

Language: English

Book: Acts

Acts

Chapter 1

¹ The former account I wrote, Theophilus, told all that Jesus began to do and to teach, ² until the day that he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself alive to them with many convincing proofs. For forty days he appeared to them, and he spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ When he was meeting together with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, about which he said, "You heard from me ⁵ that John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."

⁶ When they were assembled together they asked him, "Lord, is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has determined by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When the Lord Jesus had said these things, as they were looking up, he was raised up, and a cloud hid him from their eyes. ¹⁰ While they were looking intensely to heaven as he went, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. ¹¹ They said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will return in the same manner as you saw him going into heaven."

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain that is called Olives, which is near to Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ When they arrived, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were staying. They were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all were devoted with one purpose to prayer, together with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers, about 120 names, and said, ¹⁶ "Brothers, it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled, that the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who guided the ones who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was one of us and received a share of this ministry." ¹⁸ (Now this man bought a field with the earnings he received for his wickedness, and there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out. ¹⁹ All those living in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language "Akeldama," that is, "Field of Blood.") ²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

'Let his field be made desolate,
and do not let even one person live there';
'Let someone else take his position of leadership.'

²¹ It is necessary, therefore, that one of the men who accompanied us all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John to the day that he was taken up from us, become a witness with us of his resurrection." ²³ They put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ They prayed and said, "You, Lord, know the hearts of all people, so reveal which of these two is the one whom you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned away to go to his own place." ²⁶ They cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Acts 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter records an event, commonly known as the "Ascension," when Jesus returned to heaven after he became alive again. He will not come back until he returns at his "second coming." (See: heaven and resurrection)

The UDB has set the words "Dear Theophilus" apart from the other words. This is because English speakers often start letters this way. You might want to start this book the way people start letters in your culture.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the two quotes from Psalms in 1:20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptize

The word "baptize" has two meanings in this chapter. It refers to the water baptism of John and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1:5](#)). (See: baptize)

"He spoke about the kingdom of God"

Some scholars believe that when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God," he explained to the disciples why the kingdom of God did not come before he died. Others believe that the kingdom of God did begin while Jesus was alive and that here Jesus was explaining that it was beginning in a new form.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Akeldama

This is a phrase in Hebrew or Aramaic. Luke used Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told what it means. You should probably spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain the meaning.

Acts 1:1

The former account I wrote

The "former account" is the Gospel of Luke.

Theophilus

Luke wrote this book to a man named Theophilus. Some translations follow their own culture's way of addressing a letter and write "Dear Theophilus" at

the beginning of the sentence. Theophilus means "friend of God"

Acts 1:2

until the day that he was taken up

This refers to Jesus's ascension into heaven. Alternate translation: "until the day on which God took him up to heaven" or "until the day that he ascended into heaven"

he had given commands through the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit had led Jesus to instruct his apostles on certain things.

Acts 1:3

After his suffering

This refers to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

he presented himself alive to them

Jesus appeared to his apostles and to many other disciples.

Acts 1:4

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Jesus. Except where otherwise noted, the word "you" in the book of Acts is plural.

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to his followers after he had risen from the dead.

When he was meeting together with them

"When Jesus was meeting together with his apostles"

the promise of the Father, about which he said

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised to send, about whom Jesus said"

Acts 1:5

John indeed baptized with water ... baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus contrasts how John baptized people in water with how God would baptize believers in the Holy Spirit.

John indeed baptized with water

"John indeed baptized people with water"

you will be baptized

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

Acts 1:6

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel
"will you now make Israel a great kingdom again"

Acts 1:7

the times or the seasons

Possible meanings are 1) the words "times" and "seasons" refer to different kinds of time. Alternate translation: "the general period of time or the specific date" or 2) the two words are basically synonymous. Alternate translation: "the exact time"

Acts 1:8

you will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses

The apostles will receive power that will enable them to be witnesses for Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will empower you ... to be my witnesses"

to the ends of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) "all over the world" or 2) "to the places on earth that are farthest away"

Acts 1:9

as they were looking up

"as they watched." The apostles "were looking" at Jesus because Jesus rose into the sky. Alternate translation: "as they were looking up at the sky"

he was raised up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he rose up into the sky" or "God raised him up into the sky"

a cloud hid him from their eyes

"a cloud blocked their view so that they could no longer see him"

Acts 1:10

looking intensely to heaven

"staring at the sky" or "gazing at the sky"

Acts 1:11

of Galilee

"from Galilee"

will return in the same manner

Jesus ascended into the sky, through the clouds, and the clouds hid him [Acts 1:9](#). He will return from the sky, through (or on) the clouds, and people will be able to see him.

Acts 1:12

Then they returned

"The apostles returned"

a Sabbath day's journey

This refers to the distance which, according to Rabbinical tradition, a person was allowed to walk

on a Sabbath day. Alternate translation: "about one kilometer away"

Acts 1:13

When they arrived

"When they reached their destination." Verse 12 says they were returning to Jerusalem.

the upper chamber

"the room on the upper level of the house"

Acts 1:14

They all were devoted ... to prayer

They all spent much time ... praying

with one purpose

The phrase "with one purpose" translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 1:15

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the time that Peter and the other believers were staying together in the upper room.

In those days

These words mark the beginning of a new part of the story. They refer to the period of time after Jesus ascended. On many days after Jesus ascended, the disciples met in the upper chamber. Alternate translation: "During that time"

120 names

"one hundred and twenty names"

names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people whose names they were. Alternate translation: "people"

in the midst of the brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers and includes both men and women.

Acts 1:16

it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that we read about in scripture had to take place"

by the mouth of David

The word "mouth" refers to the words that David wrote. Alternate translation: "through the words of David"

Acts 1:17

General Information:

Although Peter is addressing the entire group of people, here the word "us" refers only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

In verse 17 Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

Acts 1:18

General Information:

The author begins to tell the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Now this man

The words "this man" refers to Judas Iscariot.

the earnings he received for his wickedness

"the money that he earned from the evil thing that he did." The words "his wickedness" refer to Judas Iscariot's betraying Jesus to the people who killed him.

there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out

This suggests that Judas fell from a high place, rather than just falling down. The fall was severe enough to cause his body to burst open. Other passages of scripture mention that he hanged himself.

Acts 1:19

General Information:

The author finishes telling the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Field of Blood

When the people living in Jerusalem heard of the way in which Judas died, they renamed the field.

Acts 1:20

General Information:

Based on the situation with Judas that Peter just recounted, he recalls two Psalms of David that relate to the incident. The quote ends at the end of this verse.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

For it is written in the Book of Psalms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For David wrote in the Book of Psalms"

Let his field be made desolate, and do not let even one person live there

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words.

Let his field be made desolate

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "field" refers to the field where Judas died or 2) that the word "field" refers to Judas's dwelling place and is a metaphor for his family line.

be made desolate
"become empty"

Acts 1:21

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the apostles and does not include the audience to whom Peter is speaking.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

It is necessary, therefore

Based on the scriptures that he quoted and on what Judas had done, Peter tells the group what they must do.

the Lord Jesus went in and out among us

Going in and out among a group of people is a metaphor for openly being part of that group. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus lived among us"

Acts 1:22

beginning from the baptism of John ... become a witness with us of his resurrection

The qualification for the new apostle that began with the words "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us" in verse 21 ends here. The subject of the verb "become" is thus "one of the men." Here is a reduced form of the sentence: "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us ... beginning from the baptism of John ... must become a witness with us."

beginning from the baptism of John

The noun "baptism" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings: 1) "beginning from when John baptized Jesus" or 2) "beginning from when John baptized people"

to the day that he was taken up from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the day when Jesus left us and rose up to heaven" or "until the day that God took him up from us"

become a witness with us of his resurrection

"must begin to testify with us about his resurrection"

Acts 1:23

They put forward two men

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers who were present. Alternate translation: "They proposed two men who fulfilled the requirements that Peter listed"

Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus

This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Joseph, whom people also called Barsabbas and Justus"

Acts 1:24

They prayed and said

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers, but it was probably one of the apostles who spoke these words. Alternate translation: "The believers prayed together and one of the apostles said"

You, Lord, know the hearts of all people

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: "You, Lord, know the thoughts and motives of everyone"

Acts 1:25

to take the place in this ministry and apostleship

Here the word "apostleship" defines what kind of "ministry" this is. Alternate translation: "to take Judas's place in this apostolic ministry" or "to take Judas's place in serving as an apostle"

from which Judas turned away

Here the expression "turned away" means that Judas stopped performing this ministry. Alternate translation: "which Judas stopped fulfilling"

to go to his own place

This phrase refers to Judas's death and likely to his judgment after death. Alternate translation: "to go where he belongs"

Acts 1:26

They cast lots for them

The apostles cast lots to decide between Joseph and Matthias.

the lot fell to Matthias

The lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas.

he was numbered with the eleven apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers considered him to be an apostle with the other eleven"

Chapter 2

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in the same place. ² Suddenly a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ There appeared to them tongues like fire that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them the ability.

⁵ Now there were Jews who were living in Jerusalem, godly men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When this sound was heard, the multitude came together and was confused because everyone heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and marveled; they said, "Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya toward Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our languages about the mighty works of God." ¹² They were all amazed and perplexed; they said to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocked and said, "They are full of new wine."

¹⁴ But Peter stood with the eleven, raised his voice, and declared to them, "Men of Judea and all of you who live at Jerusalem, let this be known to you; pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk as you assume, for it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'It will be in the last days,' God says,
 'I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.
 Your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
 your young men will see visions,
 and your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Surely on my servants
 and my female servants in those days
 I will pour out my Spirit, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the sky above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, fire, and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood
 before the great and remarkable
 day of the Lord comes.

²¹ It will be that everyone who calls
 on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

²² Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

²³ This man was handed over by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge; and you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross. ²⁴ But God raised him up, freeing him from the agonies of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says about him,

'I saw the Lord always before my face,
 for he is beside my right hand
 so that I should not be moved.

²⁶ Therefore my heart was glad
 and my tongue rejoiced.
 Also, my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
 neither will you allow
 your Holy One to see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;
 you will make me full of gladness with your face.'

²⁹ Brothers, it is proper for me to speak to you confidently about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne. ³¹ He saw what was to happen in the future and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay.

³² This Jesus—God raised him up, of which we all are witnesses. ³³ Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you see and hear.

³⁴ For David did not ascend to the heaven, but he says,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand

³⁵ until I make your enemies
the footstool for your feet.'"

³⁶ Therefore, let all the house of Israel certainly know that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced in their hearts, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what must we do?"

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are far off, as many people as the Lord our God will call." ⁴⁰ With many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹ Then they received his word and were baptized, and there were added in that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

⁴³ Fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and they sold their property and possessions and distributed them to all, according to the needs anyone had. ⁴⁶ So day after day they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple. They also broke bread in homes, and they shared food together with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people, and every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:17-21, 25-28, and 34-35.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 2:31.

The events described in this chapter are commonly called "Pentecost." Many people believe that the church began to exist when the Holy Spirit came to live inside believers at Pentecost.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

The word "tongues" has two meanings in this chapter. Luke describes what came down from heaven (Acts 2:3)(../act/02/03.md) as tongues that looked like fire. This is different from "a tongue of flame," which is a fire that looks like a tongue. Luke also uses the word "tongues" to describe the languages that the people spoke after the Holy Spirit filled them ([Acts 2:4).

Last days

No one knows for sure when the "last days" ([Acts 2:17](#)) began. Your translation should not say more than the ULB does about this. (See: lastday)

Baptize

The word "baptize" in this chapter refers to Christian baptism (Acts 2:38-41). Though the event described in [Acts 2:1-11](#) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in [Acts 1:5](#), the word "baptize" here does not refer to that event. (See: baptize)

The prophecy of Joel

Many of the things that Joel said would happen did happen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), but some things Joel spoke of have not happened yet (Acts 2:19-20). (See: prophet)

Wonders and signs

These words refer to things that only God could do, things that showed that Jesus was who the disciples said he was.

Acts 2:1

General Information:

This is a new event; it is now the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover. Here the word "they" refers to the apostles and the other 120 believers that Luke mentions in Acts 1:15.

Acts 2:2

Suddenly

This word explains that no one expected to hear the sound or to have it fill the house.

a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven

Possible meanings are 1) "heaven" refers to the place where God lives. Alternate translation: "a sound came from heaven" or 2) "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sound came from the sky"

the whole house

This may have been a house or a larger building.

Acts 2:3

There appeared to them tongues like fire

These might have been something that looked like tongues or like fire, not actual tongues or fire. Possible meanings are 1) tongues that looked like they were made of fire or 2) small flames of fire that looked like tongues. When fire burns in a small space, such as on a lamp, the flame can be shaped like a tongue.

that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them

This means that the "tongues like fire" spread out so that there was one on each person.

Acts 2:4

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit filled all of those who were there and they"

speak in other tongues

They were speaking in languages that they did not already know.

as the Spirit gave them the ability

The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak; they were dependent on the Spirit to speak in different languages.

Acts 2:5

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the believers; the word "his" refers to each person in the multitude. Verse 5 gives background information about the large number of Jews who were living in Jerusalem, many of whom were present during this event.

godly men

Here "godly men" refers to people who were devout in their worship of God and tried to obey all of the Jewish laws.

every nation under heaven

"every nation in the world." The word "every" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the people came from many different nations. Alternate translation: "many different nations"

Acts 2:6

When this sound was heard

This refers to the sound that was similar to a strong wind. Alternate translation: "When they heard this sound"

the multitude

"the large crowd of people"

Acts 2:7

They were amazed and marveled

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the intensity of amazement. Alternate translation: "They were greatly amazed"

Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

The people ask this question to express their amazement. The question could be changed to an exclamation. Alternate translation: "All of these Galileans could not possibly know our languages!"

Acts 2:8

Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born?

Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses how amazed they were or 2) this is a real question for which the people wanted an answer.

in our own language in which we were born

"in our own languages that we have learned from birth"

Acts 2:9

Parthians ... Medes ... Elamites

These are names of people groups.

Mesopotamia ... Judea ... Cappadocia ... Pontus ... Asia

These are names of large areas of land.

Acts 2:10

Phrygia ... Pamphylia ... Egypt ... Libya ... Cyrene

These are names of large areas of land.

Acts 2:11

Cretans ... Arabians

These are names of people groups.

proselytes

converts to the Jewish religion

Acts 2:12

amazed and perplexed

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that the people could not understand what was happening. Alternate translation: "surprised and confused"

Acts 2:13

They are full of new wine

Some people accuse the believers of having drunk too much wine. Alternate translation: "They are drunk"

new wine

This refers to wine that is in the process of fermentation.

Acts 2:14

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins his speech to the Jews who were there on the Day of Pentecost.

stood with the eleven

All the apostles stood up in support of Peter's statement.

raised his voice

This is an idiom for "spoke loudly."

declared to them

Made a formal, important speech to them. See how you translated "make declarations" in Acts 2:4.

let this be known to you

This means that Peter is about to explain the meaning of what the people had witnessed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "know this" or "let me explain this to you"

pay attention to my words

Peter was referring to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to what I am saying"

Acts 2:15

it is only the third hour of the day

"It is only nine o'clock in the morning." Peter expected his audience to know that people do not get drunk that early in the day.

Acts 2:16

General Information:

Here Peter tells them a passage about which the prophet Joel wrote in the Old Testament that relates to what is happening with the languages in which the believers spoke. This is written in the form of poetry as well as being a quotation.

this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what God told the prophet Joel to write" or "this is that which the prophet Joel spoke"

Acts 2:17

It will be

"This is what will happen" or "This is what I will do"

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit abundantly to all flesh"

all flesh

This is a hyperbolic metonym that refers to all people by speaking of them as all living creatures, who have flesh. Alternate translation: "all people"

Acts 2:18

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to quote the prophet Joel.

my servants and my female servants

"both my male and my female servants." These words emphasize that God will pour out his Spirit on all of his servants, both men and women.

I will pour out my Spirit

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:17]

Acts 2:19

vapor of smoke

"thick smoke" or "clouds of smoke"

Acts 2:20

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting the prophet Joel.

The sun will be turned to darkness

This means that the sun will appear to be dark instead of light. Alternate translation: "The sun will become dark"

the moon to blood

This means that the moon will appear to be red like blood. Alternate translation: "the moon will be turned to blood" or "the moon will appear to be red"

the great and remarkable day

The words "great" and "remarkable" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of greatness. Alternate translation: "the very great day"

remarkable

great and beautiful

Acts 2:21

everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will save everyone who calls on him"

Acts 2:22

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

hear these words

"listen to what I am about to say"

accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs

This means that God proved that he had appointed Jesus for his mission, and proved who he was by his many miracles.

Acts 2:23

by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge

The nouns "plan" and "foreknowledge" can be translated as verbs. This means that God planned out and knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because God planned out and knew beforehand everything that would happen"

This man was handed over

Possible meanings: 1) "you handed Jesus over into the hands of his enemies" or 2) "Judas betrayed Jesus to you."

you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross

Although "lawless men" actually crucified Jesus, Peter accuses the crowd of having killed him because they demanded his death.

by the hand of lawless men

Here "hand" refers to the actions of the lawless men. Alternate translation: "through the actions of lawless men" or "by what lawless men did"

lawless men

Possible meanings are 1) the unbelieving Jews who accused Jesus of crimes or 2) the Roman soldiers who performed the execution of Jesus.

Acts 2:24

But God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "But God caused him to live again"

freeing him from the agonies of death

He speaks of the agonies of dying as if God were freeing Christ from ropes that were binding Jesus. Alternate translation: "ending the pains of death"

for him to be held by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for death to hold him"

for him to be held by it

Peter speaks of Christ remaining dead as if death were a person who held him captive. Alternate translation: "for him to remain dead"

Acts 2:25

General Information:

Here Peter quotes a passage that David wrote in a Psalm which relates to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "I" and "my" refer to Jesus and the words "Lord" and "he" refer to God.

For David says about him, 'I saw

The context makes it plain that this is an elliptical way of saying that David was speaking as if David were the Messiah. Alternate translation: "For David spoke these words as if he were the Christ: 'I saw"

before my face

"in front of me." Alternate translation: "in my presence" or "with me"

beside my right hand

To be at someone's "right hand" often means to be in a position to help and sustain. Alternate translation: "right beside me" or "with me to help me"

I should not be moved

Here the word "moved" means to be troubled. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will not be able to cause me trouble" or "nothing will trouble me"

Acts 2:26

my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced

People consider the "heart" the center of emotions and the "tongue" voices those emotions. Alternate translation: "I was glad and rejoiced"

my flesh will live in hope

Possible meanings of the phrase "my flesh" are 1) it indicates that the writer is a mortal who will die. Alternate translation: "even though I am only mortal, I will live in hope" or 2) it is a synecdoche for the writer's entire person. Alternate translation: "I will live in hope"

will live in hope

Here the word "hope" refers to a person's confidence that what he desires will happen. Since the speaker hoped that God would rescue him, "in hope" could be translated as "in confidence in God." The phrase "live in hope" can also be translated with the phrases "confidently expect," "confidently wait," or "trust." Alternate translation: "will live with confidence in God" or "will confidently wait for God to rescue me"

Acts 2:27

General Information:

Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "my," "Holy One," and "me" refer to Jesus and the words "you" and "your" refer to God.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting David.

neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay

The Messiah, Jesus, refers to himself with the words "your Holy One." Alternate translation: "neither will you allow me, your Holy One, to see decay"

to see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. Alternate translation: "to decay"

Acts 2:28

the ways of life

"the ways that lead to life"

full of gladness with your face

Here the word "face" refers to the presence of God. Alternate translation: "very glad when I see you" or "very glad when I am in your presence"

gladness

joy, happiness

Acts 2:29

General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to David.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech to the Jews that surround him and the other believers in Jerusalem, which he began in Acts 1:16.

Brothers, it

"My fellow Jews, it"

it is proper for me to speak

Or "it is possible." He is able to speak because it is proper for him to do so.

he both died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died and people buried him"

Acts 2:30

he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne
"God would set one of David's fruit upon David's throne." Alternate translation: "God would appoint one of David's fruit to be king in David's place"

one of the fruit of his loins
This is a metaphor for a child or other descendant. Alternate translation: "one of his children" or "one of his descendants"

Acts 2:31

he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Neither did God abandon him to Hades nor did his flesh see decay" or "God did not abandon him to Hades, and his flesh did not see decay"

did his flesh see decay
Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:27]

Acts 2:32

This Jesus—God raised him up
Peter talks again about Jesus. Alternate Translation: "It is this Jesus whom God raised up" or "God raised up this Jesus"

God raised him up
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

Acts 2:33

having been exalted to the right hand of God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has exalted Jesus up to his right hand"

having been exalted to the right hand of God
"Right hand of God" here is an idiom that means that Christ will rule as God, with God's authority. Alternate translation: "Christ is in the position of God"

he has poured out what
Here the words "poured out" mean that Jesus, who is God, made these events to happen. It is implicit that he did this by giving the Holy Spirit to the believers. Alternate translation: "he has caused to happen these things that"

has poured out
"has given generously and abundantly." See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 2:17. Alternate translation: "given abundantly"

Acts 2:34

General Information:
Peter again quotes one of David's Psalms. David is not speaking of himself in this Psalm. "The Lord" and "my" refer to God; "my Lord" and "your" refer to Jesus the Messiah.

Connecting Statement:
Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

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

Acts 2:35

until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet
This means that God will completely defeat the Messiah's enemies and make them subject to him. Alternate translation: "until I make you victorious over all of your enemies"

Acts 2:36

all the house of Israel
This refers to the entire nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "every Israelite"

Acts 2:37

General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to the people in the crowd to whom Peter spoke.

Connecting Statement:
The Jews respond to Peter's speech and Peter answers them.

when they heard this
"when the people heard what Peter had said"

they were pierced in their hearts, and said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said"

pierced in their hearts
This means that the people felt guilty and became very sad. Alternate translation: "deeply troubled"

Acts 2:38

be baptized
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow us to baptize you"

in the name of Jesus Christ

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of" Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus Christ"

Acts 2:39

all who are far off

This means either 1) "all people who live far away" or 2) "all people who are far from God."

Acts 2:40

he testified and exhorted them

"he seriously told them." Here the word "testified" and "begged" share similar meanings and emphasize that Peter urged them strongly to respond to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "he strongly urged them"

exhorted

or "pleaded with"

Be saved from this perverse generation

The implication is that God will punish "this perverse generation." Alternate translation: "Be saved from the punishment that these wicked people will suffer"

Be saved

Possible meanings are 1) Peter was urging people to let God save them. Alternate translation: "Let God save you," or 2) Peter was simply urging them in a general way to avoid being punished. Alternate translation: "Save yourselves" or "Flee" or "Escape"

Acts 2:41

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that happened on the Day of Pentecost.

they received his word

Here the word "received" means that they accepted what Peter said to be true. Alternate translation: "they believed what Peter said"

were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people baptized them"

there were added in that day about three thousand souls

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about three thousand souls joined the believers on that day"

about three thousand souls

Here the word "souls" refers to people. Alternate translation: "about 3,000 people"

Acts 2:42

Connecting Statement:

This section explains how the believers continued to live after the Day of Pentecost.

the breaking of bread

Bread was part of their meals. These words could refer to 1) any meals they might eat together. Alternate translation: "eating meals together" or 2) meals they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "eating the Lord's Supper together"

Acts 2:43

Fear came upon every soul

Here the word "Fear" refers to deep respect and awe for God. The word "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "Each person felt a deep respect and awe for God"

many wonders and signs were done through the apostles

Possible meanings are 1) "the apostles performed many wonders and signs" or 2) "God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles"

wonders and signs

"miraculous deeds and supernatural events." See how you translated this in Acts 2:22.

Acts 2:44

All who believed were together

Possible meanings are 1) "All of them believed the same thing" or 2) "All who believed were together in the same place."

had all things in common

"shared their belongings with one another"

Acts 2:45

property and possessions

"land and things they owned"

distributed them to all

Here the word "them" refers to the profit that they made from selling their property and possessions. Alternate translation: "distributed the proceeds to all"

according to the needs anyone had

They distributed the proceeds that they earned from selling their property and possessions to any believer who had a need.

Acts 2:46

they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple
You may need to supply the words that have been omitted in this ellipse. What they devoted themselves to doing is stated in verse 42. Alternate translation: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching with one purpose in the temple"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

They also broke bread in homes

Bread was part of their meals. Alternate translation: "They also ate meals together in their homes"

Acts 2:47

praising God and having favor with all the people

"praising God. All the people approved of them"

those who were being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the Lord saved"

Chapter 3

¹ Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² Now a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. They would place him there every day so he could ask those who were going into the temple for alms. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for alms. ⁴ Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, "Look at us." ⁵ The lame man looked at them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I will give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, Peter raised him up, and immediately the man's feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ Leaping up, the lame man stood and began to walk; and he entered with Peter and John into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ They noticed that it was the man who had been asking people for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement because of what had happened to him.

¹¹ As he was holding on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly marveling. ¹² When Peter saw this, he answered the people, "You Israelite men, why do you marvel? Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness? ¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. He is the one whom you handed over and rejected before the face of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ You rejected the Holy and Righteous One, and you asked instead for a murderer to be given to you. ¹⁵ You killed the Founder of life, whom God raised from the dead—and we are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ On the basis of faith in his name, his name made this man, whom you see and know, strong. The faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. ¹⁷ Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But the things which God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he has now fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent, therefore, and turn, so that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you, Jesus. ²¹ He is the One heaven must receive until the time of the restoration of all things, about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets. ²² Moses indeed said, 'The Lord God will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ It will happen that every person who does not listen to that prophet will be completely destroyed from among the people.' ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who came after him, they spoke out and announced these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, as he said to Abraham, 'In your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.' ²⁶ After God raised up his servant, he sent him to you first, in order to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Acts 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The covenant God made with Abraham

This chapter explains that Jesus came to the Jews because God was fulfilling part of the covenant he had made with Abraham. Peter thought that the Jews were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus, but he wanted them to understand that Jesus, by living and dying, had fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and that if they repented, God would forgive them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You delivered up"

The Romans were the ones who killed Jesus, but they killed him because the Jews captured him, brought him to the Romans, and told the Romans to kill him. For this reason Peter thought that they were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus. But he tells them that they are also the first ones to whom God has sent Jesus's followers to invite them to repent ([Acts 3:26](#)). (See: repent)

Acts 3:1

Connecting Statement:

One day Peter and John go to the temple.

into the temple

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "to the temple courtyard" or "into the temple area"

Acts 3:2

a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying a man who was lame from from his mother's womb"

from his mother's womb

"ever since he was born"

the temple gate called Beautiful

This was one of the gates in the high, strong wall that surrounded the temple. People sometimes gathered near the gate.

lame

unable to walk

Acts 3:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:4

Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said

Both Peter and John looked at the man, but only Peter spoke.

fastening his eyes upon him

Possible meanings are 1) "looking directly at him" or 2) "looking intently at him"

Acts 3:5

The lame man looked at them

Here the word "looked" means to pay attention to something. Alternate translation: "The lame man paid close attention to them"

Acts 3:6

Silver and gold I do not have

"I do not own any silver or gold"

Silver and gold

These words refer to money.

what I do have

It is understood that Peter has the ability to heal the man.

In the name of Jesus Christ

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "With the authority of Jesus Christ"

Acts 3:7

Peter raised him up

"Peter caused him to stand"

Acts 3:8

he entered ... into the temple

He did not go inside the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "he entered ... the temple area" or "he entered ... into the temple courtyard"

Acts 3:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:10

noticed that it was the man

"realized that it was the man" or "recognized him as the man"

the Beautiful Gate

This was the name of one of the entrances to the temple area. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 3:2.

they were filled with wonder and amazement

Here the words "wonder" and "amazement" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of the people's amazement. Alternate translation: "they were extremely amazed"

Acts 3:11

General Information:

The phrase "in the porch that is called Solomon's" makes it clear that they were not inside the temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Peter and John but not to the crowd to whom Peter is talking.

Connecting Statement:

After healing the man who could not walk, Peter talks to the people.

the porch that is called Solomon's

"Solomon's Porch." This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. It was in the temple courtyard.

greatly marveling

"extremely surprised"

Acts 3:12

When Peter saw this

Here the word "this" refers to the amazement of the people.

You Israelite men

"Fellow Israelites." Peter was addressing the crowd.

why do you marvel?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that they should not be surprised by what had happened. Alternate translation: "you should not be surprised."

Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that the people should not think that he and John had healed the man by their own abilities. This could be written as two statements. Alternate translation: "Do not fix your eyes on us. We did not make him walk by our own power or godliness."

fix your eyes on us

This means that they looked intently at them without stopping. Alternate translation: "stare at us" or "look at us"

Acts 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

rejected before the face of Pilate

Here the phrase "before the face of" means "in the presence of." Alternate translation: "rejected in Pilate's presence"

when he had decided to release him

"when Pilate had decided to release Jesus"

Acts 3:14

for a murderer to be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to release a murderer to you"

Acts 3:15

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes just Peter and John.

the Founder of life

This refers to Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who gives people eternal life" or 2) "the ruler of life" or 3) "the one who leads people to life"

Acts 3:16

On the basis of faith in his name

Possible meanings are 1) this is the reason the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "Because of faith in his name" or 2) this is how the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "By faith in his name"

On the basis of faith in his name

The word "his" refers to the Founder of life, Jesus. The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) the lame man had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because he believed in Jesus name" or 2) Peter and John, and perhaps the lame man, had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because we believed in Jesus's name"

his name

The phrase "his name" is a metonym either for Jesus or for Jesus's power.

made this man ... strong

"made this man ... well"

The faith that is through Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this is the faith that Jesus enables people to have. Alternate translation: "The faith that comes from Jesus" or 2) this is faith in Jesus.

Acts 3:17

Now

Here Peter shifts the audience's attention from the lame man and continues to talk to them directly.

you acted in ignorance

Possible meanings are 1) that the people did not know that Jesus was the Messiah or 2) that the people did not understand the significance of what they were doing.

Acts 3:18

God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets

When the prophets spoke, it was as though God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "God foretold by telling all of the prophets what to speak"

God foretold

"God spoke about ahead of time" or "God told about before they happened"

the mouth of all the prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of all the prophets"

Acts 3:19

and turn

"and turn to the Lord." Here "turn" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and start obeying the Lord"

so that your sins may be blotted out

Here "blotted out" is a metaphor for forgiving. Sins are spoken of as if they are written in a book and God erases them from the book when he forgives them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God will forgive you for sinning against him"

Acts 3:20

times of refreshing

Possible meanings are 1) "times when God will strengthen your spirits" or 2) "times when God will revive you"

from the presence of the Lord

Here the words "presence of the Lord" is a metonym for the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "from the Lord"

that he may send the Christ

"that he may again send the Christ." This refers to Christ's coming again.

who has been appointed for you

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom he has appointed for you"

Acts 3:21

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech that he began in Acts 3:12 to the Jews who stood in the temple area.

He is the One heaven must receive

"He is the One heaven must welcome." Peter speaks of heaven as if it were a person who welcomes Jesus into his home.

heaven must receive until

This means that it is necessary for Jesus to remain in heaven because that is what God has planned.

until the time of the restoration of all things

Possible meanings are 1) "until the time when God will restore all things" or 2) "until the time when God will fulfill everything that he foretold."

about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets

When the prophets spoke long ago, it was as if God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "about which things God spoke long ago by telling his holy prophets to speak about them"

the mouth of his holy prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of his holy prophets"

Acts 3:22

General Information:

Peter begins to quote something Moses told the Israelites before the Messiah came.

will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers

"will cause one of your brothers to become a true prophet, and everyone will know about him"

your brothers

"your nation"

Acts 3:23

that prophet will be completely destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that prophet, God will completely destroy"

Acts 3:24

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

Yes, and all the prophets

"In fact, all the prophets." Here the word "Yes" adds emphasis to what follows.

from Samuel and those who came after him

"beginning with Samuel and continuing with the prophets who lived after he did"

these days

"these times" or "the things that are happening now"

Acts 3:25

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant

Here the word "sons" refers to heirs who will receive what the prophets and the covenant promised. Alternate translation: "You are the heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant"

In your seed

"Because of your offspring"

all the families of the earth will be blessed

Here the word "families" refers to people groups or nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the people groups in the world"

Acts 3:26

After God raised up his servant

"After God caused Jesus to become his servant and made him famous"

his servant

This refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

turning every one of you from your wickedness

Here "turning ... from" is a metaphor for causing someone stop doing something. Alternate translation: "causing every one of you to stop doing wicked things" or "causing every one of you to repent from your wickedness"

Chapter 4

¹ As Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them. ² They were deeply troubled because Peter and John were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ They laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next morning, since it was now evening. ⁴ But many of the people who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men who believed was about five thousand.

⁵ It came about on the next day that their rulers, elders, and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and all who were relatives of the high priest. ⁷ When they had set Peter and John in their midst, they asked them, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "You rulers of the people, and elders, ⁹ if we are on trial today concerning a good deed done to a sick man, and by what means this man was healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that this man stands before you healthy in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹ Jesus Christ is the stone which you builders rejected but which has been made the cornerstone. ¹² There is no salvation in any other person, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men, they were surprised, becoming aware that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ Because they saw the man who was healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against this. ¹⁵ But after they had commanded the apostles to leave the council meeting, they talked among themselves. ¹⁶ They said, "What should we do with these men? For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it spreads no further among the people, let us warn them not to speak anymore to anyone in this name." ¹⁸ Then they called them in and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is proper in the sight of God to obey you rather than him, you judge. ²⁰ We are not able to stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." ²¹ After further warning Peter and John, they let them go. They were unable to find any excuse to punish them, because all of the people were glorifying God for what had been done. ²² The man who had experienced this sign of healing was more than forty years old.

²³ After they were set free, Peter and John came to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard it, they raised their voices with one purpose to God and said, "Lord, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David,

'Why did the Gentile nations rage,
and the peoples imagine useless things?'

²⁶ You said,
'The kings of the earth set themselves together,
and the rulers gathered together
against the Lord, and against his Christ.'

²⁷ Indeed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, gathered together in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They gathered together to do all that your hand and your plan had decided in advance would happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, look upon their warnings and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and to give signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ After they had prayed, the place where they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

³² The great number of those who believed were of one heart and soul. No one said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ With great power the apostles were proclaiming their testimony about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

³⁴ There was no person among them who lacked anything, for all who owned title to lands or houses sold

them and brought the money from the things that were sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each one according to their need.

³⁶ Joseph, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite, a man from Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:25-26.

Special concepts in this chapter

Unity

The first Christians wanted very much to be united. They wanted to believe the same things and share everything they owned and help those who needed help.

"Signs and wonders"

This phrase refers to things that only God can do. The Christians wanted God to do what only he can do so that people would believe that what they said about Jesus was true.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Cornerstone

The cornerstone was the first piece of stone that people put down when they were building a building. This is a metaphor for the most important part of something, the part on which everything depends. To say that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church is to say that nothing in the church is more important than Jesus and that everything about the church depends on Jesus. (See: and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)). With these words Peter was saying that no other person who has ever been on the earth or will ever be on earth can save people.

Acts 4:1

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders arrest Peter and John after Peter's having healed the man who was born lame.

came upon them

"approached them" or "came to them"

Acts 4:2

They were deeply troubled

"They were very angry." The Sadducees, in particular, would have been angry about what Peter and John were saying because they did not believe in resurrection.

proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead

Peter and John were saying that God would raise people from the dead in the same way as he had raised Jesus from among the dead. Translate this in

a way that allows "the resurrection" to refer to both Jesus's resurrection and the general resurrection of other people.

from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Acts 4:3

They laid hands on them

"The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John"

since it was now evening

It was common practice not to question people at night.

Acts 4:4

the number of the men who believed

This refers only to men and does not include how many women or children believed.

was about five thousand

"grew to about five thousand"

Acts 4:5

General Information:

Here the word "their" refers to the Jewish people as a whole.

Connecting Statement:

The rulers question Peter and John, who answer without fear.

It came about ... that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

their rulers, elders, and scribes

This is a reference to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling court, which consisted of these three groups of people.

Acts 4:6

John, and Alexander

These two men were members of the high priest's family. This is not the same John as the apostle.

Acts 4:7

By what power

"Who gave you power"

in what name

Here the word "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by whose authority"

Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:4]

Acts 4:9

we are on trial today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are questioning us today"

by what means this man was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what means we have made this man well"

Acts 4:10

let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May all of you and all of the people of Israel know this"

to you all and to all the people of Israel

"to you who are questioning us and to all the other people of Israel"

in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"

whom God raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again"

Acts 4:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter completes his speech to the Jewish religious rulers that he began in Acts 4:8.

Jesus Christ is the stone ... which has been made the cornerstone

Peter is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, as a cornerstone in a building is important.

you builders rejected

"you builders thought was worth nothing"

Acts 4:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter as well as those to whom he is speaking.

There is no salvation in any other person

The noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "He is the only person who is able to save"

no other name under heaven given among men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no other name under heaven that God has given among men"

no other name ... given among men by which

The phrase "name ... given among men" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no other person under heaven, who is given among men, by whom"

under heaven

This is a way of referring to everywhere in the world. Alternate translation: "in the world"

by which we must be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which can save us" or "who can save us"

Acts 4:13

General Information:

Here the second instance of "they" refers to Peter and John. All other occurrences of the word "they" in this section refer to the Jewish leaders.

the boldness of Peter and John

Here the abstract noun "boldness" refers to the way in which Peter and John responded to the Jewish leaders, and can be translated with an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "how boldly Peter and John had spoken" or "how bold Peter and John were"

boldness

bravery, courage, lack of fear. A person with boldness is not afraid.

realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men

The Jewish leaders "realized" this because of the way Peter and John spoke.

and realized

"and understood"

ordinary, uneducated men

The words "ordinary" and "uneducated" share similar meanings. They emphasize that Peter and John had received no formal training in Jewish law.

Acts 4:14

the man who was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man whom Peter and John had healed"

nothing to say against this

"nothing to say against Peter and John's healing of the man." Here the word "this" refers to what Peter and John had done.

Acts 4:15

the apostles

This refers to Peter and John.

Acts 4:16

What should we do with these men?

The Jewish leaders ask this question out of frustration because they could not think of what to do with Peter and John. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that we can do with these men!"

For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God has done a remarkable sign through them, and everyone who lives in Jerusalem has seen it" or "For everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have done a remarkable sign"

sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This is a generalization. It may also be an exaggeration to show that the leaders think that this is a very big problem. Alternate translation: "many of the people who live in Jerusalem" or "people who live throughout Jerusalem"

Acts 4:17

in order that it spreads no further

Here the word "it" refers to any miracles or teaching Peter and John might continue to do. Alternate translation: "in order that news of this miracle spreads no further" or "in order that no more people hear about this miracle"

not to speak anymore to anyone in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "not to speak anymore to anyone about this person, Jesus"

Acts 4:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 4:19

Whether it is proper in the sight of God

Here the phrase "in the sight of God" refers to God's opinion. Alternate translation: "Whether God thinks it is right"

Acts 4:20

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and John but not to those whom they are addressing.

Acts 4:21

After further warning

The Jewish leaders again threatened to punish Peter and John.

They were unable to find any excuse to punish them

Although the Jewish leaders threatened Peter and John, they could not find a reason to punish them without causing the people to riot.

for what had been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for what Peter and John had done"

Acts 4:22

General Information:

This verse gives background information about the age of the lame man who was healed.

The man who had experienced this sign of healing

"The man whom Peter and John had miraculously healed"

this sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

Acts 4:23

came to their own people

The phrase "their own people" refers to the rest of the believers. Alternate translation: "went to the other believers"

Acts 4:24

General Information:

Speaking together, the people quote a Psalm of David from the Old Testament. Here the word "they" refers to the rest of the believers, but not to Peter and John.

they raised their voices with one purpose to God

To raise the voice is an idiom for speaking. "they began speaking with one purpose to God"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 4:25

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

This means that the Holy Spirit caused David to speak or write down what God said.

through the mouth of your servant, our father David

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that David spoke or wrote down. Alternate translation: "by the words of your servant, our father David"

our father David

Here the word "father" refers to an ancestor.

Why did the Gentile nations rage, and the peoples imagine useless things?

This is a rhetorical question that emphasizes the futility of opposing God. Alternate translation: "The Gentile nations should not have raged, and the peoples should not have imagined useless things."

the peoples imagine useless things

These "useless things" consist of plans to oppose God. Alternate translation: "the peoples imagine useless things against God"

peoples

people groups

Acts 4:26

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete their quotation from King David in the Psalms that they began in Acts 4:25.

The kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord

These two lines mean basically the same thing. The two lines emphasize the combined effort of the earth's rulers to oppose God.

set themselves together ... gathered together

These two phrases mean that they joined their armies together to fight a battle. Alternate translation: "set their armies together ... gathered their troops together"

against the Lord, and against his Christ

Here the word "Lord" refers to God. In the Psalms, the word "Christ" refers to the Messiah or God's anointed one.

Acts 4:27

Connecting Statement:

The believers continue praying.

in this city

"this city" refers to Jerusalem.

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully"

Acts 4:28

to do all that your hand and your plan had decided

Here the word "hand" is used to mean God's power. Additionally, the phrase "your hand and your desire decided" shows God's power and plan. Alternate translation: "to do all that you in your power had decided and planned they would do"

Acts 4:29

look upon their warnings

Here the words "look upon" are a request for God to take notice of the way in which the Jewish leaders threatened the believers. Alternate translation: "notice how they threaten to punish us"

speak your word with all boldness

The word "word" here is a metonym for God's message. The abstract noun "boldness" can be translated as an adverb. Alternate translation:

"speak your message boldly" or "be bold when we speak your message"

Acts 4:30

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete the prayer that they began in Acts 4:24.

Stretch out your hand to heal and to give

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. This is a request for God to show how powerful he is. Alternate translation: "Show your power by healing people and by giving"

through the name of your holy servant Jesus

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "through the power of your holy servant Jesus"

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully." See how you translated this in Acts 4:27.

Acts 4:31

the place ... was shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place ... shook"

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Acts 2:4. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had filled them all" or "God had filled them all with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 4:32

were of one heart and soul

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and the word "soul" refers to the emotions. Together they refer to the total person. Alternate translation: "thought the same way and wanted the same things"

they had everything in common

"they shared their belongings with one another." See how you translated this in Acts 2:44.

Acts 4:33

great grace was upon them all

Possible meanings are: 1) that God was greatly blessing the believers or 2) that the people in Jerusalem held the believers in very high esteem.

Acts 4:34

all who owned title to lands or houses

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who owned title to lands or houses" or "People who owned title to lands or houses"

owned title to lands or houses

"owned land or houses"

the money from the things that were sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the money that they received from the things that they sold"

Acts 4:35

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented the money to the apostles. Alternate translation: "presented it to the apostles" or "gave it to the apostles"

it was distributed to each one according to their need

The noun "need" can be translated with a verb. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they distributed the money to each believer who needed it"

Acts 4:36

General Information:

Luke introduces Barnabas into the story.

Son of Encouragement

The apostles used this name to show that Joseph was a person who encouraged others. "Son of" is an idiom used to describe a person's behavior or character. Alternate translation: "Encourager" or "one who encourages"

Acts 4:37

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Chapter 5

¹ Now a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a piece of property, ² and he kept back part of the sale money (his wife also knew it), and brought the other part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own, and after it was sold, was it not under your authority? Why did you put it in your heart to do this? You have not lied to men, but to God." ⁵ Hearing these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came upon all who heard it. ⁶ The young men arose and wrapped him up, and they carried him out and buried him.

⁷ After about three hours, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." She said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹ Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ She immediately fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in, they found her dead, and carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard these things.

¹² Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Porch. ¹³ But none of the rest had the courage to join them; however, they were held in high esteem by the people. ¹⁴ Still more believers were being added to the Lord, multitudes of men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, so that as Peter came by, his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ There also came together a great number of people from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees); and they were filled with jealousy ¹⁸ and laid hands on the apostles, and held them in custody in the common prison. ¹⁹ Yet during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and led them out, and said, ²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." ²¹ When they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and taught. But the high priest came, and those who were with him, and called the council together, all the elders of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have the apostles brought. ²² But the officers that went did not find them in the prison, and they returned and reported, ²³ "We found the prison securely shut and the guards standing at the door, but when we had opened it, we found no one inside." ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them as to what would come of it. ²⁵ Then someone came and told them, "The men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." ²⁶ So the captain went with the officers and brought them back, but without violence, for they feared the people, that they might be stoned. ²⁷ When they had brought them, they set them before the council. The high priest interrogated them, ²⁸ saying, "We ordered you with a command not to teach in this name, and yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and desire to bring this man's blood upon us." ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

³³ When the council members heard this, they were furious and they wanted to kill the apostles. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people, stood up in the council and gave a command to take the men outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he said to them, "Men of Israel, pay close attention to what you propose to do with these people. ³⁶ For before these days, Theudas rose up claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who had been obeying him were scattered and came to nothing. ³⁷ After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him. He also perished, and all who had been obeying him were scattered. ³⁸ Now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or work is of men, it will be overthrown. ³⁹ But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; you may even find that you are fighting against God." So they were persuaded. ⁴⁰ Then they called the apostles in and beat them and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ They went away from before the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for

the Name. ⁴² Thereafter every day, in the temple and from house to house, they were continuously teaching and proclaiming the good news that the Christ is Jesus.

Acts 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"

No one knows for sure if Ananias and Sapphira were truly Christians when they decided to lie about the land that they sold (Acts 5:1-10), because Luke does not say. However, Peter knew that they lied to the believers, and he knew that they had listened to and obeyed Satan.

When they lied to the believers, they also lied to the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit lives inside believers.

Acts 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Continuing the story of how the new Christians shared their belongings with other believers, Luke tells about two believers, Ananias and Sapphira.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story to tell a new part of the story.

Acts 5:2

his wife also knew it

"his wife also knew that he kept back part of the sale money"

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Acts 5:3

General Information:

If your language does not use rhetorical questions, you may reword these as statements.

why has Satan filled your heart to lie ... land?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias.
Alternate translation: "you should not have let Satan fill your heart to lie ... land."

Satan filled your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the will and emotions. The phrase "Satan filled your heart" is a metaphor. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "Satan completely controlled you" or 2) "Satan convinced you"

to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price

This implies that Ananias had told the apostles that he was giving the entire amount that he had received from selling his land.

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own ... authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias.
Alternate translation: "While it remained unsold, it was your own ... authority."

While it remained unsold

"Before you sold it"

after it was sold, was it not under your authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias.
Alternate translation: "after it was sold, you had control over the money that you received."

after it was sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you sold it"

Why did you put it in your heart to do this?

Peter used this question to rebuke Ananias. Here the word "heart" refers to the will and emotions.
Alternate translation: "You should not have thought of doing this thing." or "It is Satan who has put this activity in your heart."

Acts 5:5

fell down and breathed his last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed his final breath" and is a polite way of saying that he died. Ananias fell down because he died; he did not die because he fell down. Alternate translation: "died and fell to the ground"

Acts 5:6

The young men arose

This means that they began to act. This does not necessarily mean that they had been sitting or that Peter and Ananias had been at the front of the room or a meeting hall. If your language has a phrase that speaks of people responding to something by beginning to act, you may use it.

Acts 5:7

his wife came in

"Ananias' wife came in" or "Sapphira came in"

what had happened

"that her husband had died"

Acts 5:8

for so much

"for this much money." This refers to the amount of money that Ananias had given to the apostles.

Acts 5:9

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to both Ananias and Sapphira.

How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

Peter asks this question to rebuke Sapphira.
Alternate translation: "You should not have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord!"

you have agreed together

"the two of you have agreed together"

to test the Spirit of the Lord

Here the word "test" means to challenge or to prove. They were trying to see if they could get away with lying to God without receiving punishment.

Look, the feet of the men

The word "Look" is an idiom for "Pay attention!" Peter is probably telling Sapphira to pay attention to the sound of the men's footsteps, which indicate that they are about to enter the building, not to look at their feet. Here the phrase "the feet" can be either a synecdoche for the men whose feet they are or a metonym for the sound that they make.
Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The men" or "Listen! The footsteps of the men"

they will carry

"the men will carry"

Acts 5:10

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Ananias and Sapphira.

fell down at his feet

This means that when she died, she fell on the floor in front of Peter. This expression should not be confused with falling down at a person's feet as a sign of humility.

breathed her last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed her final breath" and is a polite way of saying "she died." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 5:5]

Acts 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:12

General Information:

It is not clear whether here the word "They" refers to the believers or only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues to tell what happens in the early days of the church.

Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles

"Many signs and wonders took place among the people through the hands of the apostles." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people"

signs and wonders

"supernatural events and miraculous deeds." See how you translated these terms in Acts 2:22

through the hands of the apostles

Here the word "hands" refers to the apostles.
Alternate translation: "through the apostles"

all together

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose. The people were more than just in the same place at the same time.

Solomon's Porch

This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. See how you translated "the porch that is called Solomon's" in Acts 3:11.

Acts 5:13

General Information:

The words "them" and "they" refer to the apostles.

none of the rest

Possible meanings are 1) the apostles were in Solomon's Porch, but the rest of the believers were afraid to join them there, or 2) all the believers were in Solomon's Porch, and the word "none" is a hyperbole that means that most of the people who were not believers were afraid to join them.

they were held in high esteem by the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people held the believers in high esteem"

Acts 5:14

more believers were being added to the Lord

This could be stated in active form. See how you translated "were added" in [Acts 2:41]

Acts 5:15

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people who lived in Jerusalem.

his shadow might fall on some of them

It is implied that God would heal them if Peter's shadow touched them.

Acts 5:16

those afflicted with unclean spirits

"those whom unclean spirits had afflicted"

they were all healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed them all" or "the apostles healed them all"

Acts 5:17

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders began to persecute the believers.

But

This begins a contrasting story. You may translate this in the way that your language introduces a contrasting narrative.

the high priest rose up

Here the phrase "rose up" means that the high priest decided to take action, not that he stood up from a seated position. Alternate translation: "the high priest took action"

they were filled with jealousy

The abstract noun "jealousy" can be translated as an adjective. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they became very jealous"

Acts 5:18

laid hands on

This means they had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

Acts 5:19

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the apostles.

Acts 5:20

in the temple

This phrase here refers to the temple courtyard, not to the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

all the words of this life

The word "words" here is a metonym for the message that the apostles had already proclaimed. Possible meanings are 1) "all this message of eternal life" or 2) "the whole message of this new way of living"

Acts 5:21

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

into the temple

They went into the temple courtyard, not into the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "into the temple courtyard"

about daybreak

"as it began to be light." Although the angel led them out of the jail during the night, the sun was rising by the time the apostles reached the temple courtyard.

sent to the prison to have the apostles brought

This implies someone went to the jail. Alternate translation: "sent someone to the jail to bring the apostles"

Acts 5:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:23

we found no one inside

Possible meanings are 1) they found no one inside the apostles' cell Alternate translation: "we did not find them inside" or 2) the apostles had been the only prisoners and now there were no prisoners at all in the jail.

Acts 5:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

they were much perplexed

"they were very puzzled" or "they were very confused"

concerning them

"concerning the words they had just heard" or "concerning these things"

as to what would come of it

"and what would happen as a result" or "what would happen next"

Acts 5:25

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

standing in the temple

They did not go into the part of the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple courtyard"

Acts 5:26

Connecting Statement:

The captain and the officers bring the apostles before the Jewish religious council.

brought them back

"brought the apostles back"

they feared the people, that they might be stoned

This can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "they feared that the people might stone them"

Acts 5:27

they had brought them, they set them ... interrogated them

"the captain and officers had brought the apostles, the captain and the officers set the apostles ... interrogated the apostles"

interrogated

questioned to find out what was true

Acts 5:28

We ... us

The speakers were referring to themselves, but not to the apostles, so these words are exclusive.

you ... your

These words refer to the apostles and so are plural.

in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:17]

you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

Teaching many people in a city is spoken of as if they were filling the city with a teaching. Alternate translation: "you have taught many people in Jerusalem about him" or "you have taught about him throughout the Jerusalem"

desire to bring this man's blood upon us

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for death, and to bring someone's blood on people is a metaphor for saying that they are guilty of that person's death. Alternate translation: "desire to make us responsible for this man's death"

Acts 5:29

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the apostles, and not to the audience.

Peter and the apostles answered

Peter spoke on behalf of all of the apostles when he said the following words.

Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus

Here "raised up" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The God of our fathers caused Jesus to live again"

by hanging him on a tree

Here Peter uses the word "tree" to refer to the cross, which was made of wood. Alternate translation: "by hanging him on a cross"

Acts 5:31

God exalted him to his right hand

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "God exalted him to the place of honor beside him"

give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

The words "repentance" and "forgiveness" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent and have God forgive their sins"

Israel

The word "Israel" refers to the Jewish people.

Acts 5:32

those who obey him

"those who submit to God's authority"

Acts 5:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:34

Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel addresses the council members.

Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people

Luke introduces Gamaliel and provides background information about him.

who was honored by all the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom all the people honored"

to take the men outside

The words "the men" refers to the apostles.

Acts 5:35

pay close attention to

"think carefully about" or "be cautious about."

Gamaliel was warning them not to do something that they would later regret.

Acts 5:36

Theudas rose up

Possible meanings are 1) "Theudas rebelled" or 2) "Theudas appeared."

claiming to be somebody

"claiming to be somebody important"

He was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People killed him"

all who had been obeying him were scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the people scattered who had been obeying him" or "all who had been obeying him went in different directions"

came to nothing

This means that they did not do what they had planned to do.

Acts 5:37

After this man

"After Theudas"

in the days of the census

"during the time of the census"

drew away some people after him

This means that he persuaded some people to rebel with him against the Roman government. Alternate translation: "caused many people to follow him" or "caused many people to join him in rebellion"

Acts 5:38

keep away from these men and let them alone

Gamaliel is telling the Jewish leaders not to punish the apostles any more and not to put them back in jail.

if this plan or work is of men

"if men have devised this plan or are doing this work"

it will be overthrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will overthrow it"

Acts 5:39

Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel finishes addressing the council members.

if it is of God

Here the word "it" refers to "this plan or work."

Alternate translation: "if God has devised this plan or commanded these men to do this work"

So they were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Gamaliel persuaded them"

Acts 5:40

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the council members and all instances of "them" refer to the apostles.

they called the apostles in and beat them

The council members would have ordered the temple guards to do these things.

to speak in the name of Jesus

Here "name" refers to the authority of Jesus. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 4:18. Alternate translation: "to speak anymore in the authority of Jesus"

Acts 5:41

General Information:

All instances of "they" refer to the apostles.

they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name

The apostles rejoiced because God had honored them by letting the Jewish leaders dishonor them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"

for the Name

Here "the Name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for Jesus"

Acts 5:42

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

Thereafter every day

"After that day, every day." This phrase marks what the apostles did every day through the following days.

in the temple and from house to house

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests went. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard and in different people's houses"

Chapter 6

¹ Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, a complaint by the Grecian Jews began against the Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of help.

² The twelve called the multitude of the disciples to them and said, "It is not right for us to give up the word of God in order to serve tables. ³ You should therefore choose, brothers, seven men from among yourselves, men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ As for us, we will always continue in prayer and in the ministry of the word." ⁵ Their speech pleased the whole multitude. So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶ The believers brought these men before the apostles, who prayed and then placed their hands upon them.

⁷ So the word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸ Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ But there arose some people who belonged to the synagogue called the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia. These people were debating with Stephen.

¹⁰ But they were not able to stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke. ¹¹ Then they bribed some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." ¹² They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and they approached Stephen and seized him and brought him before the council. ¹³ They brought false witnesses, who said, "This man does not stop speaking words against this holy place and the law. ¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." ¹⁵ Everyone who sat in the council fixed their eyes on him and saw his face was like the face of an angel.

Acts 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The distribution to the widows

The believers in Jerusalem gave help—probably money but possibly food—every day to women whose husbands had died. All of these widows had been raised as Jews, but some of them had lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew. Others had lived in Gentile areas and spoke Greek. Those who gave out the money or food gave it to the Hebrew-speaking widows but not to the Greek-speaking widows. To please God, the church leaders appointed Greek-speaking men to make sure the Greek-speaking widows received their share of help. One of these Greek-speaking men was Stephen.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"His face was like the face of an angel"

No one knows for sure what it was about Stephen's face that was like the face of an angel, because Luke does not tell us. It is best for the translation to say only what the ULB says about this.

Acts 6:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story. Luke gives important background information to understand the story.

Now in these days

Consider how new parts of a story are introduced in your language.

was multiplying

"was greatly increasing"

Grecian Jews ... Hebrews

These were both groups of Jews who had become believers. The writer assumes that the reader understands that these people were all believers because at this point all believers had grown up as Jews.

Grecian Jews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts living somewhere in the Roman Empire outside of Israel and speaking Greek. Their language and culture were somewhat different from those who had grown up in Israel.

the Hebrews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts in Israel speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

widows

A widow is a woman who has not remarried since her husband died.

their widows were being overlooked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Hebrew believers were overlooking the Grecian widows"

being overlooked

"being ignored" or "being forgotten." There were so many who needed help that some were missed.

daily distribution of help

The disciples were able to help the widows because believers were giving money to the apostles Acts 4:34-35. Possible meanings are 1) the disciples used the money to buy food, which they would give to the widows, or 2) the disciples gave the money directly to the widows.

Acts 6:2

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

The twelve

This refers to the eleven apostles plus Matthias, who was selected in Acts 1:26.

the multitude of the disciples

"all of the disciples" or "all the believers"

give up the word of God

This is an exaggeration in order to emphasize the importance of their task of teaching the word of God. Alternate translation: "stop preaching and teaching the word of God"

serve tables

This is a phrase meaning to serve food to the people.

Acts 6:3

General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to the believers and so is plural.

men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) the men have three qualities—a good reputation, being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom or 2) the men have a reputation for two qualities—being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom .

men of good reputation

"men that people know are good" or "men whom people trust"

over this business

"to be responsible to do this task"

Acts 6:4

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

the ministry of the word

"the ministry of teaching and preaching the message"

Acts 6:5

Their speech pleased the whole multitude

"All the disciples liked their suggestion"

Stephen ... Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus

These are Greek names, so it seems that all of the men elected were from the Grecian Jewish group of believers.

proselyte

a Gentile who converted to the Jewish religion

Acts 6:6

placed their hands upon them

This represented giving a blessing and imparting responsibility and authority for the work to the seven.

Acts 6:7

General Information:

This verse gives an update on the church's growth.

the word of God continued to spread

The writer speaks of the growing number of people who believed the word as if the word of God itself were covering a larger area. Alternate translation: "the number of people who believed the word of God increased" or "the number of people who believed the message from God increased"

became obedient to the faith

"followed the teaching of the new belief"

the faith

Possible meanings are 1) the gospel message of trust in Jesus or 2) the teaching of the church or 3) the Christian teaching.

Acts 6:8

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story.

Now Stephen

This introduces Stephen as the main character in this part of the story.

Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing

The words "grace" and "power" here refer to power from God. This could be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "God was giving Stephen power to do"

Acts 6:9

General Information:

The writer continues giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

there arose some people ... Asia. These people were debating with Stephen

The word "arose" is an idiom that represents beginning to act. These people did not begin to rise into the air, nor did they necessarily get up from a sitting position. Alternate translation: "some people ... Asia, began to debate against Stephen"

the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia

Possible meanings are 1) the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia were all members of the synagogue of the Freedmen; 2) the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians were members of the synagogue of the Freedmen, but those from Cilicia and Asia were not; or 3) there were three separate groups of people: those from the synagogue, those from Cyrene and Alexandria, and those from Cilicia and Asia.

synagogue of the Freedmen

"Freedmen" were probably ex-slaves from these different locations. It is unclear if the other people listed were part of the synagogue or just participated in the debate with Stephen.

the Cyrenians and Alexandrians

"people from Cyrene and Alexandria." Cyrene and Alexandria were cities in Northern Africa. They were south of the Mediterranean Sea.

some from Cilicia and Asia

Cilicia was a city and Asia was a Roman province, both north of the Mediterranean Sea.

debating with Stephen

"arguing with Stephen"

Acts 6:10

Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

not able to stand against

This phrase means they could not prove false what he said. Alternate translation: "could not argue against"

Spirit

this refers to the Holy Spirit

Acts 6:11

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers only to the men they persuaded to lie. The word "they" refers back to the people from the synagogue of the freedmen

some men to say

They were given money to give false testimony. Alternate translation: "some men to lie and say"

blasphemous words against

"bad things about"

Acts 6:12

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They were responsible for the false witnesses and for inciting the council, the elders, the scribes, and the other people.

stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes

"caused the people, the elders, and the scribes to be very angry at Stephen"

seized him

"grabbed him and held him so he could not get away"

Acts 6:13

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9).

does not stop speaking

"continually speaks"

Acts 6:14

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer only to the speakers, not to the hearers, and so is exclusive.

handed down to us

The phrase "handed down" means "passed on."

Alternate translation: "taught our ancestors"

Acts 6:15

fixed their eyes on him

This is an idiom that means they looked intently at him. Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight. Alternate

translation: "looked intently at him" or "stared at him"

was like the face of an angel

This phrase compares his face to that of an angel but does not say specifically what they have in common.

Chapter 7

¹ The high priest said, "Are these things true?" ² Stephen said,

"Brothers and fathers, listen to me: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran; ³ he said to him, 'Leave your land and your relatives, and go into the land that I will show you.'

⁴ "Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran; from there, after his father died, God brought him into this land, where you live now. ⁵ He gave none of it as an inheritance to him, no, not even enough to set a foot on. But he promised—even though Abraham had no child yet—that he would give the land as a possession to him and to his descendants after him. ⁶ God was speaking to him like this, that his descendants would live for a while in a foreign land, and that the inhabitants there would bring them into slavery and mistreat them for four hundred years. ⁷ 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they will come out and worship me in this place.' ⁸ Then God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision, so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹ "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him into Egypt; but God was with him ¹⁰ and rescued him from all his tribulation. He gave Joseph favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him governor over Egypt and over all his household.

¹¹ "Now a famine and great tribulation came over all Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers could find no food. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first trip. ¹³ On their second trip Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Joseph sent his brothers back to invite Jacob his father to come to Egypt, along with all his relatives, seventy-five persons in all. ¹⁵ So Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers. ¹⁶ They were carried over to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a price in silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

¹⁷ "As the time of the promise approached, the promise that God had made to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸ until there arose another king over Egypt, a king who did not know about Joseph. ¹⁹ He deceived our people and mistreated our fathers, forcing them to expose their newborn infants so they would not be kept alive.

²⁰ "At that time Moses was born; he was very beautiful before God and was nourished for three months in his father's house. ²¹ When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and raised him as her own son. ²² Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and works.

²³ "But when he was about forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel. ²⁴ Seeing an Israelite being mistreated, Moses defended him and avenged him who was oppressed by striking the Egyptian: ²⁵ he thought that his brothers would understand that God, by his hand, was giving them salvation, but they did not understand. ²⁶ On the next day he appeared to them when they were fighting, and he tried to make peace between them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why are you wronging one another?'

²⁷ "But the one who had wronged his neighbor pushed him away, and said, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?' ²⁸ Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ Moses ran away after hearing this statement; he became a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

³⁰ "When forty years were past, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ When Moses saw the fire, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look at it, the voice of the Lord came, saying, ³² 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.' Moses trembled and did not dare to look.

³³ "The Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have certainly seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them; now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

³⁵ "This Moses whom they rejected, when they said, 'Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?'—he was the one whom God sent as both a ruler and deliverer. God sent him by the hand of the angel who appeared to Moses in the bush. ³⁶ Moses led them out of Egypt, after doing miracles and signs in Egypt and at the Sea of Reeds, and in the wilderness during forty years.

³⁷ "It is the same Moses who said to the people of Israel, 'God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, a prophet like me.' ³⁸ This is the man who was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel who had spoken to him on Mount Sinai, who was with our fathers, and who received living words to give to us.

³⁹ "But our fathers refused to obey him; they pushed him away from themselves, and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt. ⁴⁰ At that time they said to Aaron, 'Make us gods who will lead us. As for this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' ⁴¹ So they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced because of the work of their hands. ⁴² But God turned and gave them up to worship the stars in the sky, as it is written in the book of the prophets,

'Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices
during the forty years in the wilderness, house of Israel?

⁴³ You accepted the tabernacle of Molech
and the star of the god Rephan,
and the images that you made to worship them:
and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴ "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, just as God commanded when he spoke to Moses, that he should make it like the pattern that he had seen. ⁴⁵ Later, our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them when they took possession of the land. God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers. The tabernacle remained in the land until the time of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob ^[1]. ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built the house for God.

⁴⁸ "However, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands, as the prophet says,

⁴⁹ 'Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is the footstool for my feet.
What kind of house can you build for me? says the Lord,
or what is the place for my rest?

⁵⁰ Did my hand not make all these things?'

⁵¹ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit; you act just as your fathers acted. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed the prophets who appeared in advance of the coming of the Righteous One; and you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also, ⁵³ you people who received the law that angels had ordained, but you did not keep it."

⁵⁴ Now when the council members heard these things, they were furious in their hearts and they ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up intently into heaven and saw the glory of God; and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ Stephen said, "Look, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

⁵⁷ At this the council members covered their ears, and shouting out with a loud voice, they rushed at him with one purpose. ⁵⁸ They forced him out of the city and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their outer clothing at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ As they were stoning Stephen, he was calling out to the Lord and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Footnotes

7:46 ^[1]The phrase:

Acts 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 7:42-43 and 49-50.

It appears that 8:1 is part of the narrative of this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Stephen said"

Stephen told the history of Israel very briefly. He paid special attention to the times that the Israelites had rejected the people God had chosen to lead them. At the end of the story, he said that the Jewish leaders he was talking to had rejected Jesus just as the evil Israelites had always rejected the leaders God had appointed for them.

"Full of the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen so that he said only and all of what God wanted him to say.

Foreshadowing

When an author speaks of something that is not important at that time but will be important later in the story, this is called foreshadowing. Luke mentions Saul, also known as Paul, here, even though he is not an important person in this part of the story. This is because Paul is an important person in the rest of the Book of Acts.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Implied information

Stephen was talking to Jews who knew the law of Moses well, so he did not explain things that his hearers already knew. But you may need to explain some of these things so that your readers will be able to understand what Stephen was saying. For example, you may need to make explicit that when Joseph's brothers "sold him into Egypt"

Metonymy

Stephen spoke of Joseph ruling "over Egypt" and over all of Pharaoh's household. By this he meant that Joseph ruled over the people of Egypt and of the people and possessions in Pharaoh's household.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background knowledge

The Jewish leaders to whom Stephen spoke already knew much about the events he was telling them about. They knew what Moses had written in the Book of Genesis. If the Book of Genesis has not been translated into your language, it may be difficult for your readers to understand what Stephen said.

Acts 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story about Stephen, which began in Acts 6:8, continues. Stephen begins his response to the high priest and the council by talking about things that happened in Israel's history. Most of this history comes from Moses's writings.

Acts 7:2

General Information:

The word "our" includes both Steven, the Jewish council to whom he spoke, and the entire audience.

Brothers and fathers, listen to me

Stephen was being very respectful to the council in greeting them as extended family.

Acts 7:3

General Information:

The word "your" refers to Abraham and so is singular.

Acts 7:4

General Information:

In verse 4 the words "he," "his," and "him" refer to Abraham. In verse 5 the words "He" and "he" refer to God, but the word "him" refers to Abraham. Here the word "you" refers to the Jewish council and audience.

Acts 7:5

He gave none of it

"He did not give any of it"

enough to set a foot on

Possible meanings for this phrase are 1) enough ground to stand on or 2) enough ground to take a step. Alternate translation: "a very tiny piece of ground"

as a possession to him and to his descendants after him

"for Abraham to own and to give to his descendants"

Acts 7:6

God was speaking to him like this

It may be helpful to state that this occurred later than the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Later God told Abraham"

four hundred years

"400 years"

Acts 7:7

I will judge the nation

"nation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "I will judge the people of the nation"

the nation that they serve

"the nation that they will serve"

Acts 7:8

gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision

The Jews would have understood that this covenant required Abraham to circumcise the males of his family. Alternate translation: "made a covenant with Abraham to circumcise the males of his family"

so Abraham became the father of Isaac

The story transitions to Abraham's descendants.

Jacob the father

"Jacob became the father." Stephen shortened this.

Acts 7:9

the patriarchs

"the founders of our tribes" or "our ancestors." A patriarch is a man who rules a family.

sold him into Egypt

The Jews knew their ancestors sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Alternate translation: "sold him as a slave in Egypt"

was with him

This is an idiom for helping someone. Alternate translation: "helped him"

Acts 7:10

over Egypt

This refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over all the people of Egypt"

all his household

This refers to all his possessions. Alternate translation: "everything he owned"

Acts 7:11

Now a famine and great tribulation came

"a famine came." The ground stopped producing food and this caused a terrible suffering.

our fathers

This refers Jacob and his sons, who were the ancestors of the Jewish people.

Acts 7:12

grain

Grain was the most common food at that time.

our fathers

Here this phrase refers to Joseph's older brothers, who were Jacob's sons.

Acts 7:13

On their second trip

"On their next trip"

made himself known

Joseph revealed to his brothers his identity as their brother.

Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh learned that they were Joseph's family"

Acts 7:14

sent his brothers back

"sent his brothers back to Canaan" or "sent his brothers back home"

Acts 7:15

he died

Make sure it does not sound as though he died as soon as he arrived in Egypt. Alternate translation: "eventually Jacob died"

he and our fathers

"Jacob and his sons, who became our ancestors"

Acts 7:16

They were carried over ... and laid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jacob's descendants carried Jacob's body and his son's bodies over ... and buried them"

for a price in silver

"with money"

Acts 7:17

As the time of the promise ... the people grew and multiplied

In some languages it may be helpful to say that the people increased in number before saying that the time of the promise arrived.

time of the promise approached

It was close to the time that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham.

Acts 7:18

there arose another king

"another king began to rule"

over Egypt

"Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over the people of Egypt"

who did not know about Joseph

"Joseph" refers to the reputation of Joseph. Alternate translation: "who did not know that Joseph had helped Egypt"

Acts 7:19

General Information:

The word "our" includes Stephen and his audience.

Acts 7:20

At that time Moses was born

This introduces Moses into the story.

very beautiful before God

This phrase is an idiom that means Moses was very beautiful.

was nourished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his parents nourished him" or "his parents cared for him"

Acts 7:21

When he was placed outside

Moses was "placed outside" because of Pharaoh's command. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When his parents placed him outside" or "When they abandoned him"

Pharaoh's daughter ... raised him as her own son

She did for him every good thing a mother would do for her own son. Use your language's normal word for what a mother does to make sure her son becomes a healthy adult.

adopted him

If your language has a word for an informal procedure, not a formal legal procedure, in which one family takes a child in and raises him, you may want to use that here. Pharaoh's daughter did do for Moses what any mother would do for her child, but this involved no formal legal procedure.

as her own son

"as if he were her own son"

Acts 7:22

Moses was educated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Egyptians educated Moses"

all the wisdom of the Egyptians

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that he was trained in the best schools in Egypt.

mighty in his words and works

"effective in his speech and actions" or "influential in what he said and did"

Acts 7:23

it came into his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "mind." The phrase "it came into his heart" is an idiom that means to decide something. Alternate translation: "it came into his mind" or "he decided"

visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel

This refers to his people, and not just to his family. Alternate translation: "see how his own people, the children of Israel, were doing"

Acts 7:24

Seeing an Israelite being mistreated ... the Egyptian

This can be stated in active form by rearranging the order. Alternate translation: "Seeing an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, Moses defended and avenged the Israelite by striking the Egyptian who was oppressing him"

striking the Egyptian

Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that he died.

Acts 7:25

he thought

"he imagined"

by his hand, was giving them salvation

Here "hand" refers to the actions of Moses. Alternate translation: "was giving them salvation through what he, Moses, was doing"

was giving them salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated using the verb "save." Alternate translation: "was saving them" or "was rescuing them"

Acts 7:26

when they were fighting

Some translations make it clear that two men were fighting. Alternate translation: "when two men of Israel were fighting"

make peace between them

"make them stop fighting"

Men, you are brothers

Moses was addressing the Israelites who were fighting.

why are you wronging one another?

Moses asked this question to encourage them to stop fighting. Alternate translation: "you should not do wrong to each other!"

Acts 7:27

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the Israelites but does not include Moses.

Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

The man used this question to rebuke Moses. Alternate translation: "No one appointed you ruler or judge over us." or "You have no authority over us!"

Acts 7:28

Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

The man used this question to warn Moses that he and probably others knew Moses had killed the Egyptian.

Acts 7:29

General Information:

Stephen's audience already knew that Moses had married a Midianite woman when he fled Egypt.

after hearing this

The implied information is that Moses understood that the Israelites knew that he had killed an Egyptian the day before (Acts 7:28).

Acts 7:30

When forty years were past

"After 40 years passed." This was the amount of time Moses had been in Midian. Alternate translation: "Forty years after Moses fled from Egypt"

an angel appeared

Stephen's audience knew that God spoke through the angel.

Acts 7:31

he marveled at the sight

Moses was surprised that the bush was not burning up in the fire. This was previously known by Stephen's audience. Alternate translation: "because the bush was not burning up"

as he approached to look at it

This may mean Moses initially drew close to the bush to investigate.

Acts 7:32

I am the God of your fathers

"I am the God whom your ancestors worshiped"

Moses trembled and did not dare to look

This may mean Moses drew back in fear when he heard the voice.

Moses trembled

Moses shook from fear. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses trembled with fear"

Acts 7:33

Take off the sandals

God told Moses this so he would honor God.

for the place where you are standing is holy ground
The implied information is that where God is present, the immediate area around God is considered holy or is made holy by God.

Acts 7:34

certainly seen
"seen for sure." The word "certainly" adds emphasis to "seen."

the oppression of my people
The abstract noun "oppression" can be translated using the verb "oppress." Alternate translation: "the way the Egyptians are oppressing my people"

my people
The word "my" emphasizes that these people belonged to God. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"

I have come down to rescue them
"will personally cause their release"

now come
"get ready." God uses an order here.

Acts 7:35

General Information:
Verses 35-38 contain a series of connected phrases referring to Moses. Each phrase begins with statements such as "This Moses" or "This same Moses" or "This is the man" or "It is the same Moses." If possible, use similar statements to emphasize Moses. After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent 40 years wandering around the wilderness before God led them into the land he had promised them.

This Moses whom they rejected
This refers back to the events recorded in Acts 7:27-28.

deliverer
"rescuer"

by the hand of the angel ... bush
The hand is a metonym for the action performed by the person. In this case, the angel had commanded Moses to return to Egypt. Stephen speaks as if the angel had a physical hand. You may need to make explicit what action the angel did. Alternate translation: "by the action of the angel" or "by having the angel ... bush command him to return to Egypt"

Acts 7:36

during forty years
Stephen's audience knew about the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. Alternate

translation: "during the 40 years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness"

Acts 7:37

raise up a prophet
"cause a man to be a prophet"

from among your brothers
"from among your own people"

Acts 7:38

This is the man who was in the assembly
"This is the man Moses who was among the Israelites"

This is the man
The phrase "This is the man" throughout this passage refers to Moses.

who received living words to give to us
God was the one who gave those words. Alternate translation: "to whom God spoke living words to give to us"

living words
Possible meanings are 1) "a message that endures" or 2) "words that give life."

Acts 7:39

pushed him away from themselves
This metaphor emphasizes their rejection of Moses. Alternate translation: "they rejected him as their leader"

in their hearts they turned back
Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts. To do something in the heart means to desire to do something. Alternate translation: "they desired to turn back"

Acts 7:40

General Information:
The quotation in this verse is from the writings of Moses.

At that time
"When they decided to return to Egypt"

Acts 7:41

they made a calf
Stephen's audience knew the calf they made was a statue. Alternate translation: "they made a statue that looked like a calf"

a calf ... the idol ... the work of their hands
These phrases all refer to the same statue of the calf.

Acts 7:42

General Information:

Stephen's quotation here is from the prophet Amos.

God turned

"God turned away." This action expresses that God was not pleased with the people and no longer helped them. Alternate translation: "God stopped correcting them"

gave them up

"abandoned them"

the stars in the sky

Possible meanings for the original phrase are 1) the stars only or 2) the sun, moon, and stars.

the book of the prophets

This was apparently a collection of the writings of several of the Old Testament prophets into one scroll. It would also have included the writings of Amos.

Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices ... Israel?

God asked this question to show Israel they did not worship him with their sacrifices. Alternate translation: "You did not honor me when brought offerings and sacrifices ... Israel."

house of Israel

This refers to the whole nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "all you Israelites"

Acts 7:43

General Information:

The quotation from the prophet Amos continues here.

Connecting Statement:

Stephen continues his response to the high priest and the council which he began in Acts 7:2.

You accepted

It is implied that they took these idols with them as they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "you carried with you from place to place"

tabernacle of Molech

the tent that housed the false god Molech

the star of the god Rephan

the star that is identified with the false god Rephan

the images that you made

They made statues or images of the gods Molech and Rephan in order to worship them.

I will carry you away beyond Babylon

"I will remove you to places even farther than Babylon." This would be God's act of judgment.

Acts 7:44

the tabernacle of the testimony

The tent that housed the ark (a box) with the 10 commandments carved in stone inside it

Acts 7:45

our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them

The phrase "under Joshua" means that their ancestors did these things in obedience to Joshua's direction. Alternate translation: "our fathers, in accordance with Joshua's instructions, received the tabernacle and brought it with them"

God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers

This sentence tells why the ancestors were able to take possession of the land. Alternate translation: "God forced the nations to leave the land before the face of our fathers"

God ... drove them out before the face of our fathers

Here "the face of our fathers" refers to the presence of their ancestors. Possible meanings are 1) "As our ancestors watched, God ... drove them out" or 2) "When our ancestors came, God ... drove them out"

the nations

This refers to the people who lived in the land before Israel. Alternate translation: "the people who previously lived here"

drove them out

"forced them to leave the land"

Acts 7:46

he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob

Here "house" is probably a metonym for the ark of the covenant. David wanted to build a place for the ark, which represented God's presence, so people could go there to worship God. Alternate translation: "he might build a place where people could worship the God of Jacob"

the house of Jacob

Many versions read, "the God of Jacob."

Acts 7:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 7:48

made with hands

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "made by person"

Acts 7:49

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Heaven is my throne ... the earth is the footstool for my feet

The prophet is comparing the greatness of God's presence to how impossible it is for man to build a place for God to rest on earth since the whole earth is nothing but a place for God to rest his feet.

What kind of house can you build for me?

God asks this question to show how useless man's efforts are to take care of God. Alternate translation: "You can not build a house adequate enough for me!"

what is the place for my rest?

God asks this question to show man that he cannot provide God any rest. Alternate translation: "There is no place of rest good enough for me!"

Acts 7:50

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Did my hand not make all these things?

God asks this question to show that man did not create anything. Alternate translation: "My hand made all these things!"

Acts 7:51

Connecting Statement:

With a sharp rebuke, Stephen finishes his response to the high priest and the council, which he began in Acts 7:2.

You stiff-necked people

Stephen shifts from identifying with the Jewish leaders to rebuking them.

uncircumcised in heart and ears

The Jews regarded uncircumcised people as disobedient to God. Stephen uses "hearts and ears" to represent to the Jewish leaders who acted the way Gentiles act when they do not obey or listen to God. Alternate translation: "you refuse to obey and hear"

Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Stephen asked this question to show them that they learned nothing from the errors of their forefathers. Alternate translation: "Your forefathers persecuted every prophet!"

Righteous One

This refers to the Christ, the Messiah.

you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also

"you have also betrayed and murdered him"

murderers of him

"murderers of the Righteous One" or "murderers of the Christ"

Acts 7:53

the law that angels had ordained

"the laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors"

Acts 7:54

Connecting Statement:

The council reacts to Stephen's words.

Now when the council members heard these things

This is the turning point; the sermon ends and the council members react.

they were furious in their hearts

This means that they were extremely angry.

ground their teeth at Stephen

This action expressed their strong anger at Stephen or hatred of Stephen. Alternate translation: "they became so angry that they ground their teeth together" or "moved their teeth back and forth as they looked at Stephen"

Acts 7:55

looked up intently into heaven

"stared up into heaven." It appears that only Stephen saw this vision and not anyone else in the crowd.

saw the glory of God

People normally experienced the glory of God as a bright light. Alternate translation: "saw a bright light from God"

and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

To stand at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor and authority beside God"

Acts 7:56

Son of Man

Stephen refers to Jesus by the title "Son of Man."

Acts 7:57

covered their ears

"put their hands on their ears." They did this to show that they did not want to hear any more of what Stephen said.

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 7:58

They forced him out of the city

"They seized Stephen and forcefully took him out of the city"

outer clothing

These are cloaks or robes they would wear outside to stay warm, similar in function to a jacket or coat.

at the feet

"in front of." They were placed there so Saul could watch them.

a young man

Saul was probably around 30 years old at the time.

Acts 7:59

receive my spirit

"take my spirit." It may be helpful to add "please" to show that this was a request. Alternate translation: "please receive my spirit"

Acts 7:60

Connecting Statement:

This ends the story of Stephen.

He knelt down

This is an act of submission to God.

do not hold this sin against them

This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "forgive them for this sin"

fell asleep

Here to fall asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "died"

Chapter 8

¹ Saul was in agreement with his death.

So there began on that day a great persecution against the church that was in Jerusalem; and the believers were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul tried to destroy the church. He would enter house after house, drag off both men and women, and put them in prison.

⁴ Yet the believers who had been scattered went about preaching the word. ⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. ⁶ Crowds of people were giving close attention to what was being said by Philip; with one mind they heard him, and they saw the signs he did. ⁷ Unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying out with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ So there was much joy in that city.

⁹ But there was a certain man in the city named Simon, who had earlier been practicing sorcery; he used to astonish the people of Samaria while claiming that he was an important person. ¹⁰ All the Samaritans, from the least to the greatest, paid attention to him; they said, "This man is that power of God which is called Great." ¹¹ They listened to him because he had astonished them for a long time with his sorceries. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the gospel about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after he was baptized he stayed with Philip constantly. When he saw signs and mighty works taking place, he was amazed.

¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John. ¹⁵ When they had come down, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For until that time, the Holy Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money. ¹⁹ He said, "Give me this authority, too, that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish along with you, because you thought to obtain the gift of God with money. ²¹ You have no part or allotted portion in this matter, because your heart is not right with God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord, so that he might perhaps forgive you for the intention of your heart. ²³ For I see that you are in the poison of bitterness and in the bonds of unrighteousness."

²⁴ Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

²⁵ When they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and said, "Arise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This road is in a desert.) ²⁷ He arose and went. Behold, there was a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸ He was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and stay close to this chariot."

³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹ Then he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" He invited Philip to come up into the chariot and sit with him.

³² Now the passage of the scripture which the Ethiopian was reading was this,

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and like a lamb before his shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation
justice was taken away from him.
Who can give a full account of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth."

³⁴ So the eunuch asked Philip, and said, "I beg you, tell me who is the prophet speaking about, himself, or someone else?" ³⁵ Philip began to speak, and beginning with this scripture he proclaimed the gospel about Jesus to him. ³⁶ As they went on the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, there is water here. What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷^[1]³⁸ So the Ethiopian commanded the chariot to stop. They went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip appeared at Azotus and he went through that region, proclaiming the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

Footnotes

8:37 ^[1]The best ancient copies do not have Acts 8:37,

Acts 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 8:32-33.

The first sentence of verse 1 ends the description of the events in chapter 7. Luke begins a new part of his history with the words "So there began."

Special concepts in this chapter

Receiving the Holy Spirit

In this chapter for the first time Luke speaks of people receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-19). The Holy Spirit had already enabled the believers to speak in tongues, to heal the sick, and to live as a community, and he had filled Stephen. But when the Jews started putting believers in prison, those believers who could leave Jerusalem did leave, and as they went, they told people about Jesus. When the people who heard about Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the church leaders knew that those people had truly become believers.

Proclaimed

This chapter more than any other in the Book of Acts speaks of the believers proclaiming the word, proclaiming the good news, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. The word "proclaim" translates a Greek word that means to tell good news about something.

Acts 8:1

General Information:

It may be helpful to your audience to move these parts of the story about Stephen together by using a verse bridge as the UDB does.

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts from Stephen to Saul in these verses.

So there began ... except the apostles

This part of verse 1 is background information about the persecution that began after Stephen's death. This explains why Saul was persecuting the believers in verse 3.

that day

This refers to the day that Stephen died (Acts 7:59-60).

the believers were all scattered

The word "all" is a generalization to express that a large number of the believers left Jerusalem because of the persecution.

except the apostles

This statement implies that the apostles remained in Jerusalem even though they also experienced this great persecution.

Acts 8:2

Devout men

"God-fearing men" or "Men who feared God"

made great lamentation over him

"greatly mourned his death"

Acts 8:3

house after house

"houses one by one"

drag off both men and women

"took away both men and women by force." Saul forcefully took Jewish believers out of their homes and put them into prison.

men and women

This refers to men and women who believed in Jesus.

Acts 8:4

who had been scattered

The cause for the scattering, the persecution, was stated previously. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had fled the great persecution"

the word

This is a metonym for "the message." You may need to make explicit that the message was about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

Acts 8:5

Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Philip, whom the people had chosen as a deacon.

went down to the city of Samaria

The phrase "went down" is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

the city of Samaria

Possible meanings are 1) Luke expected the readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "the main city in Samaria" or 2) Luke did not expect his readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "a city in Samaria"

proclaimed to them the Christ

The title "Christ" refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Alternate translation: "told them about Jesus Christ" or "told them about Jesus the Messiah"

Acts 8:6

Crowds of people

"Many people in the city of Samaria." The location was specified in Acts 8:5.

were giving close attention

The reason people paid attention was because of all the healing Philip did.

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 8:7

who were possessed

"who had them" or "who were controlled by them"

Acts 8:8

So there was much joy in that city

The phrase "that city" refers to the people who were rejoicing. Alternate translation: "So the people of the city were rejoicing"

Acts 8:9

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse gives the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

But there was a certain man ... named Simon

This is a way of introducing a new person into the story. Your language may use different wording to introduce a new person into the story.

the city

"the city in Samaria" (Acts 8:5)

Acts 8:10

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse continues to give the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

All the Samaritans

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many of the Samaritans" or "The Samaritans in the city"

from the least to the greatest

These two phrases refer to everyone from one extreme to the other. Alternate translation: "no matter how important they were"

This man is that power of God which is called Great
People were saying that Simon was the divine power known as "The Great Power."

that power of God which is called Great
Possible meanings are 1) the powerful representative of God or 2) God or 3) the most powerful man or 4) an angel. Since the term is unclear, it may be best to simply translate it as "the Great power of God."

Acts 8:11

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse ends the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

Acts 8:12

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized them" or "Philip baptized the new believers"

Acts 8:13

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

Simon himself believed

The word "himself" is here used to emphasize that Simon believed. Alternate translation: "Simon was also one of those who believed"

he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized Simon"

Acts 8:14

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the news of what was happening in Samaria.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story of the Samaritans.

Samaria

This refers to the many people who had become believers throughout the district of Samaria.

had received

"had believed" or "had accepted"

Acts 8:15

When they had come down

"when Peter and John had come down"

come down

This phrase is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

they prayed for them

"Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers"

that they might receive the Holy Spirit

"that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit"

Acts 8:16

they had only been baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip had only baptized the Samaritan believers"

they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" represents authority, and being baptized into his name represents being baptized in order to be under his authority. Alternate translation: "they had only been baptized to become disciples of the Lord Jesus"

Acts 8:17

Peter and John placed their hands on them

The word "them" refers to the Samaritan people who believed Stephen's message of the gospel.

placed their hands on them

This symbolic action shows that Peter and John wanted God to give the Holy Spirit to the believers.

Acts 8:18

the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles gave the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people"

Acts 8:19

that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit

"that I can give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom I place my hands"

Acts 8:20

General Information:

Here the words him, your, you, and yours all refer to Simon.

May your silver perish along with you

"May you and your money be destroyed"

the gift of God

Here this refers to the ability of a person to give the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on someone.

Acts 8:21

You have no part or allotted portion in this matter

The words "part" and "allotted portion" mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You may not participate in this work"

your heart is not right

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: "you are not right in your heart" or "the motives of your mind are not right"

Acts 8:22

this wickedness

"these evil thoughts"

he might perhaps forgive

"he may be willing to forgive"

for the intention of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "for what you intended to do" or "for what you were thinking of doing"

Acts 8:23

in the poison of bitterness

Here "in the poison of bitterness" is a metaphor for being very envious. It speaks of envy as if it tastes bitter and poisons the person who is envious. Alternate translation: "very envious"

in the bonds of unrighteousness

The phrase "bonds of unrighteousness" is spoken as if unrighteousness could make Simon a prisoner. It is metaphor that means Simon is not able to stop himself from sinning. Alternate translation: "because you continue sinning you are like a prisoner" or "sin has made you its prisoner"

Acts 8:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to Peter and John.

so that nothing you have said may happen to me

This refers to Peter's rebuke about Simon's silver perishing along with him.

nothing you have said may happen to me

This can be stated another way. Alternate translation: "the things you have said may not happen to me"

Acts 8:25

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the part of the story about Simon and the Samaritans.

testified

Peter and John told what they personally knew about Jesus to the Samaritans.

spoken the word of the Lord

Here "word" is a metonym for "message." Peter and John explained the message about Jesus to the Samaritans.

to many villages of the Samaritans

Here "villages" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "to the people in many Samaritan villages"

Acts 8:26

Connecting Statement:

This begins the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia.

Now

This marks a transition in the story.

Arise and go

These verbs work together to emphasize that he should get ready to start a long journey that will take some time. Alternate translation: "Get ready to travel"

goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza

The phrase "goes down" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Gaza.

This road is in a desert

Most scholars believe Luke added this comment to describe the area through which Philip would travel.

Acts 8:27

General Information:

This verse gives background information about the man from Ethiopia.

Behold

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

eunuch

The emphasis of "eunuch" here is about the Ethiopian's being a high government official, not so much his physical state of being castrated.

Candace

This was a title for the queens of Ethiopia. It is similar to the way the word Pharaoh was used for the kings of Egypt.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship

This implies that he was a Gentile who believed in God and had come to worship at the Jewish temple. Alternate translation: "He had come to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem"

Acts 8:28

chariot

Possibly "wagon" or "carriage" is more fitting in this context. Chariots are normally mentioned as a vehicle for war, not as a vehicle for long-distance travel. Also, people stood to ride in chariots.

reading the prophet Isaiah

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

Acts 8:29

stay close to this chariot

Philip understood that this meant he was to stay close to the person riding in the chariot. Alternate translation: "accompany the man in this chariot"

Acts 8:30

reading Isaiah the prophet

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

Do you understand what you are reading?

The Ethiopian was intelligent and could read, but he lacked spiritual discernment. Alternate translation: "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?"

Acts 8:31

How can I, unless someone guides me?

This question was asked to state emphatically that he could not understand without help. Alternate translation: "I cannot understand unless someone guides me."

He invited Philip to ... sit with him

It is implied here that Philip agreed to travel down the road with him to explain the scriptures.

He invited

Possible meanings are that 1) he offered a sincere invitation or 2) he made a sincere request.

Acts 8:32

General Information:

This is a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the word "he" refers to the Messiah.

like a lamb before his shearer is silent

A shearer is a person who cuts the wool off the sheep so that it may be used.

Acts 8:33

General Information:

This verse continues quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the words "his" and "him" refer to the Messiah.

In his humiliation justice was taken away from him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He was humiliated and they did not judge him fairly" or "He allowed himself to be humbled before his accusers and he suffered injustice"

Who can give a full account of his descendants?

This question was used to emphasize that he will not have descendants. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to speak about his descendants, for there will not be any."

his life was taken from the earth

This referred to his death. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "men killed him" or "men took his life from the earth"

Acts 8:34

I beg you

"Please tell me"

Acts 8:35

this scripture

This refers to Isaiah's writings in the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the writings of Isaiah"

Acts 8:36

they went on the road

"they continued to travel along the road"

What prevents me from being baptized?

The eunuch uses this question as a way of asking Philip for permission to be baptized. Alternate translation: "Please allow me to be baptized."

Acts 8:37

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 8:38

commanded the chariot to stop

"told the driver of the chariot to stop"

Acts 8:39

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia. The story of Philip ends at Caesarea.

the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away

The words "took Philip away" imply that the Spirit took forceful, physical action, perhaps a miracle

that moved Philip in an instant. The angel probably did not just suggest or even command that Philip leave the eunuch and go elsewhere.

the eunuch saw him no more

"the eunuch did not see Philip again"

Acts 8:40

Philip appeared at Azotus

There was no indication of Philip's traveling between where he baptized the Ethiopian and Azotus. He just suddenly disappeared along the road to Gaza and reappeared at the town of Azotus.

that region

This refers to the area around the town of Azotus.

to all the cities

"to all the cities in that region"

Chapter 9

¹ But Saul, still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters for the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he was traveling, it happened that as he came near to Damascus, suddenly there shone all around him a light out of heaven; ⁴ and he fell upon the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵ Saul replied, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; ⁶ but rise, enter into the city, and it will be told you what you must do." ⁷ The men who traveled with Saul stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul arose from the ground, and when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight, and he neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" He said, "See, I am here, Lord."

¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him, so that he might see again."

¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He has authority from the chief priests to put in bonds everyone here who calls upon your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for the cause of my name."

¹⁷ So Ananias departed, and entered into the house. Laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road when you were coming, has sent me so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he received his sight; he arose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and he ate and was strengthened.

He stayed with the disciples in Damascus for several days. ²⁰ Right away he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying that he is the Son of God. ²¹ All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name? He has come here to take them bound to the chief priests." ²² But Saul became more and more powerful, and he was causing distress among the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

²³ After many days, the Jews planned together to kill him. ²⁴ But their plan became known to Saul. They watched the gates day and night in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ When he had come to Jerusalem, Saul attempted to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and he told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how at Damascus Saul had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus ²⁹ and debated with the Grecian Jews; but they kept trying to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers learned of this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

³¹ So then, the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the church grew in numbers. ³² Now it came about that, as Peter went throughout the whole region, he came down also to God's holy people who lived in the town of Lydda. ³³ There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been in his bed for eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed," and right away he got up. ³⁵ So everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon saw the man and they turned to the Lord.

³⁶ Now there was in Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman was full of good works and merciful deeds that she did for the poor. ³⁷ It came about in those days that she fell sick and died; when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, pleading with him, "Come to us without delay." ³⁹ Peter arose and went with them. When he had arrived, they brought him to the upper room, and all the widows stood by him weeping, showing him the tunics and garments that Dorcas had made while she had been with them. ⁴⁰ Peter put them all out of the room, knelt down, and prayed; then, turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ Peter then gave her his hand and raised her up; and when he called God's holy people and the widows, he presented her alive to them. ⁴² This matter became known throughout all Joppa, and many people believed on the Lord. ⁴³ It happened that Peter stayed for many days in Joppa with a man named Simon, a tanner.

Acts 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

"Letters for the synagogues in Damascus"

The "letters" Paul asked for were probably legal papers that permitted him to put Christians in prison. The synagogue leaders in Damascus would have obeyed the letter because it was written by the high priest. If the Romans had seen the letter, they also would have allowed Saul to persecute the Christians, because they permitted the Jews to do as they desired to people who broke their religious laws.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

What Saul saw when he met Jesus

It is clear that Saul saw a light and that it was because of this light that he "fell upon the ground." Some people think that Saul knew that it was the Lord speaking to him without seeing a human form, because the Bible often speaks of God as being light and living in light. Other people think that later in his life he was able to say, "I have seen the Lord Jesus" because it was a human form that he saw here.

Acts 9:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen.

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts back to Saul and his salvation.

still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples

The noun "murder" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "still speaking threats, even to murder the disciples"

Acts 9:2

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of

Stephen. Here the word "him" refers to the high priest and "he" refers to Saul.

for the synagogues

This refers to the people in the synagogues. Alternate translation: "for the people in the synagogues" or "for the leaders in the synagogues"

if he found any

"when he found people" or "if he found people"

who belonged to the Way

"who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ"

the Way

This term appears to have been a title for Christianity at that time.

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem

"he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Paul's purpose can be made clear by adding "so that the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them"

Acts 9:3

Connecting Statement:

After the high priest gave Saul the letters, Saul left for Damascus.

As he was traveling

Saul left Jerusalem and now travels to Damascus.

it happened that

This is an expression that marks a change in the story to show something different is about to happen.

there shone all around him a light out of heaven

"a light from heaven shone all around him"

out of heaven

Possible meanings are 1) out of heaven, where God lives or 2) out of the sky. The first meaning is preferable. Use that meaning if your language has a separate word for it.

Acts 9:4

he fell upon the ground and heard

Possible meanings are that 1) "Saul threw himself to the ground and heard" or 2) "the light caused Saul to fall to the ground, and he heard" or 3) "Saul fell to the ground the way one who faints falls, and he heard"

why are you persecuting me?

This rhetorical question communicates a rebuke to Saul. Alternate translation: "You are persecuting me!" or "Stop persecuting me!"

Acts 9:5

General Information:

Every occurrence of the word "you" here is singular.

Who are you, Lord?

Saul was not acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord. He uses that title because he understood that he spoke to someone of supernatural power.

Acts 9:6

but rise, enter into the city

"get up and go into the city Damascus"

it will be told you

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "someone will tell you"

Acts 9:7

stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "stood speechless. They heard the voice, but they did not see anyone"

but seeing no one

"but they saw no one" or "but they did not see anyone." Apparently only Saul experienced the light.

Acts 9:8

when he opened his eyes

This implies that he had closed his eyes because the light was too bright.

he could see nothing

"he could not see anything." Saul was blind.

Acts 9:9

was without sight

"was blind" or "could not see anything"

he neither ate nor drank

It is not stated whether he chose not to eat or drink as a form of worship, or if he had no appetite because he was too distressed from his situation. It is preferable not to specify the reason.

Acts 9:10

General Information:

The story of Saul continues, and Luke introduces another man named Ananias. This is not the same Ananias who died earlier in Acts [Acts 5:3]

Now there was

This introduces Ananias as a new character.

He said

"Ananias said"

Acts 9:11

go to the street which is called Straight

"go to Straight Street"

house of Judas

This Judas was not the disciple who had betrayed Jesus. This Judas was owner of a house in Damascus where Saul was staying.

a man from Tarsus named Saul

"a man from the city of Tarsus named Saul" or "Saul of Tarsus"

Acts 9:12

laying his hands on him

This was a symbol of giving a spiritual blessing to Saul.

he might see again

"he might regain his ability to see"

Acts 9:13

your holy people in Jerusalem

Here "holy people" refers to Christians. Alternate translation: "the people in Jerusalem who believe in you"

Acts 9:14

authority ... to put in bonds everyone here

It is implied that the extent of the power and authority granted Saul was limited to the Jewish people at this point in time.

put in bonds

Putting someone in bonds is a metonym for arresting that person. Alternate translation: "arrest"

calls upon your name

Here "your name" refers to Jesus.

Acts 9:15

he is a chosen instrument of mine

"chosen instrument" refers to something that is set apart for service. Alternate translation: "I have chosen him to serve me"

to carry my name

This is an expression for identifying or speaking out for Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order that he might speak about me"

Acts 9:16

for the cause of my name

This is an expression meaning "for telling people about me."

Acts 9:17

General Information:

The word "you" here is singular and refers to Saul.

Connecting Statement:

Ananias goes to the house where Saul is staying. After Saul is healed, the story shifts from Ananias back to Saul.

So Ananias departed, and entered into the house

It may be helpful to state that Ananias went to the house before he entered into it. Alternate

translation: "So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it"

Laying his hands on him

Ananias put his hands on Saul. This was a symbol of giving a blessing to Saul.

so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might see again and that the Holy Spirit might fill you"

Acts 9:18

something like scales fell

"something that appeared like fish scales fell"

he received his sight

"he was able to see again"

he arose and was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he got up and Ananias baptized him"

Acts 9:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 9:20

General Information:

Here the first "he" refers to Saul. The second "he" refers to Jesus, the Son of God.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Acts 9:21

General Information:

Here "him" and "He" refer to Saul.

All who heard him

The word "All" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Those who heard him" or "Many who heard him"

Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name?

This is a rhetorical and negative question that emphasizes that Saul was indeed the man who had persecuted the believers. Alternate translation: "This is the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name Jesus!"

this name

Here "name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the name of Jesus"

Acts 9:22

causing distress among the Jews

They were distressed in the sense that they could not find a way to refute Saul's arguments that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 9:23

General Information:

The word "him" in this section refers to Saul.

the Jews

This refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

Acts 9:24

But their plan became known to Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But someone told their plan to Saul" or "But Saul learned about their plan"

They watched the gates

This city had a wall surrounding it. People could normally only enter and exit the city through the gates.

Acts 9:25

his disciples

people who believed Saul's message about Jesus and were following his teaching

let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket
"used ropes to lower him in a large basket through an opening in the wall"

Acts 9:26

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Saul.

but they were all afraid of him

Here "they were all" is a generalization, but it is possible that it refers to every person. Alternate translation: "but they were afraid of him"

Acts 9:27

General Information:

Here "him" refers to Saul and "he" refers to Barnabas.

had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus

This is a way of saying he preached or taught the gospel message of Jesus Christ without fear. Alternate translation: "had openly preached the message about Jesus"

Acts 9:28

He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem

Here the word "He" refers to Saul, and the word "them" probably refers to the apostles and other disciples in Jerusalem. This is an idiom meaning that Paul was able to associate freely with the believers in Jerusalem.

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this simply refers to the Lord Jesus and tells who Paul spoke about. Alternate translation: "about the Lord Jesus" or 2) "name" is a metonym for authority. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the Lord Jesus" or "with the authority that the Lord Jesus gave him"

Acts 9:29

debated with the Grecian Jews

Saul tried to reason with the Jews who spoke Greek.

Acts 9:30

the brothers

Here the words "the brothers" refer to the believers in Jerusalem.

brought him down to Caesarea

The phrase "brought him down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

sent him away to Tarsus

Caesarea was a seaport. They brothers probably sent Saul to Tarsus by ship.

Acts 9:31

General Information:

Verse 31 is a statement that gives an update on the church's growth.

the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria

This is the first use of the singular "church" to refer to more than one local congregation. Here it refers to all the believers in all the groups throughout Israel.

had peace

"lived peacefully." This means the persecution that started with the murder of Stephen was finished.

was built up

The agent was either God or the Holy Spirit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God helped them grow" or "the Holy Spirit built them up"

walking in the fear of the Lord

"Walking" here is a metaphor for "living." Alternate translation: "living in obedience to the Lord" or "continuing to honor the Lord"

in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

"with the Holy Spirit strengthening and encouraging them"

Acts 9:32

Connecting Statement:

Here the story shifts from Saul to a new part of the story about Peter.

Now it came about

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

throughout the whole region

This is an generalization for Peter's visiting the believers in many places in the region of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

he came down

The phrase "came down" is used here because Lydda is lower in elevation than the other places where he was traveling.

Lydda

Lydda is a city located about 18 kilometers southeast of Joppa. This city is called Lod in the Old Testament and in modern Israel.

Acts 9:33

There he found a certain man

Peter was not intentionally searching for a paralyzed person, but happened upon him. Alternate translation: "There Peter met a man"

a certain man named Aeneas

This introduces Aeneas as a new character in the story.

who had been in his bed ... was paralyzed

This is background information about Aeneas.

paralyzed

This means he was unable to walk. He probably was unable to move any part of his body below his waist.

Acts 9:34

make your bed

"roll up your mat"

Acts 9:35

everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon

This is a generalization referring to many of the people there. Alternate translation: "those who

lived in Lydda and in Sharon" or "many people who lived in Lydda and Sharon"

in Lydda and in Sharon

The city of Lydda was located in the Plain of Sharon.

saw the man

It may be helpful to state that they saw that he was healed. Alternate translation: "saw the man whom Peter had healed"

and they turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and they repented of their sins and started obeying the Lord"

Acts 9:36

General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the story with a new event about Peter.

Now there was

This introduces a new part in the story.

Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman

Tabitha is her name in the Aramaic language, and Dorcas is her name in the Greek language. Both names mean "gazelle." Alternate translation: "Tabitha, which in the Greek language was Dorcas. This woman"

was full of good works and merciful deeds

"doing many good things and performed merciful deeds"

Acts 9:37

General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

It came about in those days

This refers to the time when Peter was in Joppa. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "It came about while Peter was nearby"

washed her

This was washing to prepare for her burial.

they laid her in an upper room

This was a temporary display of the body during the funeral process.

Acts 9:38

they sent two men to him

"the disciples sent two men to Peter"

Acts 9:39

to the upper room

"to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying"

all the widows

It is possible that all the widows of the town were there since it was not a large town.

widows

women whose husbands had died and therefore needed help

while she had been with them

"while she was still alive with the disciples"

Acts 9:40

put them all out of the room

"told them all to leave the room." Peter had everyone leave so he could be alone to pray for Tabitha.

Acts 9:41

gave her his hand and raised her up

Peter took hold of her hand and helped her to sit up in the bed and then stand up on the floor.

God's holy people and the widows

The widows were possibly also believers but are mentioned specifically because Tabitha was so important to them.

Acts 9:42

Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

This matter became known throughout all Joppa

This refers to the miracle of Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead. It can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "People throughout all Joppa heard about this matter"

believed on the Lord

"believed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus"

Acts 9:43

Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

It happened that

"It came about that." This introduces the beginning of the next event in the story.

Simon, a tanner

"a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins"

Chapter 10

¹ Now there was a certain man in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers. ² He was a devout man, one who feared God with all his household, gave many alms to the people, and prayed to God constantly. ³ About the ninth hour of the day, he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God coming to him. The angel said to him, "Cornelius!" ⁴ Cornelius stared at the angel and was very afraid and said, "What is it, sir?"

The angel said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have gone up as a memorial offering into God's presence. ⁵ Now send men to the city of Joppa to bring a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the seaside."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had left, Cornelius called two of his house servants, and a devout soldier from among those who served him. ⁸ Cornelius told them all that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

⁹ Now on the next day at about the sixth hour, as they were on their journey and were approaching the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray. ¹⁰ He then became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while the people were cooking some food, a trance came on him, ¹¹ and he saw the sky open and a certain container descending, something like a large sheet coming down to the earth, let down by its four corners. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky. ¹³ Then a voice spoke to him: "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

¹⁴ But Peter said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean."

¹⁵ But the voice came to him again a second time: "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled."

¹⁶ This happened three times; then the container was immediately taken back up into the sky.

¹⁷ Now while Peter was very confused about what the vision that he had seen could mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius stood before the gate, after they had asked their way to the house. ¹⁸ They called out and asked whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ^[1]²⁰ Arise and go down and go with them. Do not hesitate to go with them, because I have sent them."

²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am he whom you are seeking. Why have you come?"

²² They said, "A centurion named Cornelius, a righteous man and one who fears God, and is well spoken of by all the nation of the Jews, was instructed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house, so he could listen to a message from you." ²³ So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him.

On the next morning he got up and went with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ On the following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them; he had called together his relatives and his close friends. ²⁵ It came about that when Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet to worship him. ²⁶ But Peter helped him up, saying, "Stand up! I too am a man."

²⁷ While Peter was talking with him, he went in and found many people gathered together. ²⁸ He said to them, "You yourselves know that it is not lawful for a Jewish man to associate with or to visit a foreigner. But God has shown me that I should not call any man defiled or unclean. ²⁹ That is why I came without arguing, when I was sent for. So I ask you why you sent for me."

³⁰ Cornelius said, "Four days ago at this very hour, I was praying at the ninth hour in my house; and see, a man stood before me in bright clothing. ³¹ He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard by God, and your alms have reminded God about you. ³² So send someone to Joppa, and call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying in the house of a tanner named Simon, by the seaside.' ^[2]³³ So at once I sent for you. You are kind to have come. Now then, we are all here present in the sight of God to hear everything that you have been instructed by the Lord to say." ^[3]

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I understand that God is not partial. ³⁵ Instead, in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message that he sent to the people of Israel, when he announced the good news about peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all— ³⁷ you yourselves know the events that took place, which occurred throughout all Judea, beginning in Galilee, after the baptism that John announced; ³⁸ the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses of all the things Jesus did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him up on the third day and caused him to be seen, ⁴¹ not by all the people, but to the witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that this is the one who has been chosen by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ About him all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all of those who were listening to his message. ⁴⁵ The people who belonged to the circumcision group of believers—all of those who came with Peter—were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard these Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" ⁴⁸ Then he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay with them for several days.

Footnotes

10:19 ^[1]Some ancient copies have,

10:32 ^[2]Some ancient copies add:

10:33 ^[3]Instead of

Acts 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Unclean

The Jews believed that they could become unclean in God's sight if they visited or ate food with a Gentile. This was because the Pharisees had made a law against it because they wanted to keep people from eating foods that the law of Moses said were unclean. The law of Moses did say that some foods were unclean, but it did not say that God's people could not visit or eat with Gentiles. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Baptism and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "fell on" those who were listening to Peter. This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could receive the word of God and receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers had. After that, the Gentiles were baptized.

Acts 10:1

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Cornelius.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the part of the story about Cornelius.

Now there was a certain man

This was a way of introducing a new person to this part of the historical account.

in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers

"from Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer in charge of 60 soldiers from the Italian Company of Soldiers, in the Roman army"

Acts 10:2

General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Cornelius.

a devout man

a man who wanted to do what God expected of him

feared God

worshiped God with deep respect and awe

prayed to God constantly

The word "constantly" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "prayed to God often" or "he prayed to God regularly"

Acts 10:3

the ninth hour

"three o'clock in the afternoon." This was the normal afternoon prayer time for Jews.

he clearly saw

"Cornelius clearly saw"

Acts 10:4

Your prayers and your alms have gone up ... into God's presence

It is implied that his gifts and prayers had been accepted by God. Alternate translation: "God is pleased by your prayers and alms. They have gone up ... to him"

Acts 10:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 10:6

a tanner

a person who makes leather from animal skins

Acts 10:7

When the angel who spoke to him had left

"When Cornelius' vision of the angel had ended."

a devout soldier

a soldier who wanted to do what God expected of him. See how you translated "devout" in [Acts 10:2](#).

Acts 10:8

told them all that had happened

Cornelius explained his vision to his two servants and to one of his soldiers.

sent them to Joppa

"sent two of his two servants and the one soldier to Joppa."

Acts 10:9

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Cornelius' two servants and the soldier under Cornelius' command (Acts 10:7).

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts away from Cornelius to tell us what God is doing with to Peter.

about the sixth hour

"around noon"

up upon the housetop

The roofs of the houses were flat, and people often did many different activities on them.

Acts 10:10

while the people were cooking some food

"before the people finished cooking the food"

a trance came on him

This metaphor means that Peter went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. Alternate translation: "he went into a trance"

trance

Peter saw things in his mind, not with his physical eyes.

Acts 10:11

he saw the sky open

This was the beginning of Peter's vision. It can be a new sentence.

something like a large sheet ... four corners

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth.

let down by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it"

Acts 10:12

things that crawled on the earth

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals"

Acts 10:13

a voice spoke to him

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God.

Acts 10:14

Not so

"I will not do that"

I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean

It is implied that some of the "four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky"

Acts 10:15

What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

What God has made clean

If God is the speaker, he is referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "What I, God, have made clean"

Acts 10:16

This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here.

Acts 10:17

Peter was very confused

This means that Peter was having difficulty understanding what the vision meant.

behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows, in this case, the two men standing at the gate.

stood before the gate

"stood before the gate to the house." It is implied that this house had a wall with a gate one would use to enter the property.

after they had asked their way to the house

This happened before they arrived at the house. This could be stated earlier in the verse, as the UDB does.

Acts 10:18

They called out

Cornelius' men remained outside the gate while asking about Peter.

Acts 10:19

thinking about the vision

"wondering about the meaning of the vision"

the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit"

Behold, three

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

three men are looking for you

Some ancient texts have a different number of men.

Acts 10:20

go down

"go down from the roof of the house"

Do not hesitate to go with them

It would be natural for Peter not to want to go with them, because they were strangers and they were Gentiles.

Acts 10:21

I am he whom you are seeking

"I am the man you are looking for"

Acts 10:22

General Information:

The word "They" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

A centurion named Cornelius ... listen to a message from you

This can be divided into several sentences and stated in active form as the UDB does.

fears God

worships God with deep respect and awe

all the nation of the Jews

This number of people is exaggerated with the word "all" to emphasize how widely this was known among the Jews.

Acts 10:23

General Information:

The word "them" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him

The journey to Caesarea was too long for them to begin that afternoon.

stay with him

"be his guests"

some of the brothers from Joppa

This refers to believers who lived in Joppa.

Acts 10:24

On the following day

This was the next day after they left Joppa. The journey to Caesarea took longer than one day.

Cornelius was waiting for them

"Cornelius expected them"

Acts 10:25

when Peter entered

"when Peter entered the house"

fell down at his feet to worship him

"he knelt down and put his face close to Peter's feet." He did this to honor Peter.

fell down

He purposely did this to show that he was worshipping.

Acts 10:26

Stand up! I too am a man

Peter was rebuking Cornelius mildly for worshipping Peter. Alternate translation: "Do not worship me! I am only a man, as you are"

Acts 10:27

General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Cornelius, and "he" refers to Peter.

Connecting Statement:

Peter addresses the people who are gathered in Cornelius' house.

many people gathered together

"many Gentile people gathered together." It is implied that these people Cornelius had invited were Gentiles.

Acts 10:28

General Information:

Here the words "You" and "yourselves" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

it is not lawful for a Jewish man

"it is forbidden for a Jewish man." This refers to the Jewish religious law.

a foreigner

people who are not Jews

Acts 10:29

General Information:

Here both instances of "you" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

Acts 10:30

General Information:

In verses 31 and 32 Cornelius quotes what the angel had said to him when he appeared to him at the ninth hour. The words "you" and "your" are all singular. The word "we" here does not include Peter.

Connecting Statement:

Cornelius responds to Peter's question.

Four days ago

Cornelius is referring to the day before the third night before he is speaking to Peter. Biblical culture counts the current day, so the day before three nights ago is "four days ago." Current Western culture does not count the current day, so many Western translations read, "three days ago."

praying

Some ancient authorities say "fasting and praying" instead of simply "praying."

at the ninth hour

The normal afternoon time that the Jews pray to God.

Acts 10:31

your prayer has been heard by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has heard your prayer"

reminded God about you

"brought you to God's attention." This does not imply that God had forgotten.

Acts 10:32

call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter

"tell Simon who is also called Peter to come to you"

Acts 10:33

at once

"right away"

You are kind to have come

This expression is a polite way of thanking Peter for coming. Alternate translation: "I certainly thank you for coming"

we are all here

This refers to Cornelius and his family but not to Peter, so this is exclusive.

present in the sight of God

"present with God"

that you have been instructed by the Lord to say

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Lord has told you to say"

Acts 10:34

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins speaking to everyone in the house of Cornelius.

opened his mouth

"began to speak"

Truly

This means that what he is about to say is especially important to know.

God is not partial

"God does not favor certain people"

Acts 10:35

anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him

"he accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right"

to him

to God

fears

worships with deep respect and awe

Acts 10:36

General Information:

All instances of "he" here refers to God.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to talk to Cornelius and his guests.

who is Lord of all

Here "all" means "all people."

Acts 10:37

throughout all Judea

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "throughout Judea" or "in many places in Judea"

after the baptism that John announced

"after John preached to the people to repent and then baptized them"

Acts 10:38

the events ... and with power

This long sentence, which begins in verse 36, can be shortened into several sentences as in the UDB.

God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power

The Holy Spirit and God's power are spoken of as if they are something that can be poured out onto a person.

all who were oppressed by the devil

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who were oppressed by the devil" or "many people who were oppressed by the devil"

God was with him

The idiom "was with him" means "was helping him."

Acts 10:39

General Information:

The word "We" refer to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.

in the country of the Jews

This refers mainly to Judea at that time.

hanging him on a tree

This is another expression that refers to crucifixion. Alternate translation: "nailing him to a wooden cross"

Acts 10:40

General Information:

Both instances of "him" refer to Jesus.

God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

the third day

"the third day after he died"

caused him to be seen

"permitted many people to see him after he was raised from the dead"

Acts 10:41

General Information:

The word "us" refers to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The words "him" and "he" here refers to Jesus.

from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

Acts 10:42

General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Peter and believers. It excludes his audience.

that this is the one who has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God chose this Jesus"

the living and the dead

This refers to people who are still living and people who have died. Alternate translation: "the people who are alive and the people who are dead"

Acts 10:43

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to everyone in the house of Cornelius, which he began in [Acts 10:34](#).

About him all the prophets testify

"All the prophets testify about Jesus"

everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus because of what Jesus has done"

through his name

Here "his name" refers to the actions of Jesus. His name means God who saves. Alternate translation: "through what Jesus has done for them"

Acts 10:44

the Holy Spirit fell

Here the word "fell" indicates that the event happened suddenly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit suddenly came"

all of those who were listening

Here "all" refers to all the Gentiles at the house who were listening to Peter.

Acts 10:45

the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also poured out the Holy Spirit"

the gift of the Holy Spirit

That is, the Holy Spirit himself was the gift.

poured out

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that could be poured out upon people. It implies a generous amount. Alternate translation: "generously given"

the gift

"the free gift"

also on the Gentiles

Here "also" refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit had already been given to the Jewish believers.

Acts 10:46

Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God

These were known spoken languages that caused the Jews to acknowledge that the Gentiles were indeed praising God.

speaking in tongues

Here "tongues" is a metonym for languages. Alternate translation: "speaking in other languages"

Acts 10:47

Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received ... we?

Peter uses this question to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentile believers should be baptized. Alternate translation: "No one should keep water from these people! We should baptize them because they have received ... we!"

Acts 10:48

General Information:

The words "he" and "him" refer to Peter.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Cornelius.

he commanded them to be baptized

It is implied that the Jewish Christians were the ones who would baptize them. Alternate translation: "Peter commanded the Gentile believers to allow the Jewish Christians to baptize them" or "Peter commanded the Jewish Christians to baptize them"

be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "in the name of Jesus Christ" expresses that the reason for their baptism was that they believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "be baptized as believers in Jesus Christ"

Chapter 11

¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² When Peter had come up to Jerusalem, they who belonged to the circumcision group criticized him; ³ they said, "You associated with uncircumcised men and ate with them!" ⁴ But Peter started to explain the matter to them in detail, saying, ⁵ "I was praying in the city of Joppa, and in a trance I saw a vision of a container coming down, like a large sheet let down from heaven by its four corners. It descended to me. ⁶ I gazed at it and I thought about it. I saw the four-legged animals of earth, wild beasts, things that crawled, and birds of the sky. ⁷ Then I heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat!'

⁸ I said, 'Not so, Lord; for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth.'

⁹ But the voice answered again from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call defiled.' ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then everything was taken back up into heaven again.

¹¹ "Behold, right away there were three men standing in front of the house where we were; they had been sent from Caesarea to me. ¹² The Spirit commanded me to go with them, and that I should make no distinction regarding them. These six brothers went with me, and we went into the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send men to Joppa and bring back Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will speak to you a message by which you will be saved—you and all your household.' ¹⁵ As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning. ¹⁶ I remembered the words of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ Then if God gave to them the same gift as he gave to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could oppose God?"

¹⁸ When they heard these things, they said nothing in response, but they glorified God and said, "Then God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also."

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word only to Jews. ²⁰ But some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, came to Antioch and spoke also to Greeks, proclaiming to them the gospel about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them; a great number believed and turned to the Lord. ²² News about them came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas as far as Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad and he encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart. ²⁴ For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and many people were added to the Lord. ²⁵ Barnabas then went out to Tarsus to search carefully for Saul. ²⁶ When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. It came about, that for an entire year they gathered together with the church and taught many people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

²⁷ Now in these days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, Agabus by name, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that a great famine would occur over all the world. This happened in the days of Claudius. ²⁹ So the disciples, as each one was able, determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brothers in Judea. ³⁰ They did this; they sent money to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Gentiles also had received the word of God"

Almost all of the first believers were Jewish. Luke writes in this chapter that many Gentiles started to believe in Jesus. They believed that the message about Jesus was true and so began to "receive the word of God." Some of the believers in Jerusalem did not believe that Gentiles could truly follow Jesus, so Peter went to them and told them what had happened to him and how he had seen the Gentiles receive the Word of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new event in the story.

Now

This marks a new part of the story.

the brothers

The phrase "brothers" here refers to the believers in Judea.

who were in Judea

"who were in the province of Judea"

had received the word of God

This expression refers to the fact that the Gentiles believed the gospel message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed the message of God about Jesus"

Acts 11:2

Connecting Statement:

Peter arrives in Jerusalem and begins talking to the Jews there.

had come up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of coming up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

they who belonged to the circumcision group

This is a reference to some of the Jews who believed that every believer must be circumcised. Alternate translation: "some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted all followers of Christ to be circumcised"

Acts 11:3

uncircumcised men

The phrase "uncircumcised men" refers to Gentiles.

ate with them

It was against Jewish tradition for Jews to eat with Gentiles.

Acts 11:4

Connecting Statement:

Peter responds to the Jews by telling them about his vision and about what had happened at Cornelius' house.

Peter started to explain

Peter did not criticize the Jewish believers but reacted in a friendly, explanatory manner.

in detail

"exactly what happened"

Acts 11:5

in a trance I saw

Peter saw something that was only in his mind. It was not physical. His mind was not working in its usual way. See how you translated similar words in Acts 10:10.

like a large sheet

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth. See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it." See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

Acts 11:6

four-legged animals of earth

From Peter's response, it can be implied that the law of Moses commanded the Jews not to eat some of them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 10:12]

wild beasts

This probably refer to the animals people do not or cannot tame or control.

things that crawled

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals." See how you translated this in Acts 10:12.

Acts 11:7

I heard a voice

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God. See how you translated "a voice" in [Acts 10:13]

Acts 11:8

Not so

"I will not do that." See how you translated this in Acts 10:14.

nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth

Apparently the animals in the sheet were animals which the Jewish law in the Old Testament forbade the Jews to eat. This can be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "I have eaten only meat from holy and clean animals"

unclean

In the Old Testament Jewish law, a person became ritually "unclean" in various ways, such as eating certain forbidden animals.

Acts 11:9

What God has made clean, you must not call defiled
This refers to the animals in the sheet.

Acts 11:10

This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here. See how you translated "This happened three times" in Acts 10:16.

Acts 11:11

General Information:

Here "we" refers to Peter and the believers in Joppa. It does not include his current audience in Jerusalem.

Behold

This word alerts us to the new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

right away

"immediately" or "at that exact moment"

they had been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had sent them"

Acts 11:12

that I should make no distinction regarding them

"that I should not be concerned that they were Gentiles"

These six brothers went with me

"These six brothers went with me to Caesarea"

These six brothers

"These six Jewish believers"

into the man's house

This refers to the house of Cornelius.

Acts 11:13

Simon who is called Peter

"Simon who is also called Peter." See how you translated the same phrase in Acts 10:32.

Acts 11:14

all your household

This refers to all the people in the household. Alternate translation: "everyone who lives in your house"

Acts 11:15

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Peter, the other apostles, and all of the Jewish believers who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them

This implies that Peter had not finished speaking but had intended to say more.

the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning

Peter leaves out some things to keep the story short. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit came on the Gentile believers, just as he came on the Jewish believers at Pentecost"

in the beginning

Peter is referring to the day of Pentecost.

Acts 11:16

you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 11:17

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Cornelius and his Gentile guests and household. The word "us" refers to the speaker and his hearers and so is inclusive.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech (which he began in Acts 11:4) to the Jews about his vision and about what had happened at the house of Cornelius.

Then if God gave to them ... who was I, that I could oppose God?

Peter uses this question to emphasize that he was only obeying God. Alternate translation: "Since God gave to them ... I decided that I could not oppose God!"

the same gift

Peter refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:18

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the Jewish believers to whom Peter spoke.

they said nothing in response

"they did not argue with Peter"

God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also

"God has given repentance that leads to life to the Gentiles also." Here "life" refers to eternal life. The

abstract nouns "repentance" and "life" can be translated as the verbs "repent" and "live." Alternate translation: "God has also given the Gentiles the ability to repent and then live eternally" or "God has allowed the Gentiles also to repent and live eternally"

Acts 11:19

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about what happened to the believers who fled after the stoning of Stephen.

Now

This introduces the new part of the story.

those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

The Jews began persecuting Jesus's followers because Stephen had said and done things that the Jews did not like. Because of this persecution, many of Jesus's followers left Jerusalem and went to many different places.

spread

"went in many different directions"

who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Jews had been persecuting because of Stephen, and so had left Jerusalem, spread"

the persecution that arose over Stephen

the persecution that happened because of what Stephen had said and done

only to Jews

The believers thought God's message was for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles.

Acts 11:20

spoke also to Greeks

These Greek-speaking people were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "also spoke to Gentiles who spoke Greek"

Acts 11:21

The hand of the Lord was with them

God's hand signifies his powerful help. Alternate translation: "God was powerfully enabling those believers to preach effectively"

turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "they repented of their sins and began to obey the Lord"

Acts 11:22

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "they" refers to the believers of the church at Jerusalem.

ears of the church

Here "ears" refers to the believers' hearing about the event. Alternate translation: "the believers in the church"

Acts 11:23

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "them" refers to the believers he met on his way to Antioch.

saw the grace of God

"saw how God acted kindly toward the believers"

he encouraged them

"he kept on encouraging them"

to remain with the Lord

"to remain faithful to the Lord" or "to continue to trust in the Lord"

with purpose of heart

Here the "heart" refers to a person's will and desire. Alternate translation: "with all their will" or "with complete commitment"

Acts 11:24

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas.

full of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit controlled Barnabas as he obeyed the Holy Spirit.

many people were added to the Lord

Here "added" means they came to believe the same thing as the others. Alternate translation: "many more people also believed in the Lord"

Acts 11:25

out to Tarsus

"out to the city of Tarsus"

Acts 11:26

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas and "him" to Saul.

When he found him

It probably took some time and effort for Barnabas to locate Saul.

It came about

This begins a new event in the story.

they gathered together with the church

"Barnabas and Saul gathered together with the church"

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

This implies that it was other people who called the believers Christians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People in Antioch were the first to call the disciples Christians"

Acts 11:27

General Information:

Here Luke tells background information about a prophecy in Antioch.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story-line.

came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem or going down from it.

Acts 11:28

Agabus by name

"whose name was Agabus"

indicated by the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit enabled him to prophesy"

a great famine would occur

"a great shortage of food would happen"

over all the world

This was a generalization referring to the part of the world that they were interested in. Alternate translation: "all over the inhabited world" or "throughout the Roman Empire"

in the days of Claudius

Luke's audience would know that Claudius was the emperor of Rome at that time. Alternate translation: "when Claudius was the Roman emperor"

Acts 11:29

So

This word means marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they sent money because of Agabus' prophesy or the famine.

as each one was able

The richer people sent more; the poorer people sent less.

the brothers in Judea

"the believers in Judea"

Acts 11:30

General Information:

The words "They" and "they" refer to the believers in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:27).

by the hand of Barnabas and Saul

The hand is a synecdoche for the action of the whole person. Alternate translation: "by having Barnabas and Saul take it to them"

Chapter 12

¹ Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church so that he might mistreat them. ² He killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³ After he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. That was during the days of unleavened bread. ⁴ After arresting him, he put him in prison, assigning him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him; he was intending to bring him to the people after the Passover. ⁵ So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church. ⁶ On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. ⁷ Behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared by him, and a light shone in the prison cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him and said, "Get up quickly," and his chains fell off his hands. ⁸ The angel said to him, "Gird yourself and put on your sandals." Peter did so. The angel said to him, "Put on your outer garment and follow me." ⁹ So Peter followed the angel and went out. He did not know that what was done by the angel was real. He thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ After they had passed by the first guard and the second, they came to the iron gate that led into the city; it opened for them by itself. They went out and went down a street, and the angel left him right away. ¹¹ When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I truly know that the Lord has sent his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from everything the Jewish people were expecting." ¹² When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³ When he knocked at the door of the gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, out of joy she failed to open the gate; instead, she came running into the room; she reported that Peter was standing at the gate. ¹⁵ So they said to her, "You are insane." But she insisted that it was so. They said, "It is his angel." ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷ Peter motioned to them with his hand to be silent, and he told them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. He said, "Report these things to James and the brothers." Then he left and went to another place. ¹⁸ Now when it became day, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹ After Herod had searched for him and could not find him, he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death.

Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. ²⁰ Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They went to him with one purpose, and after persuading Blastus, the king's assistant, to help them, they asked for peace because their country received its food from the king's country. ²¹ On a set day Herod dressed himself in royal clothing and sat on a throne; he made a speech to them. ²² The people shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man!" ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory; he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴ But the word of God increased and multiplied.

²⁵ So when Barnabas and Saul had completed their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, ^[1] bringing with them John, also called Mark.

Footnotes

12:25 ^[1]Some ancient copies read,

Acts 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 tells what happened to King Herod while Barnabas was bringing Saul back from Tarsus and they were delivering money from Antioch Jerusalem (11:25-30). He killed many of the leaders of the church, and he put Peter in prison. After God helped Peter escape the prison, Herod killed the prison guards, and then God killed Herod. In the last verse of the chapter, Luke tells how Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Personification

The "word of God" is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could grow and become many.

Acts 12:1

General Information:

This is background information about Herod's killing James.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the new persecution, first of James's death and then of Peter's imprisonment and then release.

Now

This begins a new part of the story.

about that time

This refers to the time of the famine.

laid hands on

This means Herod had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

some who belonged to the church

Only James and Peter are specified, which implies that these were leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

so that he might mistreat them

"in order to cause the believers to suffer"

Acts 12:2

He killed James ... with the sword

This tells the manner in which James was killed.

He killed James

Possible meanings are 1) Herod himself killed James or 2) Herod ordered someone to kill James. Alternate translation: "Herod gave the order and they killed James"

Acts 12:3

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Herod (Acts 12:1).

After he saw that this pleased the Jews

"When Herod realized that putting James to death pleased the Jewish leaders"

pleased the Jews

"made the Jewish leaders happy"

That was

"Herod did this" or "This happened"

the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. Alternate translation: "the

festival when the Jewish people ate bread without yeast"

Acts 12:4

four squads of soldiers

"four groups of soldiers." Each squad had four soldiers that guarded Peter, one group at a time. The groups divided the 24 hour day into four shifts. Each time two soldiers would have been at his side and the other two soldiers by the entrance.

he was intending to bring him to the people

"Herod planned to judge Peter in the presence of the people" or "Herod planned to judge Peter before the Jewish people"

Acts 12:5

So Peter was kept in the prison

This implies that the soldiers continually guarded Peter in prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the soldiers guarded Peter in the prison"

prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the group of believers in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for him"

earnestly

continuously and with dedication

Acts 12:6

On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial

That Herod planned to execute him can be clarified. Alternate translation: "The happened on the day before Herod was going to bring Peter out from prison to put him on trial and then to execute him"

bound with two chains

"tied with two chains" or "fastened with two chains." Each chain would have been attached to one of the two guards who stayed beside Peter.

were keeping watch over the prison

"were guarding the prison doors"

Acts 12:7

General Information:

The words "him" and "his" refer to Peter.

Behold

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

by him

"next to him" or "beside him"

in the prison cell

"in the prison room"

He struck Peter

"The angel tapped Peter" or "The angel poked Peter." Peter was evidently sleeping deeply enough that this was required to wake him.

his chains fell off his hands

The angel caused the chains to fall from Peter without touching them.

Acts 12:8

Gird yourself and put on your sandals

Peter had probably loosened his belt and taken off his sandals so he could go to sleep. The angel was telling Peter to get ready to leave the cell.

Peter did so

"Peter did what the angel told him to do" or "Peter obeyed"

Acts 12:9

General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Peter. The words "they" and "They" refer to Peter and the angel.

He did not know

"He did not understand"

what was done by the angel was real

This could be changed to active form. Alternate translation: "the actions of the angel were real" or "what the angel did truly happened"

Acts 12:10

After they had passed by the first guard and the second

It is implied that the soldiers were not able to see Peter and the angel as they walked by. Alternate translation: "The first and second guards did not see them as they passed by, and then"

had passed by

"had walked by"

and the second

The word "guard" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and the second guard"

they came to the iron gate

"Peter and the angel arrived at the iron gate"

that led into the city

"that opened to the city" or "that went from the prison to the city"

it opened for them by itself

Here "by itself" means neither Peter nor the angel opened it. Alternate translation: "the gate swung open for them" or "the gate opened itself for them"

went down a street

"walked along a street"

left him right away

"left Peter suddenly" or "suddenly disappeared"

Acts 12:11

When Peter came to himself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "When Peter became fully awake and alert" or "When Peter became aware that what had happened was real"

delivered me out of the hand of Herod

Here "the hand of Herod" refers to "Herod's hold" or "Herod's plans." Alternate translation: "brought me from the harm Herod had planned for me"

delivered me

"rescued me"

everything the Jewish people were expecting

Here "the people of the Jews" probably referred mainly to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "all that the Jewish leaders thought would happen to me"

Acts 12:12

realized this

He became aware that God had rescued him.

John, also called Mark

John was also called Mark. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John, whom people also called Mark"

Acts 12:13

he knocked

"Peter knocked." Tapping on the door was a normal Jewish custom to let others know you wish to visit them. You may need to change this to fit your culture.

at the door of the gate

"at the outer door" or "at the door of the entrance from the street to the courtyard"

came to answer

"came to the gate to ask who was knocking"

Acts 12:14

General Information:

Here all instances of "she" refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 12:13](#)).

out of joy

"because she was so joyful" or "being overly excited"

failed to open the gate

"did not open the gate" or "forgot to open the gate"

came running into the room

You may prefer to say "went running into the room in the house"

she reported

"she told them" or "she said"

Acts 12:15

General Information:

Here the words "she" and "her" both refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 10:13](#)), and the words "they" and "They" refer to the people who were inside praying ([Acts 10:12](#)).

You are insane

The people not only did not believe her, but rebuked her by saying she was crazy. Alternate translation: "You are crazy"

she insisted that it was so

"she insisted that what she said was true"

They said

"They answered"

It is his angel

"What you have seen is Peter's angel." Some Jews believed in guardian angels and may have thought that Peter's angel had come to them.

Acts 12:16

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to the people in the house. The word "him" refers to Peter.

But Peter continued knocking

The word "continued" means that Peter kept knocking the entire time those inside were talking.

Acts 12:17

General Information:

Here both instances of "them" refer to the people who were inside praying ([Acts 12:12](#)).

Report these things

"Tell these things"

the brothers

"the other believers"

Acts 12:18

Now

This word is used to mark a break in the story-line. Time has passed; it is now the next day.

when it became day

"in the morning"

there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

This phrase is used to emphasize what really happened. This could be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "there was a great disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter"

there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

The abstract noun "disturbance" can be expressed with the words "disturbed" or "upset." Alternate translation: "the soldiers were very disturbed about what had happened to Peter"

Acts 12:19

General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Peter, and both instances of "he" refers to Herod.

After Herod had searched for him and could not find him

"After Herod searched for Peter and could not find him"

After Herod had searched for him

Possible meanings are that 1) "Herod" here is a metonym for his soldiers, that is, when Herod heard Peter was missing, he sent other soldiers to search the prison, or 2) when Herod heard Peter was missing, he went himself to search the prison.

he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death

It was the normal punishment for the Roman government to kill the guards if their prisoner escaped.

Then Herod went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Judea.

Acts 12:20

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues with another event in Herod's life.

Now

This word is used here to mark the next event in the story.

very angry

This phrase translates a word that speaks of a person being so angry that he is ready to kill other people.

They went to him with one purpose

Here the word "They" is a generalization. It is unlikely that all the people of Tyre and Sidon went to Herod. Alternate translation: "Men representing the people of Tyre and Sidon went with one purpose to talk with Herod"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

after persuading Blastus

"after these men persuaded Blastus"

Blastus

a man's name

the king's assistant

This phrase refers to a person who assists the king in his personal life, not necessarily his work as ruler.

they asked for peace

"these men requested peace"

their country received its food from the king's country

They probably purchased this food. Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon bought all their food from the people that Herod ruled"

received its food

It is implied that Herod restricted this supply of food because he was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Acts 12:21

On a set day

This was probably the day on which Herod agreed to meet with the representatives. Alternate translation: "On the day when Herod agreed to meet them"

royal clothing

expensive clothing that would demonstrate he was the king

sat on a throne

This was where Herod formally addressed people who came to see him.

Acts 12:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 12:23

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Herod.

Immediately an angel

"Right away an angel" or "While the people were praising Herod, an angel"

struck him

"afflicted Herod" or "caused Herod to become very ill"

he did not give God the glory

Herod let those people worship him instead of telling them to worship God.

he was eaten by worms and died

Here "worms" refers to worms inside the body, probably intestinal worms. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "worms ate Herod's insides and he died"

Acts 12:24

the word of God increased and multiplied

The word of God is spoken of as if it were a living plant able to grow and reproduce. Alternate translation: "the message of God spread to more places and more people believed in him"

the word of God

"the message God sent about Jesus"

Acts 12:25

Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the history from [11:30]

completed their mission

This refers back to when they brought money from the believers at Antioch in [Acts 11:29-30]

they returned from Jerusalem

They went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch"

Chapter 13

¹ Now in the church in Antioch, there were some prophets and teachers. They were Barnabas, Simeon (who is called Niger), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them." ³ After they had fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on these men, they sent them off.

⁴ So Barnabas and Saul, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; from there they sailed away to Cyprus. ⁵ While they were in the city of Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John for an assistant. ⁶ When they had gone through the whole island to Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, whose name was Bar-Jesus. ⁷ This magician associated with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul, because he sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas "the magician" (that is how his name is translated) opposed them; he tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, stared at him intensely ¹⁰ and said, "You son of the devil, you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness. You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness. You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?" ¹¹ Now look, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will become blind. You will not see the sun for a while." Immediately there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness; he started going around seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹² After the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, because he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

¹³ Now Paul and his friends set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. But John left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Paul and his friends traveled from Perga and came to Antioch of Pisidia. There they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading of the law and the prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, "Brothers, if you have any message of encouragement for the people here, say it." ¹⁶ So Paul stood up and motioned with his hand; he said, "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they stayed in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸ For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave our people their land for an inheritance. ²⁰ All these events took place over 450 years. After all these things, God gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, to be king for forty years. ²² After God removed him from the kingship, he raised up David to be their king. It was about David that God testified, saying, 'I have found David son of Jesse to be a man after my heart, who does all I want him to do.' ²³ From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised to do. ²⁴ Before the arrival of Jesus, John proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ As John was finishing his work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one. But listen, one is coming after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' ²⁶ Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, it is to us that the message about this salvation has been sent. ²⁷ For they who live in Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize him, and they fulfilled the voices of the prophets that are read every Sabbath by condemning him. ²⁸ Even though they found no reason for the death penalty, they called on Pilate to kill him. ²⁹ When they had completed all the things that were written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead. ³¹ He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These people are now his witnesses to the people. ³² So we tell you the good news: The promise that came to our fathers ³³ God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

'You are my Son,
today I have become your Father.'

³⁴ As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

'I will give you the holy and sure blessings
promised to David.'

³⁵ This is why he also says in another Psalm,

'You will not allow your Holy One
to see decay.'

³⁶ For when David had served the purpose of God in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was laid with his fathers and his body experienced decay. ³⁷ But he whom God raised up experienced no decay. ³⁸ So let it be known to you, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. The law of Moses could not make you righteous. ³⁹ But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes. ⁴⁰ So then be careful that the thing the prophets spoke about does not happen to you:

⁴¹ 'Look, you despisers,
and be astonished and then perish;
For I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you would never believe,
even if someone announces it to you.'"

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas left, the people begged them that they might speak these same words again the next Sabbath. ⁴³ When the synagogue meeting ended, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who were speaking to them and persuading them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with envy and spoke against the things that were said by Paul and insulted him. ⁴⁶ But Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you push it away from yourselves and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, see, we will turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so has the Lord commanded us, saying,

'I have appointed you as a light for the Gentiles,
that you should bring salvation
to the uttermost parts of the earth.'"

⁴⁸ As the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. As many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of their region. ⁵¹ But Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust from their feet against them. Then they went to the city of Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Footnotes

13:18 ^[1] Some ancient copies read,

Acts 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 13:33-35 and 13:41.

This chapter is where the second half of the Book of Acts begins. Luke writes more about Paul than about Peter. Luke also writes about the believers preaching to the Gentiles rather than to the Jews.

Special concepts in this chapter

A light for the Gentiles

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. The Jews considered all

Gentiles as walking in darkness, but Paul and Barnabas spoke of telling the Gentiles about Jesus as if they were going to bring them physical light. (See: and righteous)

Acts 13:1

General Information:

Verse 1 gives background information about the people in the church at Antioch.

Connecting Statement:

Luke begins to tell about the mission trips on which the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul.

Now in the church in Antioch

"At that time in the church at Antioch"

Simeon ... Niger ... Lucius ... Manaen

These are men's names.

foster brother of Herod the tetrarch

Manaen was probably Herod's playmate or close friend while they were growing up.

Acts 13:2

General Information:

The words "they" refers to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](#)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and it could include other believers.

Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

"Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me"

I have called them

The verb here means that God chose them to do this work.

Acts 13:3

General Information:

The words "they" and "their" refer to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](#)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and they could include other believers.

laid their hands on these men

"laid their hands on these men whom God had set apart for his service." This act showed that the leaders agreed that the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas and Saul to do this work.

sent them off

"sent those men off" or "sent those men off to do the work the Holy Spirit told them to do"

Acts 13:4

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Saul.

So

This word marks an event that happened because of a previous event. In this case, the previous event is

Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the Holy Spirit.

went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Seleucia is lower in elevation than Antioch.

Seleucia

a city by the sea

Acts 13:5

General Information:

Here the words "They" and "their" refer to Barnabas and Saul.

city of Salamis

The city of Salamis was on Cyprus Island.

proclaimed the word of God

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message of God." Alternate translation: "proclaimed the message of God"

synagogues of the Jews

Possible meanings are that 1) there were multiple Jewish synagogues in the city of Salamis where Barnabas and Saul preached or 2) Barnabas and Saul started at the synagogue at Salamis and continued to preach in all the synagogues they found while they traveled around the Island of Cyprus.

They also had John for an assistant

"John went with them and was helping them"

John

John Mark

assistant

"helper"

Acts 13:6

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark.

the whole island

They crossed from one side of the island to the other and shared the gospel message in each town they passed through.

Paphos

a major city on Cyprus island where the proconsul lived

they found

Here "found" means they came upon him without looking for him. Alternate translation: "they met" or "they came upon"

a certain magician

"a particular person who practiced witchcraft" or "a person who practiced supernatural magic arts"

whose name was Bar-Jesus

"Bar-Jesus" means "Son of Jesus." There is no relation between this man and Jesus Christ. "Jesus" was a common name at that time.

Acts 13:7

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul.

associated with

"was often with" or "was often in the company of"

proconsul

This was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "governor"

who was an intelligent man

This is background information about Sergius Paulus.

This man summoned

The phrase "this man" refers to Sergius Paulus.

he sought to hear the word of God

"he wanted to hear the word of God"

Acts 13:8

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark, and "he" refers to Elymas.

Elymas "the magician"

This was Bar Jesus, who was also called "the magician"

that is how his name is translated

"that was what he was called in Greek"

opposed them; he tried to turn

"resisted them by trying to turn" or "attempted to stop them by trying to turn"

tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith

Here "to turn ... away from" is a metaphor for convincing someone to not do something. Alternate translation: "attempted to persuade the governor not to believe the gospel message"

Acts 13:9

General Information:

The word "him" refers to the magician Elymas, who is also called Bar Jesus ([Acts 13:6-8](#)).

Connecting Statement:

While on the island of Paphos, Paul begins to talk to Elymas.

Saul, who is also called Paul

"Saul" was his Jewish name, and "Paul" was his Roman name. Since he was speaking to a Roman official, he used his Roman name. Alternate translation: "Saul, who now called himself Paul"

stared at him intensely

"looked at him intensely"

Acts 13:10

You son of the devil

Paul is saying the man is acting like the devil. Alternate translation: "You are like the devil" or "You act like the devil"

you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness

"you are always intent in causing others to believe what is not true using falsehood and are always doing what is wrong"

wickedness

The word in this context means laziness and lack of diligence in following God's law.

You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness

Paul is grouping Elymas with the devil. Just as the devil is an enemy of God and is against righteousness, so also was Elymas.

You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?

Paul uses this question to rebuke Elymas for opposing God. Alternate translation: "You are always saying that the truth about the Lord God is false!"

the straight paths of the Lord

Here "straight paths" refer to the ways that are true. Alternate translation: "the true ways of the Lord"

Acts 13:11

General Information:

The words "you," "he," and "him" refer to Elymas the magician.

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to Elymas.

the hand of the Lord is upon you

Here "hand" represents the power of God and "upon you" implies punishment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish you"

you will become blind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make you blind"

You will not see the sun

Elymas will be so completely blind that he not even be able to see the sun. Alternate translation: "You will not even see the sun"

for a while

"for a period of time" or "until the time appointed by God"

there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness

"the eyes of Elymas became blurry and then dark" or "Elymas started seeing unclearly and then he could not see anything"

he started going around

"Elymas wandered around" or "Elymas started feeling around and"

Acts 13:12

General Information:

Both instances of "he" refer to the proconsul.

the proconsul

A proconsul was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "the governor"

he believed

"he believed in Jesus"

he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching about the Lord amazed him"

Acts 13:13

General Information:

Verse 13 gives background information about this part of the story. "Paul and his friends" were Barnabas and John Mark

Connecting Statement:

This is a new part of the story about Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.

Now

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

set sail from Paphos

"traveled by sailboat from Paphos"

came to Perga in Pamphylia

"arrived in Perga, which is in Pamphylia"

But John left them

"But John Mark left Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 13:14

General Information:

Verse 14 continues to give background information about this part of the story. The word "they" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark

Antioch of Pisidia

"the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia." This is different from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left at the beginning of the chapter.

Acts 13:15

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark.

After the reading of the law and the prophets

The "law and the prophets" refer to parts of the Jewish scriptures which were read. Alternate translation: "After someone read from the books of the law and the writings of the prophets"

sent them a message, saying

"told someone to say to them" or "asked someone to say to them"

Brothers

The term "brothers" is here used by the people in the synagogue to refer to Paul and Barnabas as fellow Jews.

if you have any message of encouragement

"if you want to say anything to encourage us"

encouragement

or "exhortation"

say it

"please speak it" or "please tell it to us"

Acts 13:16

General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "you" is plural.

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his speech to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. He begins by talking about things that happened in Israel's history.

motioned with his hand

This could refer to moving his hands as a signal that he was ready to speak. Alternate translation: "moved his hands to show that he was about to speak"

you who fear God

This refers to Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. "you who are not Israelites but who worship God"

God, listen

"God, listen to me" or "God, listen to what I am about to say"

Acts 13:17

General Information:

The word "our" includes the speaker and the hearers and so is plural. The words "they" and "them" refer to "the people." The word "he" refers to God.

The God of this people Israel

"The God the people of Israel worship"

our fathers

"our ancestors"

exalted the people

"caused the people to become very numerous"

with an uplifted arm

This refers to God's mighty power. Alternate translation: "with great power"

out of it

"out from the land of Egypt"

Acts 13:18

he put up with them

"God tolerated the people of Israel." This means "he tolerated them." Some versions have a different word that means "he took care of them." Alternate translation: "God endured their disobedience" or "God took care of them"

Acts 13:19

General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to God. The word "our" refers to Paul and his audience.

nations

Here the word "nations" refers to different people groups and not to lands with geographical boundaries.

Acts 13:20

General Information:

The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.

took place over 450 years

"took more than 450 years to accomplish"

until Samuel the prophet

"until the time of the prophet Samuel"

Acts 13:21

king for forty years

"their king for forty years" or "king, and he reigned over them for forty years"

Acts 13:22

General Information:

The quotation here is from Old Testament.

removed him from the kingship

This expression means God caused Saul to stop being king. Alternate translation: "rejected Saul from being king"

he raised up David to be their king

"God chose David to be their king"

their king

"the king of Israel" or "the king over the Israelites"

It was about David that God testified, saying,

"God gave this testimony about David:"

I have found David ... to be

"I have observed that David ... is"

a man after my heart

This expression means "a man who wants what I want."

Acts 13:23

From this man's descendants

"From David's descendants." This is placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that the savior had to be one of David's descendants (Acts 13:22).

has brought to Israel

This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "gave to the people of Israel"

as he promised to do

"just as God promised he would do"

Acts 13:24

a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel

You can translate the word "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "that all the people of Israel who wanted to repent of their sin needed to have him baptize them"

Acts 13:25

Who do you think I am?

John asked this question to compel the people to think about who he was. Alternate translation: "Think about who I am."

I am not the one

John was referring to the Messiah, whom they were expecting to come. Alternate translation: "I am not the Messiah"

But listen

This emphasizes the importance of what he will say next.

one is coming after me

This also refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "The Messiah will soon come"

the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie

"I am not worthy even to untie his sandals." The Messiah is so much greater than John that he did not even feel worthy to do the lowest job for him.

Acts 13:26

General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Paul and his entire audience in the synagogue.

Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God

Possible meanings are 1) this is a list with three items, and Paul is addressing three groups of people together, or 2) the phrases "children of the offspring of Abraham" and "those among you who fear God" refer to the two groups of people whom Paul addresses as "brothers."

those among you who fear God

These words refer specifically to Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogue and obeyed much of the law of Moses but had not been circumcised.

the message about this salvation has been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sent the message about this salvation"

about this salvation

The word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "that God will save people"

Acts 13:27

General Information:

The word "they" and "their" refers to the Jews who lived in Jerusalem.

did not recognize him

"did not realize that this man Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them"

the voices of the prophets

Here the word "voices" is a metonym for the message that the voices spoke. Alternate translation: "the writings of the prophets" or "the messages of the prophets"

that are read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone reads"

Acts 13:28

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish people and their religious leaders in Jerusalem. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.

they found no reason for the death penalty

It is implied that they found no legal reason for Jesus to be put to death. Alternate translation: "they found no legal reason for Jesus to be killed" or "they found no legal reason to kill Jesus"

Acts 13:29

When they had completed all the things that were written about him

"When they did to Jesus all the things that the prophets said would happen to him"

they took him down from the tree

It may be helpful to explicitly say Jesus died before this happened. Alternate translation: "they killed Jesus and then took him down from the cross after he died"

from the tree

"from the cross." This was another way people at that time referred to the cross.

Acts 13:30

But God raised him

"But" indicates a strong contrast between what the people did and what God did.

raised him from the dead

"raised him from among those who were dead." To be with "the dead" means to be dead. To raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of making that person alive again.

Acts 13:31

He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him ... Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The disciples who traveled with Jesus ... Jerusalem saw him for many days"

many days

We know from other writings that this period was 40 days. Translate "many days" with a term that would be appropriate for that length of time.

are now his witnesses to the people

"are now testifying to the people about Jesus" or "are now telling the people about Jesus"

Acts 13:32

So

This word marks an event that happened because of previous event. In this case, the previous event is God's raising Jesus from the dead.

our fathers

"our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These were the physical ancestors of the Jews, and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

Acts 13:33

God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

You may need to rearrange the parts of this sentence, which begins in verse 32. "God has fulfilled for us, their children, the promise that he made to our fathers, by raising up Jesus"

for us, their children

"for us, who are the children of our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These ancestors were the physical ancestors of the Jews and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

by raising up Jesus

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "by making Jesus alive again"

As it is written in the second Psalm

"This is what was written in the second Psalm"

the second Psalm

"Psalm 2"

Son ... Father

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

Acts 13:34

General Information:

The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah.

As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

"God has spoken in this way that he raised him up from the dead never to return to decay" "God used

these words to say that he raised him up from the dead, and so he would never die again"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

never to return to decay

"and he will never die again"

he has spoken in this way

God has said using these words

sure blessings

"certain blessings"

Acts 13:35

This is why he also says in another Psalm

Paul's audience would have understood that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "In another Psalm of David, he also says about the Messiah"

he also says

"David also says." David is the author of Psalm 16, from which this quotation is taken.

You will not allow your Holy One to see decay

The phrase "see decay" is a metonym for "decay." Alternate translation: "You will not allow the body of your Holy One to rot"

You will not allow

David is speaking to God here.

Acts 13:36

in his own generation

"during his lifetime"

served the purpose of God

"did what God wanted him to do" or "did what pleased God"

he fell asleep

This was a polite way to refer to death. Alternate translation: "he died"

was laid with his fathers

"was buried with his ancestors who had died"

his body experienced decay

The phrase "his body experienced decay" is a less direct way of saying "his body decayed" or "his body rotted."

Acts 13:37

he whom God raised up experienced

"Jesus, whom God raised up, experienced"

God raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused to live again"

experienced no decay

The phrase "experienced no decay" is a way to say "his body did not decay." Alternate translation: "did not rot"

Acts 13:38

let it be known to you

"know this" or "this is important for you to know"

brothers

Paul uses this term because they are his fellow Jews and followers of Judaism. They are not Christian believers at this point. Alternate translation: "my fellow Israelites and other friends"

that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we proclaim to you that your sins can be forgiven through Jesus"

forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be translated with the verb "to forgive." Alternate translation: "that God can forgive your sins"

Acts 13:39

But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes

"But God makes righteous everyone who believes in this man"

by this man

Here "this man" refers to Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:40

be careful

It is implied that the thing they should be careful about is Paul's message. Alternate translation: "give close attention to the things I have said"

that the thing the prophets spoke about

"so that what the prophets spoke about"

Acts 13:41

General Information:

In his message to the people in the synagogue, Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk. Here the word "I" refers to God.

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, which he began in Acts 13:16.

you despisers

"you who feel contempt" or "you who ridicule"

be astonished

"be amazed" or "be shocked"

then perish

"then die"

am doing a work

"am doing something" or "am doing a great deed"

in your days

"during your lifetime"

days, a work that

"days. I am doing something that"

even if someone announces it to you

"even if someone tells you about it"

Acts 13:42

As Paul and Barnabas left

"When Paul and Barnabas were leaving"

begged them that they might

"begged them to"

these same words

Here "words" refers to the message that Paul had spoken. Alternate translation: "this same message"

Acts 13:43

When the synagogue meeting ended

Possible meanings are 1) this restates "As Paul and Barnabas left" in verse 42 or 2) Paul and Barnabas left the meeting before it ended and this occurs later.

proselytes

These were non-Jewish people who converted to Judaism.

who were speaking to them and persuading them

"and Paul and Barnabas were speaking to those people and persuading them"

to continue in the grace of God

It is implied that they believed Paul's message that Jesus was the Messiah. Alternate translation: "to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did"

Acts 13:44

almost the whole city was

The "city" represents the people in the city. This phrase is used to show the great response to the Lord's word. Alternate translation: "almost all the people of the city were"

to hear the word of the Lord

It is implied that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who spoke the word of the Lord. Alternate translation: "to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus"

Acts 13:45

General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

the Jews

Here "Jews" represents Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

were filled with envy

Here envy is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. Alternate translation: "became very envious"

spoke against

"contradicted" or "opposed"

the things that were said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Paul said"

Acts 13:46

General Information:

Both instances of the word "you" and the word "yourselves" refer to the Jews to whom Paul is speaking and so are plural. The word "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present.

It was necessary

This implies that God had commanded this be done. Alternate translation: "God commanded"

that the word of God should first be spoken to you

This can be stated in active form. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message from God." Alternate translation: "that we speak the message from God to you first" or "that we speak the word of God to you first"

Seeing you push it away from yourselves

Their rejection of the word of God is spoken of as if it were something they pushed away. Alternate translation: "Since you reject the word of God"

consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life

"have shown that you are not worthy of eternal life" or "act as though you are not worthy of eternal life"

we will turn to the Gentiles

"we will go to the Gentiles." Paul and Barnabas were implying that they would preach to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we will leave you and start preaching to the Gentiles"

Acts 13:47

General Information:

The word "us" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present, so it is exclusive.

commanded us ... 'I have appointed you as a light ... you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Both instances of "you" here are singular, but when Paul said, "... the Lord commanded us," Paul was applying those singular words to both himself and Barnabas. The words in the quotation were originally spoken by God through Isaiah the prophet to God's servant. By quoting Isaiah's prophecy, Paul was saying that he and Barnabas were doing what God commanded his servant to do. Paul was not saying that God had spoken directly to him.

as a light

Here the truth about Jesus that Paul was preaching is spoken of as if it were a light that allowed people to see.

bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth

The abstract word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." The phrase "uttermost parts" refers to everywhere. Alternate translation: "tell people everywhere in the world that I want to save them"

Acts 13:48

glorified the word of the Lord

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus that they had believed. Alternate translation: "glorified God for the message about the Lord Jesus" or "glorified the Lord for his word"

As many as were appointed to eternal life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As many as God appointed to eternal life" or "All the people whom God had chosen to receive eternal life"

Acts 13:49

The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those who believed spread the word of the Lord through the whole region" or "Those who believed went everywhere in the region and told others about the message of Jesus"

Acts 13:50

the Jews

This probably refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

incited ... women ... and ... men

This means that they spoke to the women and men and caused them to be angry and act violently.
Alternate translation: "stirred up ... women ... and ... men"

the devout women of high standing

The word "devout" means that these women feared God. The phrase "of high standing" means that people respected these women.

the leading men

"the most important men"

They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas

The word "they" here probably refers to the devout women and the leading men. They listened to the Jews and then convinced the rest of the people in the city to persecute the apostles and throw them out.

threw them out of their region

"made Paul and Barnabas leave their land"

region

Here this word refers to the area that the people of the city considered their own, not to land within an official government border.

Acts 13:51

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas end their time in Antioch of Pisidia and go to Iconium.

shook off the dust from their feet against them

This was a symbolic act to indicate to the unbelieving people that God had rejected them and would punish them.

Acts 13:52

the disciples

This probably refers to the new believers in the Antioch of Pisidia that Paul and Silas just left.

Chapter 14

¹ It came about in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue of the Jews and spoke in such a way that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. ² But the Jews who were disobedient stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and made them bitter against the brothers. ³ So they stayed there for a long time, speaking boldly with the Lord's power, while he gave evidence about the message of his grace. He did this by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. ⁴ But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵ Both Gentiles and Jews (together with their leaders) made an attempt to mistreat them and to stone them, ⁶ but as soon as they learned about this, they fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region, ⁷ where they continued to proclaim the gospel.

⁸ At Lystra a certain man sat, powerless in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul fixed his eyes on him and saw that he had faith to be made well. ¹⁰ So he said to him in a loud voice, "Stand up on your feet." Then the man jumped up and walked around.

¹¹ When the multitude saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the dialect of Lycaonia, "The gods have become like men and come down to us." ¹² They called Barnabas "Zeus," and Paul "Hermes," because he was the main speaker. ¹³ The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and wreaths to the gates; he and the multitudes wanted to offer sacrifice. ¹⁴ But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their clothing and quickly went out into the crowd, crying out, ¹⁵ "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are human beings, with the same nature as you. We are telling you good news that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them. ¹⁶ In the past ages, he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ But still, he did not leave himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you the rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." ¹⁸ Even with these words, Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

¹⁹ But some Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and persuaded the crowds. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, thinking that he was dead. ²⁰ Yet as the disciples were standing around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day, he went to Derbe with Barnabas. ²¹ After they had proclaimed the gospel in that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch. ²² They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith, saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." ²³ When they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they entrusted them to the Lord, in whom they had believed. ²⁴ Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. ²⁵ When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had now completed. ²⁷ When they arrived in Antioch and gathered the church together, they reported all the things that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. ²⁸ They stayed for a long time with the disciples.

Acts 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The message of his grace"

The message of Jesus is the message that God will show grace to those who believe in Jesus. (See: grace and believe)

Zeus and Hermes

The Gentiles in the Roman Empire worshiped many different false gods who do not really exist. Paul and Barnabas told them to believe in the "living God." (See: falsegod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"We must enter into the kingdom of God through many sufferings."

Jesus told his followers before he died that everyone who followed him would suffer persecution. Paul is saying the same thing using different words.

Acts 14:1

General Information:

The story of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium continues.

It came about in Iconium that

Possible meanings here are 1) "It happened in Iconium that" or 2) "In Iconium, as usual,"

spoke in such a way

"spoke so powerfully." It may be helpful to state that they spoke the message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "spoke the message about Jesus so powerfully"

Acts 14:2

the Jews who were disobedient

This refers to the portion of the Jews who did not believe the message about Jesus.

stirred up the minds of the Gentiles

Causing the Gentiles to become angry is spoken of as if calm waters were disturbed.

the minds of the Gentiles

Here the word "minds" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to Paul and Barnabas and the new believers.

Acts 14:3

General Information:

Here the words "he," "his," and "He" refer to the Lord.

So they stayed there

"Nevertheless they stayed there." Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium to help the many people who had believed in Acts 14:1. "So" could be omitted if it adds confusion to the text.

gave evidence about the message of his grace

"demonstrated that the message about his grace was true"

about the message of his grace

"about the message of the Lord's grace"

by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders"

by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

Here "hands" refers to the will and effort of these two men as guided by the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 14:4

the people of the city were divided

"the people of the city disagreed with each other"

sided with the Jews

"supported the Jews" or "agreed with the Jews." The first group mentioned did not agree with the message about grace.

with the apostles

The second group mentioned agreed with the message about grace. It may be helpful to restate the verb. Alternate translation: "sided with the apostles"

the apostles

Luke refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here "apostle" might be used in the general sense of "ones sent out."

Acts 14:5

made an attempt to mistreat them

Here the words "made an attempt" implies that they were not able to mistreat Paul and Barnabas before Paul and Barnabas left the city.

to mistreat them and to stone

"to beat Paul and Barnabas and to kill them by throwing stones at them"

Acts 14:6

Lycaonia

A district in Asia Minor

Lystra

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and north of Derbe

Derbe

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and Lystra

Acts 14:7

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

where they continued to proclaim the gospel

"where Paul and Barnabas continued to proclaim the good news"

Acts 14:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Lystra.

a certain man sat

This introduces a new person in the story.

powerless in his feet

"unable to move his legs" or "unable to walk on his feet"

a cripple from his mother's womb

"having been born as a cripple"

cripple

person who cannot walk

Acts 14:9

General Information:

The words "him" and "he" refer to the crippled man.

Paul fixed his eyes on him

"Paul looked straight at him"

had faith to be made well

The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "believed that Jesus could heal him" or "believed that Jesus could make him well"

Acts 14:10

he said to him

"Paul said to the crippled man"

jumped up

"leaped in the air." This implies that his legs were completely healed.

Acts 14:11

what Paul had done

This refers to Paul's healing the crippled man.

they raised their voice

To raise the voice is to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "they spoke loudly"

in the dialect of Lycaonia

"in their own Lycaonian language." The people of Lystra spoke Lycaonian and also Greek.

The gods have become like men and come down to us

These people believed that the gods needed to change their appearance in order to look like men. A large number of people believed Paul and Barnabas were their pagan gods who had come down from heaven. Alternate translation: "The gods have come down from heaven to us in the form of men"

Acts 14:12

Zeus

The people of Iconium probably considered Zeus to be the king over all the other pagan gods.

Hermes

The people of Iconium probably considered Hermes to be the pagan god who brought messages to people from Zeus and the other gods.

Acts 14:13

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought

It may be helpful to include additional information about the priest. Alternate translation: "There was a temple just outside the city where the people worshiped Zeus. When the priest who served in the temple heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, he brought"

oxen and wreaths

The oxen were to be sacrificed. The wreaths were either to crown Paul and Barnabas, or put on the oxen for sacrifice.

to the gates

The gates of the cities were often used as a meeting place for the people of the city.

wanted to offer sacrifice

"wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes"

Acts 14:14

the apostles, Barnabas and Paul

Luke is here probably using "apostle" in the general sense of "one sent out."

they tore their clothing

This was a symbolic action to show that they were deeply distressed and upset that the crowd wanted to sacrifice to them.

Acts 14:15

Men, why are you doing these things?

Barnabas and Paul are rebuking the people for trying to sacrifice to them. Alternate translation: "Men, you must not do these things!"

doing these things
"worshipping us"

We also are human beings, with the same nature as you
By this statement, Barnabas and Paul are saying that they are not gods. Alternate translation: "We are just human beings like you. We are not gods"

with the same nature as you
"like you in every way"

telling you good news that you should turn
"telling you good news: you can turn" or "giving you good advice to turn." That is, the good news is that they can and should turn.

turn from these useless things to the living God
Here "turn from ... to" is a metaphor meaning to stop doing one thing and start doing something else. Alternate translation: "stop worshipping these false gods that cannot help you, and instead begin to worship the living God"

the living God
"the God who truly exists" or "the God who lives"

Acts 14:16

In the past ages
"In previous times" or "Until now"

to walk in their own ways
Walking in a way, or walking on a path, is a metaphor for living one's life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives the way they wanted to" or "to do whatever they wanted to do"

Acts 14:17

Connecting Statement:
Paul and Barnabas continue speaking to the crowd outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:8).

he did not leave himself without witness
This could also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God has certainly left a witness" or "God has indeed testified"

in that
"as shown by the fact that"

filling your hearts with food and gladness
Here "your hearts" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "giving you enough to eat and things about which to be happy"

Acts 14:18

Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them
Paul and Barnabas stopped the multitude from sacrificing to them, but it was difficult to do so.

barely kept
"had difficulty preventing"

Acts 14:19

General Information:
Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

persuaded the crowds
It may be helpful to explicitly state what they persuaded the crowd to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded the people not to believe Paul and Barnabas, and to turn against them"

the crowds
This may not be the same group as the "multitude" in the previous verse. Some time had passed, and this might be a different group that gathered together.

thinking that he was dead
"because they thought that he was already dead"

Acts 14:20

the disciples
These were new believers in the city of Lystra.

entered the city
"Paul re-entered Lystra with the believers"

he went to Derbe with Barnabas
"Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe"

Acts 14:21

General Information:
Here both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

that city
"Derbe" (Acts 14:20)

Acts 14:22

General Information:
Here the words "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas, and the word "We" includes Paul, Barnabas, and the disciples. The word "them" refers to the disciples.

They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples
Here "souls" refers to the disciples. This emphasizes their inner thoughts and beliefs. Alternate translation: "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to believe the message about Jesus" or "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to grow strong in their relationship with Jesus"

encouraging them to continue in the faith
"encouraging the believers to keep trusting in Jesus"

saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

Some versions translate this as an indirect quote, "saying that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." The word "we" here includes Luke and the readers.

We must enter

Paul includes his hearers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

Acts 14:23

they had appointed for them

"Paul and Barnabas had appointed for the believers"

they entrusted them ... they had believed

Possible meanings are 1) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed ... the elders had believed" or 2) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed and the other disciples ... the elders and other disciples had believed"

Acts 14:24

General Information:

The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 14:25

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

had spoken the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message of God."

Alternate translation: "had spoken the message of God"

went down to Attalia

The phrase "went down" is used here because Attalia is lower in elevation than Perga.

Acts 14:26

where they had been committed to the grace of God

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "where believers and leaders in Antioch had committed Paul and Barnabas to the grace of God" or "where the people of Antioch prayed that God would care for and protect Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 14:27

General Information:

Here the words "they," "them," and "They" refer to Paul and Barnabas. The word "he" refers to God.

gathered the church together

"called the local believers to meet together"

he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles

God's enabling the Gentiles to believe is spoken of as if he had opened a door that had prevented them from entering into faith. Alternate translation: "God had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe"

Acts 14:28

General Information:

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Chapter 15

¹ Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and taught the brothers, saying, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into a sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas, along with some others from among them, were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders about this question. ³ They therefore, being sent by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria and announced the conversion of the Gentiles. They brought great joy to all the brothers. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all the things that God had done with them. ⁵ But certain men who believed, who belonged to the group of Pharisees, stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses." ⁶ So the apostles and the elders gathered together to consider this matter.

⁷ After much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that a good while ago God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, has testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were."

¹² All the multitude kept silent while they listened to Barnabas and Paul report the signs and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ After they stopped speaking, James answered, saying,

"Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon has told how God first graciously helped the Gentiles in order to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written,

¹⁶ 'After these things I will return,
and I will build again the tabernacle of David,
which has fallen down;
I will set up and restore its ruins again,
¹⁷ so that the remnant of men may seek the Lord,
including all the Gentiles called by my name.'
¹⁸ This is what the Lord says,
who has done these things
that have been known from ancient times. ^[1]

¹⁹ Therefore, I have decided that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God. ²⁰ But we will write to them that they must keep away from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, and from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood. ²¹ For Moses has been proclaimed in every city from ancient generations and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath."

²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, who were leaders of the brothers, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

²³ They wrote this with their hands,

"From the apostles and elders, your brothers,
to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:
Greetings!

²⁴ Because we have heard that certain men have gone out from us, with no orders from us, and have disturbed you with words that upset your souls, ²⁵ it seemed good to us, who have come to one mind, to choose men and to send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will report to you the same things in their own words. ²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things

sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you avoid these things, you will do well.
Farewell."

³⁰ So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; after they gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. ³¹ When they had read it, they rejoiced because of the encouragement. ³² Judas and Silas, also prophets, encouraged the brothers with many words and strengthened them. ³³ After they had spent some time there, they were sent away in peace from the brothers to those who had sent them. ³⁴^[2]³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching (along with many others) the word of the Lord.

³⁶ After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to also take with them John, who was called Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought it was not good to take Mark, who had left them in Pamphylia and did not go further with them in the work. ³⁹ Then there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. ⁴⁰ But Paul chose Silas and left, after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ Then he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Footnotes

15:18 ^[1] There are some copies of the ancient Greek text that have a slightly different meaning,

15:34 ^[2] The best ancient copies do not have verse 34 (See: Acts 15:40),

Acts 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 15:16-17.

The meeting that Luke describes in this chapter is commonly called the "Jerusalem Council." This was a time when many church leaders got together to decide if believers needed to obey the whole law of Moses.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

In this chapter Luke begins to use the word "brothers" to refer to fellow Christians instead of fellow Jews.

Obedying the law of Moses

Some believers wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because God had told Abraham and Moses that everyone who wanted to belong to him had to be circumcised and that this was "an everlasting covenant." But Paul and Barnabas had seen God give uncircumcised Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they did not want the Gentiles to be circumcised. Both groups went to Jerusalem to have the church leaders decide what they should do.

"Abstain from things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality"

It is possible that the church leaders decided on these laws so that Jews and Gentiles could not only live together but eat the same foods together.

Acts 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are still in Antioch when there is a dispute about the Gentiles and circumcision.

Some men

"Some men." You can make explicit that these men were Jews who believed in Christ.

came down from Judea

The phrase "came down" is used here because Judea is higher in elevation than Antioch.

taught the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for believers in Christ. It is implied that they were in Antioch. Alternate translation: "taught the believers at Antioch" or "were teaching the believers at Antioch"

Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Unless someone circumcises you according to the custom of Moses, God cannot save you" or "God will not save you from your sins unless you receive circumcision according to the law of Moses"

Acts 15:2

This brought ... into a sharp dispute and debate with them

The abstract nouns "sharp dispute" and "debate" can be stated as verbs and where the men came from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "... had confronted and debated with the men from Judea"

go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

this question

"this issue"

Acts 15:3

General Information:

Both instances of "They" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

They therefore, being sent by the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore the community of believers sent them from Antioch to Jerusalem"

passed through ... announced

The words "passed through" and "announced" indicate they spent some time in different places sharing in detail what God was doing.

announced the conversion of the Gentiles

The abstract noun "conversion" means the Gentiles were rejecting their false gods and believing in God. Alternate translation: "announced to the community of believers in those places that Gentiles were believing in God"

They brought great joy to all the brothers

Their message causing the brothers to be joyful is spoken of as if "joy" were an object that they

brought to the brothers. Alternate translation: "What they said caused their fellow believers to rejoice"

the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers.

Acts 15:4

General Information:

All instances of "they" and "them" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles, the elders, and the rest of the community of believers welcomed them"

with them

"through them"

Acts 15:5

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to non-Jewish believers who were not circumcised and did not keep the Old Testament laws of God.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders there.

But certain men

Here Luke contrasts those who believe that salvation is only in Jesus to others who believe salvation is by Jesus but also believe that circumcision is required for salvation.

to keep the law of Moses

"to obey the law of Moses"

Acts 15:6

to consider this matter

The church leaders decided to discuss whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order for God to save them from their sins.

Acts 15:7

General Information:

The word "them" refers to apostles and elders

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins to speak to the apostles and elders who met to discuss whether Gentiles had to receive circumcision and keep the law ([Acts 15:5-6](#)).

Brothers

Peter is addressing all of the believers who are present.

by my mouth

Here "mouth" refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "from me" or "by me"

the Gentiles should hear

"the Gentiles would hear"

the word of the gospel

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

Acts 15:8

General Information:

The word "them" refers to the Gentiles, and both instances of "you" are plural.

who knows the heart

Here "heart" refers to the "minds" or "inner beings." Alternate translation: "who knows the people's minds" or "who knows what people think"

has testified to them

"has testified to the Gentiles"

giving them the Holy Spirit

"causing the Holy Spirit to come upon them"

Acts 15:9

General Information:

The word "he" refers to God, the word "us" refers to the speaker and the hearers, and the word "them" refers to the Gentiles.

made no distinction

God did not treat Jewish believers differently from Gentile believers.

having cleansed their hearts by faith

God's forgiving the Gentile believers' sins is spoken of as though he cleaned their hearts. Here "heart" stands for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "forgiving their sins because they believe in Jesus"

Acts 15:10

General Information:

Peter includes his audience by his use of "our" and "we."

Now

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

why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Peter uses a question with a word picture to tell the Jewish believers they should not require the non-Jewish believers to perform circumcision to be saved. Alternate translation: "Do not test God by

putting a burden on the non-Jewish believers which we Jews were not able to bear!"

our fathers

This refers to their Jewish ancestors.

Acts 15:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes speaking to the apostles and elders.

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But we believe the Lord Jesus will save us by his grace, just as he saved the non-Jewish believers"

Acts 15:12

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

All the multitude

"Everyone" or "The whole group" (Acts 15:6)

God had worked

"God had done" or "God had caused"

Acts 15:13

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).

Connecting Statement:

James begins to speak to the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6).

Brothers, listen

"Fellow believers, listen." James was probably speaking only to men.

Acts 15:14

in order to take from them a people

"so that he might choose from among them a people"

for his name

"for God's name." Here "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "for himself"

Acts 15:15

Connecting Statement:

James quotes the prophet Amos from the Old Testament.

The words of the prophets agree

Here "words" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "What the prophets said agrees" or "The prophets agree"

agree with this
"confirm this truth"

as it is written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as they wrote" or "as the prophet Amos wrote long ago"

Acts 15:16

General Information:
Here "I" refers to God, who spoke through the words of his prophet.

I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down ... its ruins again
This speaks of God's again choosing one of David's descendants to rule over his people as though he were setting up a tent again after it fell down.

tabernacle
Here the word "tabernacle," a dwelling place, stands for David's family. The same word is used for the tent that Yahweh told Moses to construct.

Acts 15:17

the remnant of men may seek the Lord
This speaks about people wanting to obey God and learn more about him as if they were literally looking for him.

remnant of men
Here "men" includes males and females. Alternate translation: "remnant of people"

may seek the Lord
God is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "may seek me, the Lord"

including all the Gentiles called by my name
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "including all the Gentiles who belong to me"

my name
Here "my name" stands for God.

Acts 15:18

that have been known
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have known"

Acts 15:19

General Information:
Here "we" includes James, the apostles, and the elders.

we should not trouble those of the Gentiles
You can make explicit in what way James does not want to trouble the Gentiles. Alternate translation:

"we should not require the Gentiles to become circumcised and obey the laws of Moses"

who turn to God
A person who starts obeying God is spoken of as if the person is physically turning towards God.

Acts 15:20

they must keep away from the pollution of idols ... sexual immorality ... strangled ... blood
Sexual immorality, strangling animals, and consuming blood were often part of ceremonies to worship idols and false gods.

pollution of idols
This possibly refers to eating the meat of an animal that someone has sacrificed to an idol or to anything to do with idol worship.

from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood
God did not allow Jews to eat meat that still had the blood in it. Also, even earlier in Moses's writings in Genesis, God had forbidden the drinking of blood. Therefore, they could not eat an animal that someone strangled because the blood was not properly drained from the body of the animal.

Acts 15:21

Connecting Statement:
James finishes speaking to the apostles and elders. (See: Acts 15:2 and [Acts 15:13](#))

Moses has been proclaimed in every city ... and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath
James is implying that Gentiles know how important these rules are because Jews preach them in every city where there is a synagogue. It also implies the Gentiles can go to the teachers from the synagogues to learn more about these rules.

Moses has been proclaimed ... he is preached
Here "Moses" represents the law of Moses, and so does "he." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The law of Moses has been proclaimed ... the law is read" or "Jews have taught the law of Moses ... they read the law"

in every city
The word "every" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "in many cities"

Acts 15:22

General Information:
Here the word "them" refers to Judas and Silas.

Judas called Barsabbas
This is the name of a man. "Barsabbas" is a second name that people called him.

leaders of the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to the people there who believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "leaders of the believers" or "leaders of the church"

Acts 15:23

They wrote this with their hands

One or more of the apostles and elders wrote the letter and gave it to Judas and Silas so Judas and Silas could give it to the Gentile brothers.

From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!

This is the introduction of the letter. Your language may have a way of introducing the author of the letter and to whom it is written. Alternate translation: "This letter is from your brothers, the apostles and elders. We are writing to you Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings to you" or "To our Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings from the apostles and elders, your brothers"

your brothers ... the Gentile brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers. By using these words, the apostles and elders assure the Gentile believers that they accept them as fellow believers.

Cilicia

This is the name of a province on the coast in Asia Minor north of the Island of Cyprus.

Acts 15:24

General Information:

Here all instances of "we" and "us" refer to the writers but not the readers

that certain men

"that some men"

with no orders from us

"even though we gave no orders for them to go"

disturbed you with words that upset your souls

Here "souls" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "taught things that have troubled you"

Acts 15:25

General Information:

Here the words "us" and "our" refer to the writers but not the readers

who have come to one mind

"who are now agree completely"

one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

to choose men

The men they sent were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas (Acts 15:22).

Acts 15:26

men who have risked their lives

These words refer to Barnabas and Paul, not to Judas and Silas.

for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here "name" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "because they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "because they serve our Lord Jesus Christ"

Acts 15:27

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

who will report to you the same things in their own words

This phrase emphasizes that Judas and Silas will say the same things that the apostles and elders had written. Alternate translation: "who themselves will tell you the same things about which we have written"

Acts 15:28

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things

This speaks about laws that people need to obey as if they were objects that people carry on their shoulders.

Acts 15:29

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the letter from the Jerusalem church to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

from things sacrificed to idols

This means they are not allowed to eat the meat of an animal that someone sacrifices to an idol.

blood

This refers to drinking blood or eating meat from which the blood has not been drained.

things strangled

A strangled animal was killed but its blood was not drained.

Farewell

This announces the end of the letter. Alternate translation: "Goodbye"

Acts 15:30

Connecting Statement:

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas leave for Antioch.

So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch

The word "they" refers to Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas. Alternate translation: "So when the four men were dismissed, they came down to Antioch"

when they were dismissed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the apostles and elders dismissed the four men" or "when the believers in Jerusalem sent them"

came down to Antioch

The phrase "came down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

Acts 15:31

they rejoiced

"the believers in Antioch rejoiced"

because of the encouragement

The abstract noun "encouragement" can be expressed with the verb "encourage." Alternate translation: "because what the apostles and elders wrote encouraged them"

Acts 15:32

also prophets

Prophets were teachers authorized by God to speak for him. Alternate translation: "because they were prophets" or "who were also prophets"

the brothers

"the fellow believers"

strengthened them

Judas and Silas' helping them to depend even more on Jesus is spoken of as if they were making them physically stronger.

Acts 15:33

Connecting Statement:

Judas and Silas return to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch.

After they had spent some time there

This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. The word "they" refers to Judas and Silas. Alternate translation: "After they stayed there for a while"

they were sent away in peace from the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brothers sent Judas and Silas back in peace"

the brothers

This refers to the believers in Antioch.

to those who had sent them

"to the believers in Jerusalem who sent Judas and Silas" (Acts 15:22)

Acts 15:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 15:35

the word of the Lord

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

Acts 15:36

Let us return now

"I suggest we now return"

visit the brothers

"care for the brothers" or "offer to help the believers"

the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for the message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

see how they are

"learn how they are doing." They want to learn about the current condition of the brothers and how they are holding on to God's truth.

Acts 15:37

to also take with them John, who was called Mark

"to take John, who was also called Mark"

Acts 15:38

Paul thought it was not good to take Mark

The words "not good" are used to say the opposite of good. Alternate translation: "Paul thought that taking Mark would be bad"

Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

did not go further with them in the work

"did not continue to work with them then" or "did not continue to serve with them"

Acts 15:39

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Paul.

Then there arose a sharp disagreement

The abstract noun "disagreement" can be stated as the verb "disagree." Alternate translation: "They strongly disagreed with each other"

Acts 15:40

after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

To entrust to someone means to place the care and responsibility for someone or something to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after the believers in Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord" or "after

the believers in Antioch prayed for the Lord to take care of Paul and show kindness to him"

Acts 15:41

he went

The previous sentence implies that Silas was with Paul. Alternate translation: "they went" or "Paul and Silas went" or "Paul took Silas and went"

went through Syria and Cilicia

These are provinces or areas in Asia Minor, near the island of Cyprus.

strengthening the churches

Encouraging the believers in the churches is spoken of as though Paul and Silas were making the believers physically stronger. The word "churches" refers to the groups of believers in Syria and Cilicia. Alternate translation: "encouraging the believers in the churches" or "helping the community of believers to depend even more in Jesus"

Chapter 16

¹ Paul also came to Derbe and to Lystra, and behold, a certain disciple named Timothy was there, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted him to travel with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ As they were going along through the cities, they were passing along the decrees to obey that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.

⁶ Paul and his companions went through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, since they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came near Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus prevented them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to the city of Troas. ⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia was standing there, begging him and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ When Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹ Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day we came to Neapolis. ¹² From there we went to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the most important city in the district and a Roman colony, and we stayed in this city for several days.

¹³ On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we thought there would be a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, listened to us. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her house were baptized, she pleaded with us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us.

¹⁶ It came about that, as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave girl who had a spirit of divination encountered us. She brought her masters much gain by fortunetelling. ¹⁷ This woman followed after Paul and us and shouted, saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸ She did this for many days. But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out at that same hour.

¹⁹ When her masters saw that their hope of profit was now gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. ²⁰ When they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are causing trouble in our city. They are Jews. ²¹ They proclaim customs that are not lawful for Romans to accept or practice."

²² Then the crowd rose up together against Paul and Silas; the magistrates tore their garments off them and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³ When they had laid many blows upon them, they threw them into prison and commanded the jailer to guard them securely. ²⁴ After he got this command, the jailer threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened. ²⁷ The jailer was awakened from sleep and saw the open prison doors; he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought that the prisoners had escaped.

²⁸ But Paul shouted with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, because we are all here."

²⁹ The jailer called for lights and rushed in and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ and brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him, together with everyone in his house. ³³ Then the jailer took them at the same

hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately. ³⁴ Then as he brought Paul and Silas up into his house and he set food before them, he rejoiced greatly with those of his house, that he had believed in God.

³⁵ Now when it was day, the magistrates sent word to the guards, saying, "Let those men go."

³⁶ The jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent word to me to let you go. Now therefore come out, and go in peace."

³⁷ But Paul said to them, "They have publicly beaten us without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison. Do they now want to send us away secretly? No! Let them come themselves and lead us out."

³⁸ The guards reported these words to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid. ³⁹ The magistrates came and apologized to them and brought them out, asking them to go away from the city. ⁴⁰ So Paul and Silas went out of the prison and came to the house of Lydia. When Paul and Silas saw the brothers, they encouraged them and then departed from the city.

Acts 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Timothy's circumcision

Paul circumcised Timothy because they were telling the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. Paul wanted the Jews to know that he respected the law of Moses even though the church leaders in Jerusalem had decided that Christians did not need to be circumcised.

The woman who had a spirit of divination

Most people want very much to know the future, but the law of Moses said that speaking with the spirits of dead people to learn about the future is a sin. This woman seems to have been able to tell the future very well. She was a slave, and her masters made much money from her work. Paul wanted her to stop sinning, so he told the spirit to leave her. Luke does not say that she began to follow Jesus or tell us anything more about her.

Acts 16:1

Connecting Statement:

This continues the missionary journeys of Paul with Silas. Timothy is introduced into the story and joins Paul and Silas. Verses 1 and 2 give background information about Timothy.

Paul also came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Derbe

This is the name of a city in Asia Minor. See how you translated it in Acts 14:6.

behold

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

who was a believer

The words "in Christ" are understood. Alternate translation: "who was a believer in Christ" or "who believed in Christ"

Acts 16:2

He was well spoken of by the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The brothers spoke well of him" or "Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers" or "The brothers said good things about him"

by the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "by the believers"

Acts 16:3

wanted him ... took him ... circumcised him ... his father

"wanted Timothy ... took Timothy ... circumcised Timothy ... Timothy's father"

with him ... he took

"with Paul ... Paul took"

circumcised him

It is possible that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, but it is more likely that he had someone else circumcise Timothy.

because of the Jews that were in those places
"because of the Jews living in the areas where Paul and Timothy would be traveling"

for they all knew that his father was a Greek
Since Greek men did not have their sons circumcised, the Jews would have known Timothy was not circumcised, and they would have rejected Paul and Timothy before hearing their message about Christ.

Acts 16:4

General Information:

The word "they" here refers to Paul, Silas (Acts 15:40), and Timothy ([Acts 16:3](#)).

the decrees to obey
"the decrees for the church members to obey" or "the decrees for the believers to obey"

that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided on"

Acts 16:5

the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers became stronger in their faith, and there were more and more people becoming believers every day"

the churches were strengthened in the faith
This speaks of helping someone to believe more confidently as if it were making them physically stronger.

Acts 16:6

Phrygia

This is a region in Asia. See how you translated this name in Acts 2:10.

they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had forbidden them" or "the Holy Spirit did not permit them"

the word
Here "word" stands for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

Acts 16:7

When they came

Here "came" can be translated as "went" or "arrived."

Mysia ... Bithynia

These are two more regions in Asia.

the Spirit of Jesus
"the Holy Spirit"

Acts 16:8

they came down to the city of Troas
The phrase "came down" is used here because Troas is lower in elevation than Mysia.

they came down
Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 16:9

A vision appeared to Paul
"Paul saw a vision from God" or "Paul had a vision from God"

begging him
Or "inviting him."

Come over into Macedonia
The phrase "Come over" is used because Macedonia is across the sea from Troas.

Acts 16:10

we sought to go to Macedonia ... God had called us
Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul and his companions, including Luke, the author of Acts.

we sought to go to Macedonia
"we looked for a way to go to Macedonia" or "we prepared to go to Macedonia"

Acts 16:11

Samothrace ... Neapolis
These are coastal cities near Philippi in Macedonia.

we came to Neapolis
Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at."

Acts 16:12

a Roman colony
This is a city outside of Italy where many people who came from Rome lived. The people there had the same rights and freedoms as people who lived in cities in Italy. They could govern themselves and they did not have to pay taxes.

Acts 16:13

Connecting Statement:
Paul and his companions are now in Philippi on their missionary trip. The story of Lydia begins

here. This short story happens during Paul's travels.

Acts 16:14

A certain woman named Lydia

Here "A certain woman" introduces a new person in the story. Alternate translation: "There was a woman named Lydia"

a seller of purple

Here "cloth" is understood. Alternate translation: "a merchant who sold purple cloth"

Thyatira

This is the name of a city.

worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him, but does not obey all of the Jewish laws.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention

For the Lord to cause someone to pay attention and believe a message is spoken of as if he were opening a person's heart. Alternate translation: "The Lord caused her to listen well and to believe"

opened her heart

Here "heart" stands for a person's mind. Also, the author speaks about the "heart" or "mind" as if it were a box that a person could open so it is ready for someone to fill it.

what was said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Paul said"

Acts 16:15

Connecting Statement:

The story of Lydia ends here.

When she and her house were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When they baptized Lydia and members of her household"

her house

Here "house" represents the people who live in her house. Alternate translation: "the members of her household" or "her family and household servants"

Acts 16:16

General Information:

Background information is given here to explain that this young fortune teller brought much financial gain to her masters by guessing people's futures.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the first event in another short story during Paul's travels; it is about a young fortune teller.

It came about that

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

a certain slave girl ... encountered

The phrase "a certain" introduces a new person to the story. Alternate translation: "there was a slave girl ... who encountered"

a spirit of divination

An evil spirit spoke to her often about the immediate future of people.

Acts 16:17

the way of salvation

How a person can be saved is spoken of here as if it were a way or path that a person walks on. Alternate translation: "how God can save you"

Acts 16:18

But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But she greatly annoyed Paul, so he turned around"

in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "name" stands for speaking with the authority or as the representative of Jesus Christ.

it came out at that same hour

"the spirit came out immediately"

Acts 16:19

her masters

"the owners of the slave girl"

their hope of profit was now gone

Here the word "hope" is the reason for which a person can expect that what he desires will happen. Now that the spirit was gone, the girl's masters could not expect to earn money from the spirit's telling people things. Alternate translation: "their opportunity to make money was now gone" or "they could no longer expect to make money"

their hope of profit was now gone

It can be stated clearly why they no longer expected to make money. Alternate translation: "she could no longer earn money for them by telling fortunes"

into the marketplace

"into the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services takes place.

before the authorities

"into the presence of the authorities" or "so that the authorities could judge them"

Acts 16:20

When they had brought them to the magistrates

"When they had brought them to the judges"

magistrates

rulers, judges

These men are causing trouble in our city

Here the word "our" refers to the people of the city and includes the magistrates who ruled it.

Acts 16:21

to accept or practice

"to believe or to obey" or "to accept or to do"

Acts 16:22

General Information:

Here the words "their" and "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

commanded them to be beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded the soldiers to beat them with rods"

Acts 16:23

they had ... upon them, they threw them ... guard them

"the magistrates had ... upon Paul and Silas, the magistrates threw Paul and Silas ... keep Paul and Silas"

had laid many blows upon them

"had hit them many times with rods"

commanded the jailer to guard them securely

"told the jailer to make sure they did not get out"

jailer

a person responsible for all the people held in the jail or prison

Acts 16:24

he got this command

"he heard this command"

fastened their feet in the stocks

"securely locked their feet in the stocks"

stocks

a piece of wood with holes for preventing a person's feet from moving

Acts 16:25

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and Silas.

Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul and Silas' time in Philippi in prison and tells what happens to their jailer.

Acts 16:26

earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison"

the foundations of the prison

When the foundations shook, this caused the entire prison to shake.

all the doors were opened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the doors opened"

everyone's chains were unfastened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone's chains came loose"

Acts 16:27

The jailer was awakened from sleep

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The jailer woke up"

was about to kill himself

"was ready to kill himself." The jailer preferred to commit suicide rather than suffer the consequences of letting the prisoners escape.

Acts 16:28

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and all of the other prisoners but excludes the jailer.

Acts 16:29

called for lights

The reason why the jailer needed light can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "called for someone to bring light so he could see who was still in the prison"

for lights

The word "lights" stands for something that makes light. Alternate translation: "for torches" or "for lamps"

rushed in
"quickly entered the jail"

fell down before Paul and Silas
The jailer humbled himself by bowing down at the feet of Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:30

brought them out
"led them outside the jail"

what must I do to be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what must I do for God to save me from my sins"

Acts 16:31

you will be saved
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you" or "God will save you from your sins"

your house
Here "house" stands for the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "all the members of your household" or "your family"

Acts 16:32

General Information:
The word "They" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the word "him" refers to the jailer.

They spoke the word of the Lord to him
Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "They told him the message about the Lord Jesus"

Acts 16:33

General Information:
The words "them" and "their" refer to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the words "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul and Silas immediately baptized the jailer and all the members of his household"

Acts 16:34

General Information:
All instances of "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

Acts 16:35

General Information:
This is the last event in the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:12).

Now
This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells the last event in the story that started in Acts 16:16.

sent word to the guards
Here "word" stands for "message" or "command." Alternate translation: "sent a message to the guards" or "sent a command to the guards"

sent word
Here "sent" means the magistrates told someone to go tell the guards their message.

Let those men go
"Release those men" or "Allow those men to leave"

Acts 16:36

come out
"come outside of the jail"

Acts 16:37

General Information:
The word "they" refers to the magistrates. All instances of "we" and "us" refer only to Paul and Silas and so are exclusive.

said to them
Probably Paul is speaking to the jailer, but he intends for the jailer to tell the magistrates what he says. Alternate translation: "said to the jailer"

They have publicly beaten us
Here "They" refers to the magistrates who commanded their soldiers to beat them. Alternate translation: "The magistrates ordered their soldiers to beat us in public"

without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison
"men who are Roman citizens, and they had their soldiers put us in jail though they had not proven in court that we were guilty"

Do they now want to send us away secretly? No!
Paul uses a question to emphasize that he will not allow the magistrates to send them out the city in secret after they had mistreated Paul and Silas. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not let them send us out of the city in secret!"

Let them come themselves
Here "themselves" is used for emphasis.

Acts 16:38

when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid

To be a Roman meant to be a legal citizen of the Empire. Citizenship provided freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. The city leaders were afraid that more important Roman authorities might learn how the city leaders had mistreated Paul and Silas.

they heard ... they were afraid

"the magistrates heard ... the magistrates were afraid"

Acts 16:39

General Information:

All instances of "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:40

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Silas. The word "them" refers to the believers in Philippi.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Paul and Silas' time in Philippi.

came to the house

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

the house of Lydia

"the home of Lydia"

saw the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "saw the believers"

Chapter 17

¹ Now when they had passed through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to the city of Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Paul, as his custom was, went to them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures. ³ He was opening the scriptures and explaining that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead. He said, "This Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ." ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, including a large number of devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women. ⁵ But the unbelieving Jews, being moved with jealousy, took certain wicked men from the marketplace, gathered a crowd together, and set the city in an uproar. Assaulting the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring Paul and Silas out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and certain other brothers before the officials of the city, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. ⁷ These men whom Jason has welcomed act against the decrees of Caesar; they say that there is another king—Jesus." ⁸ They troubled the crowd and the officials of the city who heard these things. ⁹ But after they took security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

¹⁰ That night the brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ Now these people were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, including some influential Greek women and many men. ¹³ But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul was also proclaiming the word of God at Berea, they went there and stirred up and troubled the crowds. ¹⁴ Then immediately, the brothers sent Paul to go to the sea, but Silas and Timothy stayed there. ¹⁵ Those who were leading Paul took him as far as the city of Athens. As they left Paul there, they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as quickly as possible.

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned every day in the synagogue with the Jews and others who worshiped God, as well as in the marketplace with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ But also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. Some said, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others said, "He seems to be one who calls people to follow strange gods," because he was proclaiming the gospel about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ They took Paul and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know this new teaching which you were speaking? ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. Therefore, we want to know what these things mean." ²¹ (Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening about something new.)

²² So Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said,

"You men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I announce to you.

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples built with hands. ²⁵ Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives people life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made every nation of people to live on the surface of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas, ²⁷ so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For in him we live and move and have our being, just as one of your own poets has said, 'For we also are his offspring.'

²⁹ "Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the qualities of deity are like gold, or silver, or stone—images created by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰ Therefore God overlooked the times of ignorance, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent. ³¹ This is because he has set a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. God has given proof of this man to everyone by raising him from the dead."

³² Now when the men of Athens heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked Paul; but others said, "We will listen to you again about this matter." ³³ After that, Paul left them. ³⁴ But certain men

joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Acts 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Misunderstandings about the Messiah

The Jews expected the Christ or Messiah to be a powerful king because the Old Testament says so many times. But it also says many times that the Messiah would suffer, and that was what Paul was telling the Jews. (See: christ)

The religion of Athens

Paul said that the Athenians were "religious," but they did not worship the true God. They worshiped many different false gods. In the past they had conquered other peoples and begun to worship the gods of the people they had conquered. (See: falsegod)

In this chapter Luke describes for the first time how Paul told the message of Christ to people who knew nothing of the Old Testament.

Acts 17:1

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40).

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Paul, Silas, and Timothy's missionary trip. They arrive in Thessalonica, apparently without Luke, since he says "they" and not "we."

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke, the author, starts to tell a new part of the story.

passed through

"traveled through"

cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia

These are coastal cities in Macedonia.

they came to the city

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at." Alternate translation: "they went to the city" or "they arrived at the city"

Acts 17:2

went to them ... reasoned with them

"went to the Jews ... reasoned with the Jews"

as his custom was

"as his habit was" or "as his common practice was." Paul usually went to the synagogue on the Sabbath when Jews would be present.

for three Sabbath days

"on each Sabbath day for three weeks"

reasoned with them from the scriptures

"gave them reasons to believe from the scriptures" or "debated with them about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with them." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts 17:3

General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Paul (Acts 17:2).

He was opening the scriptures

Possible meanings are 1) to explain the scriptures in a way that people can understand is spoken of as if Paul were opening something so people can see what is inside of it) or 2) Paul was literally opening a book or scroll and reading from it.

it was necessary

"it was part of God's plan"

to rise again

"to come back to life"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Acts 17:4

the Jews were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews believed" or "the Jews understood"

joined Paul

"became associated with Paul"

devout Greeks

This refers to Greeks who worshiped God but had not converted to Judaism through circumcision.

not a few of the leading women

This is an understatement to emphasize that many leading women joined them. Alternate translation: "many leading women"

Acts 17:5

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews and wicked men from the marketplace.

being moved with jealousy

The feeling of jealousy is spoken of as if jealousy were actually moving the person. Alternate translation: "feeling very jealous" or "feeling very angry"

with jealousy

It can be stated explicitly that these Jews were jealous because some of the Jews and Greeks believed Paul's message.

took certain wicked men

Here "took" does not mean the Jews took these people by force. It means the Jews persuaded these wicked men to help them.

certain wicked men

"some evil men." The word "men" here refers specifically to males.

from the marketplace

"from the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

set the city in an uproar

Here "the city" stands for the people in the city. Alternate translation: "caused the people of the city to be in an uproar" or "caused the people of the city to riot"

Assaulting the house

"Violently attacking the house." This probably means the people were throwing rocks at the house and trying to break down the door of the house.

Jason

This is the name of a man.

they were seeking to bring Paul ... out

The word "seeking" here means that the people wanted to bring Paul out and were trying to bring him out.

out to the people

Possible meanings or "people" are 1) a governmental or legal group of citizens gathered to make a decision or 2) a mob.

Acts 17:6

certain other brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "some other believers"

before the officials

"into the presence of the officials"

These men who have

The Jewish leaders were speaking, and the phrase "These men" refers to Paul and Silas.

turned the world upside down

This phrase is another way of saying Paul and Silas were causing trouble everywhere they went. The Jewish leaders were exaggerating the influence Paul and Silas were having with their teaching. Alternate translation: "caused trouble everywhere in the world" or "caused trouble everywhere they have gone"

Acts 17:7

Jason has welcomed

This phrase signals that Jason was in agreement with the apostles' troubling message.

Acts 17:8

They troubled the crowd

"They caused the people in the city to be afraid"

Acts 17:9

the rest

The words "the rest" refers to other believers that the Jews brought before the officials.

they took security ... they let them go

"the officials took security ... they let Jason and the other believers go"

took security

Jason and the others gave the money to the officials to show that they would not cause any more trouble. This was not a fine or a punishment, so they might have expected the officials to give the money back later.

Acts 17:10

General Information:

Paul and Silas travel on to the town of Berea.

the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "the believers"

Acts 17:11

Now

The word "now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the people in Berea and how they were willing to listen to Paul and examine what he said.

more noble

These "well-born" people were willing to think more objectively about new ideas than other people. Alternate translation: "more open minded" or "more willing to listen"

received the word

Here "word" refers to a teaching. Alternate translation: "listened to the teaching"

with all readiness of mind

These Bereans were prepared to examine earnestly Paul's teachings about the scripture.

examining the scriptures daily

"carefully reading and evaluating the scriptures every day"

these things were so

"the things Paul said were true"

Acts 17:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 17:13

General Information:

Athens was south of Berea. Both were on the coast of Macedonia. Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece.

went there and stirred up

This speaks about their agitating people as though it were a person stirring a liquid and causing the things at the bottom of the liquid to rise to the surface. Alternate translation: "went there and agitated" or "went there and disturbed"

troubled the crowds

"worried the crowds" or "caused dread and fear among the people"

Acts 17:14

brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "believers"

to go to the sea

"to go to the coast." From here Paul would probably sail to another city.

Acts 17:15

who were leading Paul

"who were accompanying Paul" or "who were going along with Paul"

they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy

"he told them to instruct Silas and Timothy." This can also be stated as a direct quotation as in the UDB.

Acts 17:16

General Information:

This is another part of the story of Paul and Silas' travels. Paul is now in Athens where he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

Now

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

his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols

Here "spirit" stands for Paul himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he became upset because he saw that there were idols everywhere in the city" or "seeing the idols everywhere in the city upset him"

Acts 17:17

he reasoned

"he debated" or "he discussed." This means that his listeners also spoke and asked him questions. He was not the only speaker.

others who worshiped God

This refers to Gentiles who gave praise to God and followed him but did not obey all of the Jewish laws.

in the marketplace

"in the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

Acts 17:18

General Information:

Here the words "him," "He," and "he" refer to Paul.

Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

Philosophers are people who think about the world and try to understand how people should live. The Epicureans and the Stoics were two groups of philosophers. They believed that a god or gods existed, but they did not trust in or obey any god. Alternate translation: "thinkers called Epicureans and Stoics"

encountered him
"happened upon him"

Some said
"Some of the philosophers said"

What is this babbler
The word "babbler" was used to refer to birds picking up seeds as food. It refers negatively to a person who only knows a little bit of information. The philosophers said Paul had bits of information which were not worth listening to. Alternate translation: "What is this uneducated person"

Others said
"Other philosophers said"

He seems to be one who calls people to follow
"He seems to be a proclaimer" or "He seems to be on a mission to add people to his philosophy"

strange gods
This is not in the sense of "odd," but in the sense of "foreign," that is, gods that Greeks and Romans do not worship or know about.

Acts 17:19

They took ... brought him
This does not mean they arrested Paul. The philosophers invited Paul to speak formally to their leaders.

to the Areopagus
The "Areopagus" was the place where the leaders met. Alternate translation: "to the leaders that met on the Areopagus"

the Areopagus, saying
Here the leaders on the Areopagus are speaking. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "the Areopagus. The leaders said to Paul"

Areopagus
This is a prominent rock outcropping or hill in Athens upon which the supreme court of Athens may have met.

Acts 17:20

For you bring some strange things to our ears
Paul's teachings about Jesus and the resurrection are spoken of as an object that a person can bring to another person. Here "ears" refers to what they hear. Alternate translation: "For you are teaching some things that we have never heard before"

Acts 17:21

Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there
The word "all" is a generalization referring to many. Alternate translation: "Now many of the Athenians and the strangers living there"

all the Athenians
"Athenians" are people from Athens, a city near the coast below Macedonia

the strangers
"the foreigners"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening
Here "time" is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "used their time doing nothing but either telling or listening" or "were always doing nothing but telling or listening"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening
The phrase "spent their time in nothing" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "did not do much but tell or listen" or "spent much of their time telling or listening"

telling or listening about something new
"discussing new philosophical ideas" or "talking about what was new to them"

Acts 17:22

General Information:
Paul begins his speech to the philosophers on the Areopagus.

very religious in every way
Paul is referring to the Athenians' public display of honoring the gods through prayers, building altars, and offering sacrifices.

Acts 17:23

as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship
"as I walked among the objects of your worship and observed them" or "as I walked around in the city, I observed the objects of your worship"

To an Unknown God
Possible meanings are 1) "to a certain unknown god" or 2) "to a god not known." This was a specific writing or inscription on that altar.

Acts 17:24

the world
In the most general sense, the "world" refers to the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

since he is Lord

"because he is the Lord." Here "he" is referring to the unknown god mentioned in Acts 17:23 that Paul is explaining is the Lord God.

of heaven and earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean all beings and things in heaven and earth.

built with hands

Here "hands" stands for people. Alternate translation: "built by the hands of people" or "that people built"

Acts 17:25

Neither is he served by men's hands

Here "served" has the sense of a doctor treating a patient to make the patient well again. Alternate translation: "Neither do men's hands take care of him"

by men's hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "by humans"

since he himself

"because he himself." The word "himself" is added for emphasis.

Acts 17:26

General Information:

Here the word "he" refer to God, the creator, and both instances of "their" refer to every nation of people living on the surface of the earth.

one man

This means Adam, the first person God created. This can be stated to include Eve. It was through Adam and Eve that God made all other people. Alternate translation: "one couple"

having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "and he determined when and where they would live"

Acts 17:27

General Information:

All instances of "they" and "their" refer to the people who live on earth, all instances of "him" and "he" refer to God, and the word "us" includes the speaker, the hearers, and the people who live on earth.

so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him

Here "search for God" represents desiring to know him, and "feel their way toward him and find him" represents praying and having a relationship with

him. Alternate translation: "so that they should want to know God and perhaps pray to him and become one of his people"

Yet he is not far from each one of us

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yet he is very near to every one of us"

Acts 17:28

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to God

For in him

"Because of him"

Acts 17:29

General Information:

Both instances of "we" include the speaker, the hearers, and other people.

are God's offspring

Because God created everyone, all people are spoken of as if they were God's literal children.

the qualities of deity are like

Here "deity" refers to God's nature or attributes. Alternate translation: "God is like"

images created by the art and imagination of man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which a man then uses his skill to make it into something that he has designed" or "images that people make by using their art and imagination"

Acts 17:30

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to God.

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

God overlooked the times of ignorance

"God decided not to punish people during the time of ignorance"

times of ignorance

This refers to the time before God fully revealed himself through Jesus Christ and before people truly knew how to obey God.

all men

This means all people, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all people"

Acts 17:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech to the philosophers in the Areopagus, which he began in Acts 17:22.

when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed

"when the man he has chosen will judge the world in righteousness"

he will judge the world

Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "he will judge all people"

in righteousness

"justly" or "fairly"

God has given proof of this man

"God has demonstrated his choice of this man"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Acts 17:32

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the men of Athens but not to Paul, so this is exclusive. Though some of them probably did want to hear Paul again, they may only have been being polite.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul in Athens.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke changes from Paul's teachings to the reaction of the people of Athens.

the men of Athens

These are the people who were present at the Areopagus and were listening to Paul.

some mocked Paul

"some ridiculed Paul" or "some laughed at Paul."
These did not believe it was possible for someone to die and then return to life.

Acts 17:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 17:34

Dionysius the Areopagite

Dionysius is a man's name. Areopagite implies that Dionysius was one of the judges at the council of Areopagus.

Damaris

This is the name of a woman.

Chapter 18

¹ After these things Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to them, ³ and because he worked at the same trade, he stayed with them and labored, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴ So Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks. ⁵ Now when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when the Jews opposed and insulted him, Paul shook out his garment at them and said to them, "May your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ Then he left from there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a man who worshiped God. His house was next to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard about it believed and were baptized. ⁹ The Lord said to Paul in the night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent." ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one will try to harm you, for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ Paul lived there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹² But when Gallio became governor of Achaia, the Jews rose up with one mind against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat; ¹³ they said, "This man persuades people to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴ Yet when Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "You Jews, if indeed it were a matter of wrong or a wicked crime, it would be reasonable to put up with you. ¹⁵ But since these are questions about words and names and your own law, settle it yourselves. I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." ¹⁶ Gallio made them leave the judgment seat. ¹⁷ So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio did not care what they did.

¹⁸ Paul, after staying there for many more days, left the brothers and sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. Before he left the seaport, Cenchreae, he had his hair cut off because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹ When they came to Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked Paul to stay a longer time, he declined. ²¹ But taking his leave of them, he said, "I will return again to you if it is God's will." He then set sail from Ephesus.

²² When Paul had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the Jerusalem church and then went down to Antioch. ²³ After having spent some time there, Paul departed and went through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, came to Ephesus. He was eloquent in speech and mighty in the scriptures. ²⁵ Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord. Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, but he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ Apollos began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ When he desired to pass over into Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples in Achaia to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who believed by grace. ²⁸ Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate, showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The baptism of John

Some Jews who lived far away from Jerusalem and Judea had heard of John the Baptist and followed his teachings. They had not yet heard about Jesus. One of these Jews was Apollos. He followed John the Baptist, but he did not know that the Messiah had come. John had baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins, but this baptism was different from Christian baptism. (See: faithful and christ and repent)

Acts 18:1

Connecting Statement:

This is another part of the story of Paul's travels as he goes to Corinth.

After these things

"After these events took place in Athens"

Athens

Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 17:15.

Acts 18:2

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

There he met

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul happened to find by chance or 2) Paul intentionally found.

a Jew named Aquila

Here the phrase "a certain" indicates this is introducing new person in the story.

a native of Pontus

Pontus was a province on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

had recently come

This is probably sometime in the past year.

Italy

This is the name of land. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

Claudius had commanded

Claudius was the current Roman emperor. See how you translated this in Acts 11:28.

Acts 18:3

General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

he worked at the same trade

"he did the same kind of work that they did"

Acts 18:4

So Paul reasoned

"So Paul debated" or "So Paul discussed." He gave reasons. This means that rather than just preaching, Paul talked and interacted with the people.

trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks

Possible meanings are 1) "and he caused both Jews and Greeks to believe" or 2) "and he kept trying to persuade the Jews and the Greeks."

Acts 18:5

General Information:

Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul.

Acts 18:6

shook out his garment

This is a symbolic action to indicate that Paul will no longer try to teach the Jews there about Jesus. He is leaving them to God's judgment.

May your blood be upon your own heads

Here "blood" stands for the guilt of their actions. Here "heads" refers to the whole person. Paul tells the Jews they are solely responsible for the judgment they will face for their stubbornness if they refuse to repent. Alternate translation: "You alone bear the responsibility for your punishment for sin"

I am clean

The word "clean" here is a metaphor for Paul being innocent of wrong against either the people or God. Alternate translation: "I am innocent" or "God will not punish me when he punishes you"

Acts 18:7

he left ... His house

"Paul left ... Titius' Justus's house"

Titius Justus

This is the name of a man.

worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him but does not necessarily obey all of the Jewish laws.

Acts 18:8

Crispus

This is the name of a man.

leader of the synagogue

a layperson who sponsored and administered the synagogue, not necessarily the teacher

all his household

Here "his household" refers to the people who lived together in his house. Alternate translation: "the people who lived with him in his house"

his household

Crispus's household

were baptized

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

Acts 18:9

Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent

The Lord is giving one command in two different ways to emphasize that Paul should certainly continue preaching. Alternate translation: "You must not be afraid; instead, you should continue to speak and not become silent"

speak and do not be silent

The Lord gives the same command in two different ways to strongly command Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "you must certainly continue to speak"

do not be silent

It can be stated explicitly what the Lord wants Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "do not stop speaking about the gospel"

Acts 18:10

I have many people in this city

"there are many people in this city who have put their faith in me" or "many people in this city will put their faith in me"

Acts 18:11

Paul lived there ... teaching the word of God among them

This is a concluding statement for this part of the story. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for the entire scriptures. Alternate translation: "Paul lived there ... teaching the scriptures among them"

Acts 18:12

General Information:

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. Corinth was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province.

Connecting Statement:

The unbelieving Jews bring Paul to the judgment seat before Gallio.

Gallio

This is the name of a man.

the Jews

This stands for the Jewish leaders that did not believe in Jesus.

rose up

This phrase means that the Jews began to act, not that they rose into the air or rose to stand from a sitting position. If your language has a different idiom for beginning to act, you may use it here.

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

brought him before the judgment seat

The Jews took Paul by force to bring Paul before the court. Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sat when he made legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "took him so that the governor could judge him at the judgment seat"

Acts 18:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 18:14

Gallio said

Gallio was the Roman governor of the Province.

Acts 18:15

your own law

Here "law" can refer to either the law of Moses or the Jewish customs of Paul's time. Gallio is simply telling the Jews that they are to do what they think right and that he is not interested in being the judge.

I do not wish to be a judge of these matters

"I refuse to make a judgment about these matters"

Acts 18:16

Gallio made them leave the judgment seat

"Gallio dismissed the Jews from the judgment seat." Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sits to make legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "Gallio made them leave his presence in the court" or "Gallio made them leave the court"

Acts 18:17

General Information:

It is not clear what events this verse describes. The Jews had been accusing Paul, but it appears that they ended up beating Sosthenes and not Paul.

So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat

Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles beat Sosthenes in the court in front of the judgment seat because he was the Jewish leader or 2) Sosthenes was a believer in Christ, so even though he was "the ruler of the synagogue," the Jews beat him in front of the court.

they all seized

This may be an exaggeration to emphasize the strong feelings the people had. Alternate translation: "many people seized" or "many of them grabbed"

Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue

Sosthenes was "the ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth.

beat him

"repeatedly hit him" or "repeatedly punched him."

Acts 18:18

General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to Paul.

left the brothers

The word "brothers" refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "left the fellow believers"

sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila

Paul got on a ship that sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him.

Cenchreae

This was a town near Corinth in Greece. It was on the coast, and Paul probably got on the ship there.

he had his hair cut off

This is a symbolic action that indicates that he had done something he had vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he had someone cut off the hair on his head"

Acts 18:19

Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul's missionary journey as Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila leave Corinth. This seems to indicate that Silas and Timothy remain, since it says "he" here and not "they." The word "they" refers to Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.

reasoned with the Jews

"gave the Jews reasons to believe" or "debated with the Jews about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with the Jews." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. See how you translated "reasoned with" in [Acts 17:2]

Acts 18:20

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews in Ephesus.

Acts 18:21

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the Jews in Ephesus. The word "you" is plural.

taking his leave of them

"saying good-bye to them"

Acts 18:22

General Information:

Phrygia is a province in Asia which is now modern day Turkey. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his missionary journey.

landed at Caesarea

"arrived at Caesarea." The word "landed" is used to show that he arrived by ship.

he went up

He traveled to the city of Jerusalem. The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

greeted the Jerusalem church

Here "church" refers to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "greeted the members of the church of Jerusalem"

then went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

Acts 18:23

Paul departed

"Paul went away" or "Paul left"

After having spent some time there

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "After staying there for a while"

Acts 18:24

General Information:

Apollos is introduced to the story. Verses 24 and 25 give background information about him.

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells what happens in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

a certain Jew named Apollos

The phrase "a certain" indicates that Luke is introducing a new person in the story.

an Alexandrian by birth

"a man who was born in the city of Alexandria."
This was a city in Egypt on the north coast of Africa.

eloquent in speech

"a good speaker"

mighty in the scriptures

"he knew the scriptures thoroughly." He understood the Old Testament writings well.

Acts 18:25

Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Other believers had taught Apollos how the Lord Jesus wanted people to live"

Being fervent in spirit

Here "spirit" refers to the entire person of Apollos. Alternate translation: "Being very enthusiastic"

the baptism of John

"the baptism that John performed." John's baptism was with water, but Jesus's baptism is with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 18:26

the way of God

How God wants people to live is spoken of as if it were a road that a person travels.

more accurately

"correctly" or "more fully"

Acts 18:27

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Apollos ([Acts 18:24](#)).

to pass over into Achaia

"to go to the region of Achaia." The phrase "pass over" is used here because Apollos had to cross the Aegean Sea to get to Achaia from Ephesus.

Achaia

Achaia was a Roman Province in the southern section of Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. You can make explicit that these are believers in Ephesus. Alternate translation: "fellow believers in Ephesus"

wrote to the disciples

"wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia"

those who believed by grace

"those who had believed in salvation by grace" or "those who by God's grace believed in Jesus"

Acts 18:28

Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate

"In public debate Apollos powerfully showed that the Jews were wrong"

showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ

"as he showed them by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ"

Chapter 19

¹ It came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to the city of Ephesus, and found certain disciples there. ² Paul said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They said to him, "No, we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit."

³ Paul said, "Into what then were you baptized?"

They said, "Into John's baptism."

⁴ So Paul replied, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance. He told the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ When the people heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Then when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷ In all they were about twelve men.

⁸ Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some Jews were hardened and disobedient, they began to speak evil of the Way before the crowd. So Paul left them and took the disciples with him, reasoning with them every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. ¹¹ God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and their illnesses left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

¹³ But there were Jewish exorcists traveling through the area. They called on the name of the Lord Jesus so they could have power over evil spirits when they said, "By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ The Jewish high priest, whose name was Sceva, had seven sons who were doing this.

¹⁵ An evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" ¹⁶ The evil spirit in the man leaped on the exorcists and subdued them and beat them up. Then they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived at Ephesus. They became very afraid, and the name of the Lord Jesus was honored. ¹⁸ Also, many of the believers came and confessed and gave a full account of the evil things they had done. ¹⁹ Many who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. When they counted the value of them, it was fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways.

²¹ Now after these things were completed, Paul decided in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem; he said, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." ²² Paul sent to Macedonia two of those who served him, Timothy and Erastus. But he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

²³ At about that time there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way. ²⁴ A certain silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in much business for the craftsmen. ²⁵ So he gathered together the workmen of that occupation and said, "Men, you know that in this business we make much money. ²⁶ You see and hear that, not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people. He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods. ²⁷ Not only is there danger that our trade will be discredited, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless, and her greatness would be brought to nothing, she whom all Asia and the world worship."

²⁸ When they heard this, they were filled with anger and cried out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." ²⁹ The whole city was filled with confusion, and the people rushed with one mind into the theater. They had seized Paul's travel companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, who came from Macedonia. ³⁰ Paul wanted to enter in among the crowd of people, but the disciples prevented him. ³¹ Also, some of the officials of the province of Asia who were his friends sent him a message pleading with him not to enter the theater. ³² Some people were shouting one thing, and some another, for the crowd was in confusion. Most of them did not even know why they had come together. ³³ Some of the crowd advised Alexander, whom the Jews were pushing forward. So Alexander motioned with his hand, wanting to give a defense to the assembly. ³⁴ But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all cried out for about two hours with

one voice, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." ³⁵ When the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "You men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven? ³⁶ Seeing then that these things are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷ For you have brought these men to this court who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸ Therefore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have an accusation against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them accuse one another. ³⁹ But if you are seeking anything more, it should be resolved in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today, and there is no cause we can give to justify this uproar." When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. ^[1]

Footnotes

19:40 ^[1]Some Greek copies number this last sentence as verse 41.

Acts 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptism

John baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus's followers baptized people who wanted to follow Jesus.

Temple of Diana

The temple of Diana was an important place in the city of Ephesus. Many people came to Ephesus to see this temple, and they bought statues of the goddess Diana while they were there. The people who sold statues of Diana were afraid that if people did not believe Diana was a real goddess, they would stop giving the sellers money for statues.

Acts 19:1

General Information:

The "upper country" was an area of Asia which today is part of modern-day Turkey to the north of Ephesus. Paul must have traveled by land around the top of the Aegean Sea in order to come to Ephesus (also in Turkey today), which is directly east of Corinth by sea.

Connecting Statement:

Paul travels to Ephesus.

It came about that

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

passed through

"traveled through"

Acts 19:2

receive the Holy Spirit

This means to have the Holy Spirit come upon them.

we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit

"we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit"

Acts 19:3

General Information:

The word "They" refers to the disciples ([Acts 19:1](#)). The word "you" is plural.

Into what then were you baptized?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What kind of baptism did you receive?"

Into John's baptism

You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "We were baptized into John's baptism" or "We received the kind of baptism about which John taught"

Acts 19:4

the baptism of repentance

You can translate the abstract noun "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "the baptism that people requested when they wanted to repent"

the one who would come

Here "the one" refers to Jesus.

come after him

This means to come after John the Baptist in time and not following after him physically.

Acts 19:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues staying in Ephesus.

When the people

Here "people" refers to the disciples in Ephesus who were talking with Paul (Acts 19:1),

they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received baptism"

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority. Alternate translation: "as believers in the Lord Jesus"

Acts 19:6

General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](#))

laid his hands on them

"placed his hands on them." He probably placed his hands on their shoulders or heads. Alternate translation: "placed his hands on their heads as he prayed"

they spoke in tongues and prophesied

Unlike in Acts 2:3-4, there are no details of who understood their messages.

Acts 19:7

General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](#))

In all they were about twelve men

This tells how many men were baptized.

twelve men

"12 men"

Acts 19:8

Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months

"Paul regularly attended the synagogue meetings for three months and spoke there boldly"

reasoning and persuading them

Probable meanings are 1) the words "reasoning" and "persuading" are a hendiadys that means "arguing persuasively" or 2) the words describe two separate activities, "giving them reasons to believe" and "convincing them"

about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "about God's rule as king" or "about how God would show himself as king"

Acts 19:9

some Jews were hardened and disobedient

People who were stubbornly refusing to believe are spoken of as though they were becoming hard and unable to move. Alternate translation: "some Jews were stubborn and did not believe" or "some Jews stubbornly refused to accept and obey the message"

to speak evil of the Way before the crowd

What Christ wants people to believe is spoken of as though it were a road that a person travels. The phrase, "the Way," seems to have been a title for Christianity at the time. Alternate translation: "to speak evil about Christianity to the crowd" or "to speak to the crowd evil things about those who follow Christ and who obey his teaching about God" (See: and Acts 9:2)

to speak evil of

"to speak bad things about"

in the lecture hall of Tyrannus

"in the large room where Tyrannus had taught people"

Tyrannus

This is the name of a man.

Acts 19:10

all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord

Here "all" is a generalization that means very many people throughout Asia heard the gospel.

the word of the Lord

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

Acts 19:11

God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul

Here "hands" stands for Paul's whole person. Alternate translation: "God was causing Paul to do extraordinary miracles" or "God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul"

Acts 19:12

General Information:

Here the words "them" and "their" refer to those who were sick.

even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they took to sick people even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul"

even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him
Possible meanings are 1) these were cloth items that Paul had touched or 2) these were cloth items that Paul had worn or used.

handkerchiefs
cloths worn around the head

aprons
clothing worn on the front of the body to protect the clothes of people

the sick
This refers to sick people. Alternate translation: "sick people" or "those who were sick"

their illnesses left them
"those who were sick became healthy"

Acts 19:13

General Information:
This is the beginning of another event that happened while Paul was in Ephesus. It is about Jewish exorcists.

exorcists
people who send evil spirits away from people or places

the name of the Lord Jesus
Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims
"Jesus" was a common name at the time, so these exorcists wanted people to know of whom they spoke.

By the Jesus
This stands for the power and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus" or "by the power of Jesus"

Acts 19:14

Sceva
This is the name of a man.

Acts 19:15

Jesus I know, and Paul I know
"I know Jesus and Paul" or "I know Jesus, and I know Paul"

but who are you?
The spirit asked this question to emphasize that the exorcists had no authority over evil spirits.

Alternate translation: "but I do not know you!" or "but you have no authority over me!"

Acts 19:16

The evil spirit in the man leaped
This means that the evil spirit caused the man whom it was controlling to leap on the exorcists.

exorcists
This refers to people who send evil spirits from people or places. See how you translated this in Acts 19:13.

they fled ... naked
The exorcists fled with their clothes ripped off them.

Acts 19:17

the name of the Lord Jesus was honored
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they honored the name of the Lord Jesus" or "they considered the name of the Lord Jesus to be great"

the name
This stands for the power and authority of Jesus.

Acts 19:18

Connecting Statement:
This ends the story about the Jewish exorcists.

Acts 19:19

brought their books
"collected their books." The word "books" refers to scrolls on which magical incantations and formulas were written.

in the sight of everyone
"in front of everyone"

the value of them
"the value of the books" or "the value of the scrolls"

fifty thousand
"50,000"

pieces of silver
A "piece of silver" was the approximate daily wage for a common laborer.

Acts 19:20

So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways
"So because of these powerful deeds, more and more people heard the message about the Lord Jesus"

Acts 19:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about going Jerusalem but does not leave Ephesus yet.

Now

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

these things were completed

"Paul completed the work that God had for him to do in Ephesus"

Paul decided in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) Paul decided with the help of the Holy Spirit or 2) Paul decided within his own spirit, which means he made up his mind.

Achaia

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. It was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

I must also see Rome

"I must also travel to Rome"

Acts 19:22

Erastus

This is the name of a man.

But he himself stayed in Asia for a while

It is made explicit in the next few verses that Paul remains in Ephesus.

he himself

This is repeated for emphasis.

Acts 19:23

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about a riot that broke out while Paul was in Ephesus.

there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way

This is a summary opening statement.

there was no small disturbance

"the people became very upset" See how you translated this in Acts 12:18

the Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated this title in Acts 9:1.

Acts 19:24

General Information:

The writer introduces Demetrius to the story and gives background information about him. Ephesus had a large temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, sometimes translated as "Diana." She was a false goddess of fertility.

A certain silversmith named Demetrius

The use of the words "a certain" introduces a new person in the story.

silversmith

a craftsman who works with silver metal to make statues and jewelry

named Demetrius

This is the name of a man. Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who was against Paul and the local church.

brought in much business for the craftsmen

"enabled those who made the idols to make much money"

shrines of Artemis

These were probably carved or molten images of the temple of Artemis or of the part of the temple in which the statue of Artemis stood.

Acts 19:25

the workmen of that occupation

An occupation is a profession or job. Alternate translation: "others who did that kind of work"

Acts 19:26

Connecting Statement:

Demetrius continues to speak to the craftsmen.

You see and hear that

"You have come to know and understand that"

persuaded and turned away many people

Paul's stopping people from worshiping idols is spoken of as though Paul were turning the people in a different direction. Alternate translation: "persuaded many people and caused them to stop worshiping the local gods"

He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods

Here the word "hands" can refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "He is saying that the idols that people make are not real gods"

Acts 19:27

that our trade will be discredited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that what Paul is saying will discredit

our trade" or "that people will think that our trade is false"

our trade

This refers to their business of making and selling idols.

the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is worthless" or "people will think there is no benefit in going to the temple to worship the great goddess Artemis"

her greatness would be brought to nothing

"Her greatness" is a metonym for her reputation of being great. Being "brought to nothing" is a metaphor for becoming nothing or no longer existing. Alternate translation: "People would no longer recognize how great she is" or "She will lose her reputation of being great"

whom all Asia and the world worship

This was an exaggeration to show how popular the goddess Artemis was. Here the words "Asia" and "the world" refer to the people in the province of Asia and the known world. Alternate translation: "whom many people in Asia and in other parts of the world worship"

Acts 19:28

General Information:

Here "they" refers to the craftsmen who made the idols ([Acts 19:24-25](#)).

they were filled with anger

This speaks of the craftsmen as though they were containers. Here "anger" is spoken of as if it were the contents that fill a container. Alternate translation: "they became very angry"

cried out

"shouted aloud" or "shouted loudly"

Acts 19:29

The whole city was filled with confusion

Here "city" refers to the people. The city is spoken of as if it were a container. And, "confusion" is spoken of as if it were the contents that filled the container. Alternate translation: "Then people all over the city became upset and started shouting"

the people rushed with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

into the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It

was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people.

Paul's travel companions

The men who had been with Paul.

Gaius and Aristarchus

These are names of men. Gaius and Aristarchus came from Macedonia but were working with Paul in Ephesus at this time.

Acts 19:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 19:31

officials of the province of Asia

Ephesus was in the Roman Empire's province of Asia.

enter the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people. See how you translated "theater" in Acts 19:29.

Acts 19:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 19:33

Alexander

This is the name of a man.

motioned with his hand

You can make explicit that Alexander was showing the crowd that he wanted them to be quiet. Alternate translation: "gestured to the crowd to be quiet"

to give a defense

It is not clear whom or what Alexander wanted to defend. If your language requires this information, it might be best to use a general phrase like "to explain what was going on."

Acts 19:34

with one voice

The shouting together of the people at the same time is spoken of as though they were speaking with one voice. Alternate translation: "in unison" or "together"

Acts 19:35

Connecting Statement:

The clerk of Ephesus speaks to quiet the crowd.

the town clerk

This refers to the town "writer" or "secretary."

what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven?

The clerk asked this question to assure the crowd they were right and to comfort them. Alternate translation: "every man knows that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven."

who does not know

The town clerk uses "not" to emphasize that all of the people knew this.

temple keeper

The Ephesian people maintained and guarded the temple of Artemis.

the image which fell down from heaven

Within the temple of Artemis was an image of the goddess. It had been fashioned from a meteorite which fell from the sky. People thought that this rock had come directly from Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods (idols).

Acts 19:36

General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

Seeing then that these things are undeniable

"Since you know these things"

do nothing rash

"do not do anything before you have had time to think about it"

rash

without careful thought

Acts 19:37

General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

these men

The words "these men" refer to Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions (Acts 19:29).

Acts 19:38

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." The town clerk had said in Acts 19:37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were not robbers or blasphemers.

have an accusation against anyone

The word "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "want to accuse someone"

proconsuls

the Roman governor's representatives who made legal decisions in court

Let them accuse one another

This does not mean Demetrius and those with him will accuse each other. It means this is a place where people in general can speak their accusation. Alternate translation: "There people can accuse one another"

Acts 19:39

Connecting Statement:

The town clerk finishes speaking to the crowd.

But if you are seeking anything more

"But if you want to ask about anything more" or "But if you have something to discuss about other matters"

it should be resolved in the regular assembly

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let us settle it in the regular assembly"

the regular assembly

This refers to a regular public gathering of citizens over which the county clerk presided.

Acts 19:40

For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in danger of the Roman authorities accusing us of starting this riot today"

Chapter 20

¹ After the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples and after he encouraged them, he said farewell and left to go into Macedonia. ² When he had gone through those regions and had spoken many words of encouragement to them, he came to Greece. ³ After he had spent three months there, a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to sail for Syria, so he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴ Accompanying him as far as Asia were Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, both from the Thessalonian believers; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. ⁵ But these men had gone before us and were waiting for us at Troas. ⁶ We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and in five days we came to them in Troas. There we stayed for seven days.

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul spoke to the believers. He was planning to leave the next day, so he prolonged his message until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where we had come together. ⁹ In the window was sitting a young man named Eutychus, who fell into a deep sleep. As Paul spoke even longer, this young man, still sleeping, fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down, stretched himself out on him, and embraced him. Then he said, "Do not be upset any more, for he is alive." ¹¹ Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking with them much longer until dawn, he left. ¹² They brought back the boy alive and were greatly comforted.

¹³ We ourselves went ahead of Paul by ship and sailed away to Assos, where we planned to take Paul on board. This is what he himself desired to do, because he planned to go by land. ¹⁴ When he met us at Assos, we took him onto the ship and went to Mitylene. ¹⁵ Then we sailed from there and arrived the next day opposite the island of Chios. The following day we touched at the island of Samos, and the day after we came to the city of Miletus. ¹⁶ For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not spend any time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost, if it were at all possible for him to do so.

¹⁷ From Miletus he sent men to Ephesus and called to himself the elders of the church. ¹⁸ When they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I always spent my time with you. ¹⁹ I kept serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind and with tears, and in trials that happened to me because of the plots of the Jews. ²⁰ You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you anything that was useful, and how I taught you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus. ²² Now look, I am going to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that chains and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not consider my life valuable to myself, if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ Now look, I know that you all, among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of any man. ²⁷ For I did not hold back from declaring to you the whole will of God. ²⁸ Therefore be careful about yourselves, and about all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ So be on guard. Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each one of you night and day with tears. ³² Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are being sanctified. ³³ I coveted no man's silver, gold, or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands served my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵ In all things I gave you an example of how you should help the weak by laboring, and of how you should remember the words of the Lord Jesus, words that he himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

³⁶ After he had spoken in this way, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ There was a lot of crying and they embraced Paul and kissed him. ³⁸ They were in anguish most of all because of what he had said, that they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him to the ship.

Footnotes

20:28 ^[1] Instead of

Acts 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter Luke describes Paul's last visits to believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Asia before he went to Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Race

Paul spoke of living for Jesus as if he were running in a race. By this he meant that he needed to keep working hard even when things were difficult and he wanted to quit. (See: and discipline)

"Compelled by the Spirit"

Paul thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem even if Paul did not want to go there. The same Holy Spirit told other people that when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, people would try to harm him.

Acts 20:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul leaves Ephesus and continues his travels.

After the uproar

"After the riot" or "Following the riot"

he said farewell

"he said goodbye"

Acts 20:2

had spoken many words of encouragement to them

"had greatly encouraged the believers" or "had said many things to encourage the believers"

Acts 20:3

After he had spent three months there

"After he had stayed there three months." This speaks about time as if it were something a person could spend.

a plot was formed against him by the Jews

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews formed a plot against him" or "the Jews formed a secret plan to harm him"

by the Jews

This means only some of the Jews. Alternate translation: "by some of the Jews"

as he was about to sail for Syria

"as he was ready to sail for Syria"

Acts 20:4

Accompanying him

"Traveling with him." Here the word "him" refers to Paul (Acts 20:1).

Sopater ... Pyrrhus ... Secundus ... Tychicus ... Trophimus

These are names of men.

Berea ... Derbe

These are names of places.

Aristarchus ... Gaius

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Acts 19:29.

Acts 20:5

these men had gone before us

"these men had traveled ahead of us"

before us ... for us

Here "us" refers to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Troas

This is the name of a place.

Acts 20:6

General Information:

All instances of "we" refer to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. See how you translated this in Acts 12:3.

Acts 20:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader. (See: and [Acts 20:4-6](#))

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about Paul's preaching in Troas and about what happened to Eutychus.

the next day

"when the sun came up again." If the writer was using the Jewish system of determining days, Paul was planning to travel after sunrise on "the first day of the week." If the writer was using the Greek system, Paul was planning to travel on the second day of the week.

to break bread

Bread was part of their meals. Possible meanings are 1) this refers simply to eating a meal together. Alternate translation: "to eat a meal" or 2) this refers to the meal they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "to eat the Lord's Supper"

he prolonged his message

"he continued to speak"

Acts 20:8

upper room

This may have been on the third floor of the house.

Acts 20:9

In the window

This was an opening in the wall with a ledge that was wide enough on which a person could sit.

Eutychus

This is the name of a man.

who fell into a deep sleep

This speaks about sleep as if it were a deep hole into which a person could fall. Alternate translation: "who slept soundly" or "who became more and more tired until finally he was sleeping soundly"

third story and was picked up dead

When they went down to check his condition, they saw he was dead. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "third story; and when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead"

third story

This means two floors above the ground floor. If your culture does not count the ground floor, you may state this as the "second story."

Acts 20:10

on him ... embraced him ... he is alive

Here "him" and "he" refers to the young man, Eutychus.

he said

Here "he" refers to Paul.

Acts 20:11

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul's preaching at Troas and about Eutychus.

broke bread

Bread was a common food during meals. Here "broke bread" probably means that they shared a meal with more kinds of food than just bread.

he left

"he went away"

Acts 20:12

the boy

This refers to Eutychus (Acts 20:9). Possible meanings are 1) he was a young man over 14 years old or 2) he was a boy between 9 and 14 years old or 3) the word "boy" implies that he was a servant or a slave.

Acts 20:13

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his other companions continue their travels; however, Paul goes separately for part of the trip.

We ourselves went

The word "ourselves" adds emphasis and separates Luke and his traveling companions from Paul, who did not travel by boat.

sailed away to Assos

Assos is a town located directly below present day Behram in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

he himself desired

Here "he himself" refers to Paul. "Himself" is used to emphasize that this is what Paul wanted.

to go by land

"to travel on land"

Acts 20:14

he met ... took him

Here "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

met us ... we took

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

went to Mitylene

Mitylene is a town located in present day Mitilini in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

Acts 20:15

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

opposite the island

"near the island" or "across from the island"

the island of Chios

Chios is an island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the Aegean Sea.

we touched at the island of Samos

"we arrived at the island of Samos"

island of Samos

Samos is an island south of Chios in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey.

the city of Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River.

Acts 20:16

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus

Paul sailed south past the port city of Ephesus, further south in order to land at Miletus.

so that he would not spend any time

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend or use up. Alternate translation: "so that he would not have to remain for a time" or "so that he would not have a delay"

Acts 20:17

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

Connecting Statement:

Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus and begins to speak to them.

Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River. See how you translated this in [Acts 20:15]

Acts 20:18

You yourselves

Here "yourselves" is used for emphasis.

I set foot in Asia

Here "foot" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "I entered Asia"

how I always spent my time with you

This speaks about time as if it were something that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "how I always conducted myself when I was with you"

Acts 20:19

lowliness of mind

This speaks about something humble as if it were low to the ground. The word "mind" stands for a person's inner attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "humbleness"

with tears

Here "tears" stands for feeling sad and crying. Alternate translation: "with crying as I served the Lord"

in trials that happened to me

"Trials" is an abstract noun. The meaning can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "while God was testing me"

of the Jews

This does not mean every Jew. This lets us know who plotted. Alternate translation: "of some of the Jews"

Acts 20:20

You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you

"You know how I was never silent, but I always declared to you"

from house to house

"I also taught when I was in your homes"

Acts 20:21

about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus

The abstract nouns "repentance" and "faith" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "that they need to repent before God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ"

our Lord Jesus

The word "our" refers to Paul and the elders to whom he is speaking.

Acts 20:22

General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Paul.

compelled by the Spirit

They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the Spirit compels me to go there"

not knowing what will happen to me there

"and I do not know what will happen to me there"

Acts 20:23

chains and afflictions await me

Here "chains" refers to Paul's being arrested and put in prison. Alternate translation: "people will put me in prison and cause me to suffer"

Acts 20:24

if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus

This speaks about Paul's "race" and "ministry" as if they are objects that Jesus gives and Paul receives. Here "race" and "ministry" mean basically the same thing. Paul repeats this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "so that I may complete the work that the Lord Jesus has commanded me to do"

finish the race

Paul speaks about completing the work that Jesus has commanded him to do as if he were running a race.

to testify to the gospel of the grace of God

"to tell people the good news about God's grace." This is the ministry that Paul received from Jesus.

Acts 20:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17).

Now look, I know

"Now, pay careful attention, because I know"

I know that you all

"I know that all of you"

among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "to whom I preached the message about God's reign as king" or "to whom I preached about how God will show himself as king"

will see my face no more

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "will not see me anymore on this earth"

Acts 20:26

I am innocent of the blood of any man

Here "blood" stands for a person's death, which, in this case, is not physical death but spiritual death when God declares a person guilty of sin. Paul had told them God's truth. Alternate translation: "I am not responsible for anyone whom God judges guilty of sin because they did not trust in Jesus"

any man

Here this means any person whether male or female. Alternate translation: "any person"

Acts 20:27

For I did not hold back from declaring to you

"For I did not keep silent and not tell you." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For I certainly declared to you"

Acts 20:28

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true," referring to all that Paul has said so far in his speech about his leaving them.

the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God

Believers are likened to a "flock" of sheep here. Church leaders are entrusted by God with the care of the community of believers just as a shepherd would care for his flock of sheep and protect them from wolves. Alternate translation: "the group of believers the Holy spirit has entrusted to you. Be sure to take care of the church of God"

the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood

The shedding of the blood of Christ here is likened to a payment to God for our sins. Alternate translation: "the people Christ saved from their sins by shedding his blood on the cross"

his own blood

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death.

Acts 20:29

vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock

This is a picture of people who teach false doctrine and who harm the community of believers as though they were wolves that eat the sheep of the flock. Alternate translation: "many enemies will come among you and try to harm the community of believers"

Acts 20:30

to draw away the disciples after them

A false teacher convincing believers to start believing his false teaching is spoken of as if he were leading sheep away from the flock to follow him. Alternate translation: "in order to convince people who are disciples of Christ to become his disciples instead"

Acts 20:31

be on guard. Remember

"be on guard and remember" or "be on guard as you remember"

be on guard

"be awake and alert" or "watch out." Christian leaders being alert about anyone that may harm the community of believers is spoken of as if they were guards in an army watching out for the enemy army.

Remember that

"Continue to remember that" or "Do not forget that"

for three years I never stopped warning ... night and day
Paul taught them over the space of three years, but not necessarily every day for three years.

I never stopped warning ... you

This does not mean that the only words he spoke were words of warning. Rather, Paul is using hyperbole to remind them that he had told them often that evil men would try to deceive them. Alternate translation: "I warned ... you as often as I could"

with tears

Here "tears" refers to Paul's crying because of the strong emotion of concern he felt while he was warning the people.

Acts 20:32

I commit you to God and to the word of his grace

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "I ask God to take care of you and to help you to keep believing the message I spoke to you about his grace"

which is able to build you up

A person's faith becoming stronger is spoken of as if the person were a wall and someone were building him higher and stronger. Alternate translation: "which is able to make become stronger and stronger in your faith"

to give you the inheritance

This speaks about the "word of his grace" as if the word itself would give the inheritance to believers. Alternate translation: "God will give you the inheritance"

the inheritance

The blessings that God gives believers are spoken of as if they were money or property that a child inherits from his father.

Acts 20:33

I coveted no man's silver

"I did not desire someone's silver" or "I did not want for myself anyone's silver"

man's silver, gold, or clothing

Clothing was considered a treasure; the more you had, the richer you were.

Acts 20:34

You yourselves

The word "yourselves" is used here to add emphasis.

these hands served my own needs

The word "hands" here represents the entire person. Alternate translation: "I worked to earn money and pay for my own expenses"

Acts 20:35

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus; he began to speak them in Acts 20:18.

you should help the weak by laboring

"you should work so as to have money to help people who cannot earn it for themselves"

the weak

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "weak persons" or "those who are weak"

weak

"sick"

the words of the Lord Jesus

Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said.

It is more blessed to give than to receive

This means a person receives the favor of God and experiences more joy when he gives to other people rather than always receiving from other people.

Acts 20:36

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his time with the elders of the church of Ephesus by praying with them.

he knelt down and prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. It was a sign of humility before God.

Acts 20:37

embraced Paul

"hugged him closely" or "put their arms around him"

kissed him

Kissing someone on the cheek is an expression of brotherly or friendly love in the Middle East.

Acts 20:38

they would never see his face again

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "they would not see him anymore on this earth"

Chapter 21

¹ When we had gone away from them and set sail, we took a straight course to the city of Cos, and the next day to the city of Rhodes, and from there to the city of Patara. ² When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ After sighting Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat, we sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ After we found the disciples, we stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵ When our days there were over, we left and went on our way, and they all, with their wives and children, accompanied us out of the city. Then we knelt down on the beach, prayed, ⁶ and said farewell to each other. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais. There we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. ⁸ On the next day we left and went to Caesarea. We entered the house of Philip, the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and we stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

¹⁰ As we stayed there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ He came to us and took Paul's belt. With it he tied his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt, and they will hand him over into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹² When we heard these things, both we and the people who lived in that place pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready, not only to be tied up, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

¹⁴ Since Paul would not be persuaded, we remained silent and then we said, "May the will of the Lord be done."

¹⁵ After these days, we picked up our bags and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ There also went with us some of the disciples from Caesarea. They brought with them a man named Mnason, a man from Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we would stay.

¹⁷ When we had arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul went with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ When he had greeted them, he reported one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ When they heard it, they glorified God, and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands have believed among the Jews. They are all zealous to keep the law. ²¹ They have been told about you, that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children, and not to walk according the traditional ways. ²² What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ So do what we say to you. We have four men who made a vow. ²⁴ Take these men and purify yourself with them, and pay their expenses for them, so that they may shave their heads. So everyone will know that the things they have been told about you are false. They will learn that you also live correctly, obeying the law. ²⁵ But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote about our decision that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them. Then they went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering would be presented for each of them.

²⁷ When the seven days were almost finished, some Jews from Asia, seeing Paul in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him. ²⁸ They were shouting, "Men of Israel, help us. This is the man who teaches all men everywhere things that are against the people, the law, and this place. Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they thought that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰ All the city was excited, and the people ran together and laid hold of Paul. They dragged him out of the temple, and the doors were immediately shut. ³¹ As they were trying to kill him, news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² Right away he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to the crowd. When the people saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the chief captain approached and laid hold of Paul, and

commanded him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing and others another. Since the captain could not learn the truth because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress. ³⁵ When he came to the steps, he was carried by the soldiers because of the crowd's violence. ³⁶ For the crowd of people followed after and kept shouting out, "Away with him!"

³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the fortress, he said to the chief captain, "Is it permitted for me to say something to you?"

The captain said, "Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not then the Egyptian who some time ago started a rebellion and led the four thousand men of the 'Assassins' out into the wilderness?"

³⁹ Paul said, "I am a Jew, from the city of Tarsus in Cilicia. I am a citizen of no unimportant city. I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."

⁴⁰ When the captain had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with the hand to the people. When there was a deep silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language. He said,

Acts 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Acts 21:1-19 describes Paul's journey to Jerusalem. After he arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there told him that the Jews wanted to harm him and what he should do so they would not harm him (verses 20-26). Even though Paul did what the believers told him to do, the Jews tried to kill him. The Romans rescued him and gave him a chance to speak to the Jews.

The last verse of the chapter ends with an incomplete sentence. Most translations leave the sentence incomplete, as the ULB does.

Special concepts in this chapter

"They are all determined to keep the law"

The Jews in Jerusalem were following the law of Moses. Even those who were following Jesus still kept the law. Both groups thought that Paul had been telling Jews in Greece not to keep the law. But it was only the Gentiles to whom Paul was saying that.

Nazarite vow

The vow that Paul and his three friends made was probably a Nazarite vow, because they shaved their heads ([Acts 21:23](#)).

Gentiles in the temple

The Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile man into a part of the temple into which God only allowed Jews to go. They thought that God wanted them to punish Paul by killing him. (See: holy)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens.

Acts 21:1

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his companions continue their travels.

we took a straight course to the city of Cos

"we went straight to the city of Cos" or "we went directly to the city of Cos"

city of Cos

Cos is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region.

city of Rhodes

Rhodes is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region south of Cos and northeast of Crete.

city of Patara

Patara is a city on the southwest coast of modern day Turkey south of the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 21:2

When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia

Here "a ship crossing over" stands for the crew that would sail the ship. Alternate translation: "When we found a ship with a crew sailing over to Phoenicia"

a ship crossing over

Here "crossing" does not mean it was presently crossing but that it would be crossing to Phoenicia soon. Alternate translation: "a ship that would be going across the water" or "a ship that would be going"

Acts 21:3

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat

The left is the "port" side of a boat. Here this means they sailed south of Cyprus. Alternate translation: "Cyprus, sailing south of it"

where the ship was to unload its cargo

Here "ship" stands for the crew that was sailing the ship. Alternate translation: "the crew would unload the cargo from the ship"

Acts 21:4

Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem

"The Spirit caused them to urge Paul again and again not to go to Jerusalem." The Spirit may have revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Because the Spirit had told them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, they urged him again and again not to go there"

Acts 21:5

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the believers from Tyre.

When our days there were over

"When the seven days were over" or "When it was time to leave"

knelt down on the beach, prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. This was a sign of humility before God.

Acts 21:6

said farewell to each other

"said goodbye to one another"

Acts 21:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

we arrived at Ptolemais

Ptolemais was a city south of Tyre, Lebanon. Ptolemais is modern day Acre, Israel.

the brothers

"fellow believers"

Acts 21:8

Connecting Statement:

This begins Paul's time in Caesarea.

one of the seven

The "seven" refers to the men chosen to distribute food and aid to the widows in Acts 6:5.

evangelist

a person who tells people good news

Acts 21:9

this man

"Philip" from verse 8.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Philip and his daughters.

four virgin daughters who prophesied

"four virgin daughters who regularly received and passed along messages from God"

Acts 21:10

General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refers to Luke, Paul, and those with them, but not to the reader.

a certain prophet named Agabus

This introduces a new person in the story.

named Agabus

Agabus was a man from Judea.

Acts 21:11

Connecting Statement:

This tells about a prophecy made about Paul in Caesarea by the prophet Agabus.

took Paul's belt

"removed Paul's belt from Paul's waist"

Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. The inner quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit says that this will be how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."

the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" or "some of the Jews"

hand him over

"deliver him"

into the hands of the Gentiles

The word "hands" here represents control. Alternate translation: "into the legal custody of the Gentiles" or "to the Gentiles"

the Gentiles

This stands for the authorities among the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "the Gentile authorities"

Acts 21:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke and the other believers but does not include the reader.

Acts 21:13

What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?

Paul asks this question to show the believers they should stop trying to persuade him. Alternate translation: "Stop what you are doing. Your weeping is breaking my heart."

breaking my heart

This is a metaphor for making someone sad or discouraging them. Here "heart" stands for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "discouraging me" or "making me very sad"

not only to be tied up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not only for them to tie me up"

for the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the sake of the Lord Jesus" or "because I believe in the Lord Jesus"

Acts 21:14

Paul would not be persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul would not allow us to persuade him" or "we were unable to persuade Paul"

persuaded

You may need to make explicit what they could not persuade Paul not to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded not to go up to Jerusalem"

May the will of the Lord be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything happen as the Lord has planned it"

Acts 21:15

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time in Caesarea.

Acts 21:16

They brought with them a man

"Among them was a man"

Mnason, a man from Cyprus

Mnason was a man from the island of Cyprus.

an early disciple

This means Mnason was one of the first to believe in Jesus.

Acts 21:17

General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem.

the brothers welcomed us

Here "brothers" refers to the believers in Jerusalem, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers welcomed us"

Acts 21:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 21:19

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "them" refers to the elders.

he reported one by one

"he gave a detailed account of all"

Acts 21:20

Connecting Statement:

The elders in Jerusalem begin their response to Paul.

they heard ... they glorified ... they said to him

Here the word "they" refers to James and the elders. The word "him" refers to Paul.

brother

Here "brother" means "fellow believer."

They are

The word "they" refers to Jewish believers who wanted all believing Jews to keep the Jewish laws and customs.

the law

this phrase here refers to the law of Moses

Acts 21:21

They have been told about you ... not to walk according to the traditional ways

Apparently here there are some Jews that are distorting what Paul is teaching. He does not discourage the Jews from obeying the law of Moses. His message is that circumcision and the other customs are not necessary for Jesus to save them. You can make explicit that the leaders of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem knew that Paul was teaching God's true message.

They have been told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have told the Jewish believers"

to abandon Moses

Here "Moses" stands for the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "to stop obeying the laws that Moses gave us"

not to walk according to the traditional ways

A person who obeys the traditions and customs is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "not to obey the old customs" or "not to practice the old customs"

the traditional ways

"the usual Jewish customs"

Acts 21:22

we do

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

They will

The word "They" refers to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted to teach Jewish believers that they could still follow the laws of Moses ([Acts 21:20-21](#)).

you have come

The word "you" refers to Paul.

Acts 21:23

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

four men who made a vow

"four men who made a promise to God." This was the kind of vow where a person would not drink alcohol or cut his hair until the end of a set period of time.

Acts 21:24

Connecting Statement:

James and the elders continue speaking to Paul.

Take these men and purify yourself with them

They had to make themselves ritually pure so they could worship in the temple.

pay their expenses for them

"pay for what they will need." The expenses would go toward buying a male and female lamb, a ram, and grain and drink offerings.

they may shave their heads

This was a sign that the person had completed what they promised God they would do.

the things they have been told about you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that people are saying about you"

Acts 21:25

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders.

Connecting Statement:

James and the elders in Jerusalem finish their request to Paul (Acts 21:18).

they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled

All of these are rules about what they can eat. They are forbidden to eat meat of animals sacrificed to an idol, meat with blood still in it, and meat from a strangled animal because it would still have blood

in the meat. See how you translated similar phrases in [Acts 15:20]

they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they stay away from the meat of an animal that someone sacrificed to an idol"

from what is strangled

This can be stated in active form. You can also state explicitly the assumed information about strangled animals. Alternate translation: "from animals that a person has strangled" or "from animals that a person killed for food but did not drain its blood"

Acts 21:26

took the men

These are the 4 men who made a vow.

he purified himself along with them

Before entering the temple area the Jews were required to be ceremonially or ritually clean. This cleansing had to do with Jews having contact with Gentiles.

went into the temple

They did not go into the temple itself where only the high priest was allowed to enter. They entered the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

the days of purification

This is a separate purification process from the purification process which they were required to fulfill in order to enter the temple area.

the offering would be presented

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they presented the animals for an offering"

Acts 21:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Paul's arrest.

the seven days

These are the seven days for purification.

in the temple

Paul was not in the temple itself. He was in the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

stirred up the whole crowd

People who incited a crowd to become very angry at Paul are spoken of as if they stirred up the crowd's emotions. Alternate translation: "caused a large number of people to be very angry at Paul"

laid hands on him

Here "laid hands on" means to "seized" or to "grabbed." See how you translated "laid hands on" in [Acts 5:18]

Acts 21:28

the people, the law, and this place

"the people of Israel, the law of Moses, and the temple"

Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple

Only Jewish males were allowed in certain areas of the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple.

Acts 21:29

General Information:

Verse 29 gives background information about the Jews from Asia.

For they had previously ... into the temple

This is background information. Luke is explaining why the Jews from Asia thought Paul brought a Greek into the temple.

Trophimus

This was a Greek man that they accused Paul of having brought into the inner temple area that was only for Jews. See how you translated his name in Acts 20:4.

Acts 21:30

All the city was excited

The word "All" here is an exaggeration for emphasis. The word "city" represents the people in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Many people in the city became angry at Paul"

laid hold of Paul

"seized Paul" or "grabbed Paul"

the doors were immediately shut

They shut the doors so that there would not be rioting in the temple area. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews immediately shut the temple doors" or "the temple guards immediately shut the doors"

Acts 21:31

news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers

Here "news" refers to the messenger who went to speak the news. Alternate translation: "someone gave news to the chief captain of the cohort"

news came up to the chief captain

The phrase "came up to" is used because the chief captain was in a fortress connected to the temple that was higher in elevation than the temple courtyard.

the chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers.

the company of soldiers

A company is a group of about 1,000 soldiers.

all Jerusalem was in an uproar

The word "Jerusalem" here represents the people of Jerusalem. The word "all" is an exaggeration to show a large crowd was upset. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem were in an uproar" or "the large crowd in Jerusalem was in an uproar" (See: and)

Acts 21:32

General Information:

The first word "he" refers to the chief captain of the guard mentioned in Acts 21:31.

ran down

From the fortress, there are stairs going down into the court.

Acts 21:33

laid hold of Paul

"took hold of Paul" or "arrested Paul"

commanded him to be bound

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded his soldiers to bind him"

with two chains

This means they bound Paul to two Roman soldiers, one on each side of him.

he asked who he was and what he had done.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked, 'Who is this man? What has he done?'"

he asked who he was

The chief captain is speaking to the crowd, not to Paul.

Acts 21:34

and others another

The words "were shouting" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and others were shouting another" or "and others in the crowd were shouting something else"

he ordered that Paul be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court.

Acts 21:35

When he came to the steps, he was carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Paul came to the steps of the fortress, the soldiers carried him"

Acts 21:36

Away with him

The crowd is using somewhat milder and less exact language to ask for Paul's death. Alternate translation: "Put him to death" or "Kill him"

Acts 21:37

As Paul was about to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the soldiers were ready to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

The captain said, "Do you know Greek?"

The chief captain uses this questions to express surprise that Paul is not who he thought he was. Alternate translation: "So you know Greek." or "I didn't know you knew Greek."

know Greek

know how to speak and understand the Greek language

Acts 21:38

Are you not then the Egyptian ... wilderness?

The chief captain uses this question and the question "Do you speak Greek?"

Are you not then the Egyptian

Shortly before Paul's visit, an unnamed man from Egypt had launched a revolt against Rome in Jerusalem. Later he escaped into the wilderness and the commander wonders if Paul might be the same man.

started a rebellion

This word "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "caused people to rebel against the Roman government"

the four thousand men

"the 4,000 terrorists"

Assassins

This refers to a group of Jewish rebels who killed Romans and anyone who supported the Roman government.

Acts 21:39

Connecting Statement:

Paul is correcting the chief captain's wrong idea about who Paul is.

Tarsus in Cilicia

Cilicia was a Roman province across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, and Tarsus was a large, well-known city.

I am a citizen of no unimportant city

Paul uses the double negative in the phrase "no unimportant city" to emphasize that the chief captain should have known that Tarsus was an important city. Alternate translation: "I am a citizen of an important city"

I beg you

Or "I plead with you."

allow me

"please allow me" or please permit me"

Acts 21:40

the captain had given him permission

The word "permission" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "the captain permitted Paul to speak" or "the captain allowed Paul to speak"

Paul stood on the steps

The word "steps" here refers to the steps on the stairway to the fortress.

motioned with the hand to the people

It can be stated explicitly why Paul motioned with the hand. Alternate translation: "motioned with his hand for the people to be quiet"

When there was a deep silence

"When the people were completely silent"

Chapter 22

¹ "Brothers and fathers, listen to my defense which I will now make to you."

² When the crowd heard Paul speak to them in the Hebrew language, they became quiet. He said,

³ "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel. I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers. I am zealous for God, just as all of you are today. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding up and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and all the elders can testify. I received letters from them for the brothers in Damascus, and I went there to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. ⁶ It happened that when I was traveling and nearing Damascus, about noon suddenly a great light from heaven began to shine around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

⁸ I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?'

He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

⁹ Those who were with me saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me.

¹⁰ I said, 'What should I do, Lord?'

The Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus. There you will be told everything that has been appointed for you to do.' ¹¹ I could not see because of that light's brightness, and being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus. ¹² There I met a man named Ananias, a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there. ¹³ He came to me, stood by me, and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' In that very hour I saw him. ¹⁴ Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the voice coming from his own mouth. ¹⁵ For you will be a witness for him to all men about what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ Now why are you waiting? Arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' ¹⁷ After I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I was praying in the temple, a trance came on me. ¹⁸ I saw him say to me, 'Hurry and leave Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' ¹⁹ I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you in every synagogue. ²⁰ When the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled, I also was standing by and agreeing, and I was guarding the cloaks of those who killed him.' ²¹ But he said to me, 'Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

²² They listened to him until that statement. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not right that he should live." ²³ As they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air, ²⁴ the chief captain commanded Paul to be brought into the fortress. He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging, so that he himself might know why they were shouting against him like that. ²⁵ When they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?"

²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." ²⁷ The chief captain came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

Paul said, "Yes."

²⁸ The chief captain answered, "It was only with a large amount of money that I acquired citizenship."

But Paul said, "I was born a Roman citizen." ²⁹ Then the men who were going to question him left him immediately. The chief captain also was afraid, when he learned that Paul was a Roman citizen, because he had tied him up.

³⁰ On the next day, the chief captain wanted to know for certain about the Jews' accusations against Paul. So he untied his bonds and ordered the chief priests and all the council to meet. Then he brought Paul down and placed him in their midst.

Acts 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the second account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 26)

Special concepts in this chapter

"In the Hebrew language"

Most Jews at this time spoke Aramaic and Greek. Most of the people who spoke Hebrew were educated Jewish scholars. This is why the people paid attention when Paul started speaking in Hebrew.

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Acts 22:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem.

Brothers and fathers

This is a polite way of addressing men who are Paul's age as well as the older men in the audience.

I will now make to you

"I will now explain to you" or "I will now present to you"

Acts 22:2

the Hebrew language

The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews.

Acts 22:3

but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I was a student of Gamaliel here in Jerusalem"

at the feet of Gamaliel

Here "feet" stands for the place where a student would sit while learning from a teacher. Alternate translation: "by Gamaliel"

Gamaliel

Gamaliel was one of the most prominent teachers of the Jewish law. See how you translated this name in Acts 5:34.

I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He instructed me how to carefully obey every law of our forefathers" or "The instruction I received followed the exact details of the law of our forefathers"

law of our fathers

"law of our ancestors." This refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses.

I am zealous for God

"I am completely dedicated to obeying God" or "I am passionate about my service to God"

just as all of you are today

"in the same way all of you are today." Paul compares himself with the crowd.

Acts 22:4

I persecuted this Way to the death

Here "this Way" represents the people who belonged to the group called "the Way." The word "death" can be translated with the verb "kill." Alternate translation: "I persecuted the people who belonged to this Way and I looked for ways to kill them"

this Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated "the Way" in Acts 9:2.

binding up and delivering to prison both men and women

"tying up both men and women and taking them to prison"

Acts 22:5

I received letters from them

"The high priests and elders gave me letters"

for the brothers in Damascus

Here "brothers" refers to "fellow Jews."

to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem

"to bind those of the Way with chains and bring them back to Jerusalem"

to be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they would receive punishment" or "so that the Jewish authorities could punish them"

Acts 22:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes his encounter with Jesus.

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Acts 22:7

heard a voice say to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone say to me"

Acts 22:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 22:9

they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "they did not understand what the one who spoke to me was saying"

Acts 22:10

There you will be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There someone will tell you" or "There you will learn"

Acts 22:11

I could not see because of that light's brightness

"I was left blind because of that light's brightness"

being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus

Here "hands" stands for those leading Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those with me guided me into Damascus"

Acts 22:12

Ananias

Though this is not the same Ananias who died earlier in [Acts 5:3]

devout man according to the law

Ananias was very serious about following God's law.

law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there

This can be stated in active form in a new sentence. Alternate translation: "law. All the Jews who lived there spoke well of him"

Acts 22:13

General Information:

The words "He" and "him" refer to Ananias.

Brother Saul

Here "Brother" is a polite way to address someone. Alternate translation: "My friend Saul"

receive your sight

The word "sight" can be translated with the verb "see." Alternate translation: "see again"

In that very hour

This was a customary way of saying something happened immediately. Alternate translation: "At that instant" or "Instantly" or "Immediately"

Acts 22:14

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Ananias (Acts 22:12).

his will

"what God is planning and will cause to happen"

to hear the voice coming from his own mouth

Both "voice" and "mouth" refer to the one speaking. Alternate translation: "to hear him speak directly to you"

Acts 22:15

to all men

Here "men" means all people whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to all people"

Acts 22:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes telling what had happened to him in Damascus. He quotes what Ananias said to him. This is still part of his speech to the crowd in Jerusalem.

Now

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

why are you waiting?

This question was asked to exhort Paul to be baptized. Alternate translation: "do not wait!" or "do not delay!"

be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let me baptize you" or "receive baptism"

wash away your sins

As washing one's body removes dirt, calling on the name of Jesus for forgiveness cleanses one's inner being from sin. Alternate translation: "ask forgiveness for your sins"

calling on his name

Here "name" refers to the Lord. Alternate translation: "calling on the Lord" or "trusting in the Lord"

Acts 22:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell the crowd about his vision of Jesus.

a trance came on me

This metaphor means that Paul went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. See how you translated similar words in [Acts 10:10]

Acts 22:18

I saw him say to me

"I saw Jesus as he said to me"

they will not accept your testimony about me

"those who live in Jerusalem will not believe what you tell them about me"

Acts 22:19

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the non-believing Jews in Jerusalem.

they themselves know

The word "themselves" is used for emphasis.

in every synagogue

Paul went to synagogues to find Jews who believed in Jesus.

Acts 22:20

the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled

Here "blood" stands for Stephen's life. To spill blood means to kill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they killed Stephen, who testified about you"

Acts 22:21

Connecting Statement:

This ends what Paul was able to say to the crowd of Jewish people by the fortress.

Acts 22:22

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "he" refer to Paul.

until that statement

"until Paul said that"

Away with such a fellow from the earth

The phrase "from the earth" adds emphasis to "Away with such a fellow." Alternate translation: "Kill him"

Acts 22:23

As they were

"While they were." The phrase "As they were" is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time.

throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air

These actions show that the Jews there are outraged because they feel Paul has spoken against God.

Acts 22:24

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

commanded Paul to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging

The commander wants soldiers to torture Paul by whipping him to ensure he tells the truth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He

ordered his soldiers to whip Paul to force him to tell the truth"

He ordered that he

The first "he" refers to chief captain. The second "he" refers to Paul.

that he himself

The word "himself" is used for emphasis.

Acts 22:25

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the soldiers.

the thongs

These were strips of leather or animal hide.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?

Paul uses this question to make the centurion check the validity of having his soldiers whip Paul.

Alternate translation: "It is not lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman and who was not given his legal right to a trial!"

Acts 22:26

What are you about to do?

This question is used to urge the commander to reconsider his plan to whip Paul. Alternate translation: "You should not do this!"

Acts 22:27

General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

The chief captain came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 22:28

It was only with a large amount of money

"It was only after I paid a lot of money to the Roman authorities." The captain makes this statement because he knows how hard it is to become a Roman citizen, and he suspects Paul is not telling truth.

I acquired citizenship

"I got citizenship." The word "citizenship" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "I became a citizen"

I was born a Roman citizen

If a man was a Roman citizen, then his children become Roman citizens automatically when they were born.

Acts 22:29

the men who were going to question

"the men who planned to question" or "the men who were preparing to question"

Acts 22:30

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to the chief captain.

So he untied his bonds

Possibly the "chief captain" stands for the chief captain's soldiers. Alternate translation: "So the chief captain ordered his soldiers to untie Paul's bonds"

he brought Paul down

There was a stairway going down from the fortress to the temple courts.

Chapter 23

¹ Paul looked directly at the council members and said, "Brothers, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." ² The high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

³ Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall. Are you sitting to judge me by the law, yet order me to be struck, against the law?"

⁴ Those who stood by said, "Is this how you insult God's high priest?"

⁵ Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was high priest. For it is written, 'You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

⁶ When Paul saw that the one part of the council were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he spoke loudly in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is because I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am being judged." ⁷ When he said this, an argument began between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the crowd was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, no angels, and no spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge all of them.

⁹ So a large uproar occurred, and some of the scribes belonging to the Pharisees stood up and argued, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" ¹⁰ When there arose a great argument, the chief captain feared that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, so he commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among the council members, and bring him into the fortress.

¹¹ The following night the Lord stood beside him and said, "Have courage, for as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

¹² When it became day, some Jews formed a conspiracy and put themselves under an oath, saying that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty men who formed this conspiracy. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now, therefore, let the council formally request the chief captain to bring him down to you, as if you would decide his case more precisely. As for us, we are ready to kill him before he comes here."

¹⁶ But Paul's sister's son heard that they were lying in wait, so he went and entered the fortress and told Paul.

¹⁷ Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the chief captain, for he has something to report to him."

¹⁸ So the centurion took the young man and brought him to the chief captain and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him, and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

¹⁹ The chief captain took him by the hand to a private place and asked him, "What is it that you have to report to me?"

²⁰ The young man said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring down Paul tomorrow to the council, as if they were going to ask more precisely about his case. ²¹ But do not be persuaded by them, because there are more than forty men who are lying in wait for him. They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him. Even now they are ready, waiting for your approval."

²² So the chief captain let the young man go, after instructing him, "Tell no one that you have reported these things to me."

²³ Then he called to him two of the centurions and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to go as far as Caesarea, and seventy horsemen also, and two hundred spearmen. You will leave at the third hour of the night." ²⁴ He also ordered them to provide animals which Paul could ride and to take him safely to Felix the governor.

²⁵ Then he wrote a letter like this:

²⁶ "Claudius Lysias,
To the most excellent Governor Felix,
Greetings.

²⁷ This man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with soldiers and rescued him, since I learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ I wanted to know why they accused him, so I took him down to their council. ²⁹ I learned that he was being accused about questions concerning their own law, but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment. ³⁰ Then it was reported to me that there was a plot against the man, so I immediately sent him to you and instructed his accusers also to bring their charges against him in your presence. Farewell."

³¹ So the soldiers obeyed their orders. They took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² On the next day, most of the soldiers left the horsemen to go with him and they themselves returned to the fortress. ³³ When the horsemen reached Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. ³⁴ When the governor read the letter, he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, "I will hear you fully when your accusers come here." Then he commanded him to be kept in Herod's government headquarters.

Acts 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 23:5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection of the dead

The Pharisees believed that after people died, they would become alive again and God would either reward them or punish them. The Sadducees believed that once people died, they stayed dead and would never become alive again. (See: raise and reward)

"Called a curse"

Some Jews promised God that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul, and they asked God to punish them if they did not do what they had promised to do.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Whitewashed

This is a metaphor in scripture describing someone who appears to be good or clean or righteous when that person is evil or unclean or unrighteous.

Acts 23:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul stands before the chief priests and the council members (Acts 22:30).

Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day

"I know that even to this day I have done what God has wanted me to do"

Acts 23:2

Ananias

This is the name of a man. Although he has the same name, the Ananias here is neither the Ananias mentioned in [Acts 5:1]

Acts 23:3

whitewashed wall

This refers to a wall that was painted white to make it look clean. Paul told Ananias that just as a wall can be painted to look clean so Ananias appeared to look morally clean, but he was really full of evil intent. Alternate translation: "white-painted wall" or "wall painted white"

Are you sitting to judge ... against the law?

Paul uses a question to point out Ananias' hypocrisy. Some modern translations read this as a statement, "You are sitting to judge ... against the law." Alternate translation: "You are wrong to sit there to judge ... against the law."

order me to be struck

This can be stated in active form. You can use the same word for "strike" as you did in the phrase "God will strike you." Alternate translation: "command people to strike me"

Acts 23:4

Is this how you insult God's high priest?

The men use this question to scold Paul for what he has said in [Acts 23:3]

Acts 23:5

For it is written

Paul is about to quote what Moses wrote in the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses wrote in the law"

Acts 23:6

Brothers

Here "Brothers" means "Fellow Jews"

a son of Pharisees

Here "son" means he is the literal son of a Pharisee and also the descendant of Pharisees. Alternate translation: "and my father and forefathers were Pharisees"

I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb phrase "become alive again." Alternate translation: "I confidently

expect the resurrection of the dead" or "I trust that the dead will become alive again"

the dead

The phrase "the dead" can be expressed as "those who have died."

I am being judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me"

Acts 23:7

the crowd was divided

"the people in the crowd strongly disagreed with one another"

Acts 23:8

For the Sadducees ... but the Pharisees

This is background information about the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Acts 23:9

So a large uproar occurred

"So they began shouting loudly at one another." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is Paul's stating his belief in the resurrection.

What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?

The Pharisees use this question to suggest that Paul may have gotten his teaching from an angel or a spirit. They may be rebuking the Sadducees for not believing that spirits and angels exist and can speak to people. Alternate translation: "Maybe a spirit or an angel has spoken with him!"

Acts 23:10

When there arose a great argument

The words "a great argument" can be re-stated as "argue violently." Alternate translation: "When they began to argue violently"

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

Paul would be torn to pieces by them

This can be stated in active form. The phrase "be torn to pieces" might be an exaggeration of how the people might harm Paul. Alternate translation: "they might tear Paul to pieces" or "they would cause Paul great physical harm"

take him by force

"use physical force to take him away"

into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

Acts 23:11

The following night

This means the night after the day Paul went before the council. Alternate translation: "That night"

testify in Rome

The words "about me" are understood. Alternate translation: "testify about me in Rome"

Acts 23:12

Connecting Statement:

While Paul is in the prison at the fortress, the disbelieving religious Jews vow to kill him.

formed a conspiracy

"organized a group with a shared purpose." The purpose for organizing this group was to kill Paul.

put themselves under an oath

The noun "oath" is an abstract noun that refers to a promise that the men made to God to kill Paul. It can also be made explicit what would happen to the men if they did not do what they had promised to do. Alternate translation: "asked God to curse them if they did not do what they promised"

Acts 23:13

forty men

"40 men"

who formed this conspiracy

"who made this plan" or "who planned to kill Paul"

Acts 23:14

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the forty Jews in Acts 23:13.

We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul

"We have sworn to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. We asked God to curse us if we do not do what we promised to do"

Acts 23:15

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the chief priests and elders. Both "us" and "we" refer to the forty Jews who planned to kill Paul.

Now, therefore

"Because what we have just said is true" or "Because we have put ourselves under this curse"

Now

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

bring him down to you

"bring Paul from the fortress to meet with you"

as if you would decide his case more precisely

"as though you want to learn more about what Paul has done"

Acts 23:16

Paul's sister's son

"the son of Paul's sister" or "Paul's nephew"

they were lying in wait

"they were ready to ambush Paul" or "they were waiting to kill Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

Acts 23:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 23:18

Paul the prisoner called me to him

"Paul the prisoner asked me to come talk with him"

this young man

Since the chief captain calls him a young man, this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

Acts 23:19

chief captain took him by the hand

Since the chief captain took the young man by the hand and calls him a young man (verse 18), this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

Acts 23:20

The Jews have agreed

This does not mean all Jews, but all of the group that was there. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews have agreed"

to bring down Paul

"to bring Paul down from the fortress"

they were going to ask more precisely about his case

"they wanted to learn more about what Paul has done"

Acts 23:21

forty men
"40 men"

lying in wait for him
"ready to ambush Paul" or "ready to kill Paul"

They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him
"They have sworn to eat and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. And they asked God to curse them if they do not do what they promised to do"

for your approval
"for you to agree to do what they have asked you to do"

Acts 23:22

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 23:23

he called to him
"he called to himself." Both "he" and "him" refer to the chief captain.

two of the centurions
"2 of the centurions"

seventy horsemen
"70 horsemen"

two hundred spearmen
"200 soldiers that are armed with spears"

third hour of the night
This was about 9:00 p.m. at night.

Acts 23:24

Felix the governor
Felix, who resided at Caesarea, was the roman governor of the area.

Acts 23:25

General Information:
Here "he" refers to the chief captain.

Acts 23:26

General Information:
Claudius Lysias was the name of the chief captain. Governor Felix was the Roman governor over the whole region.

Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greetings

This is a formal introduction to the letter. The chief captain begins by referring to himself. You can translate it in the first person. The words "am writing" are understood. Alternate translation: "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing to you, the most excellent Governor Felix, and I greet you"

to the most excellent Governor Felix

"to Governor Felix, you who deserve the greatest honors"

Acts 23:27

This man was arrested by the Jews

Here "Jews" means "some of the Jews." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews arrested this man"

was about to be killed by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were ready to kill him"

I came upon them with soldiers

"I with my soldiers arrived at the place where Paul and these Jews were"

Acts 23:28

General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Claudius Lysias, the chief captain. The word "they" refers to the Jews who accused Paul. The word "him" refers to Paul.

Acts 23:29

that he was being accused about questions concerning

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they were accusing him of questions about"

but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment

The abstract nouns "accusation," "death," and "imprisonment" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "but nobody accused him of anything that should cause Roman authorities to kill him or to send him to prison"

Acts 23:30

Connecting Statement:

The chief captain ends his letter to Governor Felix.

Then it was reported to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone told me" or "Then I learned"

sent him to you

Here "you" refers to Governor Felix.

Acts 23:31

Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time under arrest in Jerusalem and begins his time of arrest in Caesarea with Governor Felix.

So the soldiers obeyed their orders

The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is the chief captain's commanding the soldiers to escort Paul.

They took Paul and brought him by night

Here "brought" can be translated as "took."
Alternate translation: "They got Paul and took him at night"

Antipatris

Antipatris was a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. It stood at a site located today in central Israel.

Acts 23:32

to go with him

Here "him" refers to Paul.

Acts 23:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 23:34

he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia

This can be stated with direct quotations. Alternate translation: "he asked Paul, 'What province are you from?' Paul said, 'I am from Cilicia.' When the governor learned this"

When he learned that he

"When the governor learned that Paul"

Acts 23:35

he said

"the governor said"

I will hear you fully

"I will listen to all you have to say"

he commanded him to be kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he commanded soldiers to keep him" or "commanded soldiers to restrain him"

Chapter 24

¹ After five days, Ananias the high priest, certain elders, and an orator named Tertullus went there. These men brought charges against Paul before the governor. ² When Paul stood before the governor, Tertullus began to accuse him and said to the governor, "Because of you we have great peace, and your foresight brings good reform to our nation;

³ so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do, most excellent Felix. ⁴ So that I detain you no more, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵ For we have found this man to be a pest and one who causes all the Jews throughout the world to rebel. He is a leader of the Nazarene sect. ⁶ He even tried to desecrate the temple, so we arrested him. ^[1]⁷^[2]⁸ When you examine Paul about all these matters, you will be able to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him." ⁹ The Jews also joined in the accusation, affirming that these charges were true.

¹⁰ But when the governor motioned for Paul to speak, Paul answered, "I understand that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, and so I gladly explain myself to you.

¹¹ You can learn for yourself that it has not been more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. ¹² When they found me in the temple, I did not argue with anyone, and I did not stir up a crowd, either in the synagogues, or in the city. ¹³ They cannot prove to you the accusations they are now making against me. ¹⁴ But I confess this to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I serve the God of our fathers, believing all things that are according to the law and that has been written in the prophets. ¹⁵ I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶ So I always strive to have a blameless conscience before God and human beings. ¹⁷ Now after many years I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices. ¹⁸ When I did this, certain Jews from Asia found me in a purification ceremony in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar. ¹⁹ These men ought to be before you now and accuse me, if they have anything. ²⁰ Or else, these same men should say what wrong they found in me when I stood before the Jewish council, ²¹ unless it is about this one thing that I shouted out when I stood among them, 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

²² Then Felix, who was well informed about the Way, postponed the hearing. He said, "When Lysias the commander comes down from Jerusalem, I will decide your case." ²³ Then he commanded the centurion that Paul should be kept in custody, but to have some freedom so that none of his friends would be prevented from attending to his needs.

²⁴ After some days, Felix returned with Drusilla his wife, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and he heard from him about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ But when Paul reasoned with him about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for now. But when I have time later on, I will send for you." ²⁶ At the same time he hoped that Paul would give money to him, so he often sent for him and spoke with him. ²⁷ But when two years passed, Porcius Festus became the governor after Felix, but Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jews, so he left Paul bound.

Footnotes

24:6 ^[1]Some ancient copies add,

24:7 ^[2]Some ancient copies have for verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8,

Acts 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul told the governor that he had not done what the Jews were accusing him of doing and that the governor should not punish him for what he did do.

Special concepts in this chapter

Respect

Both the Jewish leaders ([Acts 24:2-4](#)) and Paul ([Acts 24:10](#)) began their speeches with words that show respect to the governor.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Governmental leaders

The words "governor," "commander," and "centurion" may be difficult to translate into some languages.

Acts 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul is on trial in Caesarea. Tertullus presents Governor Felix with the charges against Paul.

After five days

"Five days after the Roman soldiers took Paul to Caesarea"

Ananias

This is the name of a man. He is not the same Ananias as in [Acts 5:1]

an orator

"a lawyer." Tertullus was an expert in Roman law who was there to accuse Paul in court.

Tertullus

This is the name of a man.

went there

"went to Caesarea where Paul was"

before the governor

"in the presence of the governor, who was judge in the court"

brought charges against Paul

"began to argue the case before the governor that Paul had broken the law."

Acts 24:2

Because of you

Here the word "you" refers to Felix, the governor.

we have great peace

Here "we" refers to the citizens under Felix. Alternate translation: "we, the people that you govern, have great peace"

and your foresight brings good reform to our nation

"and your planning has greatly improved our nation"

Acts 24:3

so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do

The word "thankfulness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation: "so we are very thankful and we welcome everything that you do" or "so we thank you very much and welcome everything that you do"

most excellent Felix

"Governor Felix, who deserves greatest honor." Felix was the roman governor over the whole region. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 23:25.

Acts 24:4

So that I detain you no more

Possible meanings are 1) "so that I will not take up too much of your time" or 2) "so that I will not tire you"

in your kindness to hear us briefly

"to be kind and listen to the short speech I am giving to state these men's case"

Acts 24:5

General Information:

The word "we" refers to Ananias, certain elders, and Tertullus.

this man to be a pest

Here "pest" is a metaphor for a person who causes trouble. Alternate translation: "this man to be a trouble maker"

all the Jews throughout the world

The word "all" here is probably an exaggeration used to strengthen their accusation against Paul.

He is a leader of the Nazarene sect

The phrase "Nazarene sect" is another name for the Christians. Alternate translation: "He also leads the entire group whom people call the followers of the Nazarene"

sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Tertullus considers the Christians to be a small group within Judaism.

Acts 24:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 24:7

General Information:

Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Governor Felix.

Acts 24:8

Connecting Statement:

Tertullus finishes presenting the charges against Paul before Governor Felix.

to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him

"to learn whether or not these charges that we bring against him are true" or "to learn whether or not he is guilty of the things we accuse him of"

Acts 24:9

The Jews

This refers to the Jewish leaders who were there at Paul's trial.

Acts 24:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul responds to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

the governor motioned

"the governor gestured"

a judge to this nation

Here "nation" refers to the people of the Jewish nation. Alternate translation: "a judge for the people of the Jewish nation"

explain myself

"explain my situation"

Acts 24:11

twelve days since

"12 days since"

Acts 24:12

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews who were accusing Paul.

I did not stir up a crowd

"Stir up" here is a metaphor for agitating people into unrest, just as stirring a liquid agitates it. Alternate translation: "I did not cause a crowd to riot"

Acts 24:13

the accusations

"the blames for wrongdoings" or "the charges for crimes"

Acts 24:14

I confess this to you

"I acknowledge this to you"

that according to the Way

The phrase "the Way" was a title used for Christianity during Paul's time.

a sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Christianity was originally considered to be a small group within Judaism. See how you translated "sect" in Acts 24:5.

the law

Paul is referring to the law of Moses.

Acts 24:15

I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Just as these men, I trust in God that there will be a resurrection"

these men

the Jews who are accusing Paul in court

that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated with the verb "resurrect." Alternate translation: "that God will resurrect all who have died, both the righteous and the unrighteous"

the righteous and the wicked

These nominal adjectives refer to righteous people and wicked people. Alternate translation: "righteous people and wicked people" or "those who have done what is right and those who have done what is evil"

Acts 24:16

I always strive

"I always work hard" or "I do my best"

to have a blameless conscience

Here "conscience" refers to a person's inner morality that chooses between right and wrong. Alternate translation: "to be blameless" or "to always do what is right"

before God

"in the presence of God"

Acts 24:17

Now

This word marks a shift in Paul's argument. Here he explains the situation in Jerusalem when some of the Jews arrested him.

after many years

"after many years away from Jerusalem"

I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices

Here "I came" can be translated as "I went." Alternate translation: "I went to help my people by bringing them money as a gift; I also went to present sacrifices"

Acts 24:18

in a purification ceremony in the temple

"in the temple after I had finished a ceremony to purify myself"

in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "in the temple. I had not gathered a crowd nor was I trying to start a riot"

Acts 24:19

These men

"The Jews from Asia"

if they have anything

"if they have anything to say"

Acts 24:20

these same men

This refers to the members of the council who were present in Jerusalem at Paul's trial.

should say what wrong they found in me

"should say the wrong thing I did that they were able to prove"

Acts 24:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes responding to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

It is concerning the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated as "God brings back to life." Alternate translation: "It is because I believe that God will bring back to life those who have died"

I am on trial before you today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me today"

Acts 24:22

General Information:

Felix is the Roman governor of the area who resides at Caesarea. See how you translated this name in [Acts 23:24]

the Way

This is a title for Christianity. See how you translated this in Acts 9:2.

When Lysias the commander comes down

"when Lysias the commander comes down" or "at the time Lysias the commander comes down"

Lysias

This is the name of the chief captain. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:26.

comes down from Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than Caesarea so it was normal to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

I will decide your case

"I will make a decision concerning these accusations against you" or "I will judge whether you are guilty"

Acts 24:23

to have some freedom

"to have some freedom not otherwise granted to prisoners"

Acts 24:24

After some days

"After several days"

Drusilla his wife

Drusilla is a woman's name.

Acts 24:25

Felix became frightened

Felix may have felt conviction of his sins.

for now

"for the present time"

Acts 24:26

he hoped that Paul would give money to him

Here the word "hope" means think that what one desires might happen. Sometimes prisoners gave money to government officials so that the officials would free them from prison early, and Felix hoped that Paul would do that. Alternate translation: "he thought that Paul might give money to him"

so he often sent for him and spoke with him

"so Felix often sent for Paul and spoke with Paul"

Acts 24:27

Porcius Festus

This was the Roman Governor who replaced Felix.

wanted to gain favor with the Jews

Here "the Jews" refers to the Jewish leaders.
Alternate translation: "wanted the Jewish leaders to like him"

he left Paul bound

"he left Paul in prison"

Chapter 25

¹ Now, Festus entered the province, and after three days, he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem. ² The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul, and they asked Festus earnestly — ³ asking him to do them a favor against Paul—to summon him to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. ⁴ Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon. ⁵ "Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

⁶ Festus stayed not more than eight or ten days and then he went down to Caesarea, and on the next day he sat on the judgment seat and commanded Paul to be brought to him. ⁷ When he arrived, the Jews from Jerusalem stood nearby, and they brought many serious charges which they could not prove.

⁸ Paul defended himself and said, "I have committed no sin against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

⁹ But Festus wanted to gain the favor of the Jews, and so he answered Paul and said, "Do you want to go up to Jerusalem and to be judged by me about these things there?" ¹⁰ Paul said, "I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged. I have wronged no Jews, just as you also very well know.

¹¹ Though if I have done wrong and if I have done what is worthy of death, I do not refuse to die. But if their accusations are nothing, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." ¹² After Festus talked with the council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

¹³ Now after some days, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay an official visit to Festus. ¹⁴ After they had been there for many days, Festus presented Paul's case to the king; he said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. ¹⁵ When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against this man to me, and they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him. ¹⁶ I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone before the accused had faced his accusers and received an opportunity to defend himself against the charges. ¹⁷ Therefore, when they came together here, I did not wait, but the next day I sat in the judgment seat and I ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they charged him with nothing that I considered wickedness. ¹⁹ Instead, they had certain disputes with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who was dead, whom Paul claims to be alive. ²⁰ I was perplexed about how to investigate this matter, and so I asked him if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to stand trial there about these charges. ²¹ But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held in custody until I could send him to Caesar." ²² Agrippa spoke to Festus, "I would also like to listen to this man." "Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."

²³ So on the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with much ceremony; they came into the hall with the military officers and with the prominent men of the city. When Festus spoke the command, Paul was brought to them. ²⁴ Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all you men who are here with us, you see this man; all the multitude of Jews appealed to me in Jerusalem and here also, and they shouted to me that he should no longer live. ²⁵ I found he had done nothing worthy of death; but because he appealed to the emperor, I decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶ But I do not have anything certain to write to my lord. For this reason, I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa, so that I might have something more to write about the case. ²⁷ For it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state the charges against him."

Acts 25 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Favor

This word is used in two different ways in this chapter. When the Jewish leaders asked Festus for a favor, they were asking him to do something special for them on that day. They wanted him to do for them something that he would not usually do. When Festus "wanted to gain the favor of the Jews," he wanted them to like him and be willing to obey him in the months and years to come. (See: favor)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. Roman officials could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way they would treat a non-citizen.

Acts 25:1

General Information:

Festus becomes the governor of Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 24:27.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to be a prisoner in Caesarea.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

Festus entered the province

Possible meanings are 1) Festus arrived in the area to begin his rule or 2) Festus simply arrived in the area.

he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

Acts 25:2

The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul

This speaks about accusations as if they were an object that a person could bring to someone else. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and the important Jews accused Paul to Festus"

Acts 25:3

to summon him to Jerusalem

Some versions translate this as "to have him summoned to Jerusalem." The word "him" refers to Paul. The Jews wanted Festus to have his soldiers take Paul to Jerusalem.

for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way

They were going to hide along the road and kill Paul as he was passing by, but Festus was not aware of this part of their plan.

Acts 25:4

Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "But Festus said, 'Paul is being held in custody in Caesarea, and I myself will soon return there.'"

Acts 25:5

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Festus and the Romans traveling with him, but not to his audience.

"Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us

The phrase "he said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Then he said, 'Therefore, those who are able to go to Caesarea should go there with us'"

If there is something wrong with the man

"If Paul has done something wrong"

you should accuse him

"you should accuse him of violating laws" or "you should bring charges against him"

Acts 25:6

down to Caesarea

Jerusalem is higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

sat on the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus' ruling as judge over Paul's trial. Alternate translation: "sat upon the seat where he acted as judge" or "sat down as judge"

Paul to be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his soldiers bring Paul to him"

Acts 25:7

When he arrived

"When Paul came and stood before Festus"

they brought many serious charges

Charging a person with a crime is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could bring to court. Alternate translation: "they spoke against Paul many serious things"

Acts 25:8

against the temple

Paul says he did not break any rules about who could enter the Jerusalem temple. Alternate translation: "against the entry rules of the temple"

Acts 25:9

wanted to gain the favor of the Jews

Here "the Jews" means the Jewish leaders.
Alternate translation: "wanted to please the Jewish leaders"

to go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

and to be judged by me about these things there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where I will judge you with regard to these charges"

Acts 25:10

I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged

The "judgment seat" refers to Caesar's authority to judge Paul. This can be stated in active form.
Alternate translation: "I ask to go before Caesar, so he can judge me"

Acts 25:11

Though if I have done wrong ... I do not refuse to die

Paul does not believe that he has done wrong, but he shows that he will submit to the law and will not refuse to be punished if he really has done wrong.

if I have done what is worthy of death

"if I have done some wrong that deserves the death penalty"

if their accusations are nothing

"if the charges against me are not true"

no one can hand me over to them

Possible meanings are 1) Festus does not have the legal authority to hand Paul over to these false accusers or 2) the governor should not give in to the request of the Jews.

I appeal to Caesar

"I ask to go before Caesar so he can judge me"

Acts 25:12

with the council

This is not the Sanhedrin that is referred to as "council" throughout Acts. This is a political council in the Roman government. Alternate translation: "with his own government advisors"

Acts 25:13

General Information:

King Agrippa and Bernice are new people in the story. Though he ruled over only a few territories,

King Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was Agrippa's sister.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

to pay an official visit to Festus

"to visit Festus concerning official matters"

Acts 25:14

After they

"After King Agrippa and Bernice"

A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Felix left office, he left a man in prison here"

Felix

Felix was the Roman governor of the area and resided in Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:24.

Acts 25:15

brought charges against this man to me

This is a metaphor that means to accuse someone in court. Alternate translation: "spoke to me against this man"

they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him

The abstract nouns "sentence" and "condemnation" can be expressed as verbs. The phrase "a sentence of condemnation" implies that they were requesting that Paul be executed. Alternate translation: "they asked me to sentence him to death" or "they asked me to condemn him to death"

Acts 25:16

to hand over anyone

Here "hand over" represents sending someone to people who will punish or kill him. Alternate translation: "let someone punish anyone" or "to condemn anyone to death"

before the accused had faced his accusers

Here "faced his accusers" is an idiom that means to meet with the people who accuse him. Alternate translation: "before the person whom others have accused of a crime had met directly with those who accused him"

Acts 25:17

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Festus has just said that an accused man should be able to face his accusers and make his defense.

when they came together here

"when the Jewish leaders came to meet with me here"

I sat in the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus ruling over Paul's trial as judge. Alternate translation: "I sat upon the seat to act as judge" or "I sat down as judge"

I ordered the man to be brought in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before me"

Acts 25:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 25:19

their own religion

Here "religion" means the belief system people have toward life and the supernatural.

Acts 25:20

to stand trial there about these charges

To "stand trial" is an idiom meaning to speak to a judge so the judge can decide if a person is right or wrong. Alternate translation: "to go to trial about these charges" or "for a judge to decide if these charges against him are true or not"

Acts 25:21

Connecting Statement:

Festus finishes explaining Paul's case to King Agrippa.

But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when Paul insisted that he stay under Roman guard until the time when the emperor could decide his case"

I ordered him to be held in custody

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to keep him in custody" or "I told the soldiers to guard him"

Acts 25:22

"Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."

The phrase "Festus said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Festus said, 'I will arrange for you to listen to Paul tomorrow.'"

Acts 25:23

General Information:

Though he ruled over only a few territories, Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was his sister. See how you translated these names in Acts 25:13.

with much ceremony

"with a great ceremony to honor them"

the hall

This was a large room where people gathered for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

Paul was brought to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the soldiers brought Paul to appear before them"

Acts 25:24

Connecting Statement:

Festus again gives information about Paul's case to King Agrippa.

all the multitude of Jews

The word "all" is an exaggeration used to emphasize that a great number of Jews wanted Paul to die. Alternate translation: "a great number of the Jews" or "many of the Jewish leaders"

they shouted to me

"they spoke very strongly to me"

he should no longer live

This statement is made in the negative to emphasize the positive equivalent. Alternate translation: "he should die immediately"

Acts 25:25

because he appealed to the emperor

"because he said that he wanted the emperor to judge him"

the emperor

The emperor was the ruler of the Roman empire. He ruled over many countries and provinces.

Acts 25:26

to write to my lord

Festus used the word "lord" to refer to the emperor. Alternate translation: "to write to the emperor"

I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa

Here the first "you" is plural and refers to all the men to whom Festus is speaking. The second "you" is singular and refers to King Agrippa. Alternate translation: "I have brought Paul to all of you, but especially to you, King Agrippa"

so that I might have something more to write

"so that I will have something else to write" or "so that I will know what I should write"

Acts 25:27

it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state

The negative words "unreasonable" and "to not ... state" can be stated in positive form. Alternate

translation: "it seems reasonable to me to send a prisoner and to also state"

the charges against him

Possible meanings are 1) the accusations that the Jewish leaders have brought against him or 2) the charges under Roman law that apply to Paul's case.

Chapter 26

¹ So Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense.

² "I consider myself happy, King Agrippa, to make my case before you today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ especially because you are an expert in all the Jewish customs and questions. So I beg you to hear me patiently. ⁴ Truly, all the Jews know how I lived from my youth in my own nation and at Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known about me from the beginning, if they are willing to admit it, that I lived as a Pharisee, the strictest party of our religion. ⁶ Now I stand here to be judged because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷ It is this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive as they worship God earnestly night and day, and it is for this hope, king, that the Jews are accusing me. ⁸ Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead? ⁹ Now indeed, I myself thought that I should do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ I did these in Jerusalem. I locked up in prison many of God's holy people by the authority I received from the chief priests; and when they were killed, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ I punished them many times in all the synagogues and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was furiously enraged against them and I persecuted them even to foreign cities. ¹² While I was doing this, I went to Damascus with authority and orders from the chief priests; ¹³ and on the way there, in the middle of the day, king, I saw a light from heaven that was brighter than the sun, and it shone around both me and the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴ When we all fell to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me that said in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick a goad.' ¹⁵ Then I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord replied, 'I am Jesus whom you persecute. ¹⁶ Now get up and stand on your feet; because for this purpose I appeared to you, to appoint you to be a servant and a witness concerning the things that you know about me now and the things that I will show to you later; ¹⁷ and I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, so that they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance that I give to them who are sanctified by faith in me.' ¹⁹ Therefore, King Agrippa, I did not disobey the heavenly vision; ²⁰ but, to those in Damascus first, and then at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, I gave them the message that that they should repent and turn to God, doing deeds worthy of repentance. ²¹ For this cause the Jews arrested me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² Therefore I have received the help that comes from God until this very day, and I stand and testify to both small and great about nothing more than what the prophets and Moses said would happen— ²³ that Christ must suffer, and by being the first to rise from the dead he would proclaim light to our own people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴ As Paul completed his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are insane; your great learning makes you insane." ²⁵ But Paul said, "I am not insane, most excellent Festus, but I am declaring words of truth and sound judgment. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things; and so I speak boldly to him, for I am persuaded that none of this is hidden from him; for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe." ²⁸ Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?"

²⁹ Paul said, "I pray to God, that whether in a short or long time, not you only, but also all that hear me today, would be like me, but without these prison chains."

³⁰ Then the king stood up, and the governor, and Bernice also, and those who were sitting with them; ³¹ when they left the hall, they talked to one another and said, "This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds."

³² Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been freed if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Acts 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 22)

Paul told the King Agrippa why he had done what he had done and that the governor should not punish him for that.

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Acts 26:1

Connecting Statement:

Festus has brought Paul before King Agrippa.

Agrippa

Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine, though he ruled over only a few territories. See how you translated this name in Acts 25:13.

stretched out his hand

"held out his hand" or "gestured with his hand"

made his defense

The abstract noun "defense" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "began to defend himself against those who were accusing him"

Acts 26:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his defense to King Agrippa.

I consider myself happy

Paul was happy because he considered his appearance before Agrippa to be an opportunity to speak about the gospel.

to make my case

This phrase means to describe one's situation, so that those in court can discuss and make a decision about it. Alternate translation: "to defend myself"

against all the accusations of the Jews

The abstract noun "accusations" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "against all the Jews who are accusing me"

the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

Acts 26:3

questions

You can make explicit what kinds of questions this means. Alternate translation: "questions about religious matters"

Acts 26:4

all the Jews

This is a generalization. Possible meanings are 1) Jews in general who knew about Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jews" or 2) Pharisees who knew Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

in my own nation

Possible meanings are 1) among his own people, not necessarily in the geographical land of Israel or 2) in the land of Israel.

Acts 26:5

the strictest party of our religion

"a group within Judaism that lives by very strict rules"

Acts 26:6

Now

This word marks a shift from Paul discussing his past to talking about himself in the present.

I stand here to be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am here, where they are putting me on trial"

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait."

Alternate translation: "because I trust in the promise made by God to our fathers"

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Hope in a promise is the expectation that the promise will be fulfilled. Alternate translation "because of my hope that God will do what he promised our forefathers he would do" or "because I confidently wait for God to do what he promised our forefather he would do"

Acts 26:7

this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive

This speaks about a promise being fulfilled as if it were an object that is received. Alternate translation: "the promise that our twelve tribes confidently wait for God to fulfill"

our twelve tribes

The phrase "our twelve tribes" stands for the people in those tribes. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews in the twelve tribes"

worship God earnestly night and day

The extremes "night" and "day" are used together to mean consistently mean Alternate translation: "continually worship God earnestly"

king

Paul is addressing King Agrippa by his title, not by his name. Your language may require that you add another word or part of a word, as in older English "O King," or that you add the king's name, as in "King Agrippa," or that you use another expression such as "Your Majesty."

that the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "that the leaders of the Jews"

Acts 26:8

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people who were listening to Paul.

Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead?

Paul uses a question to challenge the Jews there. They believe that God can raise the dead, but they do not believe that God brought Jesus back to life. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not judge it to be unbelievable that God raises the dead" Or "You should not say that it is impossible to believe that God raises the dead."

raises the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "makes dead people come alive again"

Acts 26:9

Now indeed

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now beginning to describe how he formerly persecuted Jesus's people.

against the name of Jesus

The word "name" here stands for the teaching about the person. Alternate translation: "to stop people from teaching about Jesus"

Acts 26:10

when they were killed, I cast my vote against them

The phrase "were killed" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I voted in agreement with the other Jewish leaders to condemn believers to die"

Acts 26:11

I punished them many times

Possible meanings are 1) Paul punished some believers many times or 2) Paul punished many different believers.

Acts 26:12

Connecting Statement:

While talking to King Agrippa, Paul tells about when the Lord spoke with him.

While I was doing this

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now telling about when he saw Jesus and became his disciple.

While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. In this case, Paul went to Damascus during the time when he persecuted Christians.

with authority and orders

Paul had letters from the Jewish leaders granting him authority to persecute the Jewish believers.

Acts 26:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 26:14

I heard a voice speaking to me that said

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking to me who said"

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

This is a rhetorical question. The speaker is alerting Saul to what Saul is doing to him, and implying that Saul should not do that. Alternate translation: "Saul, Saul, you are persecuting me." or "Saul, Saul, stop persecuting me."

It is hard for you to kick a goad

For Paul to resist Jesus and to persecute believers is spoken of as if he were an ox kicking at the sharp stick that a person uses to prod

Acts 26:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

to open their eyes

Paul helping people to understand the truth is spoken of as if he were helping them to open their physical eyes. Alternate translation: "to make them able to understand the truth"

to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

Paul convincing people to stop obeying Satan and doing evil things and to start obeying God and doing good things is spoken of as if Paul were taking them out of a dark place where Satan controlled them and into a place where there was light and God controlled them. Alternate translation: "to help them stop doing what is evil, stop obeying Satan, and start trusting and obeying God"

they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be stated as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "God may forgive their sins and they may receive"

the inheritance that I give

The abstract noun "inheritance" may be stated as the verb "inherit." Alternate translation: "they may inherit that which I give"

the inheritance

The blessings that Jesus gives to those who believe in him are spoken of as if they were an inheritance that children receive from their father.

sanctified by faith in me

Jesus choosing some people to belong to him is spoken of as if he literally set them apart from other people.

by faith in me

"because they believe in me." Here Paul finishes quoting the Lord.

Acts 26:19

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Paul had just explained what the Lord had commanded him in his vision.

I did not disobey

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I obeyed"

the heavenly vision

This refers to what the person in the vision told Paul. Alternate translation: "what the person from heaven told me in the vision"

Acts 26:20

turn to God

To start trusting God is spoken of as if a person turns to start walking toward God. Alternate translation: "trust in God"

doing deeds worthy of repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be stated as the verb "repented." Alternate translation: "and start doing good deeds to show they truly have repented"

Acts 26:21

the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "some Jews"

Acts 26:22

to both small and great about nothing

Here "small" and "great" refer to people who are unimportant and important, respectively, and are used together to mean "all people." Alternate translation: "to all people, whether unimportant or important, about nothing"

about nothing more than what

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "about the exact thing that"

what the prophets

Paul is referring to the collective writings of the Old Testament prophets.

Acts 26:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes giving his defense to King Agrippa.

that Christ must suffer

You can make explicit that Christ must also die. Alternate translation: "that Christ must suffer and die"

from the dead

The phrase "the dead" refers to the spirits of people who have died. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

he would proclaim light

"he would proclaim the message about the light."
To tell people about how God saves people is spoken of as if a person were speaking about the light. Alternate translation: "he would proclaim the message about how God saves people"

Acts 26:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul and King Agrippa continue to talk together.

you are insane

"you are speaking nonsense" or "you are crazy"

your great learning makes you insane

"you have learned so much that you are now crazy"

Acts 26:25

I am not insane ... but

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I am sane ... and" or "I am able to think well ... and"

most excellent Festus

"Festus, who deserves highest honors"

Acts 26:26

For the king ... to him ... from him

Paul is still speaking to King Agrippa, but he is referring to him in the third person. Alternate translation: "For you ... to you ... from you"

I am persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am sure"

that none of this is hidden from him

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "that he is aware of this" or "that you are aware of this"

has not been done in a corner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has not happened in a corner"

in a corner

This means doing something in secret as if a person went and did something in the corner of a room where no one can see him. Alternate translation: "in a dark place" or "in secret"

Acts 26:27

Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa?

Paul asks this question to remind Agrippa that Agrippa already believes what the prophets said about Jesus. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You already believe what the Jewish prophets said, King Agrippa."

Acts 26:28

In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?

Agrippa asks this question to show Paul that he cannot convince Agrippa so easily without more proof. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think you can convince me so easily to believe in Jesus!"

Acts 26:29

but without these prison chains

Here "prison chains" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "but, of course, I do not want you to be a prisoner, as I am"

Acts 26:30

General Information:

Bernice was the sister of King Agrippa (Acts 25:13).

Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time before King Agrippa.

Then the king stood up, and the governor

"Then King Agrippa stood up, and Governor Festus"

Acts 26:31

the hall

This was a large room for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds

The abstract noun "death" can be stated as the verb "die." Here "bonds" stands for being in prison. Alternate translation: "This man does not deserve to die or to be in prison"

Acts 26:32

This man could have been freed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This man could have gone free" or "I could have freed this man"

Chapter 27

¹ When it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers. ² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia. So we went to sea. Aristarchus from Thessalonica in Macedonia went with us. ³ The next day we landed at the city of Sidon, where Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends to receive their care. ⁴ From there we went to sea and sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island, because the winds were against us. ⁵ When we had sailed across the sea past Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia. ⁶ There, the centurion found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy. He put us on it. ⁷ When we had sailed slowly for many days and had finally arrived with difficulty near Cnidus and the wind no longer allowed us to go that way, we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸ We sailed along the coast with difficulty, until we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, which is near the city of Lasea.

⁹ We had now taken much time, the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰ and said, "Men, I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." ¹¹ But the centurion was more persuaded by the master and by the owner of the ship than by those things that were spoken by Paul. ¹² Because the harbor was not easy to spend the winter in, most of the sailors advised to sail from there, and if by any means we could reach the city of Phoenix, to spend the winter there. Phoenix is a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest. ¹³ When a south wind began to blow gently, the sailors thought that they had what they needed. So they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. ¹⁴ But after a short time a wind of hurricane force, called the northeaster, began to beat down from the island. ¹⁵ When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind, we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind. ¹⁶ We sailed along the lee of a small island called Cauda, and with difficulty we were able to secure the lifeboat. ¹⁷ When they had hoisted the lifeboat up, they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship. They were afraid that they should run upon the sandbars of Syrtis, so they lowered the sea anchor and were driven along. ¹⁸ We took such a violent battering by the storm that the next day they began throwing the cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands. ²⁰ When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days, and the great storm still beat upon us, any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned. ²¹ When they had gone long without food, then Paul stood up among the sailors and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have set sail from Crete, so as to get this injury and loss. ²² Now I urge you to take courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship. ²³ For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong, whom also I worship—his angel stood beside me ²⁴ and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar, and see, God in his kindness has given to you all those who are sailing with you.' ²⁵ Therefore have courage, men! For I trust God that it will happen just as it was told to me. ²⁶ But we must run aground upon some island."

²⁷ When the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven this way and that in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors thought that they were approaching some land. ²⁸ They took soundings and found twenty fathoms; after a little while, they took more soundings and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ They were afraid that we might crash on the rocks, so they lowered four anchors from the stern and prayed that morning would come soon. ³⁰ The sailors were looking for a way to abandon the ship and had lowered the lifeboat into the sea, and pretended that they would throw down the anchors from the bow. ³¹ But Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and let it drift away. ³³ When daylight was coming on, Paul encouraged them all to take some food. He said, "This day is the fourteenth day that you have been on constant guard and have gone without food—you have not eaten anything. ³⁴ So I urge you to share some food, for this is necessary for you to survive. For not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." ³⁵ When he had said this, he took bread and he thanked God in the sight of everyone. Then he broke the bread and began to eat. ³⁶ Then they were all encouraged and they also took food. ³⁷ We were 276 souls on the ship. ³⁸ When they had eaten enough, they made the ship lighter by throwing out the wheat into the sea. ³⁹ When it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a beach, and they discussed whether they could drive the ship onto it. ⁴⁰ So they cut loose the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosed the ropes of the rudders and raised the foresail to the wind;

and so they headed to the beach. ⁴¹ But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow was stuck there and remained unmovable, and the stern was broken up by the force of the waves. ⁴² The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners so that none of them could swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion wanted to save Paul, so he stopped their plan; and he ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴ Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to land.

Acts 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sailing

People who lived near the sea traveled by boat powered by the wind. During some months of the year, the wind would blow in the wrong direction or so hard that sailing was impossible.

Trust

Paul trusted God to bring him safely to land. He told the sailors and soldiers to trust that God would also keep them alive. (See: trust)

Paul breaks bread

Luke uses almost the same words here to describe Paul taking bread, thanking God, breaking it, and eating it that he used to describe the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples. However, your translation should not make your reader think that Paul was leading a religious celebration here.

Acts 27:1

General Information:

Adramyttium was a city possibly located on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The word "we" includes the author of Acts, Paul, and the others traveling with Paul, but not the reader.

Connecting Statement:

Paul, as a prisoner, begins his journey to Rome.

When it was decided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the king and the governor decided"

sail for Italy

Italy is the name of the province Rome was in. See how you translated "Italy" in Acts 18:2.

they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers.

"they put a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment, in charge of Paul and some other prisoners"

they committed

Possible meanings are that 1) "they" refers to the governor and the king or 2) "they" refers to other Roman officials.

a centurion named Julius

Julius is a man's name.

the Augustan company of soldiers

Some versions translate the word Augustan as "Imperial" or "emperor's."

company of soldiers

This was a group of about 1,00 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

Acts 27:2

We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia

If your language requires a person to act here, you can add human actors: "We boarded a ship that people had brought from Adramyttium; they were about to sail it along."

a ship from Adramyttium

Possible meanings are 1) a ship that had come from Adramyttium or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Adramyttium.

about to sail

"soon going to sail" or "would depart soon"

went to sea

"began our journey on the sea"

Aristarchus

Aristarchus came from Macedonia but had been working with Paul in Ephesus. See how you translated his name in Acts 19:29.

Acts 27:3

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Julius treated Paul kindly

"Julius treated Paul with a friendly concern." See how you translated "Julius" in Acts 27:1.

go to his friends to receive their care

The abstract noun "care" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "go to his friends so they could care for him" or "go to his friends so they could help him with whatever he needed"

Acts 27:4

we went to sea and sailed

"we started sailing and went"

sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island

"the lee of Cyprus" is the side of that island that blocks the strong wind, so sailing vessels are not forced off their course.

Acts 27:5

Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia

You can make explicit that they got off of the ship in Myra. Alternate translation: "came to Myra, a city of Lycia, where we got off the ship"

a city of Lycia

Lycia was a Roman province, located on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey.

Acts 27:6

found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy

It is implied that a crew would sail the ship to Italy. Alternate translation: "found a ship that a crew had sailed from Alexandria and was about to sail to Italy"

Alexandria

This is the name of a city.

Acts 27:7

When we had sailed slowly ... finally arrived with difficulty

You can make explicit that the reason they were sailing slowly and with difficulty was because the wind was blowing against them.

near Cnidus

This is an ancient settlement located in modern-day Turkey.

the wind no longer allowed us to go that way

"we could no longer go that way because of the strong wind"

we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete

"we sailed along the side of Crete where there was less wind"

opposite Salmone

This is a coastal city in Crete.

Acts 27:8

We sailed along the coast with difficulty

You can make explicit that even though the winds were not as strong as before, they were still strong enough to make sailing difficult.

Fair Havens

This was a port near Lasea, located on the south coast of Crete.

near the city of Lasea

This is a coastal city in Crete.

Acts 27:9

We had now taken much time

Because of the direction the wind was blowing, the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken more time than planned.

We had now taken

The writer includes himself, Paul, and those who were traveling with them, but not the reader.

the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail

This fast took place on the Day of Atonement, which was usually either in the last part of September or the first part of October according to Western calendars. After this time, there was a higher risk of seasonal storms.

Acts 27:10

I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss

"if we travel now, we will suffer much injury and loss"

with injury

If your language has a word for "injury" that results from wrongdoing, you may want to use it here.

we are about to take ... our lives

Paul includes himself and his hearers, so this is inclusive.

loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives

Here "loss" means destruction when referring to things and death when referring to people.

not only of the cargo and the ship

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. Alternate translation: "not only the ship and the goods on the ship"

Acts 27:11

that were spoken by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Paul said"

Acts 27:12

harbor was not easy to spend the winter in

You can make explicit why it was not easy to stay in the harbor. Alternate translation: "harbor did not sufficiently protect docked ships during winter storms"

harbor

a place near land that is usually safe for ships

city of Phoenix

Phoenix was a port city on the south coast of Crete.

to spend the winter there

This speaks about the season of winter as if it were a commodity that someone can spend. Alternate translation: "to stay there for the cold season"

facing both southwest and northwest

Here "faces northwest and southwest" means the opening of the harbor was toward those directions. Alternate translation: "it opened to the northwest and southwest"

southwest and northwest

These directions are based on what one sees as one faces the setting sun. Northwest is a little to the right of the setting sun, and southwest is a little to the left of the setting sun.

Acts 27:13

weighed anchor

Here "weighed" means "pulled out of the water." An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea to keep the ship from drifting about.

Acts 27:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul and those traveling on the boat encounter a fierce storm.

after a short time

"after a little while"

a wind of hurricane force

"a very strong, dangerous wind"

called the northeaster

"called 'a strong wind from the northeast.'" The word for "the northeaster" in the original language is "Euroclydon." You can transliterate this word for your language.

began to beat down from the island

"came in from the island of Crete, and it blew strongly against our ship"

Acts 27:15

When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind

"When the wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail against it"

we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we stopped trying to sail forward, and we let the wind push us whichever way it blew"

Acts 27:16

We sailed along the lee of a small island

"We sailed on the side of the island where the wind was not so strong"

a small island called Cauda

This island was located on the south coast of Crete.

lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. At this point the lifeboat was in the water being towed by the ship.

Acts 27:17

they had hoisted the lifeboat up

"they had lifted up the lifeboat" or "they had pulled the lifeboat aboard the ship"

they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship

The "hull" is the body of the ship. They tied ropes around it so that the ship would not come apart during the storm.

sandbars of Syrtis

Sandbars are very shallow areas in the sea where ships can get stuck in the sand. Syrtis is located on the coast of Libya, northern Africa.

they lowered the sea anchor

A sea anchor is something that is towed in the water behind a ship to slow the ship down and make it more stable. It may be a large cloth or a stiff board. Alternate translation: "they let the floating anchor down into the water"

were driven along

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "had to go in whatever direction the wind blew us"

Acts 27:18

We took such a violent battering by the storm

"The wind blew us so roughly back and forth that all of us were badly battered and bruised by the storm"

they began throwing the cargo overboard

The word "they" refers to the sailors. This is done to lighten the weight of the ship in an effort to prevent the ship from sinking.

cargo

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. See how you translated this in Acts 27:10. Alternate translation: "goods on the ship"

Acts 27:19

the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands

Here "equipment" refers to the sailors' equipment needed to sail the ship: tackle, hoists, beams of wood, block and tackle, ropes, lines, sails, and the like. This indicates how desperate the situation was.

Acts 27:20

When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days

They could not see the sun and stars because of the dark storm clouds. Sailors needed to see the sun and stars in order to know where they were and what direction they were headed.

the great storm still beat upon us

"the terrible storm still blew us roughly back and forth"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone abandoned hope that we would be saved"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

Here the word "hope" is a person's thought that what he desires might happen. Here the men on the boat had no reason to believe that they would be

rescued, so they quit hoping. Alternate translation: "we quit thinking that we might be saved"

be saved

"be rescued." Since there is no mention of the people praying for God to save them, this might simply have the sense of "survive."

Acts 27:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the sailors on the ship.

When they had gone long without food

Here "they" refers to the sailors. It is implied that Luke, Paul, and those with them had not eaten either. Alternate translation: "When we had gone a long time without food"

among the sailors

"among the men"

so as to get this injury and loss

"and as a result suffer this harm and loss"

Acts 27:22

there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship

Paul is speaking to the sailors. It is implied that Paul also means that he and those with him will not die either. Alternate translation: "none of us will die: the storm will destroy only the ship"

Acts 27:23

General Information:

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Acts 27:24

You must stand before Caesar

The phrase "stand before Caesar" refers to Paul's going to court and letting Caesar judge him. Alternate translation: "You must stand before Caesar so he can judge you"

has given to you all those who are sailing with you

"has decided to allow all those who are sailing with you to live"

Acts 27:25

just as it was told to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the angel told me"

Acts 27:26

we must run aground upon some island

"we must steer our boat so that it wrecks on some island"

Acts 27:27

Connecting Statement:

The fierce storm continues.

When the fourteenth night had come

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be translated as "fourteen" or "14." Alternate translation: "After 14 days since the storm started, that night"

as we were driven this way and that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the wind blew us back and forth"

the Adriatic Sea

This is the sea between Italy and Greece.

Acts 27:28

They took soundings

"They measured the depth of the sea water." They measured the depth of water by dropping a line with a weight tied to the end of it into the water.

found twenty fathoms

"found 20 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 40 meters"

found fifteen fathoms

"found 15 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 30 meters"

Acts 27:29

anchors

An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea, keeping the ship from drifting about. See how you translated this in Acts 27:13.

from the stern

"from the back of the ship"

Acts 27:30

the lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. See how you translated this in Acts 27:16.

from the bow

"from the front of the ship"

Acts 27:31

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the centurion and the Roman soldiers.

Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved

Paul meant that if those men left the ship, then no one on the ship would be saved. This can be stated positively, and the passive phrase "be saved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can be saved only if these men stay in the ship" or "Only if these men stay in the ship will you survive"

Acts 27:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:33

When daylight was coming on

"When it was almost sunrise"

This day is the fourteenth day that

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be stated as "fourteen." Alternate translation: "For 14 days"

Acts 27:34

not one of you will lose a single hair from his head

This was a customary way of saying no harm would come upon them. Alternate translation: "every one of you will survive this disaster unharmed"

Acts 27:35

broke the bread

"tore the bread" or "tore off a piece from the loaf of bread"

Acts 27:36

Then they were all encouraged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This encouraged all of them"

Acts 27:37

We were 276 souls on the ship

"There were two hundred and seventy-six of us in the ship." This is background information.

souls

This is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "people"

Acts 27:38

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:39

bay

a large area of water partly surrounded by land

did not recognize the land

"saw land but could not recognize it as any place they knew"

Acts 27:40

cut loose the anchors and left them

"cut the ropes and left the anchors behind"

rudders

large oars or pieces of wood at the back of the ship used for steering

the foresail

"the sail at the front of the ship." The sail was a large piece of cloth that caught the wind to move the ship.

they headed to the beach

"they steered the ship toward the beach"

Acts 27:41

a sandbar

an underwater pile of sand that made the water suddenly shallow

The bow

the front end of the ship

the stern

"the back end of the ship"

Acts 27:42

The soldiers' plan was

"The soldiers were planning"

Acts 27:43

so he stopped their plan

"so he stopped them from doing what they planned to do"

jump overboard

"jump off the ship into the water"

Acts 27:44

some on planks

"some on wooden boards"

Chapter 28

¹ When we were brought safely through, we learned that the island was called Malta. ² The native people offered to us not just ordinary kindness, but they lit a fire and welcomed us all because of the constant rain and cold. ³ But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and placed them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened onto his hand. ⁴ When the native people saw the animal hanging from his hand, they said one to another, "This man certainly is a murderer who has been saved from the sea; Justice does not permit him to live." ⁵ But then he shook the animal into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they watched him for a long time and saw that nothing was wrong with him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

⁷ Now in a nearby place there were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, a man named Publius. He welcomed us and kindly provided for us for three days. ⁸ It happened that the father of Publius was lying afflicted with a fever and dysentery. When Paul went to him, he prayed, placed his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹ After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who were sick also came and were healed. ¹⁰ The people also honored us with many honors. When we were preparing to sail, they gave us what we needed.

¹¹ After three months we set sail in a ship that had spent the winter at the island, a ship of Alexandria, with "the twin gods" as its figurehead. ¹² After we landed at the city of Syracuse, we stayed there three days. ¹³ From there we sailed and arrived at the city of Rhegium. After one day a south wind sprang up, and in two days we came to the city of Puteoli. ¹⁴ There we found some brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. In this way we came to Rome. ¹⁵ From there the brothers, after they heard about us, came to meet us as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw the brothers, he thanked God and took courage.

¹⁶ When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with the soldier who was guarding him.

¹⁷ Then it came about that after three days Paul called together those men who were the leaders among the Jews. When they had come together, he said to them, "Brothers, although I have done nothing wrong against the people or the customs of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ After they questioned me, they wished to set me free, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹ But when the Jews spoke against their desire, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation. ²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I called upon you that I might see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am now wearing this chain."

²¹ Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea about you, nor did any of the brothers come and report or say anything bad about you. ²² But we want to hear from you what you think about this sect, because it is known by us that it is spoken against everywhere."

²³ When they had appointed a day for him, more people came to him at his dwelling place. He presented the matter to them, and testified about the kingdom of God. He tried to persuade them about Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning until evening. ²⁴ Some were convinced about the things which were said, while others did not believe. ²⁵ When they did not agree with one another, they left after Paul had spoken this one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers.

²⁶ He said, 'Go to this people and say,
"Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand;
seeing, you will see, but you will never know."

²⁷ For the heart of this people has become dull,
and with their ears they hardly hear,
and they have shut their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn again,
and I would heal them."

28 Therefore, you should know that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen." **29**^[1]

30 Paul lived for two whole years in his own rented house, and he welcomed all who came to him. **31** He was proclaiming the kingdom of God and was teaching the things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness without being hindered.

Footnotes

28:29 ^[1] Acts 28:29—Some ancient copies have verse 29:

Acts 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

No one knows for sure why Luke ends his history without telling what happened to Paul after he had been in Rome for two years.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Letters" and "brothers"

The Jewish leaders were surprised that Paul wanted to speak with them, because they had received no letters from the high priest in Jerusalem telling them that Paul was coming.

When the Jewish leaders spoke of "brothers," they were referring to fellow Jews, not to Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"He was a god"

The native people believed that Paul was a god, but they did not believe that he was the one true God. We do not know why Paul did not tell the native people that he was not a god.

Acts 28:1

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those who traveled with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

After the shipwreck, people on the island of Malta helped Paul and everyone on the ship. They stay there for 3 months.

When we were brought safely through

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When we arrived safely"

we learned

Paul and Luke learned the name of the island. Alternate translation: "we learned from the people" or "we found out from the residents"

the island was called Malta

Malta is an island located south of the modern-day island of Sicily.

Acts 28:2

The native people

"The local people"

offered to us not just ordinary kindness

Being kind to someone is spoken of as if it were an object that someone offers. Alternate translation: "were not only very kind to us"

not just ordinary kindness

This phrase is used to emphasize the opposite of what is said. Alternate translation: "a great deal of kindness"

they lit a fire

"they put together twigs and branches and burned them"

welcomed us all

Possible meanings are 1) "welcomed all of the people from the ship" or 2) "welcomed Paul and all his companions."

Acts 28:3

a viper came out

"a poisonous snake came out of the bundle of sticks"

fastened onto his hand

"bit Paul's hand and did not let go"

Acts 28:4

This man certainly is a murderer

"For sure, this man is a murderer" or "This man is truly a murderer"

Justice

"Justice" was the name of a goddess that the people on the island worshiped. Alternate translation: "the goddess called Justice"

Acts 28:5

shook the animal into the fire

"shook his hand so that the snake fell from his hand into the fire"

suffered no harm

"Paul was not hurt at all"

Acts 28:6

waiting for him to swell up

They thought that his body would swell because of the snake venom.

nothing was wrong with him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everything about him was as it should be"

they changed their minds

To think differently about a situation is spoken of as if a person is changing his mind. Alternate translation: "they thought again"

said that he was a god.

Perhaps the people believed that someone who lived after a poisonous snake bite was divine or a god. This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "said, 'This man must be a god.'"

Acts 28:7

General Information:

Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Paul, Luke, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Now in a nearby place

"Now" is used to introduce a new person or event in the account.

chief man of the island

Possible meanings are 1) the main leader of the people or 2) someone who was the most important person on the island, perhaps because of his wealth.

Acts 28:8

It happened that the father of Publius ... fever and dysentery

This is background information about Publius' father that is important to understanding the story.

was lying afflicted

"was in bed, ill"

afflicted with a fever and dysentery

Dysentery is an infectious disease of the intestines.

placed his hands on him

"touched him with his hands"

Acts 28:9

were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed them too"

Acts 28:10

honored us with many honors

Probably they honored Paul and those with him by giving them gifts.

Acts 28:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul's journey to Rome continues.

that had spent the winter at the island

"that the crew left at the island for the cold season"

a ship of Alexandria

Possible meanings are this refers to 1) a ship that came from Alexandria, or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Alexandria.

the twin gods

On the bow of the ship, there was a carving of the two idols called "the twin gods." Their names were Castor and Pollux.

Acts 28:12

city of Syracuse

Syracuse is a city on the southeast coast of the modern-day island of Sicily, just southwest of Italy.

Acts 28:13

city of Rhegium

This is the port city located at the southwestern tip of Italy.

a south wind sprang up

"the wind began to blow from the south"

city of Puteoli

Puteoli is located in modern-day Naples on the west coast of Italy.

Acts 28:14

There we found

"There we met"

brothers

These were followers of Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they invited us"

In this way we came to Rome

Once Paul reached Puteoli, the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. Alternate translation: "And after we stayed seven days with them, we went to Rome"

Acts 28:15

General Information:

The Market of Appius was a popular market village about 60 kilometers south of the city of Rome on a road called the Appian Way. The Three Taverns was another village about 50 kilometers south of Rome.

after they heard about us

"after they heard we were coming"

he thanked God and took courage

Courage is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could take. Alternate translation: "this encouraged him, and he thanked God"

Acts 28:16

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

Paul arrives in Rome as a prisoner but with the freedom to stay in his own place. He calls the local Jews together to explain what has happened to him.

When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After we had arrived in Rome, the Roman authorities gave Paul permission to"

Acts 28:17

Then it came about that

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

the leaders among the Jews

These are the Jewish civil or religious leaders present in Rome.

Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

against the people

"against our people" or "against the Jews"

I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews arrested me in Jerusalem and placed me in the custody of the Roman authorities"

into the hands of the Romans

Here "hands" stands for power or control.

Acts 28:18

there was no reason for the death penalty in my case

"there was no reason for them to execute me" or "I had done nothing to cause them to kill me"

Acts 28:19

the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

spoke against their desire

"complained about what the Roman authorities wanted to do"

I was forced to appeal to Caesar

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I had to ask for Caesar to judge me"

although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation

The abstract noun "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Here "nation" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "but it was not because I wanted to accuse the people of my nation before Caesar"

Acts 28:20

the hope of Israel

Here the word "hope" is what a person desires to happen and is confident will happen. In this case it is what the people of Israel hope for. Alternate translation: "what Israel joyfully waits for" or "what the people of Israel confidently expect"

the hope of Israel

Paul did not state clearly what Israel hoped for. He may have been referring 1) to their hope that the Messiah would come or 2) to their hope that God would cause those who have died to live again.

Israel

Here "Israel" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "the Jews"

that I am now wearing this chain

Here "wearing this chain" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "that I am a prisoner"

Acts 28:21

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders respond to Paul.

nor did any of the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "nor did any of our fellow Jews"

Acts 28:22

General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

you think about this sect

A sect is a smaller group within a larger group. Here it refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "you think about this group to which you belong"

because it is known by us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because we know"

it is spoken against everywhere

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many Jews all over the Roman Empire are saying bad things about it"

Acts 28:23

General Information:

Here all instances of "they" and "them" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome. All instances of "him," "his," and "He" refer to Paul (Acts 28:17).

had appointed a day for him

"had chosen a time for him to speak to them"

testified about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "told them about God's rule as king" or "told them how God would show himself as king"

from the prophets

Here "the prophets" refers to what they wrote. Alternate translation: "from what the prophets wrote"

Acts 28:24

Some were convinced about the things which were said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul was able to convince some of them"

Acts 28:25

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17). The word "your" refers to the people to whom Paul had been speaking.

Connecting Statement:

As the Jewish leaders were ready to leave, Paul quoted the Old Testament scriptures that were appropriate for this time.

after Paul had spoken this one word

Here "word" stands for a message or statement. Alternate translation: "after Paul had said one more thing" or "after Paul had made this statement"

The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers.

This sentence contains quotations within quotations.

Acts 28:26

General Information:

Paul begins to quote the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote.

He said, 'Go to this people and say, "Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know."

This is the end of the sentence that begins with the words "The Holy Spirit spoke" in verse 25 and that contains quotations within quotations. You can translate one of the inner quotations as an indirect

quotation, or you can translate two of the inner quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "The Spirit told Isaiah to go tell them that they will hear but will not understand and they will see but they will not know"

Hearing you will hear ... seeing, you will see

The words "hear" and "see" are repeated for emphasis. "You will listen carefully ... you will look intently"

but you will never understand ... but you will never know

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Jewish people will not understand God's plan.

Acts 28:27

General Information:

Translate Paul's quotation of Isaiah as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation according to how you translated it in [Acts 28:25-26](#).

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes quoting Isaiah the prophet.

For the heart of this people has become dull

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if their heart is dull. Here "heart" is a metonym for the mind.

with their ears they hardly hear, and they have shut their eyes

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if they are unable to hear and are shutting their eyes so that they will not see.

understand with their heart

Here "heart" stands for the mind.

turn again

To start obeying God is spoken of as though the person were physically turning toward God.

I would heal them

This does not mean God would only heal them physically. He would also heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

Acts 28:28

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles

God's message about how he saves people is spoken of as if it were an object that is sent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is sending his messengers to the Gentiles to tell them about how he will save them"

they will listen

"some of them will listen." This response of the Gentiles is in contrast to the way the Jews of that time responded.

Acts 28:29

General Information:

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Acts 28:30

General Information:

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Acts 28:31

Connecting Statement:

Luke ends the story of Paul in the book of Acts.

He was proclaiming the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "He was preaching about God's rule as king" or "He was preaching about how God will show himself as king"