laws. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to know my laws"

I will write them on their minds

The phrase "write them on their minds" is a metaphor for causing people to remember his laws. Alternate translation: "I will cause them to remember my laws"

Hebrews 10:17

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

Their sins and lawlessness I will remember no longer."

"I will no longer remember their sins and lawlessness." or

"I will no longer think about their sins and lawlessness."

This is the second part of the Holy Spirit's testimony

Their sins and lawlessness

The words "sins" and "lawlessness" mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize how bad the sin is. Alternate translation: "The things they did that were forbidden and how they broke the law"

Hebrews 10:18

Now

This is used to draw attention to the important point that follows. It does not mean "at this moment."

where there is forgiveness for these

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun

"forgiveness" is expressed as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "when God has forgiven these things"

there is no longer any sacrifice for sin

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "sacrifice" is expressed as the verb "make offerings." Alternate translation: "people no longer need to make offerings for sin"

Hebrews 10:19

Connecting Statement:

Having made it clear that there is only one sacrifice for sin, the writer continues with the picture of the most holy place in the temple, where only the high priest could enter each year with the blood of the sacrifice for sins. He reminds the believers that they now worship God in his presence as if they were standing in the most holy place.

brothers

Here this means all believers in Christ, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"

the most holy place

This means the presence of God, not the most holy place in the old tabernacle.

by the blood of Jesus

Here "blood of Jesus" refers to the death of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:20

living way

Possible meanings are 1) this new way to God that Jesus has provided results in believers living forever or 2) Jesus is alive, and he is the way believers enter into the presence of God.

through the curtain

The curtain in the earthly temple represents the separation between people and God's true presence.

by means of his flesh

Here "flesh" stands for the body of Jesus, and his body stands for his sacrificial death. Alternate translation: "by means of his death"

Hebrews 10:21

we have a great priest over the house of God

This must be translated in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus is this "great priest."

over the house

"in charge of the house"

the house of God

This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "all the people of God"

Hebrews 10:22

let us approach

Here "approach" stands for worshiping God, as a priest would go up to God's altar to sacrifice animals to him.

with true hearts

"with faithful hearts" or "with honest hearts." Here "hearts" stands for the genuine will and motivation of the believers. Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "sincerely"

in the full assurance of faith

"and with a confident faith" or "and trusting completely in Jesus"

having our hearts sprinkled clean

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if he had made our hearts clean with his blood"

hearts sprinkled clean

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the conscience, the awareness of right and wrong. Being made clean is a metaphor for being forgiven and being given the status of righteousness.

sprinkled

Sprinkling blood of a sacrifice was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]

having our bodies washed with pure water

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if he had washed our bodies in pure water"

our bodies washed with pure water

Possible meanings are 1) "bodies" is a metonym that represents peoples' entire beings, and "washed with pure water" is a metaphor representing Christ making a person spiritually pure or 2) this is literal and it refers to Christian baptism.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us also hold firmly to the hope we confess

Here "hold firmly" is a metaphor that refers to a person determining to do something and refusing to stop. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Let us be determined to continue confessing the things that we confidently expect from God"

Hebrews 10:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not abandon meeting together

You can make explicit that the people met to worship.

Alternate translation: "Let us not stop coming together to worship"

as you see the day coming closer

A future time is spoken of as if it were an object coming closer to the speaker. Here "the day" refers to when Jesus will return. Alternate translation: "as you know that Christ will return soon"

Hebrews 10:26

Connecting Statement:

The writer now gives his fourth warning.

we deliberately go on sinning

"we know we are sinning but we do it again and again"

after we have received the knowledge of the truth

Knowledge of the truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be given by one person to another. Alternate translation: "after we have learned the truth"

the truth

The truth about God.

a sacrifice for sins no longer remains

No one is able to give a new sacrifice because Christ's sacrifice is the only one that works. Alternate translation: "no one can offer a sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"

a sacrifice for sins

Here "sacrifice for sins" stands for "an effective way to sacrifice animals to take away sins"

Hebrews 10:27

of judgment

Of God's judgment, that is, that God will judge.

a fury of fire that will consume God's enemies

God's fury is spoken of as if it were fire that would burn up his enemies.

Hebrews 10:28

of two or three witnesses

It is implied that this means "of at least two or three witness."

Hebrews 10:29

How much worse punishment do you think one deserves ... grace?

The author is emphasizing the greatness of the punishment for those who reject Christ. Alternate translation: "This was severe punishment. But the punishment will be even greater for anyone ... grace!"

who has trampled underfoot the Son of God

Someone who has disregarded Christ and scorned him is spoken of as if that person had walked on him. Alternate translation: "who has rejected the Son of God"

the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

who has regarded the blood of the covenant as unholy

This shows how the person has trampled the Son of God.

Alternate translation: "by regarding the blood of the covenant as unholy"

has regarded

or "has treated"

the blood of the covenant

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death, by which God established the new covenant.

the blood by which he was sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the blood by which God sanctified him"

the Spirit of grace

"the Spirit of God, who provides grace"

Hebrews 10:30

General Information:

The word "we" here refers to the writer and all believers. These two quotations come from the law that Moses gave in the Old Testament.

Vengeance belongs to me

Vengeance is spoken of as if it were an object that belongs to God, who has the right to do as he wishes with what he owns. God has the right to take vengeance on his enemies.

I will pay back

God taking vengeance is spoken of as if he were paying back the harmful things that someone has done to others. Hebrews 10:31

to fall into the hands

Receiving God's full punishment is spoken of as if the person falls into God's hands. Here "hands" refers to God's power to judge. Alternate translation: "to receive the full punishment"

Hebrews 10:32

the former days

"the time in the past"

after you were enlightened

Learning the truth is spoken of as if God shined a light on the person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you learned the truth about Christ"

how you endured a great struggle in suffering

"how much suffering you had to endure"

Hebrews 10:33

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People ridiculed you by insulting you and persecuting you in public"

you shared with those

"you joined those"

Hebrews 10:34

a better and everlasting possession

God's eternal blessings are spoken of as a "possession."

Hebrews 10:35

do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward

A person no longer having confidence is spoken of as if the person were to throw confidence away, like a person would discard something worthless. The abstract noun

"confidence" can be translated with the adjective

"confident" or the adverb "confidently." Alternate

translation: "do not stop being confident, because you will receive a great reward for being confident" or "do not stop confidently trusting in God, who will reward you greatly"

Hebrews 10:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:37

General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament.

For in a very little while

You can make this explicit. Alternate translation: "As God said in the scriptures, 'For in a very little while'"

in a very little while

"very soon"

Hebrews 10:38

General Information:

Here the author quotes from the prophet Habakkuk. This directly follows the quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the previous verse.

My righteous one ... If he shrinks ... with him
These refer to any of God's people in general. Alternate translation: "My faithful people ... If any one of them shrinks ... with that person" or "My faithful people ... If they shrink ... with them"
My righteous ... my soul will
Here "My" and "my soul" refer to God.
my soul
The soul is a metonym for the whole being.
shrinks back
stops doing the good thing he is doing
Hebrews 10:39

who turn back to destruction
A person who loses courage and faith are spoken of as if he were stepping back in fear from something. And "destruction" is spoken of as if it were a destination.
Alternate translation: "who stop trusting God, whom God will destroy"
who have faith and preserve their souls
Living eternally with God is spoken of as if it were preserving one's soul. Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "who have faith, which will result in our living with God forever"

Chapter 11

Hebrews 11 General Notes

Structure

The writer begins this chapter by telling what faith is. Then he gives many examples of people who had faith and how they lived.

Important concepts in this chapter

Faith

In both the old and new covenants, God required faith. Some people with faith performed miracles and were very powerful. Other people with faith suffered greatly.

Links:

[Hebrews 11:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 11:1

Connecting Statement:

The author tells three things about faith in this brief introduction.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here the author starts to explain the meaning of "faith."

faith is being sure of the things hoped for

Here "hope" refers to having the confident expectation that God will do what he promised to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "faith is being sure of the things we hope for" or "when we have faith, we are sure that we will receive from God the things we confidently wait for"

that are not seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we still have not seen" or "that still have not happened"

Hebrews 11:2

For because of this

"Because they were certain about events that had not happened"

the ancestors were approved for their faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God approved of our ancestors because they had faith"

the ancestors

The author is speaking to the Hebrews about Hebrew ancestors. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"

Hebrews 11:3

the universe was created by God's command

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God created the universe by commanding it to exist"

what is visible was not made out of things that were visible

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not create what we see out of things that were visible"

Hebrews 11:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer then gives many examples (mostly from Old Testament writings) of people who lived by faith even though they did not receive what God had promised while they lived on the earth.

he was attested to be righteous

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God declared him to be righteous" or "God declared that Abel was righteous"

Abel still speaks

Reading the scriptures and learning about Abel's faith is spoken of as if Abel himself were still speaking. Alternate translation: "we still learn from what Abel did"

Hebrews 11:5

It was by faith that Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was by faith that Enoch did not die because God took him" see death

This speaks of death as if it were an object that people can see. It means to experience death. Alternate translation: "die"

before he was taken up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "before God took him"

it was testified that he had pleased God

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1)

"God said that Enoch had pleased him" or 2) "people said that Enoch pleased God."

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith

Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

without faith it is impossible to please him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "a person can please him only if he has faith"

that anyone coming to God

Wanting to worship God and belong to his people is spoken of as if the person is literally coming to God. Alternate translation: "that anyone who wants to belong to God"

he is a rewarder of those

"he rewards those"

those who seek him

Those who learn about God and make an effort to obey him are spoken of as if they were seeking to find him.

Hebrews 11:7

having been given a divine message

This can be stated in active form and in other terms.

Alternate translation: "because God told him"

about things not yet seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about things no one had ever seen before" or "about events that had not happened yet"

the world

Here "world" refers to the world's human population.

Alternate translation: "the people living in the world at that time"

became an heir of the righteousness

Noah is spoken of as if he were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation:

"received from God the righteousness"

that is according to faith

"that God gives to those who have faith in him"

Hebrews 11:8

when he was called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when God called him"

went out to the place

"left his home to go to the place"

that he was to receive as an inheritance

The land that God promised to give Abraham's descendants is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that Abraham was to receive. Alternate translation: "that God would give him"

He went out

"He left his home"

Hebrews 11:9

he lived in the land of promise as a foreigner

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "promise" is expressed as the verb "promised." Alternate translation: "he lived as a foreigner in the land God had promised to him"

fellow heirs

"heirs together." This speaks about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as if they were heirs that would receive an inheritance from their father.

Hebrews 11:10

the city with foundations

"the city that has foundations." Having foundations indicates that the city is permanent. Alternate translation: "the eternal city"

whose architect and builder is God

"which is designed and built by God" or "which God would design and build"

architect

a person who designs buildings and cities

Hebrews 11:11

General Information:

Many versions interpret this verse as referring to Sarah, and others interpret it as referring to Abraham.

It was by faith

The abstract noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) it was by Sarah's faith.

Alternate translation: "It was because Sarah believed God ... she" or 2) it was by Abraham's faith. Alternate translation:

"It was because Abraham believed God ... he"

Sarah herself was barren

Sarah was not able to have children.

she received ability to conceive

Possible meanings are 1) Sarah received the ability to conceive a child. Alternate translation "she became able to bear a child" or 2) Abraham received the ability to father a child. Alternate translation: "he became able to have a child"

even though she was too old

Possible meanings are that 1) Sarah was too old or 2)

Abraham was too old.

since she considered as faithful the one who had given the promise

"because she believed God, who had given the promise, to be faithful." Possible meanings are 1) Sarah considered God to be faithful or 2) Abraham considered God to be faithful.

Hebrews 11:12

descendants as many as the stars in the sky and as countless as sand by the seashore

This simile means that Abraham had very many descendants.

as countless as sand by the seashore

This means that just as there are so many grains of sand on the seashore that no one can count them all, Abraham had so many descendants that no one can count them all.

Hebrews 11:13

without receiving the promises

This speaks of promises as if they are objects that a person receives. Alternate translation: "without receiving what God had promised them"

they saw and greeted them from far off

Future promised events are spoken of as if they were

travelers arriving from far away. Seeing and greeting the promised events is a metaphor for believing and being glad that the events will happen. Alternate translation: "they believed and were glad about what God would do in the future"

they were foreigners and exiles on earth

Here "foreigners" and "exiles" mean basically the same thing. This emphasizes that this earth was not their true home. They were waiting for their true home that God would make for them.

Hebrews 11:14

a homeland

"a country for them to belong to"

Hebrews 11:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 11:16

heavenly one

"heavenly country" or "country in heaven"

God is not ashamed to be called their God

This can be expressed in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "God is happy to have them call him their God" or "God is proud to have them say that he is their God"

Hebrews 11:17

when he was tested

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when God tested him"

Hebrews 11:18

to whom it had been said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to whom God said"

that your descendants will be named

Here "named" means assigned or designated. This sentence can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I will designate your descendants"

Hebrews 11:19

God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead

"God was able to cause Isaac to live again"

to raise up ... the dead

In this verse, "to raise up" is to make alive again. The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

figuratively speaking

"in a manner of speaking." This means that what the author says next is not to be understood literally. God did not bring Isaac back from death literally. But because Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him, it was as if God brought him back from the dead.

it was from them

"it was from the dead"

he received him back

"Abraham received Isaac back"

Hebrews 11:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 11:21

Jacob worshiped

"Jacob worshiped God"

Hebrews 11:22

when his end was near

Here "his end" is a polite way of referring to death.

Alternate translation: "when he was about to die"

spoke of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt

"spoke of when the children of Israel would leave Egypt"

the children of Israel

"the Israelites" or "the descendants of Israel"

instructed them about his bones

Joseph died while in Egypt. He wanted his people to take his bones with them when they left Egypt so they could

bury his bones in the land that God promised them.

Hebrews 11:23

Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Moses's parents hid him for three months after he was born"

Hebrews 11:24

had grown up

"had become an adult"

refused to be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"refused to allow people to call him"

Hebrews 11:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 11:26

disgrace for the sake of Christ

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disgrace" is expressed as the verb "disrespect." Alternate translation:

"being disrespected for the sake of Christ" or "the experience of people disrespecting him because he did what Christ would want"

he was looking ahead to his reward

Thinking about something that will happen in the future is spoken of as looking ahead to it. Alternate translation: "he was thinking about the reward he would receive"

Hebrews 11:27

he endured as if he were seeing the one who is invisible

Moses is spoken of as if he saw God, who is invisible.

the one who is invisible

"the one no one can see"

Hebrews 11:28

he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood

This was the first Passover. Moses kept it by obeying God's commands concerning the Passover and by commanding the people to obey them every year. Alternate translation: "he commanded the people to obey God's commands concerning the Passover and to sprinkle blood on their doors" or "he established the Passover and the sprinkling of blood"

the sprinkling of the blood

This refers to God's command to the Israelites to kill a lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts of every house where Israelites lived. This would prevent the destroyer from harming their firstborn sons. This was one of the Passover commands.

should not touch

Here "touch" refers to harming or to killing someone.

Alternate translation: "would not harm" or "would not kill"

Hebrews 11:29

they passed through the Sea of Reeds

"the Israelites passed through the Sea of Reeds"

they were swallowed up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the water swallowed up the Egyptians"

they were swallowed up

The water is spoken of as if it were an animal. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians drowned in the water"

Hebrews 11:30

they had been circled around for seven days
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites had marched around the walls for seven days"
seven days
"7 days"
Hebrews 11:31
had received the spies in peace
"had peacefully received the spies"
Hebrews 11:32
Connecting Statement:
The writer continues to speak of what God did for the ancestors of the people of Israel.
What more can I say?
The author uses a question to emphasize that there are many examples that he could have quoted. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "And there are many more examples."
the time will fail me
"I will not have enough time"
Barak
This is the name of a man.
Hebrews 11:33
It was through faith that they
Here "they" does not mean that each person listed in 11:32 did all the things the author is about to mention. The author means in general these are the kinds of things that those with faith were able to do. Alternate translation: "It was through faith that men like these"
they conquered kingdoms
Here "kingdoms" refers to the people who lived there.
Alternate translation: "they defeated the people of foreign kingdoms"
committed righteousness
Possible meanings are 1) "did righteous deeds" or "did what was right" or 2) "judged others fairly" or "administered justice."
They stopped the mouths of lions
These words begin a list of some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "They kept lions from eating them"
Hebrews 11:34
quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword
These are some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "they kept fire from burning them, they kept their enemies from killing them"
were made strong when they were weak
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received strength from God when they were weak"
became mighty in battle, and defeated
"and they became mighty in battle and defeated"
Hebrews 11:35
Women received back their dead by resurrection
This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "resurrection." The word "dead" is a nominal adjective. It can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Women received back alive those who had died"
Others were tortured, not accepting release

It is implied that their enemies would have released them from prison under certain conditions. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others accepted torture rather than release from prison" or "Others allowed their enemies to torture them rather than doing what their enemies required of them in order to release them"
Others were tortured
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others allowed those who imprisoned them to torture them" or "Others endured terrible pain"
a better resurrection
Possible meanings are 1) these people will experience a better life in heaven than what they experienced in this world or 2) these people will have a better resurrection than those who did not have faith. Those with faith will live forever with God. Those without faith will live forever separated from God.
Hebrews 11:36
Others experienced mocking and whippings, and even chains and imprisonment
This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns are expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "People afflicted others by mocking and whipping them and even putting them in chains and imprisoning them"
Hebrews 11:37
They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword
These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People threw stones at others. People sawed others in two. People killed others with the sword"
went about
"went from place to place" or "lived all the time"
in sheepskins and goatskins
"wearing only the skins of sheep and goats"
They were destitute
"They had nothing" or "They were very poor"
Hebrews 11:38
The world was not worthy
Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "The people of this world were not worthy"
They were always wandering about
This was because they had no place to live.
in caves and holes in the ground
"some lived in caves or in holes in the ground"
Hebrews 11:39
Although all these people were approved by God because of their faith, they did not receive the promise
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God honored all these because of their faith, but they did not themselves receive what God had promised"
the promise
This expression stands for "what God had promised them."
Hebrews 11:40
so that without us, they would not be made perfect
This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "in order that God would perfect us and them together"

Hebrews 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After telling of the value of discipline, the author begins a series of exhortations. (See; exhort)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:5-6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Discipline

God wants his people to do what is right. When they do what is wrong, he needs to correct or punish them. He does this just as earthly fathers correct and punish children whom they love. (See: discipline)

Links:

[Hebrews 12:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 12:1

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer to the author and his readers.

Connecting Statement:

Because of this great number of Old Testament believers, the author talks of the life of faith that believers should live.

we are surrounded by such a large cloud of witnesses

The writer speaks about the Old Testament believers as if they were a cloud that surrounds the present-day believers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "such a large cloud of witnesses surrounds us" or "there are so many examples of faithful people about whom we learn in the scriptures"

witnesses

Here "witnesses" refers to the Old Testament believers in chapter 11 who lived before the race of faith that believers now run.

let us lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin

Here "weight" and "easily entangling sin" are spoken of as if a person could take them off himself and put them down. every weight

Attitudes or habits that keep believers from trusting and obeying God are spoken of as if they were loads that would make it difficult for a person to run while carrying.

easily entangling sin

Sin is spoken of as if it were a net or something else that can trip people up and make them fall. Alternate translation: "sin that makes obeying God difficult"

Let us run with perseverance the race that is placed before us

Following Jesus is spoken of as if it were running a race.

Alternate translation: "Let us continue obeying what God has commanded us, just like a runner keeps going until the race is over"

Hebrews 12:2

the founder and perfecter of the faith

Jesus gives us faith and makes our faith perfect by causing us to reach our goal. Alternate translation: "creator and finisher of our faith" or "the one who enables us to have faith from beginning to end"

For the joy that was placed before him

The joy that Jesus would experience is spoken of as if God

the Father had placed it before him as a goal to reach.

despised its shame

This means he was not concerned about the shame of dying on a cross.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 12:3

General Information:

The word "your" is plural and here refers to the readers. become weary and lose heart

Here "heart" represents a person's thoughts and emotions.

Alternate translation: "become tired and discouraged"

Hebrews 12:4

Connecting Statement:

The author of Hebrews has been comparing the Christian life to a race.

You have not yet resisted or struggled against sin

Here "sin" is spoken of as if it were a person whom someone fights in a battle. Alternate translation: "You have not yet had to endure attacks of sinners"

to the point of blood

Resisting opposition so much that one dies for it is spoken of as if one reached a certain place where he would die. of blood

Here "blood" refers to death. Alternate translation: "of death"

Hebrews 12:5

the encouragement that instructs you

Old Testament scripture is spoken of as if it were a person who could encourage others. Alternate translation: "what God has instructed you in the scriptures to encourage you"

as sons ... My son

The word translated "sons" and "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters. However, as stated by the UDB and some English versions, the author is directing his words to both males and females.

My son ... corrected by him

Here the author is quoting from the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, which was the words of Solomon to his

male children.

do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, nor grow weary

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "take it very seriously when the Lord disciplines you, and do not grow weary"

nor grow weary

"and do not become discouraged"

you are corrected by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he corrects you"

Hebrews 12:6

every son he receives

The word translated "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters.

Hebrews 12:7

Endure suffering as discipline

"Understand that during suffering God teaches us discipline"

God deals with you as with sons

The readers are God's sons, and so God deals with them the way a father properly deals with sons.

sons ... son

All occurrences of these words may be stated to include males and females. Alternate translation: "children ... child" what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

The author makes the point through this question that every good father disciplines his children. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "every father disciplines his children!"

Hebrews 12:8

But if you are without discipline, which all people share in

You can restate the abstract noun "discipline" as the verb "disciplining." Alternate translation: "So if you have not experienced God disciplining you like he disciplines all his children"

then you are illegitimate and not his sons

Those whom God does not discipline are spoken of as if they are sons born to a man and a woman who are not married each other.

Hebrews 12:9

How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

The author uses an exclamation to emphasize that we should obey God the Father. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Therefore even more so, we should obey the Father of spirits and live."

the Father of spirits

This idiom contrasts with "fathers in the flesh." Alternate translation: "our spiritual Father" or "our Father in heaven" and live

"so that we will live"

Hebrews 12:10

so that we can share in his holiness

This metaphor speaks of "holiness" as if it were an object that can be shared among people. Alternate translation: "so that we may become holy, as God is holy"

Hebrews 12:11

No discipline at the time seems to give joy, but to give sorrow

"At the time, it seems that no discipline brings joy; rather,

discipline always brings sorrow"

it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "it produces the peaceful result of righteousness" or "it produces righteousness, which results in peace"

who have been trained by it

"who have been trained by discipline." The discipline or correction done by the Lord is spoken of as if it were the Lord himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has trained by disciplining them"

Hebrews 12:12

strengthen your hands that hang down and your weak knees.

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in

[Hebrews 12:1]

Hebrews 12:13

Make straight paths for your feet

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1]

straight paths

Living so as to honor and please God is spoken of as if it were a straight path to follow.

what is lame will not be sprained

In this metaphor of running a race, "lame" represents another person in the race who is hurt and wants to quit. This, in turn, represent the Christians themselves. Alternate translation: "whoever is weak and wants to quit will not sprain his ankle"

will not be sprained

Someone who stops obeying God is spoken of as if he injured his foot or ankle on a path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not sprain his ankle"

rather be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "instead become strong" or "instead God will heal him"

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with everyone

Here the abstract noun "peace" is spoken of as if it were something that a person must chase after and can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: "Try to live peacefully with everyone"

and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord

This can be expressed as a positive encouragement.

Alternate translation: "and work hard to be holy, because only holy people will see the Lord"

and holiness

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "and pursue holiness"

Hebrews 12:15

no one lacks God's grace

"no one receives God's grace and then lets go of it" or "no one rejects God's grace after first trusting in him"

that no root of bitterness grows up to cause trouble, so that many do not become defiled by it

Hateful or resentful attitudes are spoken of as if they were a plant bitter to the taste. Alternate translation: "that no one becomes like a bitter root, which when it grows causes trouble and harms many people"

Hebrews 12:16

General Information:

The man Esau, who was told about in the writings of Moses, refers to Isaac's first son and Jacob's brother.

Hebrews 12:17

he was rejected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his father, Isaac, refused to bless him"

because he found no opportunity for repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because it was not possible for him to repent" or "because it was not possible for him to change his decision"

even though he sought it with tears

Here "he" refers to Esau.

Hebrews 12:18

General Information:

Here "you" and refers to the Hebrew believers to whom the author wrote.

Connecting Statement:

The author gives a contrast between what believers in Moses's time had while living under the law and what present day believers have after coming to Jesus under the new covenant. He illustrates the experience of the Israelites by describing how God appeared to them at Mount Sinai.

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched

The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "For you have not come, as the people of Israel came, to a mountain that can be touched"

that can be touched

This means that believers in Christ have not come to a physical mountain like Mount Sinai that a person can touch or see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that a person can touch" or "that people can perceive with their senses"

Hebrews 12:19

You have not come to a trumpet blast

"You have not come to a place where there is the loud sound of a trumpet"

nor to a voice that speaks words whose hearers begged that not another word be spoken to them

Here "voice" refers to someone speaking. The phrase "be spoken" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "or where God was speaking in such a way that those who heard him begged him not to speak another word to them"

Hebrews 12:20

General Information:

The quotation comes from the writings of Moses.

For they could not endure

"For the Israelites could not endure"

what was commanded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God commanded"

it must be stoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you must stone it"

Hebrews 12:21

General Information:

God reveals in this passage in Hebrews that Moses said he

shook at seeing the mountain.

Hebrews 12:22

Mount Zion

The writer speaks of Mount Zion, the temple mount in Jerusalem, as if it were heaven itself, the residence of God. tens of thousands of angels

"an uncountable number of angels"

Hebrews 12:23

the firstborn

This speaks of believers in Christ as if they were firstborn sons. This emphasizes their special place and privilege as God's people.

who have been registered in heaven

"whose names are written in heaven." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose names God has written in heaven"

who have been made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has made perfect"

Hebrews 12:24

General Information:

The man Abel was the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Cain, also their son, murdered Abel.

the mediator of a new covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated this phrase in Hebrews 9:15.

the sprinkled blood that speaks better than Abel's blood

The blood of Jesus and the blood of Abel are spoken of as if they were people calling out. Alternate translation: "the sprinkled blood of Jesus that says better things than the blood of Abel"

the sprinkled blood

Here "blood" stands for Jesus's death, as Abel's blood stands for his death.

Hebrews 12:25

General Information:

The word "you" continues to refer to believers. The word "we" continues to refer to the writer and the readers who are believers.

Connecting Statement:

Having contrasted the Israelites' experience at Mount Sinai with the believers' experience after Christ died, the writer reminds believers that they have the same God who warns them today. This is the fifth main warning given to believers.

you do not refuse the one who is speaking

"you pay attention to the one who is speaking"

if they did not escape

The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "if the people of Israel did not escape judgment"

the one who warned them on earth

Possible meanings are 1) "Moses, who warned them here on earth" or 2) "God, who warned them at Mount Sinai"

if we turn away from the one who is warning

Disobeying God is spoken of as if it were changing direction and walking away from him. Alternate translation: "if we

disobey the one who is warning"

Hebrews 12:26

General Information:

This quotation is from the prophet Haggai in the Old Testament.

his voice shook the earth

"when God spoke, the sound of his voice caused the earth to shake"

shook ... shake

Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to [Hebrews 12:18-21](#) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God.

Hebrews 12:27

General Information:

Here the quotation from the prophet Haggai is repeated from the previous verse.

mean the removal of those things that can be shaken, that is, of the things

The abstract noun "removal" can be translated with the verb "remove." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "mean that God will remove the things that he can shake, that is, the things"

shaken

Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to [Hebrews 12:18-21](#) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God. See how you translated

"shook" and "shake" in [\[Hebrews 12:26\]](#).

that have been created

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has created"

the things that cannot be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that do not shake" or "the things that cannot shake" that cannot be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that do not shake"

Hebrews 12:28

receiving a kingdom

You can add the words "because we are" to make clear the logical connection between this statement and the next statement. Alternate translation: "because we are receiving a kingdom" or "because God is making us members of his kingdom"

let us be thankful

"let us give thanks"

with reverence and awe

The words "reverence" and "awe" share similar meanings and emphasize the greatness of reverence due to God.

Alternate translation: "with great respect and dread"

Hebrews 12:29

our God is a consuming fire

God is spoken of here as if he were a fire that can burn up anything.

Chapter 13

Hebrews 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes the list of exhortations he began in chapter 12. Then he asks the readers to pray for him and ends the letter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hospitality

God wants his people to invite other people to come to their homes to eat food and even to sleep. His people should do this even if they do not know well the people they are inviting. In the Old Testament, Abraham and his nephew Lot both showed hospitality to people they did not know. Abraham served a costly meal to them, and then Lot invited them to sleep in his house. They learned later that those people were actually angels.

Links:

[Hebrews 13:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 13:1

Connecting Statement:

In this closing section, the author gives specific instructions to believers on how they are supposed to live.

Let brotherly love continue

"Continue to show your love for other believers as you would for a member of your family"

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Be sure to remember"

hospitality for strangers

"to welcome and show kindness to strangers"

Hebrews 13:3

as if you were bound with them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if you were tied up along with them" or "as if you were in prison with them"

who are mistreated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom others are mistreating" or "who are suffering"

since you yourselves also are in the body

Possible meanings are 1) because you are human and can suffer likewise, or 2) as if you too were being mistreated.

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor by all

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"Everyone should hold marriage in honor"

let the marriage bed be kept pure

This refers to the act of sexual union as if it were the bed on which that act takes place. Alternate translation: "Let husbands and wives honor their marriage relationship to one another and engage in sexual activity with other people"

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conduct be free from the love of money

Here "conduct" refers to a person's character or the way he lives, and "free from the love of money" refers to not greatly desiring to have more money. A person who loves money is not content with the amount of money he has. Alternate translation: "Let your conduct not be affected by the love of money" or "Do not greatly wish to have more money"

Be content

"Be satisfied"

Hebrews 13:6

The Lord is my helper ... do to me

This is a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

I will not be afraid. What can a man do to me?

The author uses a question to emphasize that he does not fear people because God is helping him. Here "man" means any person in general. Alternate translation: "I will not fear what any person can do to me!"

Hebrews 13:7

spoke God's word to you

"told you what God has said"

the result of their conduct

"the outcome of the way they behave"

Imitate their faith

Here the trust in God and the way of life led by these leaders are spoken of as "their faith." Alternate translation: "Trust and obey God in the same way they do"

Hebrews 13:8

is the same yesterday, today, and forever

Here "yesterday" means all times in the past. Alternate translation: "is the same in the past, the present, and in the future forever"

Hebrews 13:9

Do not be carried away by various strange teachings

Being persuaded by various teachings is spoken of as if a person were being carried away by a force. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let others persuade you to believe their various strange teachings"

various strange teachings

"many, different teachings that are not the good news we told you"

it is good that the heart should be strengthened by grace, not by foods that do not help those who walk by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we become stronger when we think of how God has been kind to us, but we do not become stronger by obeying rules about food"

the heart should be strengthened

Here "heart" is a metonym for the "inner being." Alternate translation: "we should be strengthened inwardly"

foods

Here "foods" stands for rules about food.

those who walk by them

Living is spoken of as if it were walking. Alternate translation: "those who live by them" or "those who regulate their lives by them"

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar from which

Here, "altar" is a metaphor. The Christians did not literally have an altar, nor did they offer animal sacrifices. The author means that Christians have a relationship with God that the Jews who work in the tabernacle do not know about. Alternate translation: "We have an altar, so to speak, from which" or "What we have is like an altar from which"

Hebrews 13:11

General Information:

This verse refers to animal sacrifices made by believers in God in Old Testament times, which covered their sins temporarily until the death of Christ came about.

the blood of the animals killed for sins is brought by the high priest into the holy place

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the high priest brings into the holy place the blood of the animals that the priests killed for sins"

while their bodies are burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"while the priests burn the animals' bodies"

outside the camp

"away from where the people live"

Hebrews 13:12

Connecting Statement:

There is a comparison here between Jesus's sacrifice and the tabernacle sacrifices of the Old Testament.

So

"In the same way" or "Because the bodies of the sacrifices were burned outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:11)

outside the city gate

This stands for "outside the city."

Hebrews 13:13

Let us therefore go to him outside the camp

Obedying Jesus is spoken of as if a person were leaving the camp to go out where Jesus is.

bearing the disgrace he endured

Reproach is spoken of as if it were an object that has to be carried in one's hands or on one's back. Alternate translation: "while allowing others to treat us with disgust just like people insulted him"

Hebrews 13:14

looking for

"waiting for"

the one that is to come

"for the city that will come" or "the permanent city that will come"

Hebrews 13:15

sacrifices of praise

Praise is spoken of as if it were incense or sacrifices of animals.

praise that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name
Praise is spoken of as if it were fruit produced by the lips of people. Alternate translation: "praise that is produced by the lips of those who acknowledge his name"

lips that acknowledge his name

Here "lips" represents people who speak. Alternate translation: "the lips of those who acknowledge his name" or "those who acknowledge his name"

his name

A person's name represents that person. Alternate translation: "him"

Hebrews 13:16

Let us not forget doing good and sharing

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Let us always remember to do good and share our goods with one another"

with such sacrifices

Doing good and helping others is spoken of as if they were sacrifices on an altar.

Hebrews 13:17

keep watch over your souls

The believers' souls, that is, the believers' spiritual well-being, are spoken of as if they were objects or animals that guards could keep watch over.

not with groaning

Here "groaning" stands for sadness or grief.

Hebrews 13:18

Pray for us

Here "us" refers to the author and his companions, but not to the readers.

we are convinced that we have a good conscience

Here "good" stands for being free from guilt. Alternate translation: "we are certain that we have no guilt"

Hebrews 13:19

that I will be returned to you sooner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God will return me to you sooner" or "that God will quickly remove the things that stop my coming to you"

Hebrews 13:20

Connecting Statement:

The author closes with a blessing and greetings.

Now

This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author praises God and gives a final prayer for his readers.

brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus

"raised the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, to life"

from the dead

"from among all those who have died." The expression "the

dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of causing that person to become alive again.

the great shepherd of the sheep

Christ in his role of leader and protector of those who believe in him is spoken of as if he were a shepherd of sheep.

by the blood of the eternal covenant

Here "blood" stands for the death of Jesus, which is the basis for the covenant that will last forever between God and all believers in Christ.

Hebrews 13:21

equip you with everything good to do his will

"give you every good thing you need in order to do his will" or "make you capable of doing every good thing according to his will"

working in us

The word "us" refers to the author and the readers.

to whom be the glory forever

"whom all people will praise forever"

Hebrews 13:22

Now

This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author gives his final comments to his audience.

brothers

This refers to all the believers to whom he is writing, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

to bear with the word of encouragement that I have briefly written to you

"to patiently consider what I have just briefly written to encourage you"

the word of encouragement

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the encouraging message"

Hebrews 13:23

has been set free

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "is no longer in prison"

Hebrews 13:24

Those from Italy greet you

Possible meanings are 1) the author is not in Italy, but there is a group of believers with him who have come from Italy or 2) the author is in Italy while writing this letter.

Italy

This is the name of a region at that time. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

Hebrews 13:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.