

Language: English

Book: Isaiah

Isaiah

Chapter 1

¹ The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

² Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth;
for Yahweh has spoken:
"I have nourished and brought up children,
but they have rebelled against me.
³ The ox knows his owner,
and the donkey his master's feeding trough,
but Israel does not know,
Israel does not understand."

⁴ Woe! Nation, sinners,
a people weighed down with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who act corruptly!
They have abandoned Yahweh,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they have estranged themselves from him.

⁵ Why are you still being beaten?
Why do you rebel more and more?
The whole head is sick,
the whole heart is weak.

⁶ From the sole of the foot to the head
there is no health;
only wounds, and bruises,
and fresh open wounds;
they have not been closed, cleansed, bandaged,
nor treated with oil.

⁷ Your country is ruined;
your cities are burned;
your fields—in your presence,
strangers are destroying them—
abandoned devastation, overthrown by strangers.

⁸ The daughter of Zion is left
like a hut in a vineyard,
like a shed in a garden of cucumbers,
like a besieged city.

⁹ If Yahweh of hosts had not left for us a few survivors,
we would have been like Sodom,
we would have been like Gomorrah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of Yahweh,
you rulers of Sodom;
listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah:

¹¹ "What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?"
says Yahweh.

- "I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams,
and the fat of fatted beasts;
and in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats
I do not delight.
- 12 When you come to appear before me,
who has required this of you, to trample my courts?
- 13 Bring no more meaningless offerings;
incense is an abomination to me;
your new moon and Sabbath assemblies—
I cannot tolerate these wicked assemblies.
- 14 I hate your new moons and your appointed feasts;
they are a burden to me; I am tired of enduring them.
- 15 So when you spread out your hands in prayer,
I hide my eyes from you;
even though you offer many prayers, I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
- 16 Wash, cleanse yourselves;
remove the evil of your deeds from my sight;
stop being evil;
- 17 learn to do good;
seek justice, make straight the oppression, ^[1]
give justice to the fatherless,
defend the widow."
- 18 "Come now, and let us reason together,"
says Yahweh;
"though your sins are like scarlet,
they will be white like snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they will be like wool.
- 19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good of the land,
- 20 but if you refuse and rebel,
the sword will devour you,"
for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it.
- 21 How the faithful city
has become a prostitute!
She who was full of justice—
she was full of righteousness,
but now she is full of murderers.
- 22 Your silver has become impure,
your wine mixed with water.
- 23 Your princes are rebels
and companions of thieves;
everyone loves bribes
and runs after payoffs.
They do not defend the fatherless,
nor does the widow's legal plea come before them.
- 24 Therefore this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts,
the Mighty One of Israel:
"Woe to them! I will comfort myself concerning my adversaries
and avenge myself against my enemies;
- 25 I will turn my hand against you,
refine away your dross as with lye,
and take away all your dross.
- 26 I will restore your judges as at the first,
and your counselors as at the beginning;
after that you will be called
the city of righteousness,

a faithful town."

- 27 Zion will be redeemed by justice,
and her repentant ones by righteousness.
- 28 Rebels and sinners will be crushed together,
and those who abandon Yahweh will be done away with.
- 29 "For you will be ashamed of the sacred oak trees
that you desired,
and you will be embarrassed by the gardens
that you have chosen.
- 30 For you will be like an oak whose leaf withers,
and like a garden that has no water.
- 31 The strong man will be like tinder,
and his work like a spark;
they will both burn together,
and no one will quench them."

Footnotes

1:17 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:2-31, which is a vision Isaiah receives. These are the words of Yahweh.

Special concepts in this chapter

Woe

The prophecy of this chapter serves as a warning to the people of the kingdom of Judah. If they do not change their evil ways, Yahweh will punish them. (See: woe and prophet and evil)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

There are many vivid metaphors used to describe Judah's sin. Their sin is described as a sickness that spreads. (See: and sin)

Rhetorical Questions

Yahweh uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. The purpose of these questions is to convince the people of Judah of their sin.

Isaiah 1:1

The vision of Isaiah ... that he saw

"This is the vision of Isaiah ... that Yahweh showed him" or "This is what God showed Isaiah"

Amoz

Amoz was the father of Isaiah.

Judah and Jerusalem

"Judah" refers to the southern kingdom of Israel.
"Jerusalem" was its most important city. The names

of the places represent the people who live in them.
Alternate translation: "those living in Judah and Jerusalem" or "the people of Judah and Jerusalem"

in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah

This is an idiom and refers to the time when each king reigned. They reigned one after the other, not all at the same time. Alternate translation: "when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings of Judah"

Isaiah 1:2

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Hear, heavens, and give ear, earth

Although these prophecies were meant for the people of Jerusalem and Judah to hear, Isaiah knows they will not listen. Possible meanings are 1) he speaks in apostrophe, as though the "heavens" and "earth" would be able to listen to what Yahweh said, or 2) the words "heavens" and "earth" are metonyms and a merism for all living beings everywhere. Alternate translation: "you who live in the heavens ... you who live on the earth"

Yahweh

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

I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me

Words that Yahweh spoke and which Isaiah is speaking to the Israelites for Yahweh.

I have nourished and brought up children

Yahweh speaks as if his words were food and as if the Israelites were his children. Alternate translation: "I have taken care of the people living in Judah like they were my children"

Isaiah 1:3

The ox knows ... does not understand

Words that Yahweh spoke and which Isaiah is speaking to the Israelites for Yahweh.

the donkey his master's feeding trough

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "the donkey knows his master's feeding trough" or "the donkey knows where his master gives him food"

but Israel does not know, Israel does not understand

This probably means "but the people of Israel do not know me, they do not understand that I am the one who cares for them."

Israel

This is a metonym for the people of Israel. Judah is part of what had been the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel"

Isaiah 1:4

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Nation, sinners

Possible meanings are 1) Isaiah is saying two different things about them. Alternate translation: "Nation of Israel, you sinners" or 2) he is saying only one thing about them. Alternate translation: "Nation of sinners"

a people weighed down with iniquity

Something very heavy that a person might carry is a metaphor for their many sins. Alternate translation: "their sin is like a heavy bag on their shoulders that makes it hard for them to walk"

offspring of evildoers

The word "offspring" is a metaphor for people who do what others have done. Alternate translation: "people who do the same evil they see others doing"

act corruptly

do evil deeds

They have abandoned Yahweh

"They have gone away from Yahweh"

have despised

"have refused to obey" or "have refused to respect"

Israel

Judah is part of what had been the nation of Israel.

they have estranged themselves from him

Though at one time they were friends, they now treat him as though they do not know him.

Isaiah 1:5

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Why are you still being beaten? Why do you rebel more and more?

Isaiah uses these questions to scold the people of Judah. The questions can be translated as statements. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You keep doing things that Yahweh has to punish you for. You continue to rebel against him."

you

Here the word "you" refers to the people who live in Judah and so is plural.

The whole head is sick, the whole heart is weak

This metaphor compares the nation of Israel to a person who has been beaten. Alternate translation: "You are like someone whose head is wounded and whose heart is weak" or "You are like someone whose whole mind and heart are sick"

Isaiah 1:6

there is no health

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "there is disease"

they have not been closed, cleansed, bandaged, nor treated with oil

This metaphor compares the punishment God has given Israel to physical wounds. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one has closed, cleansed, bandaged, or treated them with oil"

Isaiah 1:7

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Your country is ruined

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They have ruined your country" or "Your enemies have ruined your country"

your cities are burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they have burned your cities"

your fields—in your presence, strangers are destroying them

"people who are not from your own country steal the crops from your fields while you watch"

abandoned devastation

"empty and devastated." This abstract noun phrase can be expressed as verb phrases. Alternate translation: "they have destroyed the land and no one lives there"

overthrown by strangers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "strangers have overthrown your country" or "a foreign army has completely conquered it"

Isaiah 1:8

The daughter of Zion is left

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have left the daughter of Zion"

The daughter of Zion

The "daughter" of a city means the people of the city. Alternate translation: "The people of Zion" or "The people who live in Zion"

is left like a hut in a vineyard, like a shed in a garden of cucumbers

Possible meanings are 1) "has become as small as a hut in a vineyard or a shed in a garden of cucumbers" or 2) "is left the way a farmer leaves a

hut in a vineyard or a shed in a garden of cucumbers when he is finished with them"

like ... cucumbers, like a besieged city

Another possible meaning is "like ... cucumbers. She is a besieged city"

Isaiah 1:9

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

If Yahweh of hosts had not left for us a few survivors

This describes something that could have happened in the past but did not. Yahweh actually did leave a few survivors.

us ... we

Here these words refer to Isaiah and includes all the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

we would have been like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah

How Judah would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God would have destroyed us, like he destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"

Isaiah 1:10

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

listen to the instruction of our God

"listen and let our God rebuke you." The word "instruction" here probably includes the idea of rebuke.

you rulers of Sodom ... you people of Gomorrah

Isaiah is comparing the people of Judah to Sodom and Gomorrah to emphasize how sinful they have become. Alternate translation: "you rulers who are as sinful as the people of Sodom ... you people who are as wicked as those who lived in Gomorrah"

Isaiah 1:11

What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?

God is using a question to scold the people. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Your many sacrifices mean nothing to me!"

Isaiah 1:12

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

who has required this of you, to trample my courts?

The word "trample" means to step on and crush with one's feet. God is using a question to scold the

people who live in Judah. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "no one told you to stomp around in my courtyards!"

Isaiah 1:13

Bring no more meaningless offerings

"Do not bring me any more of your worthless gifts"

incense is an abomination to me

Here the abstract noun "abomination" can be expressed as the verb "hate." Alternate translation: "I hate the incense the priests burn"

I cannot tolerate these wicked assemblies

Possible meanings are 1) "I cannot allow you to gather together because of the wicked things you do" or 2) "I cannot allow myself to watch you gather together because of the wicked things you do."

Isaiah 1:14

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

your new moons and your appointed feasts

The words "new moons" are a metonym for the celebrations of the new moon. They are also a synecdoche for all regular celebrations. Alternate translation: "your celebrations of the new moon and your other regular feasts"

new moons

A new moon is when the moon first shows light after having been dark.

they are a burden to me; I am tired of enduring them

This compares how God feels about the people's celebrations to carrying a heavy object. Alternate translation: "they are a heavy load that I am tired of carrying"

Isaiah 1:15

I hide my eyes from you

This idiom is a way of saying "I will not look at you" or "I will not pay attention to you"

your hands are full of blood

This is the reason that God will not listen to their prayers. The blood likely refers to violence that they have done against people. Alternate translation: "because it is like your hands are covered with the blood of those you have harmed" or "because you are guilty of violence"

Isaiah 1:16

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Wash, cleanse yourselves

Here God compares a person who stops sinning with one who washes his body. Alternate translation: "Repent and wash the sin from your heart like you wash the dirt from your body"

remove the evil of your deeds from my sight

God was not telling them to do their evil deeds somewhere else, but to stop doing them. Alternate translation: "stop doing the evil deeds that I see you doing"

Isaiah 1:17

make straight the oppression

"correct oppression". Correcting someone's behavior is spoken of as making it straight. In this case it would mean to stop people from oppressing others. Alternate translations: "rebuke oppressors" or "help those who are oppressed"

give justice to the fatherless

"be fair to the children who do not have fathers"

defend the widow

"protect the women whose husbands have died"

Isaiah 1:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Judah.

Come now, and let

Yahweh graciously and lovingly invites the people to listen to what he is about to say. "Please listen to me. Let" or "Pay attention; I want to help you. Let"

let us reason together

"let us think about this together" or "we need to discuss this" or "what are we going to do?" Yahweh invites the people to discuss the future. Here the word "us" refers to Yahweh and includes the people of Judah.

though your sins are like scarlet, they will be white like snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool

Isaiah is speaking of the people as if they were wearing clothes that were supposed to be white wool and of their sins as if they were red stains on the clothes. If Yahweh forgives their sins, it will be as if their clothes become white again.

like scarlet

Scarlet is a bright red color. Alternate translation: "bright red"

white like snow

White is often a symbol for holiness or purity. "Snow" refers to something like frozen rain that is very white. Since this simply describes something as very white, you could replace it with something

else that is white: "white as a seashell" or "white as a dove." This means that their sins will be forgiven.

red like crimson

Crimson is a dark red color. Alternate translation: "dark red"

like wool

Wool is the hair of a sheep or goat. How they will be like wool can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "white like wool"

Isaiah 1:19

General Information:

God continues to speak to the people of Judah.

If you are willing and obedient

Here, "willing" and "obedient" are used together to express one idea. Alternate translation: "If you willingly obey"

you will eat the good of the land

"the land will produce good food for you to eat"

Isaiah 1:20

but if you refuse and rebel

"but if you refuse to listen and instead disobey me"

the sword will devour you

The word "sword" refers to Judah's enemies. Also, the word "devour" compares Judah's enemies coming to kill them to a wild animal that attacks and eats other animals. Alternate translation: "your enemies will kill you"

the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it

The word "mouth" emphasizes that Yahweh has spoken and what he says will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has spoken" or "Yahweh has said that this will happen"

Isaiah 1:21

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

How the faithful city

This exclamation shows Isaiah's anger and sadness about the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "See how the people of Jerusalem, who had been faithful to God"

has become a prostitute

Isaiah compared the people to a woman who is not loyal to her husband but who sleeps with other men for money. The people were no longer loyal to God but were worshiping false gods. Alternate translation: "acts like a prostitute"

but now she is full of murderers

The word "she" refers to Jerusalem and its people. Those who wrote the Bible often refer to cities as women. Alternate translation: "but now the people of Jerusalem are murderers"

Isaiah 1:22

Your silver has become impure, your wine mixed with water

Possible meanings are that Isaiah uses silver and wine as metaphors for 1) the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "You are like silver that is no longer pure, and like wine that is mixed with water" or 2) the good deeds that the people formerly did. Alternate translation: "You used to do good deeds, but now your bad deeds make your good deeds worthless"

silver ... impure

Someone needs to clean silver often or it will no longer shine brightly.

wine ... water

Wine with water in it has little taste and so is no better than water.

Isaiah 1:23

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Your princes are rebels

"Your leaders rebel against God"

companions of thieves

"they are friends with people who steal from others"

bribes ... payoffs

People give "bribes" as gifts to dishonest rulers so the rulers will then act unjustly. Rulers receive "payoffs" as gifts from those who make profits from unjust laws that the ruler has passed.

runs after payoffs

A person eagerly desiring for someone to give him a bribe is spoken of as if the payoff were running away and the person were running after it. Alternate translation: "everyone desires for someone to pay money to them to make dishonest decisions"

They do not defend the fatherless

"they do not protect those who do not have fathers"

nor does the widow's legal plea come before them

"nor do they listen when widows go to them for help against those who break the law" or "and they do not help widows who go to them for help against those who break the law"

Isaiah 1:24

General Information:

Isaiah begins to speak Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Therefore

"For that reason"

this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what the Lord Yahweh of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, the Mighty One of Israel, have declared"

I will comfort myself concerning my adversaries

Yahweh will comfort himself by taking just vengeance on his adversaries.

I will ... avenge myself against my enemies

"I will justly punish my enemies"

Isaiah 1:25

I will turn my hand against you

Here "hand" refers to God's power which he would use to punish his people. Alternate translation: "I will begin to use all my power against you"

refine away your dross as with lye

Here the process in which God removes his people's sin is spoken of as if he were separating metal from the bad things mixed with it. The words "as with lye" adds another metaphor, because lye is used in soap, not in refining metal. Alternate translation: "and like fire removing the dirt from silver, I will remove all the evil from among you"

dross

This is the dirt and other things that people remove from metals so the metal will be pure.

Isaiah 1:26

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

at the first ... at the beginning

These are two ways of speaking of the first part or beginning of Israel's history, when Israel first became a nation.

you will be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will call you"

the city of righteousness, a faithful town

Here "city" and "town" refer to the people living in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the city where the people are righteous and loyal to God"

Isaiah 1:27

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Zion will be redeemed by justice, and her repentant ones by righteousness

This can be stated in active form. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Possible meanings are 1) "Yahweh will redeem Zion because the people there do what is just, and he will redeem those who repent because they do what Yahweh says is right" or 2) "Yahweh will redeem Zion because he is just, and he will redeem those who repent because he is righteous"

Zion

This is a metonym for the people who live on Mount Zion.

Isaiah 1:28

Rebels and sinners will be crushed together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will destroy those who rebel and sin against him"

those who abandon Yahweh will be done away with

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and Yahweh will completely do away with those who turn away from him" or "and Yahweh will kill all who reject him"

Isaiah 1:29

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

the sacred oak trees ... gardens

These phrases refer to places where the people of Judah worshiped idols.

you will be embarrassed by

Some modern translations read, "you will blush because of." A person blushes when his face turns hot and red, often because he feels that he has done something wrong.

Isaiah 1:30

For you will be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden that has no water

Water gives life to trees and gardens. The people have cut themselves off from Yahweh, who gives them life.

Isaiah 1:31

General Information:

Isaiah speaks Yahweh's words to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

The strong man

"The strong person" or "Whoever is powerful." This may refer to people who are important and who influence other people.

tinder

dry material that burns easily

his work like a spark

This compares the person's deeds or evil works to a spark that falls on tinder and sets it on fire.

Alternate translation: "his work will be like a spark that starts a fire"

Chapter 2

¹ The things that Isaiah son of Amoz saw in a vision, concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² It will be in the last days
that the mountain of the house of Yahweh
will be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it will be raised up above the hills,
and all the nations will flow to it.

³ Many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
so he may teach us some of his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion will go the law,
and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

⁴ He will judge between the nations
and will render decisions for many peoples;
they will hammer their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation will not lift up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war any longer.

⁵ House of Jacob, come,
and let us walk in the light of Yahweh.

⁶ For you have abandoned your people,
the house of Jacob,
because they are filled with customs from the east
and they practice divination like the Philistines,
and they shake hands with sons of foreigners.

⁷ Their land is full of silver and gold,
and there is no limit to their wealth;
their land also is full of horses,
nor is there limit to their chariots.

⁸ Their land also is full of idols;
they worship the craftsmanship of their own hands,
things that their own fingers have made.

⁹ People bow down,
and men abase themselves.
So do not raise them up.

¹⁰ Go into the rocky places and hide in the ground
from the terror of Yahweh
and from the glory of his majesty.

¹¹ The lofty gaze of man will be abased,
and the haughtiness of men will be brought down,
and Yahweh alone will be exalted on that day.

¹² For there will be a day of Yahweh of hosts
against everyone who is proud and raised up,
and against everyone who is arrogant—
and he will be abased—

¹³ and against all the cedars of Lebanon
that are high and lifted up,
and against all the oaks of Bashan.

¹⁴ That day of Yahweh of hosts
will be against all the high mountains,
and against all the hills that are lifted up,

¹⁵ and against every high tower,

- and against every impregnable wall,
16 and against all the ships of Tarshish,
 and against all delightful sailing vessels.
17 The pride of man will be brought down,
 and the haughtiness of men will be abased;
 Yahweh alone will be exalted on that day.
18 The idols will completely pass away.

19 Men will go into the caves of the rocks
 and the holes of the ground,
 from the terror of Yahweh,
 and from the glory of his majesty,
 when he rises to terrify the earth.
20 On that day people will throw away
 their idols of silver and of gold
 that they have made for themselves to worship—
 they will throw them away to the moles and bats.
21 The people will go into the crevices in the rocks
 and into the clefts of the ragged rocks,
 from the terror of Yahweh
 and from the glory of his majesty,
 when he rises to terrify the earth.

22 Stop trusting in man,
 whose life-breath is in his nostrils,
 for what does he amount to?

Isaiah 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:2-22.

Special concepts in this chapter

Latter days

This is probably a reference to the "last days." This makes parts of this prophecy reference events near the end of this world. Most scholars expect these prophecies to be fulfilled by Jesus. (See: lastday and prophet and fulfill)

Idolatry

While the first prophecy of Isaiah concerned the lack of justice in Judah, this chapter focuses on the presence of idolatry in Judah. (See: justice)

Isaiah 2:1

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

Judah and Jerusalem

"Judah" and "Jerusalem" are metonyms for the people who live there. Alternate translation: "those living in Judah and Jerusalem"

Isaiah 2:2

in the last days

"in the future"

the mountain of the house of Yahweh

This can be stated 1) as a description. Alternate translation: "The mountain of Yahweh's house will stand" or 2) in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will establish the mountain on which his temple is built"

as the highest of the mountains

Isaiah speaks of importance as if it were physical height. Alternate translation: "the most important"

of the mountains" or "the most important place in the world"

it will be raised up above the hills

Isaiah speaks of honor in metaphor as if it were physical height. This can be stated 1) in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will honor it more than any other hill" or 2) as a metonym for the people who worship there. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will honor the people who worship there more than he honors any other people"

all the nations

Here "nations" is a metonym for the people of those nations. Alternate translation: "people from all the nations"

will flow to it

The people around the world going to the mountain of Yahweh is compared to how a river flows. This emphasizes that many people will come, not just a few people. Alternate translation: "will flow like a river to it" or "will go to it"

Isaiah 2:3

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

to the house of the God of Jacob

The words "let us go up" are understood from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob"

Jacob, so he may teach ... and we may walk

Another possible meaning is "Jacob. He will teach ... and we will walk"

he may teach us some of his ways, and we may walk in his paths

The words "ways" and "paths" are metaphors for the way a person lives. If your language has only one word for the ground on which people walk, you may combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "he may teach us his will so that we may obey him"

For out of Zion will go the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem

These phrases mean the same thing. Isaiah was emphasizing that all nations will understand that the truth is found in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "People in Zion will teach God's law, and people in Jerusalem will teach the word of Yahweh"

For out of Zion will go the law

"For the law will go out from Zion." Isaiah speaks as if the law were something like a river that moves without people doing anything. Alternate translation: "Those to whom they teach the law will go out from Zion" or "Yahweh will proclaim his law from Zion"

the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem

"the word of Yahweh will go out from Jerusalem." Isaiah speaks as if the word of Yahweh were something like a river that moves without people doing anything. You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "Those to whom they teach the word of Yahweh will go out from Jerusalem" or "Yahweh will proclaim his word from Jerusalem"

Isaiah 2:4

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

He will judge

"Yahweh will judge"

will render decisions

"will solve disputes"

they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks

The people of the nations will turn their weapons of war into tools for farming.

they will hammer

"they will use hammers to shape"

swords ... spears ... sword

These words are synecdoches for weapons of any kind.

plowshares ... pruning hooks

These words are synecdoches for tools of any kind that people use in peaceful activity.

they will hammer their swords into plowshares

"they will make their swords into tools for planting seeds." A plowshare is a blade that people use to dig into soil so they can plant seeds there.

their spears into pruning hooks

"they will hammer their spears into pruning hooks" or "they will make their spears into tools for caring for plants." A pruning hook is a knife that people use to cut unwanted branches off of plants.

nation will not lift up sword against nation

"no nation will lift up its sword against another nation." The sword is a metonym for war. Alternate translation: "one nation will not fight wars against another nation"

nor will they train for war

"nor will they even train to fight wars." The writer expects his reader to believe that those who fight wars train before they fight and that some who train do not fight.

Isaiah 2:5

General Information:

In 2:5 Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah, and in 2:6 he speaks to Yahweh. Both times he speaks in the form of a poem.

House of Jacob

"You descendants of Jacob." The word "house" is a metonym for the people who live in the house, the family. Here "Jacob" represents the nation of Judah, but it would be best to use "Jacob" here.

come

a gentle encouragement to do what the speaker is about to tell the hearer to do

let us walk in the light of Yahweh

Isaiah speaks of people learning and then doing what Yahweh wants them to do as if they were walking at night with a lamp that Yahweh has provided so they can see the path. Alternate translation: "let us learn how Yahweh wants us to live and then live that way"

Isaiah 2:6

For you have abandoned your people

"For you have left your people" and do not care what happens to them. Here the word "you" refers to Yahweh and so is singular.

they are filled with customs from the east

Isaiah speaks as if the people were containers who were full of something from the east. Possible meanings are that he speaks of 1) the deeds that the eastern peoples do. Alternate translation: "they do all the time the evil things the people who live in lands east of Israel do" or 2) people, specifically those who claim to speak to dead people, who have come from the east to do evil deeds. Alternate translation: "many diviners have come from the east and now live there"

they practice divination

they try to tell the future by looking at things like animal parts and leaves

they shake hands with sons of foreigners

Clasping hands together is the symbol of friendship and peace. Alternate translation: "they make peace and work together with people who are not from Israel"

Isaiah 2:7

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to Yahweh in the form of a poem.

Their land is full of silver and gold ... their land also is full of horses

Isaiah speaks as if the land were a container in which someone had placed silver, horses, and idols.

The word "land" is a metonym for the people themselves, and the words "is full of" is a metaphor for the people possessing these items. Alternate translation: "They possess much silver and gold ... they also possess many horses"

Isaiah 2:8

Their land also is full of idols

Isaiah speaks as if the land were a container in which someone had placed silver, horses, and idols. The word "land" is a metonym for the people themselves, and the words "is full of" is a metaphor for the people possessing these items. Alternate translation: "They also possess many idols"

the craftsmanship of their own hands, things that their own fingers have made

These two phrases mean almost the same thing and emphasize that these are not real gods. If your language has no general word for something someone has made, you can combine these two phrases into one. Alternate translation: "things that they themselves have made"

craftsmanship of their own hands

The word "hands" is a synecdoche for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "their own craftsmanship" or "their own work" or "things they have made with their hands"

things that their own fingers have made

The word "fingers" is a synecdoche for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "things that they have made with their own fingers"

Isaiah 2:9

General Information:

In 2:9 Isaiah finishes speaking to Yahweh. In 2:10-11 Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah. Both times he speaks in the form of a poem.

People bow down, and men abase themselves

Possible meanings are 1) this continues the thought of [Isaiah 9:8]

People

human beings, as opposed to animals

men

"each person"

do not raise them up

The words "raise them up" are a metaphor for Yahweh forgiving the people. Alternate translation: "do not forgive them"

Isaiah 2:10

Go into the rocky places

Possible meanings are the people should go into 1) caves on steep hillsides or 2) places where there are many large rocks among which to hide.

hide in the ground

Possible meanings are that the people should hide 1) in natural holes in the ground or 2) in pits that they dig in the ground.

from the terror of Yahweh

Here the abstract noun "terror" can be expressed by the verb "terrifying." Alternate translation: "to get away from Yahweh's terrifying presence" or "from Yahweh because you will be extremely afraid of him"

the glory of his majesty

"the great beauty and power he has as king" or "his royal splendor." See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:10.

Isaiah 2:11

The lofty gaze of man will be abased

"Yahweh will abase the lofty gaze of man." A man with a "lofty gaze" is looking above everyone to show them that he is better than they are. Here all people are guilty of thinking they are better than Yahweh, and the way they look at those who worship Yahweh, is a metonym for their pride. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will make ashamed all people because they think they are better than he is"

abased

See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:9.

the haughtiness of men will be brought down

The phrase "the haughtiness of men" here is a metonym for haughty people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will abase haughty men"

Yahweh alone will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will praise only Yahweh"

on that day

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "on the day that Yahweh judges everyone"

Isaiah 2:12

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem.

who is proud and raised up

One who is "raised up" is proud and considers himself better than other people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who is proud and who raises himself above other people" or "who is proud and thinks that he is better than other people"

who is proud ... who is arrogant

Someone who is arrogant speaks and acts as if he is better than other people. These two phrases have similar meanings and are used together to emphasize that Yahweh will punish them.

he will be abased

"every proud person will be abased." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will abase him"

abased

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 2:9.

Isaiah 2:13

against all the cedars of Lebanon ... against all the oaks of Bashan

The "day of Yahweh of Hosts" will be against the cedars and oaks. Possible meanings are 1) these trees are a metaphor for the proud people whom God will judge or 2) God will actually destroy these mighty trees.

Isaiah 2:14

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem. He continues to describe what will happen on the day of Yahweh of Hosts

against

In 2:14-16 Isaiah lists things that God will destroy. Possible meanings are 1) these refer to prideful people that God will humble or 2) God will actually destroy all these things in the list.

mountains ... hills

These words are metaphors for the pride of the Israelites. They also appear in [Isaiah 2:2]

that are lifted up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "that are very high"

Isaiah 2:15

high tower ... impregnable wall

These refer to things people would build around their cities so they could defend themselves against their enemies. They are a metaphor for the Israelites' pride and belief that they had no need for Yahweh and could stand against any punishment Yahweh would mete out to them for their sins.

impregnable wall

"wall that nothing can break down or go through"

Isaiah 2:16

ships of Tarshish ... delightful sailing vessels

These refer to large boats that people used to travel far on the sea and bring back goods to the cities.

ships of Tarshish

"ships on which they go to Tarshish"

delightful

"beautiful" or "desirable"

Isaiah 2:17

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem. He continues to describe what will happen on the day of Yahweh of Hosts

The pride of man will be brought down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He will bring down every proud man" or "He will humiliate every proud man"

brought down ... abased

See how you translated these words in Isaiah 2:11.

the haughtiness of men will be abased

The abstract noun "haughtiness" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those people who are haughty will stop being haughty"

Yahweh alone will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:11. Alternate translation: "people will praise only Yahweh"

Isaiah 2:18

The idols will completely pass away

"All idols will disappear" or "There will be no more idols"

Isaiah 2:19

Men will go ... from the terror

The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Men will go ... to hide from the terror"

the caves of the rocks

"the caves in the rocks." These are large rocks, not small stones that can be held in the hand.

from the terror of Yahweh, and from the glory of his majesty

See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:10.

from the terror of Yahweh

because they are very afraid of Yahweh

the glory of his majesty

Here the word "glory" describes "majesty." Alternate translation: "the beauty he has as king"

when he rises to terrify the earth

"when Yahweh takes action and causes the people of the earth to be terribly afraid of him"

Isaiah 2:20

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah in the form of a poem. He continues to describe what will happen on the day of Yahweh of Hosts

to the moles and bats

Moles are small animals that dig and live underground. Bats are small flying animals that sometimes live in caves. Alternate translation: "to the animals"

Isaiah 2:21

the crevices in the rocks ... the clefts of the ragged rocks

If your language does not have two different words for "crevice" and "cleft," the space that appears between the two parts of a rock when it splits, you can combine these two phrases into one.

from the terror of Yahweh

because they are very afraid of Yahweh. See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:19.

the glory of his majesty

"the great beauty and power he has as king" or "his royal majesty." See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:10.

when he rises to terrify the earth

"when Yahweh takes action and causes the people of the earth to be terribly afraid of him." See how you translated this in Isaiah 2:19.

Isaiah 2:22

whose life-breath is in his nostrils

This describes how man is human and weak by emphasizing that he needs to breathe to live. Alternate translation: "who is weak and will die" or "who needs the breath in his nose to live"

nostrils

the holes in the nose through which people breathe

for what does he amount to?

Isaiah uses a question to remind the people of something they should already know. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "for man amounts to nothing!" or "for man is not worth anything!"

Chapter 3

- ¹ See, the Lord Yahweh of hosts
is about to take away from Jerusalem and from Judah
support and staff:
the whole supply of bread
and the whole supply of water;
- ² the mighty man and the warrior,
the judge and the prophet,
the one who practices divination and the elder;
- ³ the captain of fifty
and the respected citizen,
the counselor, the expert craftsman
and the skillful enchanter.
- ⁴ "I will place mere youths as their leaders,
and the young will rule over them.
- ⁵ The people will be oppressed,
every one by another,
and every one by his neighbor;
the child will act arrogantly toward the elderly,
and the degraded will challenge the honorable.
- ⁶ A man will even take hold of his brother
in his father's house and say,
'You have a coat; be our ruler,
and let this ruin be in your hands.'
- ⁷ On that day he will shout and say,
'I will not be a healer;
I have no bread or clothing.
You will not make me ruler of the people.'"
- ⁸ For Jerusalem has stumbled,
and Judah has fallen,
because their speech and their actions are against Yahweh,
rebelling against the eyes of his glory.
- ⁹ The look on their faces witnesses against them;
and they tell of their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.
Woe to them!
For they have completed a catastrophe for themselves.
- ¹⁰ Tell the righteous person that it will be well,
for they will eat the fruit of their deeds.
- ¹¹ Woe to the wicked! It will go badly for him,
for what his hands have earned will be done to him.
- ¹² My people—children are their oppressors,
and women rule over them.
My people, those who guide you lead you astray
and confuse the direction of your path.
- ¹³ Yahweh stands up for an accusation;
he is standing to accuse the people.
- ¹⁴ Yahweh will come with judgment
against the elders of his people and their leaders:
"You have ruined the vineyard;
the plunder from the poor is in your houses.
- ¹⁵ Why do you crush my people
and grind the faces of the poor?"

This is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts.

16 Yahweh says that because the daughters of Zion are proud,
they walk with their necks extended,
with flirting eyes, walking with tiny steps as they go,
making tinkling sounds from bracelets on their ankles.

17 Therefore the Lord will form scabs
on the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and Yahweh will make them bald.

18 On that day the Lord will remove their beautiful ankle jewelry, head bands, the crescent ornaments, **19**
the ear pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; **20** the headscarves, the ankle chains, the sashes, and the
perfume boxes, and the amulets.

21 He will remove the rings and the nose jewels; **22** the festive robes, the mantles, the veils, and the
handbags; **23** the hand mirrors, the fine linen, the head pieces, and the wraps.

24 Instead of sweet perfume there will be stench;
and instead of a belt, a rope;
instead of well-arranged hair, baldness;
and instead of a robe, a covering of sackcloth;
and branding instead of beauty.

25 Your men will fall by the sword,
and your strong men will fall in war.

26 Jerusalem's gates will lament and mourn;
and she will be alone and sit upon the ground.

Isaiah 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the material in the previous chapter. Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:1-26, which is a vision Isaiah receives. These are the words of Yahweh.

Judgment

This chapter is structured as a judgment against the Jews. God is acting as a judge reading the list of convictions against them and then he reads the judgment. (See: judge)

Special concepts in this chapter

Exile

While the previous part of the prophecy in chapter 2 discussed the last days, this part of the prophecy predicts the exile of Judah to Babylon. (See: prophet and lastday)

Isaiah 3:1

See

The word "see" here adds emphasis to what follows. It can also be translated as "Listen" or "Indeed."

support and staff

Both of these words refer to a walking stick, on which someone leans for support. This idea here stands for the things that people need the most in order to live: food and water. Alternate translation: "everything that supports you" or "everything that you depend on"

Isaiah 3:2

the mighty man ... the warrior ... the judge ... the prophet ... the one who practices divination ... the elder
This is a list of categories of people that others depend on. Since they do not refer to particular individuals, they can all be translated with plural nouns as in the UDB. Alternate translation: "the mighty men ... the warriors ... the judges ... the prophets ... the ones who practices divination ... the elders"

the one who practices divination

This is a person who claims that he can tell the future by looking at things like animal parts and

leaves. See how you translated similar words in Isaiah 2:6.

Isaiah 3:3

the captain of fifty ... the respected citizen ... the counselor ... the expert craftsman ... the skillful enchanter

This is a list of categories of people that others depend on. Since they do not refer to particular individuals, they can all be translated with plural nouns as in the UDB. Alternate translation: "the captains of fifty ... the respected citizens ... the counselors ... the expert craftsmen ... the skillful enchanters"

the captain of fifty

Possible meanings are 1) the word "fifty" represents the exact amount of soldiers that the captain led. Alternate translation: "the captains of 50 soldiers" or 2) the word translated as "fifty" does not represent an exact number, but is the name of a small military unit. Alternate translation: "the captain of a small military unit"

fifty
"50"

Isaiah 3:4

I will place mere youths as their leaders, and the young will rule over them

These phrases mean basically the same thing. Possible meanings are 1) "I will place young people as their leaders, and those young people will rule over them" or 2) "youths" is a metaphor for simple and foolish men. Alternate translation: "I will place over them leaders who are immature, like young people, and those bad leaders will rule over them"

I will place

Here the word "I" refers to Yahweh. This can also be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Yahweh says, 'I will place'"

Isaiah 3:5

The people will be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone will be cruel to others and will mistreat his neighbor"

the degraded

"the people who are without honor" or "the people whom no one respects"

the honorable

"the people with honor" or "the people whom everyone respects"

Isaiah 3:6

let this ruin be in your hands

Here "hands" represents authority. Alternate translation: "take charge of this ruin" or "rule over this ruin"

this ruin

Possible meanings are 1) many or most of the buildings in the city of Jerusalem were destroyed or 2) the people in Jerusalem have no more prosperity or leadership. Alternate translation: "this city, which is now ruined"

Isaiah 3:7

I will not be a healer

Solving the people's troubles is spoken of as if it were healing them. Alternate translation: "No, I cannot fix this problem" or "No, I cannot help you"

Isaiah 3:8

Connecting Statement:

The prophet begins to comment on this situation.

Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen

Disobeying God is spoken of as if it were stumbling and falling.

the eyes of his glory

Here "the eyes" stands for God himself, who is glorious. Alternate translation: "him who is glorious" or "Yahweh, who is glorious"

Isaiah 3:9

The look on their faces witnesses against them

Expressions of arrogance on people's faces are spoken of as if the expressions were persons who could testify against the proud people. Alternate translation: "The prideful looks on their faces show that they oppose Yahweh"

they tell of their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it

Here the people of Judah are said to be like the people of Sodom, because they openly boasted about their sins. Alternate translation: "like the people of Sodom, they talk about their sins and let everyone know about them"

For they have completed a catastrophe for themselves

The catastrophe is still coming, but the people have finished doing what will cause it to come. The catastrophe's causes are spoken of here as if they were the catastrophe itself. Alternate translation: "For they have done everything that will cause a catastrophe to happen"

Isaiah 3:10

Tell the righteous person that it will be well

"Tell the one who is doing what is right that I will make things good for him"

the righteous person

This refers to righteous people in general. Alternate translation: "righteous people"

for they will eat the fruit of their deeds

Deeds are spoken of as if they were trees giving fruit that can be eaten. The fruit stands for the reward for doing good deeds. Alternate translation: "for they will receive their reward for their good deeds" or "for they will receive their reward for the good things they have done"

they will eat the fruit of their deeds

The Hebrew text has these plural pronouns here, but they refer to any righteous person. Translators can choose to translate them as singular: "he will eat the fruit of his deeds."

Isaiah 3:11

for what his hands have earned will be done to him

Here "hands" stands for the deeds that the person has done. Alternate translation: "for what the wicked person has done to others will be done to him"

Isaiah 3:12

My people ... My people

Possible meanings are 1) Isaiah is talking and "My" refers to Isaiah, or 2) Yahweh is talking and "My" refers to Yahweh.

children are their oppressors

Possible meanings are 1) "young people have become their leaders and they oppress the people" or 2) "their leaders are immature like children and oppress the people."

women rule over them

Possible meanings are 1) "women rule over the people" or 2) "their leaders are weak like women."

those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your path

It was common in the Ancient Middle East to speak of a nation's leaders as if they were shepherds. As shepherds lead the sheep along good paths to safety, leaders should teach the people the truth and help them do what is right. Judah's leaders were not doing this. Alternate translation: "your leaders are like bad shepherds who lead you away from good paths and do not show you where to go"

Isaiah 3:13

Yahweh stands up for an accusation; he is standing to accuse the people

Isaiah speaks of Yahweh's decision to harm the people as if Yahweh were bringing a legal accusation in a courtroom against the people of Israel. The second part of this line means the same thing as the first part, but it says it a little more completely. Alternate translation: "It is as though Yahweh had taken his place in a courtroom and were ready to accuse the people"

Isaiah 3:14

will come with judgment

Judgment is spoken of as if it were an object that one could bring to another person. Alternate translation: "will announce his judgment" or "will declare his judgment"

You have ruined the vineyard

Here "you" refers to the elders and rulers. Yahweh is speaking of his people as if they were a vineyard. Like someone who fails to care for a vineyard so that the vines give no more grapes, the elders and leaders are discouraging the Israelites from serving God. Alternate translation: "My people are like a vineyard, and you have ruined it"

the plunder from the poor is in your houses

"the things you have taken from the poor are in your houses"

the poor

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are poor"

Isaiah 3:15

Why do you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?

Yahweh asks this question in order to accuse the leaders of the people. This accusation can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am angry with you evil men because you are crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor!"

crush my people

Making people suffer is spoken of as if it were crushing them with a very heavy weight. Alternate translation: "cruelly harm my people"

grind the faces of the poor

Making people suffer is spoken of as if it were rubbing their faces into the ground. Alternate translation: "harm the poor and make them suffer"

This is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate

translation: "this is what the Lord Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, the Lord Yahweh of hosts, have declared"

Isaiah 3:16

the daughters of Zion

Zion, meaning here the city of Jerusalem, is spoken of as if it were a woman with her daughters.

Alternate translation: "the women of Zion"

with their necks extended

"in an arrogant way"

with flirting eyes

Looking at men in a way that makes the men think the women want sexual relations.

walking with tiny steps as they go

This is how they would walk to attract men, possibly because the bracelets on their ankles were connected by chains decorated with bells so they could not take normal steps.

Isaiah 3:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 3:18

General Information:

This continues to describe how Yahweh will judge the women of Jerusalem.

the Lord will remove

Here what the Lord causes others to do is spoken of as the Lord doing it himself. Alternate translation: "the Lord will cause others to remove"

ankle jewelry

a decoration that women wear on the ankle, just above the foot

head bands

a decoration that women wear over the head and hair

crescent ornaments

moon-shaped ornaments that people wear in the belief that they will protect the person from evil

Isaiah 3:19

ear pendants

jewelry that hangs from the ear or over the ear

bracelets

a decoration that women wear on the arm near the hands

veils

a very thin material used to cover a woman's head and face

Isaiah 3:20

headscarves

long, thin pieces of cloth that women tie around the head or hair

ankle chains

These are decorations that women wear near the feet. Often the chains hang down to make a gentle noise.

sashes

a piece of cloth that people wear around the waist or across the chest mostly for decoration

perfume boxes

a small box or bag containing perfume that women wore on chains or strings around their necks so they smelled good

amulets

ornaments or jewelry that people wear because they believe that those things will protect them from evil, danger, or sickness

Isaiah 3:21

rings

a decoration worn around the finger

nose jewels

a decoration worn in or through the nose

Isaiah 3:22

festive robes

a long, loose garment with decorations that was worn over other clothes for everyone to see

mantles

a cloth worn over the shoulders on the outside of the clothes

veils

See how you translated this in Isaiah 3:19.

handbags

a bag to used to carry small things

Isaiah 3:23

hand mirrors

a small surface, held in one's hand and used to see oneself

fine linen

a soft cloth worn by rich people

head pieces

a cloth or small hat worn over the hair

wraps

a decorative cloth that a woman would wrap around herself to make her beautiful

Isaiah 3:24

belt

This is a general word for a piece of cloth or leather that people wear around the waist. Some are for decoration, but others are to hold weapons.

a rope

This may refer to a rope that enemies would tie on the people of Judah when they captured them. Or it might mean that Jerusalem's women would have nothing to wear but rough clothing secured with ropes.

well-arranged hair, baldness

"pretty hair, their heads will be bald"

Isaiah 3:25

Your men will fall by the sword, and your strong men will fall in war

Falling represents being killed, and the sword represents battle. Alternate translation: "Your men will be killed in battle, and your strong men will be killed in war" or "Enemies will kill your soldiers in battle"

Isaiah 3:26

Jerusalem's gates will lament and mourn

Here the city gates represent the people who sit at the public places near the city gates. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem will sit at the city gates and cry and mourn"

she will be alone and sit upon the ground

Isaiah speaks of the people of Jerusalem, whom no one will save from their enemies, as if they were the city itself and as if they were a woman who sits on the ground because all her friends have deserted her.

Chapter 4

¹ On that day seven women
will take hold of one man and say,
"Our own food we will eat,
our own clothing we will wear.
But let us take your name
to remove our shame."

² On that day the branch of Yahweh will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and delight of the escaped remnant in Israel.

³ It will happen that the one who is left in Zion and the one who remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who is written down as living in Jerusalem. ⁴ This will happen when the Lord will have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and will have cleansed the blood stains from the midst of Jerusalem, by means of the spirit of judgment and the spirit of flaming fire.

⁵ Then over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her place of assembly, Yahweh will create cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; it will be a canopy over all the glory. ⁶ It will be a shelter for shade in the daytime from the heat, and a refuge and a cover from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

More women than men

This chapter describes a time when there will be many more women than men in Judah. This is because so many of Judah's fighting men will have died before the exile. Those who come through this difficult time will be a holy remnant. (See: and holy and remnant)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Branch of Yahweh

Scholars are divided over the possible meaning of this metaphor. Some believe it is a reference to the Messiah, while others believe it is a reference to the faithful remnant. (See: and christ and faithful)

Isaiah 4:1

let us take your name

This phrase means "let us marry you."

Isaiah 4:2

the branch of Yahweh will be beautiful

Possible meanings are 1) "branch" is a synecdoche that represents the crops Yahweh will cause to grow in the land of Israel. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause the crops in Israel to be beautiful" or 2) "branch" is a metaphor that refers to the Messiah.

will be beautiful and glorious

"will be full of beauty and glory"

the fruit of the land will be the pride and delight of the escaped remnant in Israel

The phrase "fruit of the land" speaks a synecdoche for all food crops that grow on the land. The words "pride" and "delight" are metonyms for what it is

that brings pride and delight. Alternate translation: "the fruit of the land will be what makes those survivors in Israel proud and what they delight in"

Isaiah 4:3

the one who is left in Zion and the one who remains in Jerusalem

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Here "the one who" does not refer to a specific person but to people in general who are still alive in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "everyone who remains in Jerusalem"

will be called holy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will call them holy" or "will belong to the Lord"

everyone who is written down as living in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone whose name is on the list of the people who live in Jerusalem"

Isaiah 4:4

when the Lord will have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion

This expression speaks of sin as if it were physical dirt. Alternate translation: "after the Lord removes the sins of the daughters of Zion as someone washes away filth"

filth

This word can refer to dung or to vomit, so you should use a general word here that can refer to either.

the daughters of Zion

Possible meanings are 1) the women of Jerusalem or 2) the people of Jerusalem.

will have cleansed the blood stains from the midst of Jerusalem

"Blood stains" here represents violence and murder. Alternate translation: "will have taken away those in Jerusalem who harm innocent people"

by means of the spirit of judgment and the spirit of flaming fire

This is how God would remove the sin from Jerusalem. Here "spirit" probably represents the activity of judging and burning. Alternate translation: "by judgment and flaming fire"

spirit of judgment

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh will punish the people or 2) Yahweh will declare the people guilty.

the spirit of flaming fire

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor that means Yahweh will remove sinners from Zion like a fire removes impurities or 2) "flaming fire" is a metonym that represents the destruction in general of all the sinners.

Isaiah 4:5

a canopy over all the glory

Possible meanings are 1) a canopy for protecting the glorious city, or 2) a canopy consisting of God's glory that will protect the city. If the first meaning is followed, then it may further mean that the city is glorious because Yahweh is present in it.

canopy

This is a cloth that is hung over something to cover it for protection.

Isaiah 4:6

General Information:

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Chapter 5

- ¹ Let me sing for my well beloved,
a song of my beloved about his vineyard.
My well beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
- ² He spaded it, removed the stones,
and planted it with an excellent kind of vine.
He built a tower in the middle of it,
and also built a winepress.
He waited for it to produce grapes,
but it only produced wild grapes.
- ³ So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
- ⁴ What more could have been done for my vineyard,
that I have not done for it?
When I looked for it to produce grapes,
why did it produce wild grapes?
- ⁵ Now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard:
I will remove the hedge,
I will turn it into a pasture,
I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled down.
- ⁶ I will lay it waste,
and it will not be pruned nor hoed.
Instead, briars and thorns will spring up.
I will also command the clouds
not to rain on it.
- ⁷ For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the man of Judah
his pleasant planting;
he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help.
- ⁸ Woe to those who join house to house,
who join field to field,
until no room remains,
and you alone remain in the land!
- ⁹ Yahweh of hosts told me,
many houses will be desolate,
even great and impressive ones,
without any inhabitant.
- ¹⁰ For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath,
and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah.
- ¹¹ Woe to those who rise up early in the morning
to obtain strong drink,
those who linger late into the night
until wine inflames them.
- ¹² They have harp and lute,
tambourine, flute, and wine at their feasts,
but they do not honor what Yahweh has done
or respect the work of his hands.
- ¹³ Therefore my people have gone into captivity
for lack of understanding;
their honored leaders are famished,

- and their common people have nothing to drink.
- 14** Therefore Sheol has made its appetite greater
and has opened its mouth very wide;
their elite, the people, their leaders, and the revelers
and those who are happy among them, descend into Sheol.
- 15** People bow low,
and men abase themselves.
the eyes of the lofty will be abased.
- 16** Yahweh of hosts will be exalted in his justice,
and God the Holy One will show himself holy by his righteousness.
- 17** Then the sheep will feed as in their own pasture,
and in the ruins, lambs will graze as foreigners. ^[1]
- 18** Woe to those who pull along iniquity with useless cords
and who pull along sin as if it were with a cart rope.
- 19** Woe to those who say, "Let God hurry,
let him work quickly, so we can see it happen;
and let the plans of the Holy One of Israel come,
so that we may know them."
- 20** Woe to those who call evil good,
and good evil;
who represent darkness as light,
and light as darkness;
who represent bitter as sweet,
and sweet as bitter!
- 21** Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and prudent in their own understanding!
- 22** Woe to those who are champions at drinking wine,
and masters at mixing strong drinks;
- 23** who acquit the wicked for a bribe,
and deprive those in the right of what is right!
- 24** Therefore as the tongue of fire devours stubble,
and as chaff goes down in flame,
so their root will rot,
and their blossom will blow away like dust.
This will happen because they have rejected
the law of Yahweh of hosts,
and because they have despised
the word of the Holy One of Israel.
- 25** Therefore the anger of Yahweh is kindled against his people.
He has reached out with his hand against them
and has punished them.
The mountains tremble,
and their corpses are like garbage in the streets.
In all these things, his anger does not subside;
his hand is still stretched out.
- 26** He will lift up a signal flag for faraway nations
and will whistle for those at the end of the earth.
Look, they will come
speedily and promptly.
- 27** None tire or stumble among them;
none slumbers or sleeps.
Nor are their belts loose,
or the thongs of their sandals broken.
- 28** Their arrows are sharp
and all their bows are bent;
their horses' hooves are like flint,

- and their chariot wheels like storms.
- 29 Their roaring will be like a lion;
they will roar like young lions.
They will growl and seize the prey
and drag it away, with none to rescue.
- 30 On that day they will roar against the prey
as the sea roars.
If anyone looks over the land,
he will see darkness and suffering;
even the light will be made dark by the clouds.
-

Footnotes

5:17 ^[1]Some modern translations have

Isaiah 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Woe

This chapter presents a series of woes, or judgments against those who are spoken against. Most of these judgments are due to the lack of justice in Judah. (See: woe and judge and justice)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Allegory

This chapter begins as an allegory. An allegory is a story with a symbolic meaning. This allegory is meant to teach the Jews that they sinned against Yahweh and that there was nothing more he could have done for them. (See: spirit and sin)

==Animals being present where people once lived== Verse 17 ("Then the sheep will feed as in their own pasture, and in the ruins of the rich people, lambs will graze") is an example of the Old Testament's prophets' habit of describing complete ruin and desolation in terms of a picture of animals—usually wild animals, but here sheep and lambs—living in or feeding in those places. Whether the picture is of flocks or wild animals, the purpose is to say that the human habitation has gone back to wild nature, and that this has happened because of God's punishment on the people.

Isaiah 5:1

General Information:

Isaiah tells a parable about a farmer and his vineyard. The farmer represents God and the vineyard represents the people of Judah, the southern kingdom of the Israelites.

my well beloved
"my dear friend"

on a very fertile hill
"on a hill where very good crops could grow"

Isaiah 5:2

He spaded it

"He prepared the soil." This expression refers to using a tool to dig into the ground to prepare it for planting.

He built a tower in the middle of it

"He made a tall building in the middle of the vineyard to watch over it." Someone would stand at the top of the tower to watch the vineyard and make sure that no animals or people went into it. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

built a winepress

"dug a pit to squeeze out the grape juice." A winepress is a low place carved out of rock in the ground where workers step on the grapes to crush them with their feet, in order to remove the grape juice.

wild grapes

"worthless grapes" or "bad tasting grapes"

Isaiah 5:3

General Information:

In Isaiah's parable of the vineyard, the owner of the vineyard, who represents God, speaks to the people of Jerusalem and Judah about his vineyard.

inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah

These expressions refer in general to all people living in Jerusalem and Judah, so they can be translated with plural nouns. Alternate translation: "all of you who live in Jerusalem and Judah"

Jerusalem ... Judah

"Judah" was the name of the southern kingdom of Israelites, and Jerusalem was the capital city.

judge between me and my vineyard

The idea of a space separating two things is often used to express the idea of choosing one or the other of those things. Alternate translation: "decide who has acted right, I or my vineyard"

Isaiah 5:4

What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it?

The owner uses this question to make a statement about his vineyard. This rhetorical questions can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have done all that I could do for my vineyard!"

When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?

The owner uses a question to say that his vineyard should have produced good grapes. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I wanted it to make good grapes, but it only produced worthless grapes"

Isaiah 5:5

General Information:

In Isaiah's parable, the owner of the vineyard continues to talk about his vineyard.

remove the hedge

"take away the border of bushes." A hedge is a row of bushes or small trees that have been planted in order to protect a garden or some other kind of area. Here "hedge" probably refers to the thorn bushes that were planted to grow on the stone wall surrounding the vineyard.

I will turn it into a pasture

"I will allow animals to go there and eat." This is a grassy place where animals feed.

it will be trampled down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "animals will trample it down"

Isaiah 5:6

I will lay it waste

"I will destroy it"

it will not be pruned nor hoed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will prune it or hoe it" or "no one will cut off the branches that are not needed, and no one will take care of the soil"

briers and thorns will spring up

Briers and thorns are often used as symbols of ruined cities and land.

Isaiah 5:7

General Information:

Isaiah explains the parable of the vineyard.

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel

Isaiah states that the vineyard in the parable represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts represents the house of Israel" or "The people of Israel are like the vineyard of Yahweh, Lord of the angel armies"

the house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: "Israel" or "the kingdom of Israel" or "the people of Israel"

the man of Judah his pleasant planting

The people of Judah are spoken of as if they are a vine that Yahweh planted. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah are like a vine that that Yahweh planted for Yahweh's pleasure"

the man of Judah

Here "man" represents all the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah"

he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing

This can be changed so that the abstract noun "justice" can be expressed by the verb "do what is fair." The abstract noun "killing" can be expressed as "killed one another." Alternate translation: "Yahweh waited for the people to do what is fair, but instead they killed one another"

for righteousness

The phrase "he waited" is understood from earlier in the verse. It can be repeated to make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: "he waited for righteousness" or "he waited for them to do what is right"

instead, a shout for help

The words "there was" are understood from earlier in the verse. They can be repeated to make the meaning clear. The reason people shouted out for help can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "instead, there was a shout for help" or "instead, those who were weak shouted out for someone to help them because others were attacking them"

a shout

This expression probably stands for many shouts.

Isaiah 5:8

General Information:

Isaiah announces God's judgment.

to those who join house to house, who join field to field

"to those who take more and more houses, and who take more and more fields." Isaiah assumes that his audience knows that the law forbids someone from taking land from a family permanently. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

Isaiah 5:9

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

without any inhabitant

"without anyone living in it"

Isaiah 5:10

a ten-yoke vineyard

The size of the vineyard is represented by the number of pairs of oxen that could plow it in one day. Each pair of oxen would be connected by a yoke. Alternate translation: "a vineyard that is large enough for ten pairs of oxen to plow it"

only one bath

The words "of wine" are implied. Alternate translation: "only one bath of wine"

one bath

A bath is equal to 22 liters.

one homer of seed will yield only an ephah

A homer is equal to 220 liters.

only an ephah

The words "of grain" are implied. Alternate translation: "only an ephah of grain"

an ephah

An ephah is equal to 22 liters.

Isaiah 5:11

those who rise up early in the morning ... who linger late into the night

This refers to people who do nothing all day but drink alcoholic drinks.

until wine inflames them

Here the power of wine to make its drinkers drunk is spoken of as if it were inflaming them, that is, setting them on fire. Alternate translation: "until they are drunk with wine"

Isaiah 5:12

harp and lute, tambourine, flute, and wine

These musical instruments and the wine imply that the people enjoying these things are celebrating very much.

tambourine

A musical instrument with a head like a drum that can be beaten with the hand. It probably had pieces of metal around the side that sounded when the player shook it. The tambourine was small enough for the player to hold it and shake it with one hand.

the work of his hands

Here the metonym "hands" represents the person who has done something. Alternate translation: "what Yahweh has done"

Isaiah 5:13

General Information:

These verses tell what will happen to the people because they have disobeyed God.

my people have gone into captivity

In prophecy things that will happen in the future are often referred to as if they had already happened. This emphasizes that the prophecy will certainly come true. Alternate translation: "enemies from other countries will take my people, Israel, as slaves"

for lack of understanding

What they do not understand can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "because they do not understand Yahweh or his law"

are famished

"are extremely hungry"

Isaiah 5:14

Sheol has made its appetite greater and has opened its mouth very wide

This phrase speaks of Sheol, which stands here for the grave, to an animal that is ready to eat other

animals. It implies that many, many people will die. Alternate translation: "death is like a hungry animal that has opened its mouth wide to eat up many people"

their elite, the people, their leaders, and the revelers and those who are happy among them, descend into Sheol

The prophet speaks of the future as if it were happening now. Alternate translation: "Many people of Israel, their important people and common people, their leaders and those who enjoy wild parties, will go into Sheol"

Isaiah 5:15

People bow low, and men abase themselves

See how you translated these words in [Isaiah 2:9]

the eyes of the lofty will be abased

Looking down is often a sign of being ashamed. See how you translated similar words in [Isaiah 2:11]

the lofty

Here proud, arrogant people are spoken of as if they are high above other people. Alternate translation: "proud"

Isaiah 5:16

Yahweh of hosts will be exalted in his justice

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will praise Yahweh of hosts because he is just"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

will be exalted

Being honored is spoken of as if it were being lifted high. Alternate translation: "will be greatly honored"

Isaiah 5:17

the sheep will feed as in their own pasture

Yahweh will destroy the city of Jerusalem, which was called a "vineyard" in Isaiah 5:1. It will become good for nothing except for sheep to eat grass there.

graze

eat grass

in the ruins, lambs will graze as foreigners

That is, the lambs will graze there. The land will be worthless for any other use.

Isaiah 5:18

Woe to those who pull along iniquity with useless cords and who pull along sin as if it were with a cart rope

These phrases mean basically the same thing. They speak of people who continue to sin on purpose as

if they were using all their strength to pull a heavy cart along. God will punish them for their sin.

Alternate translation: "Woe to those who work hard to sin as a person who drags a cart by a rope"

Isaiah 5:19

those who say

This refers to those who continue to sin

let the plans of the Holy One of Israel come

God's plans are spoken of as if they were objects that could come by themselves. Alternate translation: "let the Holy One of Israel accomplish his plans"

the Holy One of Israel

Translate "the Holy One" as in Isaiah 5:16.

Isaiah 5:20

who represent darkness as light, and light as darkness ... bitter as sweet, and sweet as bitter

Those who do these things are the same as those "who call evil good, and good evil." These things are opposites and people know the difference between them, but some people lie and say that bad things are good. Alternate translation: "They are like people who call darkness light and light darkness. They are like people who call bitter things sweet and sweet things bitter"

Isaiah 5:21

to those who are wise in their own eyes

Here the metonym "eyes" refers to their thoughts. Alternate translation: "to those who consider themselves to be wise"

prudent in their own understanding

"think they understand everything"

Isaiah 5:22

General Information:

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Isaiah 5:23

who acquit the wicked for a bribe

This passage is speaking about corrupt judges in courts of law.

acquit the wicked

"declare guilty people innocent"

deprive those in the right of what is right

"do not treat innocent people fairly"

Isaiah 5:24

General Information:

Yahweh threatens to destroy the evil people of Isaiah 5:18-23.

tongue of fire

"flame of fire" or "flame"

stubble ... chaff

"Stubble" and "chaff" are the useless parts of the food grain plant. During harvest they are dry and so burn easily.

stubble

The dry pieces of plants that are left in the ground after the stalks have been cut.

chaff

or "dry grass"

their root will rot, and their blossom will blow away like dust

Isaiah speaks of these people as if they were a dying plant. Alternate translation: "they will die like a plant whose roots have rotted and whose blossom has dried up and blown away in the wind"

Isaiah 5:25

the anger of Yahweh is kindled

Isaiah speaks of Yahweh's anger as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is very angry"

He has reached out with his hand against them and has punished them

The prophet speaks of the future as if it had already happened. He does this to insist that the prophecy certainly will come about. Alternate translation: "he will punish them with his powerful hand"

has reached out with his hand against them

Here "hand" refers to God's power and control. Alternate translation: "has shown his power against them"

corpses

dead bodies

their corpses are like garbage in the streets

The dead bodies are allowed to lie in the streets as if they were garbage. This implies that many will die but that no one will be there to bury them. The word "garbage" can also be translated as "refuse" or "manure."

In all these things, his anger does not subside; his hand

"Even though all these things have happened, he is still angry, and his hand"

his hand is still stretched out

Here "hand" represents God's power and control. Isaiah speaks as if Yahweh were a person about to

hit another person with his fist. This is a metaphor for Yahweh punishing Israel. Alternate translation: "he will still be ready to punish them"

Isaiah 5:26

He will lift up a signal flag for faraway nations and will whistle for those at the end of the earth

Isaiah says the same thing in two different ways. God causing the armies of nations that are far away from Judah to come and attack is spoken of as if he would raise a flag and whistle to call them to Judah. Alternate translation: "He will call for the armies of nations that are far away from Judah and tell them to come"

whistle

a loud, high pitched noise a person makes with their mouth to call a person or animal that is far away

they will come

"the enemy army will come"

speedily and promptly

These words mean basically the same thing and emphasize how quickly they will come. Alternate translation: "very quickly"

Isaiah 5:27

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the army that will attack Judah. He describes it as if it were already existing (Isaiah 5:26).

tire ... stumble ... slumbers ... sleeps

These four words progress from being tired from work to being unable to walk well, to being unable to stay awake, to full sleep, so all four should appear in the translation.

Nor are their belts loose

The soldiers kept their clothes tight so it would be easier to move and fight.

the thongs of their sandals

"the straps of their sandals"

Isaiah 5:28

their horses' hooves are like flint

"their hooves are like hard stone." Isaiah compares the hard part of a horse's foot to flint, which is a hard stone that can cause sparks when struck. Possible meanings are 1) Isaiah compares their hooves to flint so to describe the frightening image of their feet causing sparks as they run or 2) Isaiah compares their hooves to flint to emphasize how strong their hooves are which enables the horse to do whatever their master want them to do.

their chariot wheels like storms

Isaiah compares the chariot wheels to storms in order to imply that they will destroy everything in their path. Alternate translation: "the wheels of the chariots will spin like a windstorm"

chariot wheels

These wheels often had sharp blades attached to them that would cut to pieces anyone the chariot passed close to.

Isaiah 5:29

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the army that will attack Judah (Isaiah 5:26).

young lions

A young age is a metonym for strength. Alternate translation: "the strongest lions"

They will growl and seize the prey

Isaiah compares the enemy killing the people of Judah to a lion killing a weaker animal. Possible

meanings are 1) lions make a sound not as loud as a roar just before they strike, or 2) the writer is using two words to mean the same thing.

prey

animals that another animal wants to catch and kill

with none to rescue

"and no one will be able to save them"

Isaiah 5:30

will roar ... sea roars

The word "roar" here is translated "growl" in verse 29. Use your language's word for the sound of waves in a storm or heavy rain or some other frightening natural sound.

even the light will be made dark by the clouds

Here darkness represents suffering and disaster. This metaphor can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "the dark clouds will completely block the light of the sun"

Chapter 6

¹ In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne; he was high and elevated, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were the seraphim; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ Each one called to another and said,

"Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts!
The whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voices of those who were crying out, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵ Then I said, "Woe is me! For I am doomed because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, because my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh, Yahweh of hosts!"

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me; he had a glowing coal in his hand, that he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt has been taken away, and your sin atoned for."

⁸ I heard the voice of the Lord say, "Whom will I send; who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am; send me." ⁹ He said, "Go and tell this people,

'Hearing, you will hear, but you will not understand;
seeing, you will see, but you will not know.'

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people insensitive,
and their ears dull, and blind their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears,
and understand with their heart, and then turn and be healed."

¹¹ Then I said, "Lord, how long?" He answered,

"Until cities crash into ruins
and are without inhabitants,
and the houses are without people,
and the land falls into a desolate waste,

¹² and until Yahweh has sent the people far away,
and the whole land is completely abandoned.

¹³ Even if a tenth of the people remain in it,
it will again be destroyed;
as a terebinth or an oak is cut down and whose trunk remains,
the holy seed is in its stump."

Isaiah 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 6:3-4,7, 9-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Heaven

This vision described in this chapter is probably a scene in heaven. (See: heaven)

Isaiah's call

This chapter record Isaiah's call to prophetic ministry. It recognizes the holiness of God and Isaiah recognizes his need for holiness. (See: call and prophet and holy)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Inevitability

The way Yahweh speaks in this chapter shows the inevitability of the punishment of Yahweh against the people of Judah. The punishment must now come. It is too late for repentance. (See: repent)

Isaiah 6:1

he was high and elevated

The words "high" and "elevated" emphasize that the throne was very high and above everything around it. The height of the throne represents how great and powerful the Lord is.

filled the temple

"filled the palace." The word used for temple here is often used to refer to the palace of kings.

Isaiah 6:2

Above him were the seraphim

The word "seraphim" is the plural of seraph. This means the Lord was seated on the throne and the seraphim were standing or flying near the Lord ready to serve him.

seraphim

This word suggests that the creatures might have a fiery appearance or resemble snakes. Because we do not know exactly what "seraphim" means, you could translate this as "winged creatures" or "winged living things." Or, you can borrow the word and use it in your language.

each one had six wings

"each seraph had six wings" or "each creature had six wings"

with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew

The words "wings" and "seraph" are understood. Alternate translation: "with two wings each seraph covered his face, and with two wings he covered his feet, and with two wings he flew"

Isaiah 6:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe his vision.

Each one called to another and said

"The seraphim called out to one another and said" or "The winged creatures proclaimed to one another"

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts

Repeating the word "holy" three times indicates God is completely holy. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts is holy beyond all else" or "Yahweh of hosts is completely holy"

The whole earth is full of his glory

This speaks of the earth as if it were a container and glory were the contents in the container.

Alternate translation: "Everything on the earth is evidence of God's glory"

Isaiah 6:4

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe his vision.

The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voices of those who were crying out

"When the seraphim called out, their voices shook the doorways and their foundations"

the house was filled with smoke

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "smoke filled the temple" or "smoke filled the palace"

Isaiah 6:5

Woe is me! For I am doomed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am in great trouble! Terrible things will happen to me"

of unclean lips

Here "lips" represent what a person speaks. And, people saying things that are unacceptable to God is spoken of as if their lips were physically unclean.

Yahweh, Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh, the ruler of the angel armies"

my eyes have seen

Here "eyes" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "I have seen"

Isaiah 6:6

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe his vision.

seraphim

This word suggests that the creatures might have a fiery appearance or resemble snakes. Because we do not know exactly what "seraphim" means, you could translate these as "creatures" or "living things" or "beings." Or you can borrow the word and use it in your language. See how you translated this word in [Isaiah 6:2]

tongs

a tool used for grabbing or holding objects

Isaiah 6:7

your guilt has been taken away, and your sin atoned for
These two phrases say basically the same thing.
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has taken away your guilt and has forgiven your sins"

your guilt has been taken away
Yahweh no longer considering a person to be guilty is spoken of as if "guilt" were an object that someone could take away from someone else.

Isaiah 6:8

General Information:
Isaiah continues to describe his vision.

the voice of the Lord say
Here "voice" represents the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "the Lord say"

Whom will I send
It is implied that Yahweh will send someone to speak his message to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "Whom will I send to be a messenger to my people"

who will go for us
It seems "us" refers to Yahweh and the members of his heavenly council to whom he is speaking.

Isaiah 6:9

this people
"the people of Israel"

Hearing, you will hear, but you will not understand; seeing, you will see, but you will not know
If needed, you can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "You will hear Yahweh's message, but you will not understand what it means; you will see what Yahweh is doing, but you will not know what it means"

Isaiah 6:10

General Information:
Yahweh continues to tell Isaiah what he must do when Yahweh sends him to preach to the people.

Make the heart of this people insensitive
Here "heart" represents a person's mind. A person who does not think clearly and is unable to understand and care about what is happening is spoken of as if his heart were insensitive. Alternate translation: "Make these people unable to understand" or "Make the minds of these people dull"

Make the heart of this people
It may be more natural to translate "heart" and "this" as plurals. Alternate translation: "Make the hearts of these people"

Make the heart ... insensitive
This command means that Yahweh will use Isaiah's message to cause the people to understand even less and to make them less sensitive to what Yahweh is doing.

their ears dull, and blind their eyes
"make it so that they cannot hear, and make it so that they cannot see." Isaiah making people to not understand Yahweh's message or what he is doing is spoken of as if Isaiah were making them deaf and blind.

they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears
People being able to understand Yahweh's message and what he is doing is spoken of as if the people were able physically to see and hear.

understand with their heart
Here "heart" represents as person's mind. Truly understanding something and caring about what is happening is spoken of as if the people were to understand with their hearts.

then turn
Repenting and starting to obey Yahweh is spoken of as if the people were physically to turn towards him. Alternate translation: "follow me again" or "then start trusting in me again"

be healed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I would heal them"

Isaiah 6:11

Until cities crash into ruins and are without inhabitants, and the houses are without people
"Until all the cities and houses are ruined and no one lives there"

the land falls into a desolate waste
Here "falls into" is an idiom that means to become something worse. Alternate translation: "the land becomes a desolate waste"

Isaiah 6:12

until Yahweh has sent the people far away, and the whole land is completely abandoned
Here Yahweh speaks about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "until I, Yahweh, have sent all the people far away from their land, so that no one is left"

Isaiah 6:13

it will again be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "armies will again destroy the land of Israel"

as a terebinth or an oak is cut down and whose trunk remains, the holy seed is in its stump

This simile means that even after Yahweh destroys Israel, he will still set apart people from among the Israelites to serve him.

terebinth

a kind of oak tree

trunk ... stump

A trunk is the thick main stem of a tree. A stump is the part of a tree that remains in the ground after the tree is cut down.

the holy seed

The people who will serve Yahweh after armies destroy Israel are spoken of as if they were set apart as a holy seed.

Chapter 7

¹ During the days of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but they could not prevail against it. ² It was reported to the house of David that Aram was allied with Ephraim. His heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake in the wind. ^[1]

³ Then Yahweh said to Isaiah, "Go out with your son Shear-Jashub to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the road to Launderer's Field. ⁴ Tell him, 'Be careful, remain calm, do not be afraid or intimidated by these two smoldering firebrands, by the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram, and of Pekah son of Remaliah. ⁵ Aram, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have planned evil against you; they have said, ⁶ "Let us attack Judah and terrify her, and let us break into her and set up our king there, the son of Tabeel." ⁷ The Lord Yahweh says,

"It will not take place;
it will not happen,

⁸ because the head of Aram is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

Within sixty-five years,
Ephraim will be shattered and will no longer be a people.

⁹ The head of Ephraim is Samaria,
and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.

If you do not remain firm in faith,
surely you will not remain secure.""

¹⁰ Then Yahweh spoke again to Ahaz, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of Yahweh your God; ask for it in Sheol below or in the height above." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test Yahweh." ¹³ So Isaiah replied, "Listen, house of David. Is it not enough for you people to test the patience of people? Must you also test the patience of my God? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you people a sign: See, the young woman will conceive, bear a son, and will call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He will eat curds and honey when he knows to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate. ¹⁷ Yahweh will bring on you, on your people, and on your father's house days unlike any since Ephraim seceded from Judah—he will bring on you the king of Assyria."

¹⁸ At that time Yahweh will whistle for a fly from the distant streams of Egypt, and for a bee from the land of Assyria. ¹⁹ They will all come and settle down into all the gorges, into the clefts of the rocks, on all the thornbushes, and onto all the pastures.

²⁰ At that time the Lord will shave with a razor that was hired beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the legs; it will also sweep away the beard. ²¹ On that day, a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep, ²² and because of the abundance of milk they give, he will eat curds, for everyone left in the land will eat curds and honey.

²³ At that time, where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels, there will be nothing but briars and thorns. ²⁴ Men will go there to hunt with bows, because all the land will be briars and thorns. ²⁵ They will stay away from all the hills that were cultivated with the hoe, for fear of the briars and thorns; but it will be a place where cattle and sheep graze.

Footnotes

7:2 ^[1] Instead of

Isaiah 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:7-9, 18-25.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Young woman"

Some translations choose to translate this as "virgin" and believe it is a reference to the Messiah being born of a virgin woman. This is only one possible translation, therefore most translations have avoided forcing this specific connotation into the meaning of the term. (See: christ)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

In this chapter, Israel is a reference to the northern kingdom of Israel and not the nation as a whole. They are also called Ephraim in this chapter after its most prominent tribe.

Isaiah 7:1

During the days of Ahaz ... king of Judah

"When Ahaz ... was king of Judah" This was when the events happened.

Rezin ... Pekah ... Remaliah men's names

Rezin ... and Pekah ... went up

The author speaks as if the kings were the armies they led. Alternate translation: "Rezin ... and Pekah ... led their armies up"

to war against it

The author speaks as if the city itself were the people who live in it. Alternate translation: "to war against the people of Jerusalem"

Isaiah 7:2

It was reported to the house of David

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the house of David heard the report" or "someone reported to the house of David"

the house of David

The word "house" is a metonym for the family living in the house. Alternate translation: "King Ahaz and his counselors"

that Aram was allied with Ephraim

Here "Aram" and "Ephraim" refer to their kings. Here "Ephraim" represents the whole northern kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: "that Rezin, the king of Aram was helping Pekah, the king of Israel"

His heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake in the wind

The trembling of their hearts at this news is compared to the way trees shake when the wind blows through them. Alternate translation: "Ahaz and his people were very afraid"

Isaiah 7:3

General Information:

Isaiah writes about what happened to him as if it had happened to someone else.

Shear-Jashub

Translators may also add a footnote that says, "The name Shear-Jashub means 'a remnant will return.'" The meaning may have given hope to Ahaz.

at the end of the conduit of the upper pool

"where the water flows out of the tunnel and enters the upper pool"

conduit

man-made ditch or tunnel through which water flows

road

If your language has a word for a road or path that people have made smooth by filling in the low places and lowering the high places, you can use it here.

Launderer's Field

Possible meanings are 1) this is the proper name by which the people called the field or 2) this is the common noun that the people used to talk about the field, "the launderer's field" or "the field where men wash wool" or "the field where women wash clothes."

Lauderer's Field

A launderer is either 1) a man who washes wool that someone has cut from the sheep, "Wool Washer Field," or 2) a woman who washes dirty clothes, "Clothes Washer Field."

Isaiah 7:4

Tell him
"Tell Ahaz"

do not be afraid or intimidated by these two smoldering firebrands, by the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram, and of Pekah son of Remaliah

God compares Rezin and Pekah to burning sticks whose fire has gone out and are making smoke now. God is emphasizing that they are not real threats to Judah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "do not let Rezin and Pekah make you afraid; their fierce anger is like a burning stick whose fire has gone out and there is only smoke"

afraid or intimidated

The words "afraid" and "intimidated" mean the same thing and can be translated as one word. Alternate translation: "afraid"

Isaiah 7:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues to tell Isaiah what he should tell Ahaz (Isaiah 7:3).

Aram, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah

The words "Aram" and "Ephraim" refer to the kings of these lands. Also, "Ephraim" represents the northern kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: "Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel"

Remaliah

This is the name of a man. Translate his name as in Isaiah 7:1.

have planned evil against you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Ahaz.

Isaiah 7:6

son of Tabeel

It is unknown who this man is.

Isaiah 7:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues to tell Isaiah what he should tell Ahaz (Isaiah 7:3).

Isaiah 7:8

the head of Damascus is Rezin

Here "head" is a metonym for the most important part. It is implied that Rezin is only a man, and

therefore cannot stop Yahweh's plan. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king of Damascus is Rezin, who is only a man"

sixty-five years
"65 years"

Ephraim will be shattered and will no longer be a people

Here "Ephraim" refers to all of the northern kingdom of Israel. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "an army will destroy Ephraim, and there will no longer be a people of Israel"

Isaiah 7:9

the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son

This means Pekah is the king of Samaria and all of Israel. Alternate translation: "the king of Samaria is Pekah, who is a weak man"

If you do not remain firm in faith, surely you will not remain secure

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "If you continue to believe in me, you will certainly remain safe"

If you do not remain
"Unless you remain"

Isaiah 7:10

General Information:

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Isaiah 7:11

ask for it in Sheol below or in the height above
Yahweh uses the words "Sheol" and "height" to mean Ahaz could ask him for anything.

the height

The abstract noun "height" can be translated with a preposition. "places far above you"

Isaiah 7:12

will not ask
"will not ask Yahweh for a sign"

Isaiah 7:13

house of David

The word "house" is a metonym for the family living in the house. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 7:2]

Is it not enough for you people to test the patience of people? Must you also test the patience of my God?

These questions emphasize that the king has sinned greatly. Alternate translation: "You test the patience of people! Now you even test the patience of my God!"

Isaiah 7:14

the young woman will conceive

Some ancient versions and some contemporary versions translate, "the virgin will conceive," while others translate "the young woman will conceive."

his name Immanuel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Immanuel means 'God with us.'"

Isaiah 7:15

He will eat curds and honey when he knows to refuse the evil and choose the good

Possible meanings are 1) "By the time that child is old enough to eat curds and honey, he will be able to reject what is evil and choose what is good." This emphasizes that the child will be very young when he knows to choose what is right instead of wrong or 2) "By the time the child is old enough to reject what is evil and choose what is good, he will be eating curds and honey." The people of Judah considered a child to be responsible for doing what is right when he was 12 years old. This emphasizes that within twelve years the people will be able to eat much curds and honey because most of the people of Israel will be killed or taken as captives.

curds

milk that people have treated to make it into a soft solid

refuse the evil and choose the good

Here "the evil" and "the good" refer to evil and good things in general. Alternate translation: "refuse to do evil deeds and choose to do good deeds"

Isaiah 7:16

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the sign that God will give the house of David.

refuse the evil and choose the good

Here "the evil" and "the good" refer to evil and good things in general. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 7:15]

you dread

"you fear." Here "you" is singular and refers to Ahaz.

Isaiah 7:17

your people

This refers to the people of Judah.

Isaiah 7:18

At that time

before the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good (Isaiah 7:15)

Yahweh will whistle for

"Yahweh will call" or "Yahweh will summon"

for a fly from the distant streams of Egypt, and for a bee from the land of Assyria

Here the armies of Egypt and Assyria are spoken of as if they are insects that will invade the land of Israel. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "for the armies of Egypt and Assyria, and their soldiers will be everywhere like flies and bees"

Isaiah 7:19

General Information:

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Isaiah 7:20

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the time when the army of Assyria will attack Israel.

the Lord will shave with a razor that was hired beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria

The word "razor" is a metaphor for the king of Assyria and his army, and Yahweh speaks of the king as if the king were a man who would do Yahweh's work and then receive money from Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the Lord will call the king of Assyria from beyond the Euphrates River to work for him to shave you"

that was hired

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that he bought"

the head ... the hair of the legs ... also ... the beard

It was bad to have someone shave the top of the head; it was worse to have someone shave "the hair of the legs"; it was worst of all to have someone shave the beard.

the head ... the hair of the legs ... the beard

Isaiah does not say whose head, hair, and beard the Lord is going to shave, but Ahaz and the reader would understand that this is a man; the man is a metaphor for the people living in the land of Judah.

the head

Here "the head" represents the hair that grows on it. Alternate translation: "the hair on the head"

the hair of the legs

Possible meanings are 1) this is a polite way to speak of the hair on the lower body or 2) this speaks of the hair on the legs.

it will also sweep

"the razor will also sweep." If your language requires a person to be the subject of "will ... sweep," you can say, "the Lord will also sweep."

Isaiah 7:21

General Information:

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Isaiah 7:22

because of the abundance of milk they give

The abstract noun "abundance" can be translated as a clause. Alternate translation: "because they will give so much milk"

Isaiah 7:23

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the time when the army from Assyria will attack the land of Israel.

there were a thousand vines ... briers and thorns

"there were 1,000 vines." That is, when Isaiah wrote, there were vineyards, in some of which were 1,000 vines or more each. He says that these vineyards will become full of briers and thorns.

a thousand silver shekels

"1000 silver shekels." A shekel is a silver coin worth 4 days wage. Alternate translation: "1,000 silver coins"

briers and thorns

The words "briers" and "thorns" both refer to useless, thorny plants. It is not necessary to translate both words. Alternate translation: "thorn bushes" or "brier bushes"

Isaiah 7:24

because all the land will be briers and thorns

Why the hunters come to these lands can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "because there will be nothing in these lands but briers, thorns, and wild animals"

Isaiah 7:25

They will stay away from all the hills that were cultivated with the hoe

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will stay away from the hills where they once prepared the soil to plant crops"

Chapter 8

¹ Yahweh said to me, "Take a large tablet and write on it, 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.' ² I will summon faithful witnesses to attest for me, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah." ³ I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then Yahweh said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. ⁴ For before the child knows to cry, 'My father,' and, 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria."

⁵ Yahweh spoke to me again,

⁶ "Because this people has refused
the gentle waters of Shiloah
and rejoices over Rezin
and the son of Remaliah,

⁷ therefore the Lord is about to bring up on them
the waters of the River, mighty and many,
the king of Assyria and all his glory.
It will come up over all its channels
and overflow its banks.

⁸ The River will sweep onward into Judah,
flooding and passing on, until it reaches to your neck.
Its outstretched wings will fill the breadth of your land,
Immanuel."

⁹ You peoples will be broken to pieces.
Listen, all you distant countries:
gird yourselves and be broken to pieces;
gird yourselves and be broken to pieces.

¹⁰ Form a plan, but it will not be carried out;
issue the command, but it will not be carried out,
for God is with us.

¹¹ Yahweh spoke to me, with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people.

¹² Do not call conspiracy
anything that this people calls conspiracy,
you will not fear what they fear,
and do not be terrified.

¹³ It is Yahweh of hosts whom you will honor as holy;
he is the one you must fear,
and he is the one you must dread.

¹⁴ He will become a sanctuary;
but he will be a stone of striking,
and a stone of stumbling—
for both the houses of Israel,
and he will be a trap and a snare
to the people of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Many will stumble over it
and fall and be broken,
and be ensnared and captured.

¹⁶ Bind up my testimony,
seal the official record, and give it to my disciples.

¹⁷ I will wait for Yahweh,
who hides his face from the house of Jacob;
I will trust in him.

¹⁸ See, I and the sons whom Yahweh has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Yahweh of hosts, who lives on Mount Zion.

¹⁹ They will say to you, "Consult with sorcerers and spiritists," the ones who chirp and mutter incantations. But should a people not consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not say such things, it is because they have no light of dawn. ²¹ They will pass through the land greatly distressed and hungry. When they are hungry, they will become angry and curse their king and their God, as they turn their faces upward. ²² They will look at the earth and see distress, darkness, and gloom that causes anguish. They will be banished to thick darkness.

Isaiah 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 8:6-18, 21-22.

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust in Yahweh

Israel will not trust in Yahweh. Instead, they will trust in their own power, their Gentile allies and the power of false gods. They will be punished because the power of Yahweh is greater than all of these. (See: trust and falsehood)

Isaiah 8:1

Yahweh said to me

Here the word "me" refers to Isaiah.

Isaiah 8:2

I will summon faithful witnesses to attest for me

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh is speaking: "I will call honest men to be witnesses" or 2) Isaiah is speaking: "I called honest men to be witnesses" or 3) Yahweh is commanding Isaiah: "Call honest men to be witnesses."

Isaiah 8:3

I went to the prophetess

The phrase "went to" here is a euphemism for sexual relations. It can be stated explicitly that Isaiah is married to the prophetess. Alternate translation: "I had sexual relations with the prophetess" or "I had sexual relations with my wife, the prophetess"

Isaiah 8:4

the riches of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the king of Assyria will carry away all the treasures of Damascus and Samaria"

Isaiah 8:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 8:6

Because this people has refused the gentle waters of Shiloah

The words "gentle waters" are a metaphor for the law of the Lord. Alternate translation: "Because this people has rejected Yahweh's law, which is like the gentle waters of Shiloah"

this people

"this people group." If your language needs a plural here, you can translate this phrase and the following verbs as "these people have refused ... are happy."

rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah

The full meaning can be made explicit. See how you translated these men's names in [Isaiah 7:1]

Isaiah 8:7

therefore the Lord is

Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were someone else to remind the people of who he is. Alternate translation: "therefore I, the Lord, am"

bring up on them

The verb is "bring up"; the adverb is "on them."

on them

"on the people of Judah"

the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory

The river symbolizes the army of Assyria. Alternate translation: "the army from Assyria, which is powerful like a mighty river"

the River

the Euphrates River in Assyria

Isaiah 8:8

General Information:

The Lord continues to describe the army of Assyria as a river that will flood Judah (Isaiah 8:7).

The River will sweep onward into Judah, flooding and passing on, until it reaches to your neck

The army of Assyria is like a flood of water.

Alternate translation: "More and more soldiers will come like a river rising up to your neck"

The River

This refers to the Euphrates River in Assyria. This is a metonym for the Assyrian soldiers, who will come from their homes by the Euphrates River

Its outstretched wings will fill

Possible meanings are 1) as "the River" in the metaphor rises, its "wings" flow over and cover what had been dry land or 2) Isaiah changes metaphors and now speaks of Yahweh as a bird who is protecting the land, "But his outstretched wings will cover."

Immanuel

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The name Immanuel means 'God with us.'" See how you translated this in Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 8:9

You peoples will be broken to pieces

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will break your armies to pieces"

Listen, all you distant countries

Isaiah speaks as if people in other countries can hear him. Alternate translation: "Listen, all you people in far away places"

gird yourselves and be broken to pieces; gird yourselves and be broken to pieces

Yahweh is mocking the peoples and saying that no matter how they prepare for war, he will defeat them. These words are stated twice for emphasis. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will prepare yourselves for battle, but I will destroy you"

Isaiah 8:10

Form a plan, but it will not be carried out; issue the command, but it will not be carried out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can prepare to attack Judah, but you will not succeed"

it will not be carried out ... it will not be carried out

To "carry out" a plan or command is to do what the person who makes the plan or command wants the hearer to do. These clauses can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will not be able to do what you plan to do ... your soldiers will not be able to do what their commanders tell them to do"

Isaiah 8:11

Yahweh spoke to me, with his strong hand upon me

Here "his strong hand upon me" is an idiom that refers to Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "Yahweh spoke to me in a very powerful way"

warned me not to walk in the way of this people.

This is an indirect quote that ends in 8:17.

Alternate translation: "warned me and said, 'Do not act like this people.'"

Isaiah 8:12

Do not call conspiracy anything that this people calls conspiracy

The people imagine there are conspiracies, and it makes them anxious. Alternate translation: "Do not worry like this people who think someone is always trying to harm them"

Isaiah 8:13

It is Yahweh of hosts whom you will honor as holy; he is the one you must fear, and he is the one you must dread

If you translate this as a direct quote, you can also translate it with Yahweh speaking in the first person: "But you will consider me, Yahweh of Hosts, as holy. And you will fear and be in awe of me"

Isaiah 8:14

General Information:

Isaiah continues the indirect quote of Yahweh that began in [Isaiah 8:11-13]

He will become a sanctuary

The word "sanctuary" is a metaphor for Yahweh keeping his people safe and protecting them. Alternate translation: "He will protect them when they go to him"

he will be a trap and a snare to the people of Jerusalem

The words "trap" and "snare" mean almost the same thing and emphasize that when Yahweh decides to punish the people of Jerusalem they will not be able to escape. Alternate translation: "he will trap the people of Jerusalem so they cannot escape him"

trap

a device that catches a bird in a net or basket

snare

a trap that catches and holds an animal's leg or nose

Isaiah 8:15

Many will stumble over it and fall and be broken, and be ensnared and captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Many people will stumble over the stone, and when they fall they will not get up. And many people will step into the trap, and they will not be able to get out"

ensnared and captured

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that they will be caught in the trap.

Isaiah 8:16

Bind up my testimony, seal the official record

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Close up tightly the scroll with this message written on it"

my testimony ... my disciples

It is unclear to whom the word "my" refers. It could be Isaiah or Yahweh. It is best to leave the pronouns ambiguous if your language will allow it.

Isaiah 8:17

I will wait for Yahweh

Here "I" refers to Isaiah.

who hides his face from the house of Jacob

Yahweh's "face" is a metonym for his blessing or favor. Alternate translation: "who has taken away his blessing from the house of Jacob" or "who no longer looks with favor on the house of Jacob"

house of Jacob

people of Israel

Isaiah 8:18

I and the sons whom Yahweh has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel

"I and the sons Yahweh has given me are like signs to warn the people of Israel." The sons are Shear-Jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, whose names are a message to the people of Israel. (See: Isaiah 7:3 and [Isaiah 8:1](#))

Isaiah 8:19

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking.

They will say to you, "Consult with sorcerers and spiritists," the ones who chirp and mutter incantations.

But should a people not consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Other possible meanings are 1) "They will say to you, 'Consult with the mediums and spiritists, those who chirp and mutter incantations. Should a people not consult their gods? They should consult the dead on behalf of the living for teaching and for testimony.'" or 2) "When they say to you, 'Consult with the mediums and spiritists, those who chirp and mutter incantations,' should a people not consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony!"

They will say to you

The word "they" refers to those who do not trust Yahweh. The word "you" is plural and refers to those who trust Yahweh.

the ones who chirp and mutter incantations

The words "chirp" and "mutter" refer to the sounds mediums and spiritists made when trying to speak to dead people. Alternate translation: "they people who whisper and mutter their magic words to try and speak to dead people"

chirp

make sounds like birds

But should a people not consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

These questions are to show that people should consult God instead of foolishly trying to talk to dead people. Alternate translation: "But people should ask Yahweh to guide them. They should not seek answers from those who have died."

Isaiah 8:20

To the law and to the testimony

Possible meanings are 1) "Pay attention to God's instructions and teaching" or 2) "Then you must remember the teaching and testimony I gave." (Isaiah 8:16).

the law

This is the same word translated "official record" in Isaiah 8:16.

the testimony

See how you translated this in Isaiah 8:16.

If they do not say such things

"If they do not speak of the law and the testimony"

it is because they have no light of dawn

Isaiah speaks of people who do not know God as if they were people walking in darkness without any light. Alternate translation: "it is because they are like a person lost in the dark"

Isaiah 8:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 8:22

gloom that causes anguish

"darkness that makes them very sad"

They will be banished to thick darkness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will drive them out into complete darkness"

Chapter 9

¹ The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish. In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who have lived in the land of the shadow of death,
the light has shone on them.

³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased their joy.
They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time,
as men rejoice when they divide the plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
the beam across his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken to pieces as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot treading in the tumult
and the garments rolled in blood
will be burned,
fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child has been born,
to us a son has been given;
and the government will be on his shoulder;
and his name will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
as he rules on the throne of David,
and over his kingdom,
to establish it and sustain it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and for evermore.
The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this.

⁸ The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
and it fell on Israel.

⁹ All the people will know,
even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
who say in pride
and with an arrogant heart,

¹⁰ "The bricks have fallen,
but we will rebuild with chiseled stone;
the sycamores have been cut down,
but we will put cedars in their place."

¹¹ Therefore Yahweh will raise up against him Rezin,
his adversary, and will stir up his enemies,

¹² the Arameans on the east, and the Philistines on the west.
They will devour Israel with open mouth.
In all these things, his anger does not subside;
his hand is still stretched out.

¹³ Yet the people will not turn to him who struck them,
nor will they seek Yahweh of hosts.

¹⁴ Therefore Yahweh will cut off from Israel head and tail,
palm branch and reed, in one day.

¹⁵ The elder and the noble man are the head;
and the prophet that teaches lies is the tail.

¹⁶ Those who lead this people lead them astray,

- and those who are led by them are swallowed up.
- 17 Therefore the Lord will not rejoice over their young men
nor will he have compassion on their fatherless and widows,
since every one is godless and an evildoer,
and every mouth speaks foolish things.
In all these things, his anger does not subside;
his hand is still stretched out.
- 18 Wickedness burns like a fire;
it devours the briers and thorns;
it even burns the thickets of the forest,
which rise in a column of smoke.
- 19 Through the fury of Yahweh of hosts
the land is scorched,
and the people are like fuel for the fire.
No man spares his brother.
- 20 They will grab food on the right hand
but still be hungry;
they will eat food on the left hand
but will not be satisfied.
Each will even eat the flesh of his own arm. ^[1]
- 21 Manasseh will devour Ephraim, and Ephraim, Manasseh;
and they together will attack Judah.
In all these things, his anger does not subside;
his hand is still stretched out.

Footnotes

9:20 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins with a prophecy that is a continuation of the prophecy concluding the previous chapter. Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 9:1-21. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

Messiah

The prophecy in 9:1-7 is about the coming Messiah. Parts of this prophecy were fulfilled when he first came to earth. Other parts are to be fulfilled when he will return in glory to earth. (See: christ and fulfill)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Fulfillment of prophecies

Some of the prophecies in this chapter were fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime while others are fulfilled in the distant future. Some scholars believe that there can be multiple fulfillments of each of these prophecies, while others see only one complete fulfillment.

Isaiah 9:1

The gloom will be dispelled from her who was in anguish
Isaiah speaks of people who are spiritually lost as if they were walking around in total darkness. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Yahweh will remove the darkness from her who was in anguish"

The gloom

This word means "partial or total darkness."
Translate as you translated "gloom" in Isaiah 8:22.

her who was in anguish

"her who was suffering great pain and sadness."

This is probably a metaphor for the people of Judah.

In an earlier time he humiliated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali

"Land" refers to the people who live in an area.

Alternate translation: "In the past, the Lord humbled those living in Zebulun and Naphtali"

but in the latter time he will make it glorious, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations

Here "it" refers to Galilee which represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "but in the future, the Lord will honor the people of Galilee of the nations, which is on the road between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River"

Galilee of the nations

Here "nations" represents the people from other nations that live in Galilee. Alternate translation: "Galilee, where many foreigners live"

Isaiah 9:2

walked in darkness ... lived in the land of the shadow of death

Isaiah speaks of the people living sinful lives and suffering because of it as if they had been walking in a dark or living in a land of shadow of death.

a great light ... light has shone

Here "light" represents hope and deliverance.

the land of the shadow of death

The phrase "shadow of death" is an idiom that means absolute darkness. Alternate translation: "the land of deepest darkness"

Isaiah 9:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the time when God will save the people of Israel. Although these events will happen in the future

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased their joy

The word "you" refers to Yahweh. The word "their" refers to the people of Israel, but Isaiah includes himself as part of Israel. Alternate translation: "Lord, you will greatly increase our people and our joy"

They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time, as men rejoice when they divide the plunder

The joy that Yahweh will give Israel is described as the same kind of joy people have when they bring in a harvest or divide valuable plunder. Alternate translation: "They will rejoice before you as people rejoice when they gather their crops or when a battle is over and soldiers divide what they took"

Isaiah 9:4

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the time when God will save the people of Israel. Although these events will happen in the future

For the yoke of his burden ... you have broken to pieces as on the day of Midian

Isaiah speaks of the Israelites, who are the Assyrians' slaves, as if they were an ox wearing a yoke. This will happen in the future, but he speaks as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "For as on the day of Midian you will set the people of Israel free from being slaves to their oppressors like a person removes a yoke from the shoulders of an animal"

For the yoke of his burden ... his shoulder ... his oppressor

Isaiah speaks of the people of Israel as if they were one man. Alternate translation: "For the yoke of their burden ... their shoulders ... their oppressor"

the beam across his shoulder

The beam is the part of the yoke that goes over the shoulders of the ox.

beam

Another possible meaning is "staff," a long piece of wood that a person uses to beat the oxen so they will work and a symbol of one person's power to rule other people.

the rod of his oppressor

Isaiah speaks of the power the oppressor has over the people of Judah as if it were the piece of wood used by a person to beat oxen so they will work.

as on the day of Midian

The word "day" is an idiom that can refer to an event that takes more than one day to happen. Alternate translation: "as when you defeated the Midianites"

Isaiah 9:5

every boot treading in the tumult and the garments rolled in blood will be burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will burn the boots of the soldiers and their clothes, which are covered with blood"

burned, fuel for the fire

This can be made more explicit by translating it as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "burned. You will make the boots and the garments fuel for the fire"

Isaiah 9:6

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the time when God will save the people of Israel. Although these events will happen in the future

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The word "us" refers to both the speaker and the hearer and so is inclusive. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the Lord will give to us a child"

the government will be on his shoulder

His authority to rule is spoken of as if it were the robe that is a symbol of his authority. Alternate translation: "he will wear his royal robe on his shoulder" or "he will have authority to rule as king."

Counselor

one who advises kings

Isaiah 9:7

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end

"As time passes he will rule over more and more people and enable them to live more and more peacefully"

rules on the throne of David

Sitting on the "throne of David" is a metonym for having the right to rule; only David's descendants could be king over Israel. Alternate translation: "has the right to rule as David's descendant"

his kingdom, to establish it and sustain it with justice and with righteousness

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "his kingdom. He will establish and protect his kingdom, and he will do what is fair and just"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 9:8

The Lord sent a word against Jacob, and it fell on Israel

"Send a word" means to speak. Alternate translation: "The Lord has spoken against the people of Israel"

Jacob ... Israel

These names refer to the people of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Isaiah 9:9

Ephraim ... Samaria

These names all refer to the people of the northern kingdom of Israel.

All the people will know, even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria

What they will know can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "All the people will know that the Lord has judged them, even those in Ephraim and Samaria"

Isaiah 9:10

The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with chiseled stone; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place

The full meaning can be made explicit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We will replace the common bricks of our destroyed cities with expensive cut stone, and we will plant great cedar trees where ordinary sycamore trees grew"

Isaiah 9:11

Therefore Yahweh will raise up against him Rezin, his adversary

Here "Rezin" represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "Therefore, Yahweh will bring Rezin and his army against the people of Israel"

Rezin

This is the name of a man. See how you translated Rezin in [Isaiah 7:1]

will stir up his enemies

The phrase "stir up" is an idiom that means to incite them to attack. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause Israel's enemies to attack"

Isaiah 9:12

They will devour Israel with open mouth

"Devour" is how wild animals eat their prey. Alternate translation: "Like a wild beast eating its prey, the army of the enemy will destroy the people of Israel"

In all these things, his anger does not subside; his hand

"Even though all these things have happened, he is still angry, and his hand." See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:25.

his hand is still stretched out

Isaiah speaks as if Yahweh were a person about to hit another person with his fist. This is a metaphor for Yahweh punishing Israel. See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:25. Alternate translation: "he will still be ready to punish them"

Isaiah 9:13

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 9:14

head and tail

Isaiah explains this metaphor in verse 15. The "head," the part of an animal a person would want to be, is "the leader and the noble man," and the "tail," the dirty part of the animal, is "the prophet who teaches lies."

palm branch and reed

The "palm branch" grows high on the tree and is a metaphor for people who are important and rule others. The "reed" grows in shallow water and is a metaphor for people who are poor and unimportant and are ruled by others.

Isaiah 9:15

General Information:

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Isaiah 9:16

Those who lead this people lead them astray

The leaders causing people to disobey is spoken of as if the leaders led them on the wrong path.

Alternate translation: "The leaders of Israel have caused the people to disobey God"

those who are led by them are swallowed up

This is a metaphor that can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "those that they lead become confused" or 2) Alternate translation: "Yahweh destroys those that they lead"

Isaiah 9:17

every mouth speaks foolish things

The word "mouth" refers to the person. Alternate translation: "every person speaks foolish things"

In all these things, his anger does not subside; his hand

"Even though all these things have happened, he is still angry, and his hand." See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:25.

his hand is still stretched out

Isaiah speaks as if Yahweh were a person about to hit another person with his fist. This is a metaphor

for Yahweh punishing Israel. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 5:25]

Isaiah 9:18

Wickedness burns like a fire; it devours the briers and thorns; it even burns the thickets of the forest

The people's evil deeds are spoken of as if they were a very destructive fire. This fire burns even the briers and thorns, plants that grow in places where people no longer live, and "the thickets of the forest" where no one has ever lived, because it has already destroyed the places where people were living.

briers ... thorns

The words "briers" and "thorns" both refer to useless, thorny plants; they can be translated using one word. See how you translated these words in [Isaiah 7:23]

Isaiah 9:19

Through the fury of Yahweh of hosts the land is scorched

Translate "Yahweh of hosts" as in [Isaiah 1:9]

No man spares his brother

"No one stops himself from harming his own brother" or "Everyone harms even his own brother." To "spare" a person means to want to harm him but to not harm him.

Isaiah 9:20

They will grab food on the right hand ... on the left hand

"They will grab food that lies to the right of them ... that lies to the left of them." They will grab food wherever they can find it.

Each will even eat the flesh of his own arm

Possible meanings are 1) people will be so hungry that they will want to eat or will actually eat their own arms or 2) the word "arm" is a metaphor for the person's neighbor.

Isaiah 9:21

In all these things, his anger does not subside; his hand

"Even though all these things have happened, he is still angry, and his hand." See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:25.

his hand is still stretched out

Isaiah speaks as if Yahweh were a person about to hit another person with his fist. This is a metaphor for Yahweh punishing Israel. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 5:25]

Chapter 10

- ¹ Woe to those who decree unjust decrees
and write unjust laws.
- ² They deprive the needy of justice,
rob the poor of my people of their rights,
plunder widows,
and make the fatherless their prey!
- ³ What will you do on judgment day
when the destruction comes from far away?
To whom will you flee for help,
and where will you leave your wealth?
- ⁴ Nothing remains, and you crouch among the prisoners
or fall among the killed.
In all these things, his anger does not subside;
his hand is still stretched out.
- ⁵ Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
the staff by whom I wield my fury!
- ⁶ I send him against a godless nation
and against the people who bear my overflowing wrath.
I order him to take the plunder, to take the prey,
and to trample them like mud in the streets.
- ⁷ But this is not what he intends,
nor does he think this way.
It is in his heart to destroy
and eliminate many nations.
- ⁸ For he says, "Are not all my princes kings?"
- ⁹ Is not Kalno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?
- ¹⁰ As my hand has overcome idolatrous kingdoms,
whose carved figures were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
- ¹¹ just as I did to Samaria and her worthless idols,
will I not also do the same to Jerusalem and to her idols?"
- ¹² When the Lord has finished his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the
arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and his prideful looks. ¹³ For he says,
- "By my strength and by my wisdom I acted.
I have understanding,
and I have removed the boundaries of the peoples.
I have stolen their treasures,
and like a bull I have brought down the inhabitants.
- ¹⁴ My hand has seized, as from a nest,
the wealth of nations,
and as one gathers abandoned eggs,
I gathered all the earth.
None fluttered their wings
or opened their mouth or chirped."
- ¹⁵ Will the ax boast about itself against the one who wields it?
Will the saw praise itself more than the one who cuts with it?
It is as if a rod could lift up those who raise it,
or as if a staff could lift up a person.
- ¹⁶ Therefore the Lord Yahweh of hosts
will send emaciation among his elite warriors;
and under his glory there will be kindled
a burning like fire.
- ¹⁷ The light of Israel will become a fire,

- and his Holy One a flame;
it will burn and devour his thorns and briers
in one day.
- 18** Yahweh will consume the glory of his forest
and of his fruitful land, both soul and body;
it will be like when a sick man's life wastes away.
- 19** The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few,
that a child could count them.
- 20** On that day, the remnant of Israel,
the family of Jacob that has escaped,
will no longer rely on the one
who defeated them,
but will indeed depend on Yahweh,
the Holy One of Israel.
- 21** A remnant of Jacob
will return to the mighty God.
- 22** For though your people, Israel, are like the sand of the seashore,
only a remnant of them will return.
Destruction is decreed,
as overflowing righteousness demands.
- 23** For the Lord Yahweh of hosts is about to carry out
the destruction determined throughout the land.
- 24** Therefore the Lord Yahweh of hosts says,
"My people who live in Zion,
do not fear the Assyrian.
He will strike you with the rod
and raise his staff against you, as the Egyptians did. **25** Do not fear him,
for in a very short time
my anger against you will end,
and my anger will lead to his destruction."
- 26** Then Yahweh of hosts will wield a whip against them,
as when he defeated Midian at the rock of Oreb.
He will raise his rod over the sea and lift it up
as he did in Egypt.
- 27** On that day, his burden is lifted from your shoulder
and his yoke from off your neck,
and the yoke will be destroyed
because of fatness. ^[1]
- 28** The enemy has come to Aiath
and has passed through Migron;
at Mikmash he has stored his provisions.
- 29** They have crossed over the pass
and they lodge at Geba.
Ramah trembles
and Gibeah of Saul has fled.
- 30** Cry aloud, daughter of Gallim!
Pay attention, Laishah!
Answer her, Anathoth!
- 31** Madmenah is fleeing,
and the inhabitants of Gebim run for safety.
- 32** This very day he will halt at Nob
and shake his fist
at the mountain of the daughter of Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.
- 33** Behold, the Lord Yahweh of hosts
will lop off the boughs with a terrifying crash;

the tallest trees will be cut down,
and the lofty will be brought down.
³⁴ He will chop down the thickets of the forest with an ax,
and Lebanon in his majesty will fall.

Footnotes

10:27 ^[1] The last line of this verse is difficult because it does not seem to fit the context. Some modern translations leave out

Isaiah 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins with a prophecy that is a continuation of the prophecy beginning in 8:21. Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. ULB does this with the poetry in 10:1-11, 13-14, 15-19, 27-34. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's sovereignty

Yahweh has so much power and authority that he controls all of the nations. He even controls the nations who do not worship him. He uses Assyria to punish the kingdom of Israel.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

There are many rhetorical questions in this chapter. Yahweh uses rhetorical questions to make statements about Israel's sin. The Assyrians use rhetorical questions in order to boast in their pride. (See: and sin)

Isaiah 10:1

to those who decree unjust decrees and write unjust laws

These two phrases mean basically the same thing.
Alternate translation: "to those who make laws and decrees that are not fair to everyone"

Isaiah 10:2

They deprive the needy of justice, rob the poor of my people of their rights

These two phrases mean basically the same thing.
Alternate translation: "They are unjust to the poor and needy among my people"

the needy
"poor people"

plunder widows
"take everything from women whose husbands have died"

make the fatherless their prey
Isaiah compares orphans to animals that other animals hunt and eat. This emphasizes that orphans are powerless and judges can easily harm them.
Alternate translation: "harm children who do not have parents like an animal that goes after its prey"

prey

Translated "prey" as in Isaiah 5:29.

Isaiah 10:3

What will you do on judgment day ... away?

Isaiah uses a question to scold those in Judah who harm the poor and weak people. Alternate translation: "You will be able to do nothing on judgment day ... away!"

judgment day

"the day when Yahweh comes to judge you" or "the day when Yahweh punishes you"

To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth?

Isaiah uses a question to scold those in Judah who harm the poor and weak people. Alternate translation: "You have nowhere to run for help, and you will have nowhere to hide your riches!"

Isaiah 10:4

Nothing remains, and you crouch

Possible meanings are 1) "None of your wealth remains as you crouch" or 2) "You can do nothing else but crouch."

you crouch among the prisoners or fall among the killed
"your enemies will either take you as a prisoner or will kill you"

In all these things, his anger does not subside
"Even though all these things have happened, he is still angry." See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:25.

his hand is still stretched out
Isaiah speaks as if Yahweh were a person about to hit another person with his fist. This is a metaphor for Yahweh punishing Israel. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 5:25]

Isaiah 10:5

Woe
This word marks the beginning of God's announcement about a severe punishment against Assyria.

the Assyrian
This refers to the king of Assyria.

the rod of my anger, the staff by whom I wield my fury
Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh compares the king of Assyria to a weapon a person holds in his hand and hits other people with. It emphasizes that the king of Assyria and his army are a tool that Yahweh uses to punish Israel. Alternate translation: "who will be like a weapon in my hands that I will use to show my anger"

Isaiah 10:6

I send him ... I order him
The word "him" here also refers to the king of Assyria. But it does not mean God is only sending the king; he is sending with him the army of Assyria. Alternate translation: "I send the army of Assyria ... I order them"

against a godless nation and against the people who bear my overflowing wrath
"to attack a nation full of proud people who have made me very angry"

who bear my overflowing wrath
Yahweh speaks of his wrath as if it were more liquid than a container could hold; "the people" are trying to carry this container, but it is heavy, and Yahweh keeps pouring liquid in even after it starts to spill out. Alternate translation: "at whom I continue to be angry even after I have punished them"

to take the plunder
"to take everything they have"

to take the prey
to take the people like prey. See how you translated "prey" in Isaiah 5:29.

trample them like mud
Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh compares the army of Assyria attacking Israel to people stomping through mud who do not care what happens to the mud. Alternate translation: "trample them until they become like mud" or 2) the people are stomping on other people so they are lying in the mud and unable to rise. This is a metaphor for completely defeating them. Alternate translation: "completely defeat them"

Isaiah 10:7

But this is not what he intends, nor does he think this way
The meaning of "this" and "this way" can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But the king of Assyria does not intend to do what I tell him, nor does he think that I am using him as my weapon"

It is in his heart to destroy and eliminate many nations
The words "destroy" and "eliminate" mean basically the same thing. They are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "He wants to completely destroy many nations"

Isaiah 10:8

Are not all my princes kings?
The king of Assyria uses a question to emphasize what he believes everyone should already know. Alternate translation: "I have made captains of my army kings over lands I have conquered!"

Isaiah 10:9

Is not Kalno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus?
The king of Assyria uses these questions for emphasis. Alternate translation: "Kalno is no different from Carchemish. Hamath is no different from Arpad. Samaria is no different from Damascus. I have conquered them all!"

Kalno ... Carchemish ... Hamath ... Arpad
These are all names of cities.

Isaiah 10:10

General Information:
Yahweh continues to quote what the king of Assyria says (Isaiah 10:8).

As my hand has overcome
"Hand" here is a reference to military strength. Alternate translation: "As my powerful army has defeated" or "As I have conquered"

my
This refers to the king of Assyria.

whose carved figures were greater

During this time people believed that the greatness of an idol showed how powerful the kingdom that had built it was. The king of Assyria is saying that because the idols in Jerusalem are not as great as the idols of the kingdoms he has defeated, Jerusalem would be less able to defeat him than they were.

Isaiah 10:11

just as I did to Samaria and her worthless idols

The word "Samaria" refers to the people who lived there, and "her" refers to the city of Samaria. Cities and nations were often spoken of as if they were women. Alternate translation: "just as I did to the people of Samaria and their worthless idols"

will I not also do the same to Jerusalem and to her idols?

The king of Assyria used this question to emphasize the certainty that he will conquer the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "I will certainly do the same to Jerusalem and her idols!"

Isaiah 10:12

When the Lord has finished his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish

Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were someone else. "When I, the Lord, have finished my work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish"

his work on ... and on

his work of punishing. "punishing ... and punishing"

I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and his prideful looks

"I will punish the king of Assyria for the arrogant things he has said and the look of pride on his face"

Isaiah 10:13

For he says

"For the king of Assyria says"

I have removed ... I have stolen

Here the word "I" refers to the king of Assyria. He was the leader of the Assyrian army and took credit for what the army did at his command. Alternate translation: "my army has removed ... They have stolen"

like a bull

"as strong as a bull." Some ancient texts read, "like a mighty man."

I have brought down the inhabitants

Possible meanings are 1) the king of Assyria has shamed the people of the countries he conquered or 2) he has removed the kings of the nations so they no longer rule.

I have brought

Here the word "I" refers to the king of Assyria. He was the leader of the Assyrian army and took credit for what the army did at his command. Alternate translation: "I and my army have brought" or "we have brought"

Isaiah 10:14

General Information:

Yahweh is still quoting the king of Assyria (Isaiah 10:13).

My hand has seized

The hand is a metonym for either the king's power or his army. Alternate translation: "In my power I have seized" or "My army has seized"

My hand has seized, as from a nest, the wealth of nations

The king of Assyria compares taking the treasures from the nations to a person taking eggs out of a bird's nest. This emphasizes how easy it was for him and his army to conquer these other kingdoms. Alternate translation: "My army has stolen the wealth from the nations just as easily as a man takes eggs from a nest"

as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth

The king of Assyria speaks of taking over nations as if he was gathering eggs. Alternate translation: "just as a person takes eggs from a nest when the bird is not there to protect them, my army has taken the treasures of every nation"

None fluttered their wings or opened their mouth or chirped

This compares the nations to a bird who sits quietly while her eggs are taken. This emphasizes that the nations did nothing while the army of Assyria took all of their possessions. Alternate translation: "And like a bird that does not make a sound or flap her wings when someone steals her eggs, the nations did nothing as we took their treasure"

Isaiah 10:15

Will the ax boast about itself against the one who wields it? Will the saw praise itself more than the one who cuts with it?

The speaker uses these questions to mock the king of Assyria. Alternate translation: "An ax cannot boast that it is better than the one who holds it. And a saw does not get more glory than the one who cuts with it."

the saw

a sharp tool used for cutting wood

It is as if a rod could lift up those who raise it, or as if a staff could lift up a person

These phrases mean basically the same thing and are used to strengthen the meaning of the two questions before it. This can be translated as a new

sentence. Alternate translation: "And neither can a rod or staff lift the person who picks it up"

Isaiah 10:16

Therefore the Lord Yahweh of hosts will send emaciation among his elite warriors

It is unclear whether Yahweh or Isaiah is speaking. This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "emaciation" is expressed as the verb "make weak." Alternate translation: "Therefore I, Lord Yahweh of hosts, will make the king's strongest soldiers weak"

under his glory there will be kindled a burning like fire
Yahweh compares his punishment to a fire. This emphasizes that his punishment will completely destroy all the splendor and greatness of the kingdom of Assyria. Alternate translation: "I will destroy his greatness as if I were starting a fire to burn everything he is proud of"

Isaiah 10:17

The light of Israel will become a fire

The phrase "light of Israel" refers to Yahweh. It is unclear whether Yahweh or Isaiah is speaking. Alternate translation: "I, Yahweh, the light of Israel, will become like a fire, able to destroy everyone that does not honor me"

his Holy One a flame

"I, Yahweh, the Holy one of Israel, will become like a flame." See how you translated "Holy One" in Isaiah 1:4.

it will burn and devour his thorns and briers

"The fire will burn and devour the king of Assyria's thorns and briers." The speaker compares the king of Assyria's army to thorns and briers. This emphasizes how easily God will destroy them. Alternate translation: "I will destroy the Assyrians like a fire burning thorns and briers"

thorns ... briers

The words "briers" and "thorns" both refer to useless, thorny plants; they can be translated using one expression. See how you translated these words in [Isaiah 7:23]

Isaiah 10:18

Yahweh will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful land

Possible meanings are 1) "Yahweh will destroy the great forests and farmlands in the nation of Assyria" or 2) "Yahweh will destroy the army of Assyria as a fire burns up great forests and farmlands."

both soul and body

Possible meanings are 1) this emphasizes that God will completely destroy the forests and farmlands. Alternate translation: "completely" or 2) this means God will completely destroy the people of Assyria.

The phrase "soul and body" refers to the spiritual part and the physical part of a person.

it will be like when a sick man's life wastes away

This compares either the forests and farmlands of Assyria or the army of Assyria to a sick man as he lies in bed dying. This emphasizes how something so great can become weak and dying. Alternate translation: "they will be like a sick man who grows weak and dies"

Isaiah 10:19

The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few

"What remains of the trees in the king's forest will be so few"

Isaiah 10:20

On that day

This refers to the time when God does the things that are described in [Isaiah 10:16-19]

that has escaped

The meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "that has escaped from the army of Assyria"

will no longer rely on the one who defeated them

"no longer rely on the king of Assyria, who harmed them"

Holy One

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 10:21

General Information:

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Isaiah 10:22

your people, Israel, are

Here "your" is singular. Possible interpretations are 1) God is speaking to Isaiah and "your" refers to Isaiah. Alternate translation: "your people Israel are" or 2) Isaiah or God is speaking to the nation of Israel and "your" refers to the nation. Alternate translation: "your people, O Israel, are"

are like the sand of the seashore

This emphasizes that there were a great number of people of Israel. Alternate translation: "are too many to count, like the sand on the seashore"

Destruction is decreed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has decreed that he will destroy most of those who live in Israel"

as overflowing righteousness demands

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "This must be done for the sake of

perfect righteousness" or "Yahweh must do this because he is completely righteous"

Isaiah 10:23

carry out the destruction determined throughout the land

This can be translated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "destroy everything in the land just as he has determined to do" or 2) Alternate translation: "destroy the people in the land just as he has determined to do."

determined
"decided"

Isaiah 10:24

the Assyrian

Isaiah speaks of the king of Assyria and his army as if he were one man. Alternate translation: "the king of Assyria and his army"

He will strike you with the rod and raise his staff against you

The words "rod" and "staff" refer to pieces of wood that people use as clubs to beat animals and other people. Isaiah speaks of the way the Assyrians will rule over the Israelites as if the Assyrians were beating the Israelites with clubs. Alternate translation: "He will rule over you and make slaves of you"

He will strike

The word "He" refers to "the Assyrian" which represents the king of Assyria and his army. Alternate translation: "He and his army will strike"

rod ... staff

See how you translated these words in Isaiah.

as the Egyptians did

The full meaning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "as the Egyptians ruled over your ancestors and made them slaves"

Isaiah 10:25

my anger will lead to his destruction

The abstract noun "destruction" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "I will destroy him because I am angry with him"

Isaiah 10:26

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

will wield a whip against them

"will beat the Assyrians with a whip." God will not really use a whip. This refers to God's power to punish the Assyrians severely. Alternate translation: "will punish the Assyrians severely as if with a whip"

as when he defeated Midian at the rock of Oreb

This refers to when God helped a man named Gideon defeat the army of Midian.

He will raise his rod over the sea and lift it up as he did in Egypt

This speaks of God rescuing the people from the Assyrians as if they were the Egyptian army. This refers to when God caused the water of the Red Sea to split so the people of Israel could escape from the Egyptian army and so that the Egyptian army would drown in it. Alternate translation: "He will help you escape from the army of Assyria as he helped your ancestors escape the army of Egypt"

Isaiah 10:27

his burden is lifted from your shoulder and his yoke from off your neck

"Yahweh will lift the burden that Assyria has put on your shoulder, and he will remove the yoke that they have put on your neck." These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The words "burden" and "yoke" refer to slavery. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will remove the Assyrians who oppress you and will stop them from making you their slaves"

the yoke will be destroyed because of fatness

This expression suggests that the neck of the animal that is wearing the yoke will become too fat to fit the yoke any longer. This is a metaphor for Israel becoming so strong that the Assyrians can no longer rule them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your neck will become so fat that it will break the yoke" or "you will become so strong that you will no longer be the Assyrians' slaves"

Isaiah 10:28

has come ... has passed ... has stored

Isaiah speaks of these future events as though they have already happened.

Aiath ... Migron ... Mikmash

These are all cities and villages near Jerusalem that the army of Assyria went through and caused trouble in.

Isaiah 10:29

have crossed ... lodge ... trembles ... has fled

Isaiah speaks of these future events as though they have already happened.

Geba ... Ramah ... Gibeah

These are all cities and villages near Jerusalem that the army of Assyria went through and caused trouble in.

Ramah trembles and Gibeah of Saul has fled

Here "Ramah" and "Gibeah of Saul" refer to the people who lived in those cities. Alternate translation: "The people of Ramah tremble and the people of Gibeah of Saul have fled"

Isaiah 10:30

daughter of Gallim

The word "daughter" here refers to the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "Gallim" or "people of Gallim"

Gallim ... Laishah ... Anathoth

These are names of more cities and villages near Jerusalem that the Assyrian army traveled through causing fear among the people. All of these refer to the people who live in these places.

Isaiah 10:31

Madmenah ... Gebim

These are names of more cities and villages near Jerusalem that the Assyrian army traveled through causing fear among the people. All of these refer to the people who live in these places.

Isaiah 10:32

Nob

This is the name of a village or city near Jerusalem that the Assyrian army traveled through causing fear among the people. It refers to the people who live in this place.

he will halt at Nob and shake his fist

Here "he" and "his" refer to the king of Assyria and his soldiers. People would shake their fists at people whom they were threatening. Alternate translation: "the army of Assyria will stop at Nob and threaten"

the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem

The words "mount" and "hill" are metonyms for the people who live on them. The words "mount of the daughter of Zion" mean almost the same thing as the words "hill of Jerusalem." See how they are translated in [Isaiah 2:14]

Isaiah 10:33

Behold

This can be translated as "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you."

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

will lop off the boughs ... the lofty will be brought down

Isaiah speaks of the army of Assyria as if it were the tall trees in Lebanon. God will destroy the army like people cutting down the mighty trees of Lebanon. This emphasizes that though the army is strong, God has the power to destroy it.

will lop off the boughs

"will cut off the big branches of the trees." In order to make it clear that this refers to the army of Assyria, it can be translated as a simile: He will destroy the army of Assyria like strong men cutting off the big branches of trees.

with a terrifying crash

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "crash" is expressed as the verb "make a noise." Alternate translation: "and the branches will crash down on the ground and make a terrifying noise" or "and the branches will fall to the ground with a very loud noise"

the tallest trees will be cut down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will cut down the tallest trees"

the tallest trees

This is a metaphor for "the strongest soldiers."

the lofty will be brought down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will bring down the lofty people"

lofty
proud

Isaiah 10:34

He will chop down the thickets ... and Lebanon in his majesty will fall

Isaiah speaks of the army of Assyria as if it were the tall trees in Lebanon. God will destroy the army like people cutting down the mighty trees of Lebanon. This emphasizes that though the army is strong, God has the power to destroy it.

the thickets of the forest

"the dense shrubs in the forest." This is possibly a metaphor for those people who are not well known.

Lebanon in his majesty will fall

"the forests of Lebanon will no longer be so grand." This is possibly a metaphor for the Assyrian army. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will defeat the army of Assyria, as mighty as it is"

Chapter 11

- ¹ A shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit.
- ² The Spirit of Yahweh will rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of instruction and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh.
- ³ His delight will be the fear of the Lord;
he will not judge by what his eyes see,
nor decide by what his ears hear.
- ⁴ Instead, he will judge the poor with righteousness
and decide fairly for the humble of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness will be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his hips.
- ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together,
and a little child will lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear will graze together,
and their young will lie down together.
The lion will eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ A baby will play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child will put his hand on the den of the adder.
- ⁹ They will not hurt nor destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of knowledge of Yahweh,
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal flag for the peoples. The nations will seek him out,
and his resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ On that day, the Lord will again extend his hand to recover the
remnant of his people who remain in Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the
islands of the sea.
- ¹² He will set up a signal flag for the nations
and will gather the outcasts of Israel
and the dispersed of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.
- ¹³ He will turn aside the envy of Ephraim,
and hostilities of Judah will be cut off.
Ephraim will not envy Judah,
and Judah will no longer be hostile to Ephraim.
- ¹⁴ Instead they will swoop down on the Philistine hills on the west,
and together they will plunder the people of the east.
They will possess Edom and Moab,
and the people of Ammon will obey them.
- ¹⁵ Yahweh will completely destroy
the gulf of the Sea of Egypt.
With his scorching wind he will wave his hand
over the Euphrates River
and will divide it into seven streams,
so it can be crossed over in sandals.
- ¹⁶ There will be a highway for the remnant of his people
that return from Assyria,
as there was for Israel in their coming up
from the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Messiah

The prophecies of this chapter focus on the coming Messiah. Some of these prophecies concern the first coming of Jesus, while some reference a future day of restoration. The author transitions between these time periods without telling his reader. (See: prophet and christ and restore)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Ambiguity

It is uncertain what period of time these prophecies refer to or who will fulfill them. The translator should allow this uncertainty and ambiguity to remain. (See: fulfill)

Isaiah 11:1

A shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse ... a branch out of his roots will bear fruit

Isaiah speaks of Jesse and his descendants as if they were a tree that had been cut down. Both of these phrases tell about a descendant of Jesse who would be king. Alternate translation: "As a shoot sprouts out of a tree stump, so a descendant of Jesse will become king over what remains of Israel"

the stump of Jesse

A stump is what remains of a tree after it is chopped down. The "stump of Jesse" represents what was left of the kingdom that Jesse's son David was once king of.

Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of Yahweh will rest upon him

Resting upon him represents being with him and helping him. The word "him" refers to the one who would become king.

the Spirit of wisdom ... the Spirit of instruction ... the Spirit of knowledge ... the fear of Yahweh

Here the word "Spirit" refers to an ability or quality that the Spirit of Yahweh would give him. Alternate translation: "and he will cause him to have wisdom and understanding, instruction and might, knowledge and the fear of Yahweh"

Isaiah 11:3

Connecting Statement:

Isaiah continues to describe the king.

he will not judge by what his eyes see

The phrase "what his eyes see" refers to seeing things that are not important for judging a person

rightly. Alternate translation: "he will not judge a person simply by seeing what the person looks like"

nor decide by what his ears hear

"and he will not decide by what his ears hear." The phrase "what his ears hear" refers to hearing what people say about someone. Alternate translation: "and he will not judge a person simply by hearing what others say about him"

Isaiah 11:4

the poor ... the humble ... the wicked

These phrases refer to people who have these qualities. Alternate translation: "poor people ... humble people ... wicked people"

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth ... with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked

These two phrases mean basically the same thing.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth

The word "earth" here represents the people on earth. Striking them with the rod of his mouth represents judging them, and that judgement will lead to punishment. Alternate translation: "He will judge the people of the earth, and they will be punished"

with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked

The "breath of his lips" represents him judging them. Alternate translation: "he will judge wicked people, and they will be killed"

Isaiah 11:5

the belt of his waist ... the belt around his hips

Possible meanings are 1) the belt is used to secure one's clothes so he can work, or 2) the belt is an undergarment, or 3) the belt is a sash that a king wears to show his authority.

Righteousness will be the belt of his waist

Wearing righteousness like a belt represents being righteous. Possible meanings are 1) the king's righteousness will enable him to rule. Alternate translation: "His righteousness will be a like a belt around his waist" or 2) the king's righteousness would show his authority to rule. Alternate translation: "He will rule righteously"

faithfulness the belt around his hips

The words "will be" are understood in this phrase. Alternate translation: "faithfulness will be the belt around his hips"

faithfulness the belt around his hips

Wearing faithfulness like a belt represents being faithful. Possible meanings are 1) the king's faithfulness will enable him to rule, or 2) the king's faithfulness will show his authority to rule. Alternate translation: "his faithfulness will be a like a belt around his hips" or "he will rule faithfully"

Isaiah 11:6

General Information:

Isaiah describes what the world will be like when the king rules. There will be complete peace in the world. This is shown by the peace that there will be even among animals. Animals that normally kill other animals will not kill them, and they will all be safe together.

The wolf ... the leopard ... the young lion

These phrases refer to these animals in general, not to a specific wolf or leopard. These are all strong animals that attack and eat other animals. Alternate translation: "Wolves ... leopards ... young lions"

the lamb ... the young goat ... the calf ... the fattened calf

The phrases refer to these animals in general, not to a specific lamb or goat. These are all animals that eat grass and straw. Other animals sometimes attack and eat them. Alternate translation: "lambs ... young goats ... calves ... fattened calves"

leopard

a large cat with yellow fur and black spots that kills and eats other animals

the calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together

The phrase "will be" is understood. Alternate translation: "the calf, the lion, and the fattened calf will be together"

a little child will lead them

A child will take care of them and lead them to good places to drink water and eat grass or hay.

Isaiah 11:7

the bear ... The lion

These phrases refer to these animals in general, not to a specific wolf or leopard. These are all strong animals that attack and eat other animals. Alternate translation: "Wolves ... leopards ... young lions ... bears ... Lions"

The cow ... the ox

The phrases refer to these animals in general, not to a specific lamb or goat. These are all animals that eat grass and straw. Other animals sometimes attack and eat them. Alternate translation: "lambs ... young goats ... calves ... fattened calves ... Cows ... oxen"

bear

a very large animal with thick hair and sharp claws that kills and eats other animals

will graze together

"will eat grass together"

their young

This refers to the animals' offspring shortly after they are born.

Isaiah 11:8

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe the complete peace in the world when the king rules.

A baby will play over the hole of the asp

It can be stated clearly that the baby will be safe because the asp will not bite him. Alternate translation: "Babies will play safely over the hole of the asp"

the asp ... the den of the adder

These phrases refer to poisonous snakes in general. Alternate translation: "snakes ... serpents' dens"

the weaned child

a child who no longer drinks his mother's milk

Isaiah 11:9

on all my holy mountain

The "holy mountain" is Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "on all of Yahweh's holy mountain"

the earth will be full of knowledge of Yahweh

The phrase "knowledge of Yahweh" represents people who know Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the earth will be full of those who know Yahweh" or "those who know Yahweh will cover the earth"

as the waters cover the sea

This phrase is used to show how full the earth will be of people who know Yahweh. It may be clearer

that it does this if its words are similar to the words in the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "as the seas are full of water"

Isaiah 11:10

the root of Jesse

This refers to Jesse's and King David's descendant who would become the king that was told about in [Isaiah 1:1]

will stand as a signal flag for the peoples

"will attract the peoples to come to him"

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

The nations

"The people of the nations"

Isaiah 11:11

the Lord will again extend his hand to recover the remnant of his people

The hand is a reference to God's power. Alternate translation: "the Lord will again use his power to bring back the remnant of his people"

Pathros ... Elam ... Hamath

These are names of places.

Isaiah 11:12

He will set up a signal flag for the nations

Possible meanings are 1) "The Lord will set up the king as a signal flag for the nations" or 2) "The king will set up a signal flag for the nations"

a signal flag for the nations

"a flag for the nations to see" or "a flag to call the nations to himself"

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

the dispersed of Judah

"the people of Judah who had been scattered around the world"

from the four corners of the earth

The earth is pictured as if it has four corners, and those corners are its most distant places. This refers to everywhere on earth where those people might be. Alternate translation: "from even the most distant places of the earth" or "from all over the earth"

Isaiah 11:13

He will turn aside the envy of Ephraim

Ephraim here refers to the descendants of the northern kingdom of Israel. The noun "envy" can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: "He will stop the people of Ephraim from being envious"

Judah will no longer be hostile to Ephraim

Judah here refers to the descendants of the southern kingdom. This phrase can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will stop the people of Judah from being hostile" or "he will stop the people of Judah from hating"

Isaiah 11:14

they will swoop down on the Philistine hills

The people of Israel and Judah are pictured as if they were birds that fly down quickly to attack a person or animal. Alternate translation: "they will go quickly to the Philistine hills to attack the people there"

They will possess Edom and Moab

This means that they will conquer the people of Edom and Moab and will rule over them. Alternate translation: "They will take the land of Edom and Moab" or "They will rule over Edom and Moab"

Isaiah 11:15

the gulf of the Sea of Egypt

A "gulf" is a large area of water that land partly surrounds.

With his scorching wind he will wave his hand over the Euphrates River

Waving his hand over something represents his power to change it. Alternate translation: "By his power he will cause a scorching wind to blow on the Euphrates River"

his scorching wind

This is a strong or hot wind that causes some of the water in rivers to dry up.

so it can be crossed over in sandals

"so that people can cross over it even while wearing their sandals"

Isaiah 11:16

There will be a highway

A highway is a large road that many people can travel on. "Yahweh will make a road"

in their coming up from the land of Egypt

"when they came up from the land of Egypt"

Chapter 12

- ¹ On that day you will say,
- "I will give thanks to you, Yahweh.
For though you were angry with me,
your wrath has turned away,
and you have comforted me.
- ² See, God is my salvation;
I will trust and will not fear,
for Yah, yes, Yahweh is my strength and song.
He has become my salvation." ^[1]
- ³ With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
- ⁴ On that day you will say,
- "Give thanks to Yahweh and call upon his name;
declare his deeds among the peoples,
proclaim that his name is exalted.
- ⁵ Praise Yahweh in song, for he has done majestic things;
let this be known throughout the earth.
- ⁶ Cry aloud and shout for joy, you inhabitants of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

Footnotes

12:2 ^[1]Yah is a short form of the name Yahweh.

Isaiah 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"That day"

The time of this day is unclear. It may be a time in the near future for Isaiah, or a time in the distant future for him. In the latter case, it would reference the last days. (See: lastday)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Tense

Extra care must be taken in translating the tense of this chapter. The author talks about the future, but frequently changes to speak in the present tense. Some languages will have difficulty speaking in this way.

Isaiah 12:1

General Information:

Here Isaiah continues to describe what it will be like when the king that God has chosen rules (Isaiah 11:1-2).

On that day

It can be stated clearly what time is being referred to. Alternate translation: "At that time" or "When the king rules"

your wrath has turned away

God's wrath is spoken of as if it were a person that could turn away and leave. It means that God has stopped being angry. Alternate translation: "You are no longer angry with me"

Isaiah 12:2

God is my salvation

God causing someone's salvation is spoken of as if God were that salvation. The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with the noun "savior"

or the verb "save." Alternate translation: "God causes my salvation" or "God is my savior" or "God is the one who saves me"

Yahweh is my strength

God causing someone to be strong is spoken of as if Yahweh were their strength. Alternate translation: "Yahweh makes me strong"

song

The word "song" here represents what a person sings about. Alternate translation: "the one I joyfully sing about"

He has become my salvation

"He has saved me"

Isaiah 12:3

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation

Isaiah speaks of people being saved as if they were getting salvation the way people get water out of well. Alternate translation: "you will rejoice when he saves you, as people rejoice when they draw water from a well"

Isaiah 12:4

call upon his name

Here "his name" refers to Yahweh. Calling on him represents either praising him or asking him for

help. Alternate translation: "praise him loudly" or "call to him to help you"

declare his deeds among the peoples

The noun "deeds" can be expressed with the phrase "what he has done." Alternate translation: "Tell the peoples about the great things he has done"

proclaim that his name is exalted

Here "his name" refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "proclaim that he is exalted" or "proclaim that he is great"

Isaiah 12:5

General Information:

Isaiah continues to tell what the people will say when the king rules.

Praise Yahweh in song

"Sing songs of praise to Yahweh"

Isaiah 12:6

for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel

"because the Holy One of Israel, who lives among you, is mighty" or "because the Holy One of Israel is mighty and he lives among you"

Chapter 13

¹ A declaration about Babylon, that Isaiah son of Amoz received:

² On the bare mountain set up a signal flag,
cry aloud to them,
wave your hand for them
to go into the gates of the nobles.

³ "I have commanded my consecrated ones;
I have summoned my mighty ones to vent my anger—
those who rejoice in my triumph.

⁴ The noise of a multitude in the mountains,
as of many people!
The noise of a tumult of the kingdoms
like many nations gathered together!
Yahweh of hosts is mustering
the army for the battle.

⁵ They come from a far country,
from way over the horizon.
It is Yahweh with his instruments of indignation,
to destroy the whole land.

⁶ Wail, for the day of Yahweh is near;
it comes with destruction from the Almighty.

⁷ Therefore all hands hang limp,
and every heart melts.

⁸ They will be terrified;
pain and agony will seize them,
like a woman in labor.
They will look in amazement at one another;
their faces will be aflame.

⁹ See, the day of Yahweh comes
with cruel wrath and overflowing anger,
to make the land a desolation
and to exterminate the sinners from it.

¹⁰ The stars of heaven and the constellations
will not give their light.
The sun will be darkened even from dawn,
and the moon will not shine.

¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil
and the wicked for their iniquity.
I will put an end to the arrogance of the proud
and will abase the arrogance of the ruthless.

¹² I will make men more rare than fine gold
and mankind harder to find than the pure gold of Ophir.

¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble,
and the earth will be shaken out of its place,
by the fury of Yahweh of hosts,
and on the day of his fierce anger.

¹⁴ Like a hunted gazelle or like a sheep
with no one to gather them,
every man will turn toward his own people
and will flee to his own land.

¹⁵ Every one who is found will be thrust through,
and every one who is swept up will die by the sword.

¹⁶ Their infants also will be dashed in pieces before their eyes.
Their houses will be plundered and their wives raped.

- 17 Look, I am about to stir up the Medes to attack them,
who will not be concerned about silver,
nor do they delight in gold.
- 18 Their bows will strike down the young men;
they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb
and they will not look with pity on children.
- 19 Then Babylon, the most admired of kingdoms,
the splendor of Chaldean arrogance,
will be overthrown by God
like Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 20 It will never be inhabited
or lived in from generation to generation.
The Arab will not pitch his tent there,
nor will shepherds have their flocks rest there.
- 21 But wild animals of the desert will lie there.
Their houses will be full of owls;
and ostriches and wild goats will skip about there.
- 22 Hyenas will cry in their fortresses,
and jackals in the beautiful palaces.
Her time is near,
and her days will not be delayed.

Isaiah 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecies

It is unclear who is addressed by these prophecies. At times, it appears to be the people of Judah, while at other times it seems to reference the last days. This ambiguity should remain in translation. (See: prophet and lastday)

Isaiah 13:1

about Babylon

The name of the city stands for the people of Babylon. Alternate translation: "about the people of Babylon"

Amoz

Amoz was the father of Isaiah. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 1:1]

Isaiah 13:2

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

cry aloud to them

The word "them" refers to soldiers from another country.

the gates of the nobles

Possible meanings are 1) "the gates of Babylon where the nobles live" or 2) "the gates of the nobles' large houses"

the nobles

"the respected people" or "the rulers"

Isaiah 13:3

my consecrated ones

"the ones I have set apart for myself" or "the army that I have set apart for myself"

I have summoned my mighty ones to vent my anger

Venting God's anger represents punishing people because of God's anger. Alternate translation: "I have called my mighty soldiers to punish the people of Babylon because they have made me angry"

in my triumph

"because I have defeated my enemies"

Isaiah 13:4

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as of many people

The words "there is" are understood. The phrases "multitude" and "many people" mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "There is the noise of many people in the mountains" or "There is the noise of a great crowd of people in the mountains"

The noise of a tumult of the kingdoms like many nations gathered together

The words "there is" are understood. The words "kingdoms" and "nations" here refer to the same thing. Alternate translation: "There is the noisy commotion of many kingdoms gathered together"

is mustering
"is gathering"

Isaiah 13:5

from way over the horizon

"from places far beyond the horizon" or "from very distant places"

his instruments of indignation

The soldiers that God is sending to attack Babylon are spoken of as if they were weapons in God's hands. "Indignation" is a metonym for the punishment that God will inflict on Babylon because he is indignant. Alternate translation: "the army that he will use to punish Babylon"

Isaiah 13:6

Wail

cry out loud. The word is usually used of an animal making a sound because it is in pain.

the day of Yahweh is near

Something that is about to happen soon is spoken of as if it is coming near. Alternate translation: "the day of Yahweh will happen soon"

it comes with destruction from the Almighty

The word "it" refers to the day of Yahweh. "It comes with destruction" means that destruction will happen on that day. "Destruction from the Almighty" means that the Almighty will destroy them. Alternate translation: "on that day, the Almighty God will destroy them"

Isaiah 13:7

all hands hang limp

This shows that all the people are very weak and unable to do anything.

every heart melts

People being terribly afraid is spoken of as if their hearts melt. Alternate translation: "everyone is terribly afraid"

Isaiah 13:8

pain and agony will seize them

People suddenly feeling terrible pain and sorrow is spoken of as if the pains and sorrows were people who grab them. Alternate translation: "they will suddenly feel terrible pain and agony"

like a woman in labor

Being in labor represents giving birth to a baby. Alternate translation: "like a woman giving birth to a baby" or "like the pain of a woman who is giving birth to a baby"

their faces will be aflame

Their faces being hot and red is spoken of as if they were burning. Possible reasons for their faces being hot are 1) the people are very afraid or 2) the people feel ashamed or 3) the people cry. Alternate translation: "their faces will be hot and red"

Isaiah 13:9

the day of Yahweh comes with cruel wrath and overflowing anger

The day coming with wrath and anger means that there will be wrath and anger on that day. The abstract nouns "wrath" and "anger" can be expressed with the adjectives "furious" and "angry." Alternate translation: "on the day of Yahweh, he will be furious and extremely angry"

overflowing anger

Anger here is spoken of as if the one who is angry is a container filled with anger. Overflowing anger means that he is extremely angry.

to make the land a desolation

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "desolation" is expressed with the verb "ruin." Alternate translation: "to ruin the land"

Isaiah 13:10

The stars of heaven and the constellations

"The stars in the sky"

will not give their light

Giving light represents "shining." Alternate translation: "will not shine"

The sun will be darkened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will darken the sun" or "The sun will be dark"

Isaiah 13:11

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to talk about what he will do on the day of Yahweh.

the world

This refers to people. Alternate translation: "the people of the world"

the wicked ... the proud ... the ruthless

These phrases refer to people who have these qualities. Alternate translation: "wicked people ... proud people ... ruthless people"

the ruthless

"cruel people"

will abase the arrogance of the ruthless

Here the word "arrogance" is a metonym for the people who are arrogant. Alternate translation: "will abase the ruthless"

Isaiah 13:12

I will make men more rare than fine gold

Why there will be so few people can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will cause so many people to die that living people will be more rare than fine gold"

men more rare than fine gold ... mankind harder to find than the pure gold of Ophir

These two phrases mean basically the same thing.

pure gold of Ophir

Ophir was the name of a place where there was pure gold.

Isaiah 13:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Isaiah 13:14

Like a hunted gazelle or like a sheep with no one to gather them

Yahweh speaks of the defenseless people of Israel as if they were a gazelle or a sheep that was being chased by hunters or wild animals. Alternate translation: "Like gazelles that run away swiftly when people hunt them, and like sheep that have no shepherd run away from wild animals"

gazelle

an animal that is similar to a deer. People hunt them, and wild animals sometimes attack and kill them.

like a sheep with no one to gather them

Sheep that have no shepherd have no one to keep them together and protect them from harm.

Isaiah 13:15

Every one who is found will be thrust through ... every one who is swept up will die by the sword

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy will kill with the sword everyone they find"

swept up

captured

Isaiah 13:16

Their infants also will be dashed in pieces

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy will also dash their infants to pieces" or "The enemy will beat their infants until they die"

before their eyes

Here the people are represented by their "eyes" to emphasize what they see. It can be stated clearly that the parents are unable to help their infants. Alternate translation: "in front of them" or "while their parents helplessly watch"

Their houses will be plundered

This means that everything valuable will be stolen from their houses. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy will plunder the people's houses" or "The enemy will steal everything valuable from the people's houses"

their wives raped

This means that the enemies will attack the women and force them to have sex with them. The words "will be" are understood. This can also be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "their wives will be raped" or "their enemies will rape their wives"

Isaiah 13:17

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I am about to stir up the Medes to attack them

Making people want to do something is spoken of as stirring them up. Alternate translation: "I am about to make the Medes want to attack them"

Isaiah 13:18

Their bows will strike down

Here "their bows" is a metonym for the soldiers who use the bows. Alternate translation: "Their soldiers will use bows and arrows to kill"

Isaiah 13:19

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking.

the most admired of kingdoms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the kingdom that people most admire"

Then Babylon, the most admired of kingdoms, the splendor of Chaldean arrogance, will be overthrown by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then God will destroy Babylon, the most admired of kingdoms, the splendor of Chaldean arrogance, as he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah"

the splendor of Chaldean arrogance

The abstract nouns "splendor" and "arrogance" can be translated with adjectives. The word "splendor" refers to the beautiful appearance of Babylon. Alternate translation: "the beautiful city that the Chaldeans are so proud of"

Isaiah 13:20

It will never be inhabited or lived in

The two verbs mean basically the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will ever live in it"

from generation to generation

The phrase "generation to generation" refers to all generations of people who will live in the future. Alternate translation: "for ever" or "ever again"

The Arab

This refers to Arab people in general, not one person. Alternate translation: "Arabs" or "Arab people"

Isaiah 13:21

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Babylon.

will lie there

"will lie in Babylon"

Their houses

"The people's houses"

owls

Owls are wild birds that hunt at night.

ostriches

Ostriches are large wild birds that run fast and cannot fly.

Isaiah 13:22

Hyenas

Hyenas are large wild animals that look like dogs and eat dead animals. Their loud cry sounds like a person laughing.

jackals in the beautiful palaces

The words "will cry" are understood. Alternate translation: "jackals will cry in the beautiful palaces"

jackals

wild dogs

Her time is near, and her days will not be delayed

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. "Her time" and "her days" both refer to the time that God has chosen for Babylon to be destroyed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The time that all of this will happen to the people of Babylon is near, and nothing will stop it"

Chapter 14

¹ Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob;
 he will again choose Israel
 and restore them into their own land.
 Foreigners will join with them
 and attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

² The nations will bring them to their own place.
 Then the house of Israel will take possession of them
 in the land of Yahweh as male servants and female servants.
 They will take captive those who had captured them,
 and they will rule over their oppressors.

³ On the day that Yahweh gives you rest from your suffering and anguish, and from the hard labor which
 you were required to perform, ⁴ you will sing this taunt song against the king of Babylon,

"How the oppressor has come to an end,
 the proud fury ended! ^[1]

⁵ Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked,
 the scepter of those rulers,

⁶ that struck the peoples in wrath
 with unceasing blows,
 that ruled the nations in anger,
 with an attack that was unrestrained.

⁷ The whole earth is at rest and is quiet;
 they begin celebrating with singing.

⁸ Even the cypress trees rejoice over you
 with the cedars of Lebanon;
 they say, 'Since you are laid low,
 no woodcutter comes up to cut us down.'

⁹ Sheol below is eager
 to meet you when you go there.
 It arouses the dead for you,
 all the leaders of the earth,
 making them rise up from their thrones,
 all the kings of the nations.

¹⁰ They all will speak and say to you,
 'You have become as weak as us.
 You have become like us.'

¹¹ Your pomp has been brought down to Sheol
 with the sound of your lutes.
 Maggots are spread under you,
 and worms cover you.'

¹² How you are fallen from heaven,
 daystar, son of the dawn!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 you who made the nations weak!

¹³ You had said in your heart,
 'I will ascend into heaven,
 I will exalt my throne
 above the stars of God,
 and I will sit on the mount of assembly,
 in the far reaches of the north.'

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High God.'

¹⁵ Yet you are now brought down to Sheol,
 to the depths of the pit.

¹⁶ Those who see you will gaze at you

- and they will pay attention to you.
 They will say, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
 who shook kingdoms,
 17 who made the world like a wilderness, who overthrew its cities
 and did not let his prisoners go home?'
- 18 All the kings of the nations,
 all of them lie down in honor, each one in his own tomb.
 19 But you are cast out of your grave
 like an abhorrent branch.
 Those who were killed cover you like a garment,
 those pierced by the sword,
 who go down to the stones of the pit
 like a trampled corpse.
 20 You will not join them in burial,
 because you have destroyed your land
 and killed your people.
 The offspring of evildoers will never be mentioned again."
 21 Prepare your slaughter for his children,
 for the iniquity of their ancestors,
 so they will not rise up and possess the earth
 and fill the whole world with cities.
- 22 "I will rise up against them—
 this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.
 I will cut off from Babylon name, descendant, and posterity—
 this is Yahweh's declaration.
 23 I will also make her into a possession of owls,
 and into pools of water,
 and I will sweep her with the broom of destruction—
 this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts."
- 24 Yahweh of hosts has sworn,
 "Surely, as I have intended, so it will come about;
 and as I have purposed, so it will be:
 25 I will break the Assyrian in my land,
 and on my mountains trample him underfoot.
 Then his yoke will be lifted from off them
 and his burden from off their shoulder."
- 26 This is the plan that has been devised for the whole earth,
 and this is the hand that is raised over all the nations.
 27 For Yahweh of hosts has planned this; who will stop him?
 His hand is raised, and who will turn it back?
- 28 In the year that king Ahaz died this declaration came:
- 29 Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
 that the rod that struck you is broken.
 For out of the serpent's root will grow an adder,
 and his offspring will be a fiery flying serpent.
 30 The firstborn of the poor will graze their sheep in my pastures,
 and the needy will lie down in safety.
 I will kill your root with famine
 that will put to death all your survivors.
- 31 Wail, gate; cry, city;
 all of you will melt away, Philistia.
 For out of the north comes a cloud of smoke,
 and there is no straggler in his ranks.
 32 How will they respond

to the messengers of that nation?
"Yahweh has founded Zion,
and in her the afflicted of his people will find refuge."

Footnotes

14:4 ^[1]Because the Hebrew translated as

Isaiah 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 14:4-27, 29-32.

Special concepts in this chapter

Satan

It is believed that this chapter references Satan. It describes Satan as a star fallen from heaven. There are five important statements beginning with the words "I will" which appear to show the essence of Satan's sin.

Babylon

This is the name of the kingdom that conquered Judah, but it is also the name representing Satan's kingdom in prophecies. They were not yet a world power when these words were spoken. It should be translated as "Babylon," but translators should be aware of its dual meaning.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

The use of Israel in this chapter is in reference to the nation or people group of Israel. It is this Israel who will be restored and not the kingdom of Israel. (See: restore)

Isaiah 14:1

Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob

Here "Jacob" refers to the descendants of Jacob.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob"

attach themselves to the house of Jacob

The house of Jacob refers to the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites. Alternate translation: "unite with the descendants of Jacob"

Isaiah 14:2

The nations will bring them to their own place

"The nations will bring the descendants of Jacob back to the land of Israel"

the house of Israel

This refers to the Israelites, the descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Israel"

will take possession of them

"will possess the people of the nations"

as male servants and female servants

"as male and female servants"

They will take captive those who had captured them

"The Israelite soldiers will take as captives those who had captured Israelites"

Isaiah 14:3

from your suffering and anguish

The word "your" is singular, but it refers to the people of Israel. Also, "suffering" and "anguish" mean basically the same thing and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: "from the things that have caused you to suffer greatly"

Isaiah 14:4

How the oppressor has come to an end

"The oppressor has come to an end." This is an exclamation.

the proud fury ended

The words "how" and "has" are understood.
Alternate translation: "how the proud fury has ended" or "his pride and fury have ended"

the proud fury ended

The "proud fury" refers to the king of Babylon being proud and treating other nations cruelly. Alternate translation: "his cruelty has ended" or "he can no longer oppress people"

Isaiah 14:5

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon.

Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked

The staff of the wicked probably refers to a stick that wicked people would hit other people with. Breaking that stick represents destroying their power to treat people cruelly. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has destroyed the power of the wicked"

the scepter of those rulers

A scepter represents a ruler's power to rule. Breaking the scepter represents destroying the ruler's power. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has destroyed the power of the wicked rulers"

Isaiah 14:6

that struck the peoples

"who struck the peoples." Wicked people struck the peoples with their staff.

with unceasing blows

"without stopping" or "again and again"

that ruled the nations

"who conquered other nations"

with an attack that was unrestrained

"attacking them without stopping"

Isaiah 14:7

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon.

The whole earth

This refers to everyone on earth. Alternate translation: "everyone on earth"

Isaiah 14:8

Even the cypress trees rejoice over you with the cedars of Lebanon

Isaiah speaks of the trees as if they were people who could rejoice. This emphasizes that it is such a great thing that God has stopped the king of Babylon that even nature would rejoice if it could.

Alternate translation: "It will be as if even the cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon rejoice over you"

rejoice over you

Why they rejoice can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "rejoice that God has made you powerless"

Since you are laid low

Being laid low represents being made powerless and unimportant. Alternate translation: "Since you have become powerless"

Isaiah 14:9

Sheol below is eager to meet you

Sheol is spoken of as if it were a person who is eager to meet his guests. This implies that the king dies. Alternate translation: "Sheol is like a host eager to meet you"

It arouses the dead for you, all the leaders of the earth

"it wakes up the dead for you, all the leaders of the earth." Sheol is spoken of as if it were a person that could wake up those who are in it. Alternate translation: "All the dead leaders of the earth in Sheol wake up to greet you"

Isaiah 14:10

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon. Here they sing about what the dead kings in Sheol will say to him.

They all will speak and say to you

The word "they" refers to the dead kings in Sheol, and the word "you" refers to the king of Babylon.

Isaiah 14:11

Your pomp has been brought down to Sheol

The dead kings will speak of the king of Babylon having no more splendor as if his splendor had gone down to Sheol. Alternate translation: "Your splendor ended when God sent you here to Sheol"

with the sound of your lutes

People would make music on lutes to honor the king. The dead kings will speak of people no longer honoring the king of Babylon with music as if the music went to Sheol. Alternate translation: "along with the sound of people playing music to honor you"

Maggots are spread under you

The maggots under his dead body are spoken of as if they were a mat or bed. Alternate translation: "You lie on a bed of maggots" or "You lie on many maggots"

worms cover you

The worms all over his body are spoken of as if they were covering him like a blanket. Alternate translation: "Worms cover you like a blanket" or "There are worms all over your body"

Isaiah 14:12

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon.

How you are fallen from heaven, daystar, son of the dawn

The daystar is a bright star that rises just before dawn. The people of Israel will refer to the king of Babylon in terms of this star in order to imply that he once was great, but now he was not. Alternate translation: "You were like the bright morning star, but you have fallen from the sky"

How you are cut down to the ground

The people of Israel will speak of the king of Babylon as if he were a tree that was cut down. Alternate translation: "You are defeated like a tree that someone has cut down to the ground"

Isaiah 14:13

I will sit on the mount of assembly

This alludes to the myth that many people in the Ancient Near East knew, that the Canaanite gods met in council on the top of a mountain in the northern part of Syria. Sitting on the mountain represents ruling with the gods. Alternate translation: "I will rule on the mountain where the gods assemble"

in the far reaches of the north

"in the most northern places." The mountain in the north was apparently called Zaphon. Some modern English translations say, "far away on the sides of Zaphon."

Isaiah 14:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 14:15

Connecting Statement:

This is part of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon.

Yet you are now brought down to Sheol

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now God has sent you down to Sheol"

Isaiah 14:16

Is this the man

The people will use this question either to mock the king of Babylon, or to express their shock at what has happened to him. Alternate translation: "Surely, this is not the man"

who made the earth tremble

Possible meanings are 1) the earth trembled as the king's army marched to conquer people, or 2) this refers to the people of the earth trembling in fear of him.

shook kingdoms

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor for "conquered kingdoms" or 2) this is metonymy for "terrified the people of kingdoms."

Isaiah 14:17

who made the world like a wilderness

"who made the places where people lived into a wilderness"

Isaiah 14:18

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the taunt song that the Israelites will sing to the king of Babylon.

all of them lie down in honor

This means that their bodies were buried in an honorable way. Alternate translation: "all the kings who have died are buried in an honorable way"

Isaiah 14:19

But you are cast out of your grave

Being thrown out of the grave represents not being buried. Alternate translation: "But you are not buried. Your body is left on the ground"

like an abhorrent branch

While this simile is unclear, an "abhorrent branch" clearly represents something disgusting. Alternate translation: "like something disgusting that is tossed aside"

Those who were killed cover you like a garment

This represents many dead bodies being on top of his body. Alternate translation: "The bodies of dead people completely cover your body" or "The bodies of dead soldiers are piled on top of your body"

those pierced by the sword

This describes "the dead" spoken of at the beginning of this sentence. Being pierced by the sword represents being killed in battle. Alternate translation: "those who were killed in battle"

who go down to the stones of the pit

The pit refers either to hell, or to a large hole in the ground where many dead bodies are simply dumped.

Isaiah 14:20

You will not join them in burial

The word "them" refers to the other kings who died and were buried properly. Joining them in burial represents being buried as they were. Alternate translation: "you will never be buried as other kings were buried"

The offspring of evildoers will never be mentioned again

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will ever speak again about the descendants of evildoers"

Isaiah 14:21

Prepare your slaughter for his children

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "slaughter" is expressed with the verb "kill."
Alternate translation: "Get ready to kill the children of the king of Babylon"

for the iniquity of their ancestors

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "iniquity" is expressed as the verb "sinned greatly."
Alternate translation: "because their forefathers have sinned greatly"

so they will not rise up

Here "rise up" represents either becoming powerful or attacking. Alternate translation: "so they will not become powerful" or "so they will not attack"

possess the earth

This represents taking control of the people on the earth, in this case by conquering them. Alternate translation: "take control of the peoples on the earth" or "conquer the peoples on the earth"

fill the whole world with cities

This represents causing the world to have many cities on it. Alternate translation: "build cities all over the world"

Isaiah 14:22

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 14:23

I will also make her

The word "her" refers to the city of Babylon. Cities were often spoken of as if they were women.
Alternate translation: "I will also make it"

a possession of owls

This represents wild animals living in the city because there are no people there. Alternate translation: "a place where owls live" or "a place where wild animals live"

into pools of water

Causing there to be swamps or ponds of stagnant water where the city was is spoken of as making the city into those things. Alternate translation: "into a place where there are stagnant ponds"

Isaiah 14:24

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

as I have intended, so it will come about; and as I have purposed, so it will be

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "the things that I have planned will surely happen"

Isaiah 14:25

I will break the Assyrian in my land

Breaking represents defeating. Alternate translation: "I will defeat the Assyrian in my land" or "I will cause the Assyrian in my land to be defeated"

the Assyrian

This represents the Assyrian king and his army. Alternate translation: "the king of Assyria and his army" or "the Assyrian army"

trample him underfoot

This represents completely defeating him.

Then his yoke will be lifted from off them and his burden from off their shoulder

This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "Then I will lift his yoke from them and his burden from their shoulder"

Then his yoke will be lifted from off them and his burden from off their shoulder

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Lifting the yoke and burden represents setting people free from slavery. Alternate translation: "Then I will set the Israelites free from slavery to Assyria like removing a heavy burden from their shoulder"

his yoke ... his burden

The word "his" refers to Assyria.

from off them ... from off their shoulder

The words "them" and "their" refer to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 14:26

General Information:

This may be Isaiah speaking or it may be Yahweh speaking.

This is the plan that has been devised for the whole earth

The idea of "has been devised" can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "This is the plan that God intends for the whole earth"

this is the hand that is raised over all the nations

God being ready to punish the nations is spoken of as if he raised his hand in order to hit them. The word "hand" may also represent his power. Alternate translation: "this is Yahweh's power to punish all the nations" or "this is how Yahweh will punish the nations"

Isaiah 14:27

who will stop him?

This question emphasizes that no one can stop Yahweh. Alternate translation: "there is no one who can stop him."

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

His hand is raised

This represents Yahweh being ready to punish the nations. Alternate translation: "He is ready to punish them"

who will turn it back?

This question is used to say that no one can turn back God's hand. Turning back his hand represents stopping him from punishing the nations. Alternate translation: "no one can turn it back." or "no one can stop him from punishing them."

Isaiah 14:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 14:29

the rod that struck you is broken

The rod that struck Philistia represents a king who sent his army to attack them. Being broken represents either being dead or being defeated. Alternate translation: "the king that sent his army against you is dead" or "the army that attacked you is defeated"

For out of the serpent's root will grow an adder ... his offspring will be a fiery flying serpent

These two phrases are both the image of a serpent's offspring being even more harmful than the serpent. They represent a king's successor being more powerful and cruel than the first king.

an adder

a kind of poisonous snake

a fiery flying serpent

Here the word "fiery" probably refers to the serpent's poisonous bite, and the word "flying" refers to its quick movements. Alternate translation: "a quickly moving poisonous snake"

Isaiah 14:30

The firstborn of the poor

This represents the poorest people. Alternate translation: "The poorest people" or "The poorest of my people"

I will kill your root with famine that will put to death all your survivors

Here "your root" refers to the people of Philistia. Alternate translation: "I will kill your people with famine that will put to death all your survivors"

Isaiah 14:31

Wail, gate; cry, city

Here "gate" and "city" represent the people at the city gates and in the cities. "Wail, you people at the city gates; cry, you people in the cities"

you will melt away

Melting away represents becoming weak because of fear. Alternate translation: "you will grow weak with fear"

For out of the north comes a cloud of smoke

This implies that a large army is coming from the north. Alternate translation: "For from the north comes a large army with a cloud of smoke"

a cloud of smoke

Possible meanings are 1) this represents a cloud of dust that the army stirs up as they travel on dry dirt roads. Alternate translation: "a cloud of dust" or 2) there is a lot of smoke because of all the things that the army destroys and burns. Alternate translation: "much smoke"

there is no straggler in his ranks

"no one in his ranks walks slowly behind the others"

Isaiah 14:32

How will they respond to the messengers of that nation?

The author uses this question to introduce his instruction about how the Israelites should speak to

the messengers. Alternate translation: "This is how we will answer the messengers of Philistia."

Yahweh has founded Zion
"Yahweh started Zion"

in her
"in Jerusalem" or "there"

the afflicted of his people
"those of his people who have been afflicted"

Chapter 15

¹ A declaration about Moab.

- Indeed, in one night
 Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed;
 indeed, in one night
 Kir of Moab is laid waste and destroyed.
- ² They have gone up to the temple,
 the people of Dibon went up to the heights to weep;
 Moab wails over Nebo and over Medeba.
 All their heads are shaved bare
 and all their beards are cut off.
- ³ In their streets they wear sackcloth;
 on their housetops and in the square
 everyone wails, melting in weeping.
- ⁴ Heshbon and Elealeh call out for help;
 their sound is heard as far as Jahaz.
 So the armed men of Moab cry out for help;
 they tremble within themselves.
- ⁵ My heart cries out for Moab;
 her fugitives flee to Zoar
 and to Eglath Shelishiyah.
 They go up the ascent of Luhith weeping;
 on the road to Horonaim
 they raise a cry of distress over their destruction.
- ⁶ The waters of Nimrim are a desolation;
 the grass is withered;
 the vegetation has dried up;
 there is no more green grass.
- ⁷ The abundance they have grown and stored
 they carry away over the brook of the poplars.
- ⁸ The cry has gone around the territory of Moab;
 the wailing as far as Eglaim and Beer Elim.
- ⁹ For the waters of Dimon are full of blood;
 but I will bring even more upon Dimon.
 A lion will attack those who escape from Moab
 and also those remaining in the land.

Isaiah 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter shifts from discussing Judah to the nation of Moab. Moab is punished by Yahweh, even though he is not a god they worship. (See: god)

Isaiah 15:1

General Information:

Often in prophecy events that will happen in future are described as happening now or in the past. This emphasizes that the event will certainly happen.

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares" or "This is a message from Yahweh"

Ar ... Kir

These are names of cities and towns in Moab.

Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed

The words "laid waste" and "destroyed" mean the same thing and emphasize that the city was completely ruined. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Enemy armies will completely destroy Ar of Moab"

Isaiah 15:2

Dibon ... Nebo ... Medeba

These are names of cities and towns in Moab.

went up to the heights to weep

Here "up to the heights" refers to a temple or altar that was built on high ground like a hill or mountain side. Alternate translation: "went up to the temple on the hilltop to weep"

Moab wails over Nebo and over Medeba

These place names refer to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "the people of Moab will weep because of what happened to the cities of Nebo and Medeba"

All their heads are shaved bare and all their beards are cut off

They do this to show their extreme sadness. Alternate translation: "They will all shave their heads and cut off their beards and grieve"

Isaiah 15:3

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present ([Isaiah 15:1-2](#)).

they wear sackcloth

They do this to show their extreme sadness. Alternate translation: "they wear sackcloth and mourn"

Isaiah 15:4

Heshbon ... Elealeh ... Jahaz

These are names of cities and towns.

Heshbon and Elealeh call out

These city names represent the people of these cities. "The people of Heshbon and Elealeh call out"

they tremble within themselves

Physical trembling is a symptom of fear and represents fear. Alternate translation: "they will be completely filled with fear" or "they tremble with fear"

Isaiah 15:5

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the

future as if it is happening in the present ([Isaiah 15:1-2](#)).

My heart cries out for Moab

Here God is represented by his "heart" which emphasizes his emotions. God speaks of his great sadness as if his heart cried out. Alternate translation: "I am extremely sad about what is happening to Moab"

her fugitives flee

"the fugitives from Moab will flee." A fugitive is a person who runs away so that his enemy will not capture him.

Zoar ... Eglath Shelishiyah ... Luhith ... Horonaim

These are names of cities and towns.

over their destruction

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "destruction" is expressed as the verb "destroyed." Alternate translation: "because their city is destroyed"

Isaiah 15:6

Nimrim

This is the name of a city or town.

Isaiah 15:7

The abundance

"Everything"

brook of the poplars

This may refer to the river at the southern border of Moab.

Isaiah 15:8

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present ([Isaiah 15:1-2](#)).

The cry has gone around the territory of Moab

People's crying out and others hearing it is spoken of as if the cry had gone out. Alternate translation: "People all over the territory of Moab cry out"

the wailing as far as Eglaim and Beer Elim

The words "has gone" are understood. People's wailing and others hearing it is spoken of as if the wailing had gone as far away as these two places. Alternate translation: "the wailing has gone as far as Eglaim and Beer Elim" or "people even as far away as Eglaim and Beer Elim wail"

Eglaim ... Beer Elim

These are names of cities and towns. Dimon was the principal city of the country of Moab. Several modern versions have "Dibon" instead of "Dimon."

Isaiah 15:9

Dimon

This is the name of a city or town. Dimon was the principal city of the country of Moab. Several modern versions have "Dibon" instead of "Dimon."

but I will bring even more upon Dimon

Here "I" refers to Yahweh. Also, "Dimon" refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "but I will cause even more trouble for the people of Dimon"

Chapter 16

- ¹ Send rams to the ruler of the land
from Selah in the wilderness,
to the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- ² As wandering birds,
as a scattered nest,
so the women of Moab are
at the fords of the Arnon River.
- ³ "Give instruction, execute justice;
provide some shade like night in the middle of the day;
hide the outcasts;
do not betray the fugitives.
- ⁴ Let them live among you, the outcasts from Moab;
be a hiding place for them from the destroyer."

For the oppression will stop,
and destruction will cease,
those who trample will disappear from the land.

- ⁵ A throne will be established in covenant faithfulness;
and one from David's tent will faithfully sit there.
He will judge as he seeks justice and does righteousness.
- ⁶ We have heard of Moab's pride, his arrogance,
his boasting, and his anger.
But his boastings are empty words.
- ⁷ So Moab wails for Moab—they all wail!
Mourn, you who are utterly destroyed,
for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth.
- ⁸ The fields of Heshbon have dried up
as well as the vines of Sibmah.
The rulers of the nations
have trampled the choice vines
that reached to Jazer
and spread into the desert.
Its shoots spread abroad;
they went over to the sea.
- ⁹ Indeed I will weep along with Jazer
for the vineyard of Sibmah.
I will water you with my tears,
Heshbon and Elealeh.
For on your fields of summer fruits and harvest
I have ended the shouts of joy.
- ¹⁰ Gladness and joy are taken away from the fruit tree groves;
and there is no singing, or shouts in the vineyards.
No one treads out wine in the presses,
for I have put an end to the shouts of the one who treads.
- ¹¹ So my heart sighs like a harp for Moab,
and my inward being for Kir Hareseth.
- ¹² When Moab wears himself out on the high place
and enters his sanctuary to pray,
his prayers will accomplish nothing.

¹³ This is the word that Yahweh spoke concerning Moab previously. ¹⁴ Again Yahweh speaks, "Within three years, the glory of Moab will be dishonored; in spite of his many people, the remnant will be very few and insignificant."

Isaiah 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter and is a prophecy against the nation of Moab. (See: prophet)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 16:1-12.

Isaiah 16:1

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present. This verse is probably what God says the rulers of Moab will say to each other (Isaiah 15:1-2).

Send rams to the ruler of the land

The Moabites will send rams to the king of Judah so that he might protect them from the enemy army.

Selah

This is the name of a city.

the daughter of Zion

The "daughter" of a city means the people of the city. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 1:8]

Isaiah 16:2

As wandering birds, as a scattered nest, so the women of Moab are at the fords of the Arnon River

All the people of Moab, which includes the women, are forced to flee from their homes. Alternate translation: "Like birds without a home, the women of Moab will flee across the river to another land"

As wandering birds, as a scattered nest

These two phrases mean basically the same thing.

Isaiah 16:3

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present. Verses 3 and 4 is probably the message that the Moabite rulers send to the king of Judah (Isaiah 15:1-2).

provide some shade like night in the middle of the day

The heat of the middle of the day represents the Moabites' suffering from their enemies, and shade represents protection from their enemies. Comparing the shade to night shows that they want strong protection. Alternate translation: "protect us completely from our enemies as a large shadow protects people from the hot sun"

Isaiah 16:4

Let them live among you, the outcasts from Moab

"Allow the refugees from Moab to live with you." Here "you" refers to the people of Judah.

be a hiding place for them from the destroyer

Providing a hiding place is spoken of as being a hiding place. Alternate translation: "give them a place to hide from those who are trying to destroy them" or "hide them from those who want to destroy them"

Isaiah 16:5

A throne will be established in covenant faithfulness

Here "throne" refers to the power to rule as king. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will be faithful to the covenant and he will appoint a king"

one from David's tent will faithfully sit there

Here "David's tent" represents David's family, including his descendants. Sitting on the throne represents ruling. Alternate translation: "a descendant of David will rule faithfully"

as he seeks justice

Seeking justice represents wanting to do what is just.

Isaiah 16:6

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present (Isaiah 15:1-2).

We have heard of Moab's pride, his arrogance, his boasting, and his anger

The words "Moab's" and "his" refer to the people of Moab. Alternate translation: "We have heard that the people of Moab are proud and arrogant, boastful and angry"

We have heard

Possible meanings are that 1) Isaiah is speaking and "We" refers to him and the people of Judah, or 2) God is speaking and "We" refers to God.

But his boastings are empty words

"But what they say about themselves means nothing" or "But what they boast about is not true"

Isaiah 16:7

So Moab wails for Moab—they all wail

"Moab" represents the people of Moab. "So all the people of Moab will cry out loud over what has happened to their cities"

for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth

"because there are no raisin cakes in Kir Hareseth"

raisin cakes

The Hebrew word used here means either "raisin cakes" or "men."

Kir Hareseth

"Kir Hareseth" is the name of a city.

Isaiah 16:8

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it happened in the past (Isaiah 15:1-2).

Heshbon

Translate the name of this city as you did in Isaiah 15:4.

Sibmah ... Jazer

These are names of cities.

The rulers of the nations have trampled the choice vines

The land of Moab was known for its vineyards. Here God describes the land of Moab as one large vineyard. This emphasizes that the rulers, which refers to the armies, completely destroyed everything in Moab.

Isaiah 16:9

General Information:

This continues to describe the land of Moab as one large vineyard (Isaiah 16:8). God describes events that will happen in the future as if they are happening in the present.

Indeed I will weep

In 16:9-10 the word "I" refers to Yahweh.

I will water you with my tears

God speaks of his deep sorrow for these places as if he would cry much and his many tears would fall on them. Alternate translation: "I will cry much for you"

Jazer ... Sibmah

Translate the names of these cities as you did in Isaiah 16:8.

Heshbon ... Elealeh

Translate the names of these cities as you did in Isaiah 15:4.

For on your fields of summer fruits and harvest I have ended the shouts of joy

The "shouts of joy" represent people shouting for joy about the harvest of their fruit trees. Alternate translation: "Because of what I will do, you will no longer shout for joy when you harvest your fields of summer fruit"

Isaiah 16:10

I have put an end to the shouts of the one who treads

Here "the shouts" refers to the joy of the people who tread the grapes to produce the wine. Alternate translation: "therefore the people who tread the grapes do not shout with joy"

Isaiah 16:11

General Information:

This continues the prophecy about the people of Moab. God describes events that will happen in the future as if it is happening in the present (Isaiah 15:1-2).

So my heart sighs like a harp for Moab

The phrase "my heart" represents Yahweh and his sad feelings. He compares his sigh to the sound of a sad song played on a harp. Alternate translation: "So I sigh like a sad song on a harp"

Moab

This refers to the people of Moab.

my inward being for Kir Hareseth

The phrase "my inward being" represents Yahweh. The word "sighs" is understood from the previous phrase. See how you translated Kir Hareseth in [Isaiah 16:7]

Kir Hareseth

This is a metonym for the people of the city.

Alternate translation: "the people of Kir Hareseth"

Isaiah 16:12

Moab ... himself ... his

All of these words refer to the people of Moab.

his prayers will accomplish nothing

"his prayers will not be answered"

Isaiah 16:13

This is the word

"This is the message." This refers to all he said in 15:1-16:12.

concerning Moab

The word "Moab" refers to the people of Moab.

Isaiah 16:14

the glory of Moab will be dishonored

This can be translated using an active verb.

Alternate translation: "I will destroy everything for which Moab is honored"

Chapter 17

¹ A declaration about Damascus.

Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city,
and it shall be a fallen ruin.

² The cities of Aroer will be abandoned.
They will be places for flocks to lie down,
and no one will frighten them.

³ Fortified cities will disappear from Ephraim,
the kingdom from Damascus,
and the remnant of Aram—
they will be like the glory of the people of Israel—
this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.

⁴ It will come about on that day
that the glory of Jacob will become thin,
and the fatness of his flesh will become lean.

⁵ It will be as when a harvester gathers the standing grain,
and his arm reaps the heads of grain.
It will be as when one gleans heads of grain
in the Valley of Rephaim.

⁶ Gleanings will be left,
however, as when the olive tree is shaken:
two or three olives in the top of the uppermost bough,
four or five in the highest branches of a fruitful tree—
this is the declaration of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

⁷ On that day men will look toward their Maker,
and their eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.

⁸ They will not look to the altars,
the work of their hands,
nor will they look to what their fingers have made,
the Asherah poles or the sun images.

⁹ On that day their strong cities will be like the abandoned wooded slopes on the hill summits, which
were abandoned because of the people of Israel, and they will become a desolation.

¹⁰ For you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
and have ignored the rock of your refuge.
So you plant pleasant plants,
and set out vine branches received from a stranger.

¹¹ But though on the day you plant them you hedge them in,
and though in the morning your seed grows,
the harvest will fail on a day of grief
and of desperate sorrow.

¹² Woe! The uproar of many peoples,
who roar like the roaring of the seas,
and the rushing of nations,
who rush like the rushing of mighty waters!

¹³ The nations will roar like the rushing of many waters,
but he will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
they will be chased before the wind like chaff on the mountains,
and like weeds whirling before a storm.

¹⁴ In the evening, see, terror!
Before the morning they will be gone!
This is the portion of those who loot us,
the lot of those who rob us.

Isaiah 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

The ULB sets the lines in 17:1-6, 9-14 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are part of a long quotation.

Special concepts in this chapter

Damascus

This chapter prophesies destruction against the people of Damascus. Damascus was the capital of Aram. The people of Damascus worship gods other than Yahweh and have fought Yahweh's people. (See: prophet, falsegod and peopleofgod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Ephraim

This chapter prophesied destruction against the kingdom of Israel. They are also called Ephraim in this chapter. Both the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram were conquered at about the same time in history.

Isaiah 17:1

about Damascus

Damascus is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 7:8]

Isaiah 17:2

The cities of Aroer will be abandoned

This can be stated in active form. "All the people will abandon the cities of Aroer"

no one will frighten them

The word "them" refers to the sheep.

Isaiah 17:3

Fortified cities will disappear from Ephraim

Ephraim was the largest tribe in Israel. Here it represents the entire northern kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: "Strong cities will disappear from Israel"

will disappear

This does not mean that they will vanish, but that the cities will be destroyed.

the kingdom from Damascus

The words "will disappear" are understood from the previous phrase. Damascus was where the king of Aram ruled from. The kingdom disappearing represents the king no longer having royal power. Alternate translation: "the kingdom will disappear from Damascus" or "there will be no royal power in Damascus"

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 14:22]

Isaiah 17:4

It will come about

This phrase is used here to mark an important event that will happen. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

the glory of Jacob will become thin, and the fatness of his flesh will become lean

Here "Jacob" refers to the kingdom of Israel. Israel would no longer be glorious. Rather it would be weak and poor.

Isaiah 17:5

It will be as when a harvester gathers the standing grain ... in the Valley of Rephaim

There will be nothing left in the land after God punishes the people of Israel.

the Valley of Rephaim

This is a valley where people normally grew and harvested much food.

Isaiah 17:6

General Information:

This continues to compare the nation of Israel with a field after it is harvested ([Isaiah 17:4-5](#)).

Gleanings will be left

The word "Gleanings" here represents the people who will still live in Israel. Alternate translation: "But there will be a few people left in Israel"

as when the olive tree is shaken

People harvested olive trees by shaking them so that the olives would fall out. Alternate translation: "like the few olives that remain on the olive trees after people harvest them"

four or five

The word "olives" is understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "four or five olives"

this is the declaration of Yahweh, the God of Israel

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, have declared"

Isaiah 17:7

men will look toward their Maker ... will look to the Holy One of Israel

Looking toward God here represents hoping that he will help them. Alternate translation: "men will hope that their Maker, the Holy One of Israel, will help them"

men will look

The word "men" represents people in general. Alternate translation: "people will look"

their eyes will look

Here "eyes" represents the people who look. Alternate translation: "they will look" or "the people will look"

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 17:8

They will not look to the altars

Looking to the altars represents worshiping idols with the hope that the idols will help them. Alternate translation: "They will not worship idols at their altars" or "The people of Israel will not go to their altars and ask their idols to help them"

the work of their hands

Here the people are represented by their "hands" to emphasize that they made the altars or idols. Alternate translation: "that they made with their hands" or "which they themselves built"

what their fingers have made ... the Asherah poles or the sun images

The second phrase identifies the things that the people made. Speaking of the fingers here

emphasizes that the people made them, so these things are not real gods. Alternate translation: "the Asherah poles or the sun images, which they themselves made"

Isaiah 17:9

which were abandoned because of the people of Israel

It can be made explicit who left these lands. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which the Hivites and Amorites left after the people of Israel came"

Isaiah 17:10

For you have forgotten

Here "you" refers to the people of Israel. The word "forgotten" does not mean they have no memory of God. It means they no longer obey him. Alternate translation: "For you no longer obey"

the God of your salvation

"the God who saves you"

have ignored the rock of your refuge

This compares God to a large rock which people could climb on to get away from their enemies or hide behind. Alternate translation: "have ignored God, who is like a rock that protects you" or "have ignored the one who protects you"

Isaiah 17:11

the harvest will fail

"there will not be much fruit for you to harvest"

Isaiah 17:12

The uproar of many peoples, who roar like the roaring of the seas

An uproar is a very loud noise. Alternate translation: "The sound of many people, that is very loud like the seas"

the rushing of nations, who rush like the rushing of mighty waters

The enemy armies appear to be a powerful force that no one can stop. Alternate translation: "the nations come rushing in like the mighty waters"

the rushing of nations

The word "nations" refers to the armies of those nations. Alternate translation: "the rushing of the enemy armies"

Isaiah 17:13

before the wind like chaff on the mountains ... like weeds whirling before a storm

These two phrases mean the same thing. The enemy armies seem powerful but God will easily stop them and send them away. Alternate translation: "like chaff on the mountains that the

wind blows away ... like weeds that whirl and blow away as a storm approaches"

Isaiah 17:14

This is the portion of those

What happens to them is spoken of as if it is a portion that they inherit. Alternate translation: "This is what happens to those"

loot us ... rob us

The word "us" refers to Isaiah and the people of Judah.

Chapter 18

- ¹ Woe to the land of the rustling of wings,
 which is along the rivers of Cush;
² who send ambassadors by the sea,
 in vessels of papyrus on the waters.
Go, you swift messengers,
 to a nation tall and smooth,
 to a people feared far and near,
a nation strong and treading down,
 whose land the rivers divide.
- ³ All you inhabitants of the world
 and you who live on the earth,
when a signal flag is lifted up on the mountains, look;
 and when the ram's horn is blown, listen.
- ⁴ This is what Yahweh said to me,
 "I will quietly observe from my home,
like the simmering heat in sunlight,
 like a cloud of mist in the heat of harvest.
- ⁵ Before the harvest, when the blossoming is over,
 and the flower is ripening into a grape,
he will cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks,
 and he will cut down and take away the spreading branches.
- ⁶ They will be left together for the birds of the mountains
 and for the animals of the earth.
The birds of prey will spend the summer on them,
 and all the animals of the earth will spend harvest time on them."
- ⁷ At that time tribute will be brought to Yahweh of hosts
- from a people tall and smooth,
 from a people feared far and near,
nation strong and trampling down,
 whose land the rivers divide,

to the place of the name of Yahweh of hosts, to Mount Zion.

Isaiah 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Cush

This chapter records prophecies against the nation of Cush. They are being punished by Yahweh. (See: prophet)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

This chapter uses many metaphors to describe the destruction coming to the people of Cush.

Isaiah 18:1

Woe to the land of the rustling of wings, which is along the rivers of Cush

Possible meanings of "the rustling of wings" are 1) the boats that have sails are spoken of as having wings. Alternate translation: "Woe to those who live in the land beyond the rivers of Cush, whose many ships look like insects on the water" or 2) the rustling of wings refers to the noise of insects that have wings, perhaps locusts.

Isaiah 18:2

by the sea

The Nile River was very wide, and people in Egypt and Cush referred to it as "the sea." Alternate translation: "on the great river" or "along the Nile River"

vessels of papyrus

Papyrus is a tall plant that grows along the side of the Nile River. People bound together papyrus bundles to make boats. Alternate translation: "papyrus boats" or "boats made of reeds" or

a nation tall and smooth ... a people feared far and near ... a nation strong and treading down, whose land the rivers divide

These phrases all describe the people of one nation.

a nation tall and smooth

The word "nation" here refers to the people of that nation. Alternate translation: "a nation whose people are tall and have smooth skin"

a people feared far and near

The words "far" and "near" are used together to mean "everywhere." Alternate translation: "a people who are feared everywhere" or "a people that everyone in the earth fears"

a nation strong and treading down

Treading down represents conquering other nations. Alternate translation: "a nation that is strong and conquers other nations"

the rivers divide

This probably refers to many rivers that flow through the nation so they divide it into different parts.

Isaiah 18:3

Connecting Statement:

Verse 3 tells what the messengers in Isaiah 18:2 must say to the people of the world.

All you inhabitants of the world ... you who live on the earth

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "All you people on the earth"

when a signal flag is lifted up on the mountains, look; and when the ram's horn is blown, listen

The signal flag and ram's horn were to call people to battle. The commands to look and listen are commands to pay attention and prepare for battle. Alternate translation: "pay attention when the signal flag is lifted up on the mountains and the ram's horn is blown"

when a signal flag is lifted up on the mountains, look

The signal was a flag used to call people to battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "pay attention when you see the battle flag on the mountains"

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

when the ram's horn is blown, listen

The trumpets were used to call people to battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "pay attention when you hear the sound of the battle trumpets"

Isaiah 18:4

General Information:

God uses a parable about a farmer in a vineyard in order to describe how he will punish a certain nation. That nation is either Ethiopia or Ethiopia's enemy.

This is what Yahweh said to me

"Yahweh said to me." Here the word "me" refers to Isaiah.

I will quietly observe from my home

What God will observe can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will quietly observe that nation from my home" or "From my home, I will quietly watch what the people of that nation do"

like the simmering heat in sunlight, like a cloud of mist in the heat of harvest

These phrases show how quietly God will watch the nation.

Isaiah 18:5

Before the harvest

This is a harvest of grapes. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Before the grape harvest"

when the blossoming is over

It can be stated clearly that this refers to blossoms on grape vines. Alternate translation: "when flowers have finished growing on the grape vines"

he will cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks

Yahweh will cut off the branches before the grapes can ripen. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cut

off the branches with knives before their produce fruit"

pruning hooks

A pruning hook is a knife that people use to cut branches off of vines or other plants.

he will cut down and take away the spreading branches
Yahweh will throw away the branches in judgment.

Isaiah 18:6

They will be left together

God seems to change from telling the parable to speaking more directly about the nation. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Those who are killed will be left together" or "Like branches that are cut off and thrown away, the bodies of those who are killed will be left on the ground"

The birds of prey will spend the summer on them
"The birds of prey will eat them during the summer"

all the animals of the earth
"all kinds of wild animals"

will spend harvest time on them
"will eat them in the winter"

Isaiah 18:7

a people tall and smooth ... a people feared far and near ... a nation strong and trampling down, whose land the rivers divide

These phrases all describe the people of one nation. See how you translated these phrases in Isaiah 18:2.

a people tall and smooth

"a people who are tall and have smooth skin"

a people feared far and near

The words "far" and "near" are used together to mean "everywhere." Alternate translation: "a people who are feared everywhere" or "a people that everyone in the earth fears"

a nation strong and trampling down

Trampling down represents conquering other nations. Alternate translation: "a nation that is strong and conquers other nations"

to the place of the name of Yahweh of hosts, to Mount Zion

The word "name" refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "to Mount Zion, where Yahweh of hosts dwells"

Chapter 19

¹ A declaration about Egypt.

See, Yahweh rides on a swift cloud
and is coming to Egypt;
the idols of Egypt quake before him,
and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within themselves.

² "I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians:
A man will fight against his brother,
and a man against his neighbor;
city will be against city,
and kingdom against kingdom.

³ The spirit of Egypt will be weakened from within.
I will destroy his advice,
though they sought the advice of idols,
dead men's spirits, sorcerers, and spiritists.

⁴ I will give the Egyptians
into the hand of a severe master,
and a strong king will rule over them—
this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts."

⁵ The waters of the sea will dry up,
and the river will dry up and become empty.

⁶ The rivers will become foul;
the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up;
the reeds and flags will wither away.

⁷ The reeds along the Nile,
at the mouth of the Nile,
and every sown field beside the Nile will become parched,
will be driven away, and will be no more.

⁸ The fishermen will wail and mourn,
and all who cast a hook into the Nile will mourn,
and those who spread nets on the waters will waste away.

⁹ The workers in combed flax
and those who weave white cloth will turn pale.

¹⁰ The cloth workers of Egypt will be crushed;
all who work for wages will be grieved within themselves.

¹¹ The princes of Zoan
are completely foolish.
The advice of the wisest advisors of Pharaoh
has become stupid.
How can you say to Pharaoh,
"I am the son of wise men, a son of ancient kings?"

¹² Where then are your wise men?
Let them tell you and make known
what Yahweh of hosts plans concerning Egypt.

¹³ The princes of Zoan have become fools,
the princes of Memphis are deceived;
they have made Egypt go astray,
who are the cornerstones of her tribes. ^[1]

¹⁴ Yahweh has mixed a spirit of distortion into her midst,
and they have led Egypt astray in all she does,
like a drunk staggering in his vomit.

¹⁵ There is nothing anyone can do for Egypt,
whether head or tail, palm branch or reed.

16 In that day, the Egyptians will be like women. They will tremble and fear because of the upraised hand of Yahweh of hosts that he raises over them. **17** The land of Judah will become a cause of staggering to Egypt. Whenever anyone reminds them of her, they will be afraid, because of the plan of Yahweh of hosts, that he is planning against them. **18** In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to Yahweh of hosts. One of these will be called The City of the Sun. ^[2]

19 In that day there will be an altar to Yahweh in the middle of the land of Egypt, and a stone pillar at the border to Yahweh. **20** It will be as a sign and a witness to Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt. When they cry to Yahweh because of oppressors, he will send them a savior and a defender, and he will deliver them. **21** Yahweh will become known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will acknowledge Yahweh on that day. They will worship with sacrifices and offerings, and will make vows to Yahweh and fulfill them. **22** Yahweh will afflict Egypt, afflicting and healing. They will return to Yahweh; he will hear their prayer and will heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come to Egypt, and the Egyptian to Assyria; and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. **24** In that day, Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; **25** Yahweh of hosts will bless them and say, "Blessed be Egypt, my people; Assyria, the work of my hands; and Israel, my inheritance."

Footnotes

19:13 ^[1]The name

19:18 ^[2]Instead of

Isaiah 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 19:1-18.

Special concepts in this chapter

Egypt

This chapter prophesied destruction against the nation of Egypt. Their destruction will come from internal division instead of being conquered by another nation. (See: prophet)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Imagery

Some of the imagery used in this chapter may be connected to the worship of specific false gods. One important god the people of Canaan worshiped was Baal, the god of rain or storms. One of the important gods the Egyptians worshiped was Ra, the god of the sun. (See: falsegod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"In that day"

This changes the reference from the time when Assyria comes to dominate the world and looks to a more distant future day.

Isaiah 19:1

See

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

Yahweh rides on a swift cloud

Yahweh seems to be pictured here as riding on a cloud as if he was riding in a chariot.

the idols of Egypt quake before him

The idols are described as having feelings of fear as Yahweh approaches. Alternate translation: "the idols of Egypt tremble in fear before Yahweh"

the hearts of the Egyptians melt within themselves

The heart melting represents losing their courage. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians have no more courage"

Isaiah 19:2

a man against his neighbor

The words "will fight" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "a man will fight against his neighbor"

city will be against city

The word "city" represents the people of the city. Alternate translation: "people of one city will fight against people of another city" or "people from different cities will fight against one another"

kingdom against kingdom

The words "will be" or "will fight" are understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "kingdom will be against kingdom" or "kingdom will fight against kingdom"

kingdom against kingdom

The word "kingdom" refers to a smaller kingdom within Egypt. It may also be called a province. It represents the people of that kingdom or province. Alternate translation: "the people of one province will be against the people of another province" or "people from different provinces will fight against one another"

Isaiah 19:3

The spirit of Egypt will be weakened from within. I will destroy his advice

The nation of Egypt is spoken of here as if it was a person.

The spirit of Egypt will be weakened from within

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "I will weaken the spirit of Egypt from within"

I will destroy his advice, though they sought the advice of ... spiritists

"They sought the advice of ... spiritists, but that will do them no good. It will not stop me from destroying his advice"

I will destroy his advice

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh will cause the advice that he gives to be ineffective or 2) Yahweh will cause him to be unable to give any advice. This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "advice" is expressed as the verb "advise." Alternate

translation: "I will confuse those who advise the king"

sorcerers ... spiritists

These are people who claim to speak with those who have died.

Isaiah 19:4

I will give the Egyptians into the hand of a severe master

Here "hand" refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "I will give the Egyptians over to the control of a severe master"

this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 3:15]

Isaiah 19:5

The waters of the sea will dry up, and the river will dry up and become empty

Egyptians referred to the Nile River as "the sea." These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "The Nile River will completely dry up"

Isaiah 19:6

become foul

"become foul-smelling" or "stink"

will dwindle

"become smaller and smaller"

the reeds and flags will wither away

"Reeds" and "flags" refer to two similar kinds of water plants. Alternate translation: "the plants along the river will die and decay"

Isaiah 19:7

every sown field beside the Nile

"the fields near the Nile where people have planted crops"

Isaiah 19:8

The fishermen will wail and mourn, and all who cast a hook into the Nile will mourn, and those who spread nets on the waters will waste away

These three phrases mean basically the same thing. If necessary, the reason they will grieve can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "The fishermen who catch fish with hooks or nets will cry in despair because the fish in the Nile have died"

cast a hook into the Nile

In order to catch fish, some people put a little food on a hook, tie the hook to a string, and throw the hook into the water. When a fish tries to eat the food, its mouth gets stuck on the hook, and the person pulls the fish out of the water.

cast
throw

spread nets on the waters

In order to catch fish, some people toss a net on the water. When fish get caught in it, they pull the net with the fish out of the water.

will waste away

"will grieve." This weakness probably comes from grief.

Isaiah 19:9

The workers in combed flax

"Those who work with combed flax"

combed flax

Flax is a plant that grows along the Nile River. People comb its fibers in order to separate them, and use them to make thread for linen cloth.

will turn pale

"will be ashamed"

Isaiah 19:10

The cloth workers of Egypt

"The people of Egypt who make cloth"

will be crushed

Being crushed represents being discouraged. Alternate translation: "will be discouraged"

work for wages

"work for pay"

will be grieved within themselves

"will feel very sad"

Isaiah 19:11

The princes of Zoan are completely foolish. The advice of the wisest advisors of Pharaoh has become stupid

These two phrases are similar in meaning. Either the "princes of Zoan" are also "the wisest advisors of Pharaoh," or they are another group of people that also are shown to be foolish.

Zoan

This is a city in northern Egypt.

How can you say to Pharaoh ... kings?

Isaiah uses a question to mock those in Egypt who claim to be wise. Alternate translation: "You foolishly say to Pharaoh ... kings."

Isaiah 19:12

Where then are your wise men?

Isaiah uses a question to mock the wise men. The word "your" refers to Pharaoh. Alternate

translation: "You do not have any wise men." or "Your wise men are fools."

Let them tell you and make known what Yahweh of hosts plans concerning Egypt

Isaiah is implying that wise men should be able to understand God's plans, but Isaiah does not really believe they are wise. Alternate translation: "If they were really wise, they would be able to tell you what Yahweh of hosts plans concerning Egypt"

Isaiah 19:13

they have made Egypt go astray, who are the cornerstones of her tribes

The princes of Zoan and Memphis are spoken of as if they are the cornerstones of buildings because they are an important part of the community. Alternate translation: "the leaders have made Egypt go astray"

princes of Zoan

Zoan is a city in northern Egypt. See how you translated this in Isaiah 19:11.

Memphis

This is a city in the northern part of Egypt.

made Egypt go astray

The word "Egypt" represents the people of Egypt. Going astray represents doing what is wrong. Alternate translation: "made the people of Egypt go astray" or "made the people of Egypt do what is wrong"

Isaiah 19:14

Yahweh has mixed a spirit of distortion into her midst

Isaiah speaks of Yahweh's judgment as if Egypt was a cup of wine. He speaks of Yahweh causing the leaders' thoughts to be distorted as if their distorted thoughts were a liquid that Yahweh mixed in with the wine. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has judged them by distorting their thoughts" or "Yahweh has judged Egypt by distorting its leaders' thoughts, as intoxicating drinks confuse people's thoughts"

distortion

"perverseness" or "confusion"

into her midst

Here "her" refers to Egypt. Nations are sometimes spoken of as if they were women. Alternate translation: "within Egypt"

they have led Egypt astray

Here, "they" refers to the leaders described in the previous verses. The word "Egypt" represents the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "the princes have led the people of Egypt astray"

have led Egypt astray

Leading people astray represents influencing them to do what is wrong.

like a drunk staggering in his vomit

Isaiah speaks of the people of Egypt doing what is wrong as if they were made to wander about like a drunken person.

Isaiah 19:15

whether head or tail

The "head," the part of an animal a person would want to be, represents the leader. The "tail" is the opposite and represents people who follow.

Alternate translation: "whether leader or follower"

palm branch or reed

The "palm branch" grows high on the tree and represents people who are wealthy and important. The "reed" grows in shallow water and represents people who are poor and unimportant. See how you translated similar phrases in Isaiah 9:14. Alternate translation: "whether they are important or unimportant" or "whether rich or poor"

Isaiah 19:16

Egyptians will be like women

This emphasizes that the people of Egypt will be afraid and helpless when God punishes them.

because of the upraised hand of Yahweh of hosts that he raises over them

Here "hand" refers to God's power, and raising the hand against them represents punishing them.

Alternate translation: "because Yahweh of hosts has raised his powerful hand to punish them"

Isaiah 19:17

The land of Judah will become a cause of staggering to Egypt

The "land of Judah" and "Egypt" refer to the people in those places. The Egyptians will stagger because they are afraid. Alternate translation: "The people of Judah will cause the Egyptians to stagger" or "The people of Judah will cause the Egyptians to be terribly afraid"

Whenever anyone reminds them of her, they will be afraid

Here, "them" and "they" refer to the Egyptians and "her" refers to the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone reminds the Egyptians of the people of Judah, the Egyptians will be afraid"

Isaiah 19:18

there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak

This refers to the people of those cities. Alternate translation: "the people in five Egyptian cities will speak"

the language of Canaan

This refers to Hebrew, the language of the people of God living in the land of Canaan. Here Canaan represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "the language of the people of Canaan"

swear allegiance

"promise to be loyal"

One of these will be called

This can be stated in active form. "People will call one of these cities"

called The City of the Sun

It is not clear whether the Hebrew word translated "Sun" here means "sun" or "destruction." It is also not clear what the name tells us about the city. Alternate translation: "the city called Sun City" or "the city called Destruction City"

Isaiah 19:19

a stone pillar at the border to Yahweh

The phrase "the border" refers to the border of Egypt. Alternate translation: "a stone pillar to Yahweh at the border of Egypt"

Isaiah 19:20

It will be as a sign and a witness to Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt

The abstract nouns "sign" and "witness" can be expressed with the verbs "show" and "prove."

Alternate translation: "The altar will show and prove that Yahweh of hosts is in the land of Egypt"

to Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt

Yahweh being in the land of Egypt represents the people of Egypt worshiping him. Alternate translation: "that the people in the land of Egypt worship Yahweh of hosts"

When they cry

"When the Egyptians cry"

because of oppressors

"because people are treating them harshly" or "because others are causing them to suffer"

he will send them a savior and a defender

"Yahweh will send someone to save and defend the Egyptians"

he will deliver them

Who Yahweh will deliver them from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will deliver the Egyptians from their oppressors"

Isaiah 19:21

Yahweh will become known to Egypt

Here "Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will make the people of Egypt know him"

will acknowledge Yahweh

"will accept the truth about Yahweh" or "will agree to the truth about Yahweh"

They will worship

The object of their worship can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "They will worship Yahweh"

will make vows to Yahweh and fulfill them

"will make promises to Yahweh and keep them" or "they will make promises to Yahweh and they will do what they have promised to do"

Isaiah 19:22

Yahweh will afflict Egypt

Here, "Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will afflict the people of Egypt"

afflict

"strike" or "punish"

afflicting and healing

The word "them" is understood in this phrase. Alternate translation: "afflicting them and healing them"

afflicting and healing

How this phrase relates to the phrase before it can be made clear with the words "after" and "also." Alternate translation: "and after he afflicts them, he will also heal them"

Isaiah 19:23

there will be a highway

A highway is a large road on which many people can travel.

the Assyrian will come

"the Assyrian" refers to a person from Assyria, but represents anyone from Assyria who comes to Egypt. Alternate translation: "Assyrians will come"

the Egyptian to Assyria

The words "will come" are understood. Alternate translation: "the Egyptian will come to Assyria"

the Egyptian

This refers to a person from Egypt, but represents anyone from Egypt who comes to Assyria. Alternate translation: "Egyptians"

the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians

The object of their worship can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians and Assyrians will worship Yahweh"

Isaiah 19:24

Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria

The names of the three nations represent the people of those nations. Alternate translation: "the Israelites will be the third with the Egyptians and Assyrians"

be the third with

Possible meanings are 1) "join together with" or 2) "be the third blessing with" or 3) "be equal to."

Isaiah 19:25

Blessed be Egypt, my people; Assyria, the work of my hands; and Israel, my inheritance

The names of the three nations refer to the people of those nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have blessed you, people of Egypt, because you are my people; and I have blessed you, people of Assyria, because I created you; and I have blessed you, people of Israel, because I securely possess you"

the work of my hands

Here "hands" refers to God's power and action.

Chapter 20

¹ In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, he fought against Ashdod and took it. ² At that time Yahweh spoke by Isaiah son of Amoz and said, "Go and remove the sackcloth from your waist, and take your sandals off your feet." He did so, walking naked and barefoot. ³ Yahweh said, "Just as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years, it is a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Cush— ⁴ in this way the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵ They will be dismayed and ashamed, because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their glory. ⁶ The inhabitants of these coasts will say on that day, 'Indeed, this was our source of hope, where we fled for help to be rescued from the king of Assyria, and now, how can we escape?'"

Isaiah 20 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Naked and barefoot

This is an image used in this chapter to describe Assyria's victory over Egypt and Ethiopia. While they will be defeated, they will not be totally destroyed. Instead, they will be left with nothing.

Isaiah 20:1

Tartan

the name of the chief commander of the armies of Assyria

Sargon

the name of the king of Assyria

he fought against Ashdod and took it

Ashdod refers to the army of Ashdod. Alternate translation: "he fought against the army of Ashdod and defeated it"

Isaiah 20:2

walking naked and barefoot

"walking around without clothes and without sandals." Here the word "naked" probably refers to wearing only his undergarments.

Isaiah 20:3

a wonder

"a warning"

Isaiah 20:4

the king of Assyria will lead away the captives

The king orders his army to do this task. Alternate translation: "the king of Assyria will have his army lead away the captives"

will lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Cush

It can be stated clearly that they will first attack and capture people. Alternate translation: "will

attack Egypt and Cush and capture their people and lead them away"

to the shame of Egypt

Egypt refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "which will bring shame on the people of Egypt"

Isaiah 20:5

dismayed and ashamed

"afraid and put to shame"

because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their glory

Hope and glory refer to their trust in the military power of these countries. Alternate translation: "because they had trusted in the power of the armies of Cush and Egypt"

Isaiah 20:6

The inhabitants of these coasts

the people who lived in the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea

where we fled for help to be rescued

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where we fled to so they would rescue us"

now, how can we escape?

The author uses this question to emphasize how hopeless their situation was. Alternate translation: "now there is no way for us to escape!"

Chapter 21

¹ A declaration about the desert by the sea.

Like stormwinds sweeping through the Negev it comes
passing through from the wilderness, from a terrible land.

² A severe vision has been given to me:
the treacherous man deals treacherously,
and the destroyer destroys.
Go up and attack, Elam; besiege, Media;
I will stop all her groaning.

³ Therefore my loins are filled with pain;
pains like the pains of a woman in labor
have taken hold of me;
I am bowed down by what I heard;
I am disturbed by what I saw.

⁴ My heart pounds; I shake with fear.
Twilight was my desire, but it brought me terror.

⁵ They prepare the table,
they spread rugs and eat and drink;
arise, princes,
anoint your shields with oil.

⁶ For this is what the Lord said to me,

"Go, post a watchman;
he must report what he sees.

⁷ When he sees a chariot, a pair of horsemen,
riders on donkeys, and riders on camels,
then he must pay attention
and be very alert."

⁸ The watchman cries out, ^[1]

"Lord, on the watchtower I stand all day, every day,
and at my post I stand all night long."

⁹ Here comes a chariot with a man and a pair of horsemen.
He calls out, "Babylon has fallen, fallen,
and all the carved figures of its gods
are broken to the ground."

¹⁰ My threshed and winnowed ones,
children of my threshing floor!
What I have heard from Yahweh of hosts,
the God of Israel, I have declared to you.

¹¹ A declaration about Dumah.

One calls to me from Seir,
"Watchman, what is left of the night?
Watchman, what is left of the night?"

¹² The watchman said,
"The morning comes and also the night.
If you want to ask, then ask;
and come back again."

¹³ A declaration about Arabia.

In the wilderness of Arabia you spend the night,
you caravans of Dedanites.

14 Bring water for the thirsty;
inhabitants of the land of Tema,
meet the fugitives with bread.

15 For they have fled from the sword,
from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow,
and from the weight of war.

16 For this is what the Lord said to me, "Within a year, as a laborer hired for a year would see it, all the glory of Kedar will end. **17** Only a few of the archers, the warriors of Kedar will remain," for Yahweh, the God of Israel, has spoken.

Footnotes

21:8 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 21:1-10, 13-17.

Special concepts in this chapter

Cush

Dumah and Seir are places in Edom. Part of this chapter is a prophecy against Cush. (See: prophet)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The desert by the sea

This is a metaphor for an unknown nation. Scholars are divided over the proper identity of this nation, but it is probably Babylon.

Mystery

The fulfillment of this chapter is very mysterious. It is unknown who is truly being addressed and how this is to be fulfilled in history. The translator should not attempt to give the reader insight into this prophecy's fulfillment. (See: fulfill)

Isaiah 21:1

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares" or "This is Yahweh's message"

about the desert by the sea

This refers to the people who live in Babylon as being a desert, even though God has not made it into a desert yet. This event will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "about the people who live in a land that soon will be a desert"

Like stormwinds sweeping through the Negev

Isaiah compares the army that will attack the people to a storm with strong winds. They will be quick and powerful.

from the wilderness

Here "wilderness" refers to the wilderness of Judea.

from a terrible land

The army is from a people that cause great fear.

Isaiah 21:2

A severe vision has been given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh showed me a troubling vision"

the treacherous man deals treacherously

"those who deceive will deceive"

the destroyer destroys

"those who destroy will destroy"

Go up and attack, Elam; besiege, Media

In the vision given to Isaiah, Yahweh speaks to the armies of Elam and Media as if they are there listening to him.

Go up and attack, Elam; besiege, Media

It is understood that they are to attack the Babylonians. Alternate translation: "Go up and attack the Babylonians, you soldiers of Elam; go and besiege the Babylonians, you soldiers of Media"

Elam ... Media

Here "Elam" and "Media" represent the soldiers from these places.

I will stop all her groaning

Here "her" represents all the people who are suffering because of the Babylonians. Yahweh will cause them to stop groaning when he sends the armies of Elam and Media to destroy the Babylonians.

Isaiah 21:3

my loins are filled with pain

The vision that Isaiah sees is so troubling it causes him physical pain. Here he describes the pain and cramping in the middle part of his body.

pains like the pains of a woman in labor have taken hold of me

Isaiah compares his pain to the pain of a woman giving birth. This emphasizes the great pain he is feeling.

I am bowed down by what I heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What I heard has caused me to bend over in pain"

I am disturbed by what I saw

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what I saw has greatly troubled me"

Isaiah 21:4

My heart pounds; I shake with fear

"My heart beats fast and I am shaking"

Isaiah 21:5

They prepare

Here "They" refers to the leaders of Babylon.

prepare the table

Here "table" represents the food that people will eat at the feast.

arise, princes

Here "princes" refers in general to men with authority and not necessarily to sons of kings.

anoint your shields with oil

Soldiers would put oil on their leather shields so they would stay soft and not crack during battle.

Isaiah 21:6

post a watchman

"tell a watchman to stand on the wall of Jerusalem"

Isaiah 21:7

a chariot, a pair of horsemen

"a soldier riding in a chariot, a pair of horses pulling it"

Isaiah 21:8

Lord, on the watchtower I stand

Here "Lord" refers to the person with authority that commanded the watchman to stand on the wall of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 21:9

Babylon has fallen, fallen

Babylon being completely defeated by their enemies is spoken of as if Babylon has fallen. Here "Babylon" is a metonym that represents the people of Babylon. Alternate translation: "The people of Babylon are completely defeated"

fallen, fallen

The word "fallen" is repeated to emphasize that the people of Babylon were completely defeated by their enemies.

Isaiah 21:10

My threshed and winnowed ones, children of my threshing floor

The people of Israel suffering because of the Babylonians is spoken of as if the people were grain that was threshed and winnowed.

My threshed

The word "my" refers to Isaiah.

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 21:11

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares" or "This is a message from Yahweh"

about Dumah

This is another name for Edom. Here "Dumah" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "about the people of Dumah" or "about the people of Edom"

One calls to me

Here "me" refers to Isaiah.

Seir

This is the name of mountains west of Edom.

Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?

This is repeated to emphasize that the person asking the question is worried and nervous.

Isaiah 21:12

If you want to ask, then ask; and come back again

"Ask me now what you want to know, but also come back later and ask again"

Isaiah 21:13

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares" or "This is the message of Yahweh"

about Arabia

Arabia refers to the population of Arabia. Alternate translation: "about the people of Arabia"

In the wilderness of Arabia

Arabia does not have a forest. Alternate translation: "Far off from the road in Arabia" or "Out in the bushes of Arabia"

caravans

a group of people traveling together

Dedanites

This is a people group that lived in Arabia.

Isaiah 21:14

land of Tema

This is the name of a city in Arabia.

fugitives

A fugitive is a person who runs away so that his enemy will not capture him. See how you translated this in Isaiah 15:5.

with bread

Here "bread" represents food in general.

Isaiah 21:15

from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow

Here "sword" and "bow" represents the soldiers who attack the inhabitants of Tema. Alternate translation: "from their enemies who attack them with swords and bows"

from the weight of war

The terror and suffering that is experienced during war is spoken of as if war were a heavy weight on people. Alternate translation: "from the horrors of war"

Isaiah 21:16

as a laborer hired for a year would see it

"as a hired laborer would count the days of a year." A hired worker is careful to count the days so that he works exactly the amount of time he is paid to work. This means Kedar will be defeated in exactly one year.

of Kedar

This is a region in Arabia. Kedar represents the population of Kedar. Alternate translation: "of the people of Kedar"

Isaiah 21:17

General Information:

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Chapter 22

- ¹ A declaration about the Valley of Vision:
What is the reason that you have all gone up
to the housetops?
- ² Is it so you may hear a city full of noises,
a town full of revelry?
Your dead were not killed with the sword,
and they did not die in battle.
- ³ All your rulers fled away together,
but they were captured without using a bow;
all of them were captured together,
though they had fled far away.
- ⁴ Therefore I said, "Do not look at me,
I will weep bitterly;
do not try to comfort me concerning the destruction
of the daughter of my people."
- ⁵ For there is a day of tumult, treading down,
and confusion for the Lord Yahweh of hosts,
in the Valley of Vision,
a breaking down of the walls,
and people crying out to the mountains.
- ⁶ Elam takes up the quiver,
with chariots of men and horsemen,
and Kir lays the shield bare.
- ⁷ It will come about that your choicest valleys
will be full of chariots,
and the horsemen will take their positions at the gate.
- ⁸ He took away the protection of Judah;
and you looked in that day
to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest.
- ⁹ You saw the breaches of the city of David,
that they were many,
and you collected the water
of the lower pool.
- ¹⁰ You counted the houses of Jerusalem,
and you tore down the houses to fortify the wall.
- ¹¹ You made a reservoir between the two walls
for the water of the old pool.
But you did not consider the city's maker,
who had planned it long ago.
- ¹² The Lord Yahweh of hosts called on that day
for weeping, for mourning,
for shaved heads, and the wearing of sackcloth.
- ¹³ But look, there is celebration and gladness,
killing cattle and slaughtering sheep,
eating meat and drinking wine:
"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die."
- ¹⁴ This was revealed in my ears by Yahweh of hosts:
"Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you,
even when you die,"
says the Lord Yahweh of hosts.
- ¹⁵ The Lord Yahweh of hosts, says this,
"Go to this administrator, to Shebna,

who is over the house, and say,

16 'What are you doing here and who gave you permission
to cut out a tomb for yourself,
hewing out a grave on the heights
and carving out a resting place in the rock?'"

17 See, Yahweh is about to throw you, a mighty man,
about to throw you down; he will grasp you tightly.

18 He will surely wind you round and round,
and toss you like a ball into a vast country.
There you will die, and there your glorious chariots will be;
you will be the shame of your master's house!

19 "I will force you out of your office and from your station.
You will be pulled down.

20 It will come about on that day that I will call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. **21** I will clothe him
with your tunic and put on him your sash, and I will transfer your authority into his hand. He will be a
father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. **22** I will place the key of the house of
David on his shoulder; he will open, and none will shut; he will shut, and none will open. **23** I will fasten
him, a peg in a secure place, and he will become a seat of glory for his father's house. **24** They will hang
on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and descendants, every small container from the
cups to all the jugs.

25 On that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—the peg driven in a firm place will give way,
break off, and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off—for Yahweh has spoken.

Isaiah 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Repentance

On this day of judgment, Judah should be repenting of their sin. Instead, they are celebrating it. Although Judah avoids Yahweh's punishment through the Assyrians, their punishment will still come. (See: judge and repent and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Valley of Visions"

This is a metaphor used in this prophecy against the nation of Judah. (See: and prophet)

Isaiah 22:1

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares" or "This is Yahweh's message"

about the Valley of Vision

Here "Valley" refers to those who live in the valley, that is, Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "about those who live in the Valley of Vision" or "about those who live in Jerusalem"

What is the reason that you have all gone up to the housetops?

Isaiah uses a question to scold the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "You should not go and stand on the tops of your houses."

Isaiah 22:2

a town full of revelry

"a town full of people celebrating"

Your dead were not killed with the sword

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Enemy soldiers did not kill your people"

with the sword

Here "sword" represents the soldiers who fight in battle.

Isaiah 22:3

but they were captured without using a bow

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but the enemy captured your rulers who were not even carrying a bow"

all of them were captured together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy captured all of them together"

Isaiah 22:4

Therefore I said

Here "I" refers to Isaiah.

of the daughter of my people

Here "daughter" represents the people and may imply Isaiah's feeling of love for them. Alternate translation: "of my people whom I love" or "of my people"

Isaiah 22:5

For there is a day

"For there will be a time"

of tumult, treading down, and confusion for the Lord Yahweh of hosts

"when the Lord Yahweh of hosts will cause panic, treading down, and confusion"

treading down

Treading down represents conquering other nations. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 18:2]

in the Valley of Vision

This refers to Jerusalem. See how you translated this in Isaiah 22:1.

people crying out to the mountains

Possible meanings are 1) "people in the mountains will hear their cries" or 2) "the people's cries will echo off the mountains"

Isaiah 22:6

Elam takes up the quiver

The quiver is a bag to carry arrows and represents the archer's weapons. Alternate translation: "The soldiers of Elam take their bows and arrows"

Kir lays the shield bare

Here "Kir" represents the soldiers. Alternate translation: "the soldiers of Kir will take their shields out of their covers"

Kir

Kir is a city in Media.

Isaiah 22:7

your choicest valleys

Here "your" refers to the people of Jerusalem. Isaiah does include himself as one of the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "our best valleys"

Isaiah 22:8

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when an army will attack the people of Jerusalem. Past tense verbs can be translated with future tense verbs.

He took away the protection of Judah

The abstract noun "protection" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will take away everything that has protected the people of Judah"

you looked in that day to the weapons

Here the phrase "to look to" means to trust in something. Alternate translation: "to defend yourselves you will get the weapons"

Palace of the Forest

This was a part of the temple in Jerusalem where they stored their weapons.

Isaiah 22:9

you collected the water of the lower pool

The people will store water so that they will have enough to drink while their enemies surround the city.

Isaiah 22:10

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when an army will attack the people of Jerusalem.

You counted the houses

Here "counted" means they inspected the houses to find material to help them rebuild the city wall.

Isaiah 22:11

You made a reservoir

"You made a storage place"

between the two walls

It is unclear what two walls Isaiah meant. The main point is that they built the reservoir within the city walls.

the city's maker

These words could refer to 1) the original human builder of the city or 2) Yahweh.

Isaiah 22:12

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

for shaved heads

This was a sign of mourning and repenting.

Isaiah 22:13

Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die

Here "eat and drink" represents having a party and eating a lot of food and drinking a lot of wine. It can be stated clearly that this is what the people were saying. Alternate translation: "You say, 'Let us feast and drink all we want, for we will die soon.'"

Isaiah 22:14

This was revealed in my ears by Yahweh of hosts

Here "ears" represents Isaiah as a whole. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts revealed this to me"

Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you, even when you die

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Surely I will not forgive you for these sinful things you have done, even when you die"

even when you die

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh will never forgive them, even after they die or 2) Yahweh will not forgive them until they die.

Isaiah 22:15

Shebna

This is the name of the manager of the king's palace in Jerusalem.

who is over the house

Here "house" represents those in the king's palace. Alternate translation: "who is in charge of all those who work in the palace"

Isaiah 22:16

What are you doing here and who gave you permission ... in the rock?

Yahweh uses this question to scold Shebna. Alternate translation: "You have no right ... in the rock!"

cut out a tomb ... hewing out a grave ... carving out a resting place

These three phrases all refer to making a burial tomb.

on the heights

The most important people in Israel had tombs in the highest places.

Isaiah 22:17

General Information:

Isaiah continues to speak God's message to Shebna.

Isaiah 22:18

He will surely wind you round and round, and toss you like a ball into a vast country

The enemy soldiers coming and taking Shebna as a captive to a foreign land is spoken of as if Yahweh were throwing him like a ball into another land.

you will be the shame of your master's house

Here "house" represents the people who work in the king's palace. Alternate translation: "you will cause shame for all those in your master's palace"

Isaiah 22:19

I will force you out of your office and from your station. You will be pulled down

Yahweh causing Shebna to no longer work in the king's palace is spoken of as if Yahweh will throw him to the ground.

You will be pulled down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bring you down from your honored position"

Isaiah 22:20

General Information:

Isaiah continues to speak God's message to Shebna.

It will come about on that day

"It will happen at that time"

Eliakim ... Hilkiah

These are names of men.

Isaiah 22:21

I will clothe him with your tunic and put on him your sash

Yahweh causing Eliakim to take Shebna's place in the king's palace is spoken of as if Yahweh will dress Eliakim in Shebna's clothes that represent his authority in the king's palace.

your tunic ... your sash

Here the tunic and sash represent authority in the king's palace.

sash

This is a piece of cloth that people wear around the waist or across the chest. See how you translated this in Isaiah 3:20.

into his hand

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "to him"

He will be a father

Eliakim caring for and protecting the people of Judah is spoken of as if he would be their father. Alternate translation: "He will be like a father"

to the house of Judah

Here "house" represents the people. Alternate translation: "to the people of Judah"

Isaiah 22:22

I will place the key of the house of David on his shoulder ... none will open

Here "key" represents authority. This speaks of Eliakim having authority that no one can oppose as if he had the key to the palace and no one else could lock or unlock the door. Alternate translation: "I will put him in charge of those who work in the king's palace, and when he makes a decision no one will be able to oppose him"

Isaiah 22:23

General Information:

Yahweh continues to describe Eliakim, who will replace Shebna in the king's palace.

I will fasten him, a peg in a secure place

Yahweh causing Eliakim's authority to be strong and secure in the king's palace is spoken of as if Eliakim were a peg and Yahweh will set him firmly in the palace wall.

he will become a seat of glory for his father's house

Here "seat of glory" represents a place of honor. Alternate translation: "Eliakim will bring honor to his family"

his father's house

Here "house" represents family. Alternate translation: "his father's family" or "his family"

Isaiah 22:24

They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house

Yahweh causing Eliakim's whole family to be honored because of Eliakim is spoken of as if Eliakim were a peg in the wall and his family were something that hangs on the peg. Alternate translation: "They will give honor to his whole family because of him"

every small container from the cups to all the jugs

This continues to speak of Eliakim as a peg. His offspring will be like cups that hang on the peg. This means his descendants will be honored because of him.

the cups to all the jugs

A cup is a small container that holds water. A jug is a larger container that holds water.

Isaiah 22:25

General Information:

This continues the imagery from [Isaiah 22:23-24](#).

the peg driven in a firm place ... will be cut off

Yahweh causing Shebna to lose his authority in the king's palace is spoken of as if Shebna were a peg in the wall that breaks off and falls to the ground. This emphasizes that Shebna thought his authority was secure but God will remove him.

the load that was on it will be cut off

Here "load" represents Shebna's power and authority. It is spoken of as if it were an object hanging on the peg that represents Shebna. Yahweh causing Shebna to lose his power and authority is spoken of as if someone were to cut off the object that was hanging on the peg.

Chapter 23

¹ A declaration about Tyre:

Wail, you ships of Tarshish;
 Tyre has been devastated,
 with neither home nor harbor;
 from the land of Cyprus
 it has been revealed to them. ^[1]

² Be silent, you inhabitants of the coast;
 the merchant of Sidon,
 who travels over the sea, has filled you. ^[2]

³ Upon the great waters
 was the grain of Shihor,
 the harvest of the Nile was her produce;
 and it became the commerce of the nations.

⁴ Be ashamed, Sidon; for the sea has spoken,
 the fortress of the sea. He says,
 "I have not labored nor given birth,
 nor have I raised young men nor brought up young women."

⁵ When the report comes to Egypt,
 they will be grieved concerning Tyre.

⁶ Cross over to Tarshish;
 wail, you inhabitants of the coast.

⁷ Has this happened to you, the joyful city,
 whose origin is from ancient times,
 whose feet carried her far away
 to foreign places to settle?

⁸ Who has planned this against Tyre,
 the giver of crowns,
 whose merchants are princes,
 whose traders are the honored ones of the earth?

⁹ Yahweh of hosts has planned it
 to dishonor her pride and all her glory,
 to shame all her honored ones of the earth.

¹⁰ Plow your land, as one plows the Nile,
 daughter of Tarshish.
 There is no longer a marketplace in Tyre. ^[3]

¹¹ Yahweh has reached out with his hand over the sea,
 and he has shaken the kingdoms;
 he has given a command concerning Phoenicia,
 to destroy the strongholds.

¹² He said, "You will not rejoice again,
 oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon;
 arise, pass over to Cyprus;
 but neither there you will have rest."

¹³ See the land of the Chaldeans.
 This people has ceased to be;
 the Assyrians have made it
 a wilderness for wild animals.
 They set up their siege towers;
 they demolished its palaces;
 they made it a heap of ruins.

¹⁴ Wail, you ships of Tarshish;
 for your refuge has been destroyed.

15 In that day, Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of a king. After the end of seventy years there will happen in Tyre something like in the song of the prostitute.

16 Take a harp, go about the city,
you forgotten prostitute;
play it well, sing many songs,
so that you may be remembered.

17 It will come about that after seventy years, Yahweh will help Tyre, and she will start making her prostitute's wages again by doing the work of a prostitute, and she will offer her services to all the kingdoms of the earth. **18** Her profits and prostitute's wages will be set apart to Yahweh. They will not be stored up or kept in the treasury, for her profits will be given to those who live in Yahweh's presence and will be used to supply them with abundant food and so they can have the best quality clothing.

Footnotes

23:1 ^[1]Instead of

23:2 ^[2]Some ancient and modern translations have

23:10 ^[3]The Hebrew is difficult here. Instead of ULB,

Isaiah 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Phoenicia

This chapter prophesies destruction against several cities in Phoenicia as well as in Tarshish. The exact location of Tarshish is unknown. Because of the locations mentioned in this chapter, it appears that the Assyrians will conquer many of the nations on the Mediterranean Sea. (See: prophet)

Isaiah 23:1

General Information:

Isaiah continues to tell what God has judged against the nations in 13:1-23:18.

A declaration about Tyre

"This is what Yahweh declares about Tyre"

Wail, you ships of Tarshish

Here "ships" represents the men on the ships. Isaiah speaks to the men on the ships of Tarshish as if they could hear him. Alternate translation: "Cry out in despair you men on the ships of Tarshish"

harbor

an area of the sea that is near land and safe for ships

from the land of Cyprus it has been revealed to them

This phrase can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the men heard about Tyre when they were in the land of Cyprus"

Isaiah 23:2

Be silent, you inhabitants of the coast

Isaiah speaks to the people who live on the coast as if they could hear him.

Be silent

This is an idiom. Here silence is meant to signal shock and amazement. Alternate translation: "Be shocked"

of the coast

The "coast" is the land near or around the sea or ocean. Here it refers to the people who live in Phoenicia which borders the Mediterranean sea.

the merchant of Sidon, who travels over the sea, has filled you

Here "merchant" means "many merchants." Alternate translation: "the merchants of Sidon, who travel over the sea, have made you rich"

Isaiah 23:3

Upon the great waters was the grain of Shihor
Shihor was the name of a valley near the Nile River in Egypt known for its production of grain.
Alternate translation: "The men traveled on the large sea to transport the grain from Shihor in Egypt"

the harvest of the Nile was her produce
The "harvest of the Nile" refers to the grain that was harvested near the Nile River and transported on the river and then to Phoenicia.

her produce
"its produce." It was common to refer to the river as "her."

it became the commerce of the nations
Commerce is the activity of buying and selling goods. Here "nations" represents the people.
Alternate translation: "you were where people from other nations came to buy and sell goods"

Isaiah 23:4

for the sea has spoken, the fortress of the sea ... nor brought up young women
Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh describes the city of Tyre

young men ... young women
Or "sons and daughters." Some modern translations read, "young men ... virgins," but the emphasis here is on the girls' youth, in parallel with "young men," not on their sexual purity.

Isaiah 23:5

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 23:6

Cross over to Tarshish
"Make your way to Tarshish." Tarshish was the farthest land the people of Tyre traveled to do business. It will be the only place of safety for those who escape from Tyre.

Isaiah 23:7

Has this happened to you, the joyful city, whose origin is from ancient times ... to settle?
Yahweh uses a question to mock Tyre. This rhetorical questions can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "This has indeed happened to you who were full of joy in the ancient city of Tyre ... to settle."

the joyful city
Here "city" represents the people. Alternate translation: "the joyful people who live in the city of Tyre"

whose feet carried her far away to foreign places to settle
Here "feet" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "who went to distant places to live and make money"

her far away
Here "her" refers to the city of Tyre which represents the people of Tyre.

Isaiah 23:8

Who has planned this against Tyre ... of the earth?
Isaiah uses a question to mock Tyre. The word "this" refers to God's plans to destroy Tyre which Isaiah described in 23:1-7. Also, "Tyre" refers to the people who live in Tyre. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It was Yahweh who has planned to destroy the people of Tyre ... of the earth."

the giver of crowns
Here "crown" refers to the power a person has as a ruler over people. Alternate translation: "who gives people power to rule over others"

whose merchants are princes
The merchants are compared to princes to emphasize how much power they had when they went to different lands. Alternate translation: "whose merchants are like princes"

whose traders are the honored ones of the earth
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose traders the people of the earth give the highest honors"

Isaiah 23:9

to dishonor her pride and all her glory
"to dishonor them because they were proud of their own glory"

her pride ... her glory ... her honored ones
Here "her" refers to the city of Tyre which represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "their pride ... their glory ... their honored one"

Isaiah 23:10

Plow your land, as one plows the Nile, daughter of Tarshish. There is no longer a marketplace in Tyre
Possible meanings are 1) Isaiah is telling the people of Tarshish to start planting crops since they can no longer trade with Tyre or 2) Isaiah is telling the people of Tarshish they are free from Tyre's control. Alternate translation: "Pass through your land like a

river, daughter of Tarshish. The people of Tyre no longer have any power"

daughter of Tarshish

The "daughter" of a city represents the people of the city. Alternate translation: "the people of Tarshish" or "the people who live in Tarshish"

Isaiah 23:11

Yahweh has reached out with his hand over the sea, and he has shaken the kingdoms

Yahweh using his power to control the sea and the people of mighty kingdoms is spoken of as if Yahweh reached out his hand and shook kingdoms.

has reached out with his hand over the sea

Here "hand" refers to God's power and control. Alternate translation: "has shown his power over the sea"

Isaiah 23:12

oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon

Here "virgin daughter" represents the people of Sidon. Alternate translation: "people of Sidon, because other people will oppress you"

Isaiah 23:13

See the land of the Chaldeans

"Chaldeans" here is another name for Babylonians. Alternate translation: "See what happened to the land of the Babylonians" or "See what has happened to Babylonia"

siege towers

Soldiers built towers or dirt ramps to attack over the walls of a city.

Isaiah 23:14

Wail, you ships of Tarshish

Here "ships" represents the men on the ships. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 23:1]

for your refuge has been destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for enemies have destroyed your refuge"

Isaiah 23:15

In that day

"At that time" or "Then"

Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years

Since people will no longer go to Tyre to buy or sell goods, it will be like they have forgotten about the city. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for seventy years it will be like the people have forgotten about Tyre"

for seventy years

"for 70 years"

like the days of a king

"like the years of a king" or "which is about as long as a king lives"

like in the song of the prostitute

This speaks about the people of Tyre as if they were a prostitute.

Isaiah 23:16

Take a harp, go about the city, you forgotten prostitute ... so that you may be remembered

This speaks about the people of Tyre as if they were a prostitute

so that you may be remembered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that people remember you" or "so that people return to you"

Isaiah 23:17

It will come about that

This phrase is used here to mark an important event that will happen. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

seventy years

"70 years"

Yahweh will help Tyre

Here "Tyre" represents the people who live in Tyre. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will help the people of Tyre"

she will start making her prostitute's wages again by doing the work of a prostitute ... of the earth

Isaiah compares the people of Tyre with a prostitute. Just as the prostitute sells herself for money to any man, the people of Tyre will again buy and sell to all kingdoms. Alternate translation: "And like a prostitute they will buy and sell will all the kingdoms of the earth"

she will start making her prostitute's wages again

"once again she will begin making as much money as she made when she was a prostitute"

Isaiah 23:18

prostitute's wages

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 23:17.

They will not be stored up or kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The merchants will not store away their money"

those who live in Yahweh's presence

"those who obey and serve Yahweh"

to supply them with abundant food
"so they will have enough food to eat"

Chapter 24

- ¹ Look, Yahweh is about to empty the earth,
to devastate it, mar its surface, and scatter its inhabitants.
- ² It will come about that, as with the people, so with the priest;
as with the servant, so with his master;
as with the servant girl, so with her mistress;
as with the buyer, so with the seller;
as with the creditor, so with the debtor;
as with the receiver of interest, so with the giver of interest.
- ³ The earth will be completely devastated and completely plundered;
for Yahweh has spoken this word.
- ⁴ The earth mourns and withers, the world shrivels up and withers,
the prominent people of the earth waste away.
- ⁵ The earth is polluted by its inhabitants
because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes,
and broken the everlasting covenant.
- ⁶ Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants are found guilty.
The inhabitants of the earth burn up, and few people are left.
- ⁷ The new wine mourns, the vine wastes away,
all the merry-hearted groan.
- ⁸ The happy sound of the tambourines stops,
and the revelry of those who rejoice;
the joy of the harp ceases.
- ⁹ They no longer drink wine and sing,
and the strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
- ¹⁰ The city of chaos has been broken down;
every house is closed up and empty.
- ¹¹ There is a crying in the streets because of the wine;
all joy is darkened, the gladness of the land has disappeared.
- ¹² In the city is left a desolation,
and the gate is broken into a ruin.
- ¹³ For this is how it will be on the whole earth
among the nations,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
as the gleanings when the grape harvest is done.
- ¹⁴ They will lift up their voices
and shout the majesty of Yahweh,
and will joyfully shout from the sea.
- ¹⁵ Therefore in the east glorify Yahweh,
and in the isles of the sea give glory
to the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
- ¹⁶ From the farthest part of the earth we have heard songs,
"Glory to the righteous one!"
But I said, "I have wasted away,
I have wasted away, woe is me!
The treacherous have dealt treacherously;
yes, the treacherous have dealt very treacherously."
- ¹⁷ Terror, the pit, and the snare
are upon you, inhabitants of the earth.
- ¹⁸ He who flees from the sound of terror
will fall into the pit,
and he who comes up out of the middle of the pit
will be caught in the snare.
The windows of the heavens will be opened,
and the foundations of the earth will shake.
- ¹⁹ The earth will be completely broken, the earth ripped apart;

- the earth will be violently shaken.
- 20** The earth will stagger like a drunkard,
and it will sway back and forth like a hut.
Its sin will be heavy on it
and it will fall and never rise again.
- 21** On that day Yahweh will punish
the host of the heaven in the heavens,
and the kings of the earth on the earth.
- 22** They will be gathered together,
prisoners in a pit,
and will be shut up in a prison;
and after many days they will be punished.
- 23** Then the moon will be ashamed,
and the sun disgraced,
for Yahweh of hosts will reign
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and before his elders in glory.

Isaiah 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

While it appears that this chapter is a continuation of the prophecy from the previous chapter, it actually looks at the whole of the Assyrian conquest as Yahweh's punishment on the world. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

Covenant

The mention of an "everlasting covenant" in this chapter is probably not to a specific covenant with Abraham or Moses. Instead, it is an expectation that mankind would obey Yahweh. Some consider this to be a covenant Yahweh made with Adam. (See: eternity and covenant)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Reign of Yahweh

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. This chapter pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator should not add explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and prophet and christ)

Isaiah 24:1

to empty the earth

"to make the earth desolate" or "to destroy everything on the earth"

Isaiah 24:2

It will come about that

This phrase marks an important event. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

as with ... so with

What Yahweh will do is not stated here, but it is understood. This shows that God will treat all

people the same way. Alternate translation: "as Yahweh scatters ... so he will scatter"

the priest ... the giver of interest

In 24:2 Isaiah lists several classes of people. They can be expressed as plural nouns as in the UDB. Alternate translation: "the priests ... those who give interest"

the receiver of interest

"the one who owes money." The word "interest" means the extra money someone has to pay so that he may borrow money.

the giver of interest

"the one who is owed money"

Isaiah 24:3

The earth will be completely devastated and completely plundered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will completely devastate the earth and he will remove from it everything of value"

Yahweh has spoken this word
"Yahweh has said he would"

The earth
everything that is on the earth

Isaiah 24:4

The earth ... the world
Both of these are metonyms for everything that is on the earth.

Isaiah 24:5

The earth is polluted by its inhabitants
The people sinning and making the earth unacceptable to God is spoken of as if the people made the earth physically unclean. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people have polluted the earth"

they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant
"they have not obeyed God's laws and statutes, and they have broken God's eternal covenant"

Isaiah 24:6

General Information:
Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when God will judge the earth. Prophets sometimes describe a future event as something in the past or in the present. This emphasizes the event certainly will happen.

a curse devours the earth
Yahweh cursing the earth and destroying it is spoken of as if a curse were either a wild animal that completely eats the earth or a fire that completely burns up the earth.

its inhabitants are found guilty
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will declare that the people are guilty"

Isaiah 24:7

General Information:
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Isaiah 24:8

General Information:
Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when God will judge the earth. Prophets sometimes describe a future event as something in the past or in the present. This emphasizes the event certainly will happen.

tambourines ... harp
These are musical instruments. See how you translated these in Isaiah 5:12.

Isaiah 24:9

General Information:
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Isaiah 24:10

General Information:
Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when God will judge the earth. Prophets sometimes describe a future event as something in the past or in the present. This emphasizes the event certainly will happen.

The city of chaos has been broken down
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will break down the city of chaos"

The city of chaos
Possible meanings are 1) the city was in chaos before the Lord breaks it down; the people did not obey God, the government was corrupt, and the city was full of drinking and parties, or 2) the city will be in chaos after God breaks it down. The walls and buildings that were once built strong and tall are now in ruins on the ground. With either meaning it does not mean one city. It refers to cities in general.

every house is closed up and empty
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people will close up their houses and leave them empty"

Isaiah 24:11

because of the wine
"because there is no wine"

all joy is darkened, the gladness of the land has disappeared
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "all joy will be gone from the earth"

gladness of the land
Here "land" represents the people of the earth.

Isaiah 24:12

General Information:

Isaiah continues to describe a time in the future when God will judge the earth. Prophets sometimes describe a future event as something in the past or in the present. This emphasizes the event certainly will happen.

In the city is left a desolation

The abstract noun "desolation" can be stated as "desolate" or "empty." Alternate translation: "The city is desolate" or "The city is left empty"

In the city

This is not a specific city but cities in general.

Isaiah 24:13

as when an olive tree is beaten, as the gleanings when the grape harvest is done

This compares the nations after Yahweh devastates the land to trees and vines after their fruit has been picked. This means there will be very few people left in the land.

Isaiah 24:14

They will lift up their voices and shout the majesty of Yahweh

The phrase "lift up their voices" is an idiom that means to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "They will sing and shout about the majesty of Yahweh"

They will

Here "They" refers to those who are still alive after Yahweh devastates the earth.

and will joyfully shout from the sea

Here "the sea" refers to the Mediterranean Sea which is west of Israel. Alternate translation: "and those in the west towards the sea will shout with joy"

Isaiah 24:15

Therefore in the east glorify Yahweh

The phrase "in the east" represents the people living east of Israel. Isaiah is commanding these people as if they were there with him. But, he is talking to the people in the future after God devastates the earth. Alternate translation: "Therefore everyone from distant lands in the east will glorify Yahweh"

in the isles of the sea give glory

Isaiah is commanding the people who live on the islands in the Mediterranean sea as if they were there with him. But, he is talking to the people in the future after God devastates the earth. Alternate translation: "everyone in the islands will give glory"

to the name of Yahweh

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "to Yahweh"

Isaiah 24:16

we have heard

Here "we" refers to Isaiah and the people of Israel. Isaiah is describing something in the future as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "we will hear"

I have wasted away, I have wasted away

Isaiah repeats this phrase to emphasize his anguish. He was very concerned because he saw people who deceived others and did not do what they promised to do. Alternate translation: "I have become very weak"

The treacherous have dealt treacherously; yes, the treacherous have dealt very treacherously

Isaiah repeats this phrase to emphasize his anguish. Alternate translation: "Indeed, those who deceive are now deceiving others" or "Indeed, the deceivers have acted deceitfully"

Isaiah 24:17

Terror, the pit, and the snare are upon you, inhabitants of the earth

"You people of the earth will experience terror, the pit, and the snare"

the pit, and the snare

Here "pit" and "snare" represent all the different bad things that will happen to people. People will run away to escape one bad thing but they will just experience another bad thing.

Isaiah 24:18

caught in the snare

Here the "snare" represents all the different bad things that will happen to people. People will run away to escape one bad thing but they will just experience another bad thing.

the sound of terror

"the terrifying sound"

will be caught in the snare

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the snare will catch him"

The windows of the heavens will be opened

This speaks of large amounts of rain falling from the sky as if Yahweh opened a window in the sky and let the water pour through. Alternate translation: "The sky will split open and torrents of rain will fall"

the foundations of the earth will shake

The word "foundation" normally refers to a stone structure that gives support to a building from underneath. Here it describes a similar structure that was thought to support and hold the earth in place. Isaiah says even the structure that holds the earth will shake. Alternate translation: "the earth will shake terribly" or "there will be a terrible earthquake"

Isaiah 24:19

The earth will be completely broken, the earth ripped apart; the earth will be violently shaken

These passive clauses can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The earth will break and split apart; the earth will shake violently"

Isaiah 24:20

The earth will stagger like a drunkard, and it will sway back and forth like a hut

These similes emphasize how the earth will shake back and forth, which is a metaphor for how sin will cause the people of the earth to suffer.

Its sin will be heavy on it and it will fall and never rise again

This speaks of the earth as if it were a person and transgressions were a heavy object. The person tries to carry the heavy weight but the weight causes the person to fall and not be able to stand back up. Here the earth represents the people of the earth who cause Yahweh to destroy the earth because of their sins. Alternate translation: "The sins of the people are many and so Yahweh will destroy the earth, and the earth will be like a person who falls and cannot get back up"

Isaiah 24:21

On that day

"At that time"

the host of the heaven in the heavens

"the army of heaven in the heavens." Here "the host of the heaven" refers to living beings that God created in the heavens. In this passage it refers to the living beings who are evil. Possible meanings are that they are called the host 1) because they fight as an army. Alternate translation: "the heavenly army in heaven" or 2) because there are so many of them, just as armies have many soldiers. Alternate translation: "the multitude of powerful beings in the heavens" or "the evil spiritual beings in the heavens"

Isaiah 24:22

They will be gathered together, prisoners in a pit, and will be shut up in a prison

Here "pit" refers to a dark room or hole in a prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will gather them together as his prisoners and lock them in the dungeon of a prison"

they will be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will punish them"

Isaiah 24:23

Then the moon will be ashamed, and the sun disgraced

The sun and the moon are described as a person who is ashamed of being in front of someone with greater power. In the presence of Yahweh, the light of the moon and sun will seem less bright.

Chapter 25

- ¹ Yahweh, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
things planned long ago, in perfect faithfulness.
- ² For you have made a city a heap,
a fortified city a ruin;
a palace of foreigners is no longer a city;
it will never be rebuilt.
- ³ Therefore a strong people will glorify you;
a city of ruthless nations will fear you.
- ⁴ For you have been a place of safety
for the one who is poor,
a shelter for the one who is needy in his distress—
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.
When the breath of the ruthless
was like a storm against a wall,
- ⁵ and like heat in a dry land,
you subdued the noise of foreigners,
as the heat is subdued by the shade of a cloud,
so the song of the ruthless ones is answered.
- ⁶ On this mountain Yahweh of hosts
will make for all peoples a feast of tender meats,
a feast of choice wines,
of tender meats filled with marrow,
of refined choice wines.
- ⁷ He will destroy on this mountain
the covering over all peoples,
the web woven over all the nations.
- ⁸ He will swallow up death forever,
and the Lord Yahweh will wipe away tears
from off all faces;
the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for Yahweh has spoken it.
- ⁹ It will be said on that day,
"Look, this is our God;
we have waited for him, and he will save us.
This is Yahweh; we have waited for him,
we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."
- ¹⁰ For on this mountain the hand of Yahweh will rest;
and Moab will be trampled down in his place,
even as straw is trampled down in a pit filled with manure.
- ¹¹ They will spread their hands in the midst of it,
as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim.
But Yahweh will bring down their pride
in spite of the skill of their hands.
- ¹² The stronghold of your fortress walls he will bring down,
he will abase,
he will cause to fall to the ground, to the dust.
-

Isaiah 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter shifts from being a prophecy against the nations to the personal praises of Isaiah. He praises Yahweh for the deliverance of his people. (See: prophet and deliverer and peopleofgod)

Special concepts in this chapter

Reign of the Messiah

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. This chapter pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator should not add explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and prophet and christ)

Isaiah 25:1

praise your name

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "praise you"

things planned long ago

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things you planned long ago"

in perfect faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." Alternate translation: "because you are perfectly faithful"

Isaiah 25:2

a city

This is not referring to a certain city. It means cities in general.

a palace of foreigners is no longer a city

"a city where foreigners had a palace is no more"

Isaiah 25:3

a city of ruthless nations

Here "city" and "nations" represent the people who live there.

Isaiah 25:4

you have been a place of safety ... a shelter ... a shelter from the storm ... a shade from the heat

Yahweh protecting his people is spoken of as if he were a place that the people could go to be safe and comforted.

When the breath of the ruthless was like a storm against a wall

Ruthless people oppressing the people of God is spoken of as if they were a storm beating against a wall.

When the breath

"When the wind" or "When the blast"

the ruthless

This is a nominal adjective. Alternate translation: "ruthless people" or "those who are ruthless"

Isaiah 25:5

like heat in a dry land

This compares the enemies of God's people to the heat that dries up the land. This emphasizes how much the enemies cause the people of God to suffer.

as the heat is subdued ... ruthless ones is answered

Yahweh stopping ruthless people from singing and boasting is compared to a cloud providing shade on a hot day. This emphasizes that Yahweh comforts his people by stopping those who cause them to suffer.

as the heat is subdued by the shade of a cloud

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just like when a cloud passes overhead and subdues the heat"

the song of the ruthless ones is answered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will stop the ruthless people from singing"

Isaiah 25:6

On this mountain

This refers to Jerusalem or Mount Zion.

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

refined choice wines

choice wine that has been refined, the best wine

Isaiah 25:7

the covering over all peoples, the web woven over all the nations

Death, suffering, and sadness are spoken of as if they were a dark cloud or web that covers everyone on the earth.

Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death forever

Yahweh causing people to live forever is spoken of as if he would swallow death.

the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth

Yahweh causing the people to never be ashamed again is spoken of as if disgrace were an object that Yahweh would take away.

Isaiah 25:9

It will be said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will say"

on that day

"at that time"

Isaiah 25:10

For on this mountain the hand of Yahweh will rest

The "hand" represents God's power. For Yahweh's hand to rest on "this mountain" means he will protect his people Alternate translation: "The power of Yahweh will be on this mountain" or "For on Mount Zion Yahweh will protect his people"

Moab will be trampled down in his place, even as straw is trampled down in a pit filled with manure

Yahweh destroying the people of Moab is spoken of as if he would step on them and crush them. This is compared to how people trampled on straw to mix it with manure.

Moab will be trampled down in his place

Here Moab represents the people of Moab. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will trample the people in the land of Moab"

Isaiah 25:11

They will spread their hands ... his hands to swim

This simile emphasizes how badly Yahweh will humiliate the people of Moab. They will spread their hands in dung like a swimmer spreads his hands in water.

They will spread their hands in the midst of it

"The people of Moab will push their hands through the dung"

as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim

"as if they were swimming"

will bring down their pride

Yahweh humiliating a proud person is spoken of as if pride were something high and Yahweh would cause it to be low.

in spite of the skill of their hands

Here "hands" represents the power to do or make something. Alternate translation: "in spite of the great things they have built" or "in spite of the great things they have done"

Isaiah 25:12

The stronghold of your fortress walls he will bring down, he will abase, he will cause to fall

This speaks of Yahweh causing armies to bring down the walls as if he himself were going to bring them down. To "abase" the "wall" is a metonym for humiliating the Moabites by destroying the walls they were proud of. Alternate translation: "He will send an army to humiliate you by bringing down the stronghold of your fortress walls and making them fall"

your fortress

Here "your" refers to the people of Moab. It can be stated in third person to be consistent with the previous verse. Alternate translation: "their fortress"

bring down ... abase

See how you translated similar words in Isaiah 2:11.

Chapter 26

- ¹ In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:
- We have a strong city;
God has made salvation its walls and ramparts.
- ² Open the gates,
that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.
- ³ The mind that is stayed on you,
you will keep him in perfect peace, for he trusts in you.
- ⁴ Trust in Yahweh forever;
for in Yah, Yahweh is an everlasting rock. ^[1]
- ⁵ For he will bring down those
who live in the high place, the lofty city.
He will abase it.
He will abase it to the ground;
he will cause it to fall to the dust.
- ⁶ It will be trampled down
by the feet of the poor and the treading of the needy.
- ⁷ The path of the righteous is level,
Righteous One; the path of the righteous you make straight.
- ⁸ Yes, in the path of your judgments,
Yahweh, we wait for you;
your name and your reputation are our desire.
- ⁹ I have longed for you in the night;
yes, my spirit within me seeks you earnestly.
For when your judgments come on the earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn about righteousness.
- ¹⁰ Let favor be shown to the wicked one,
but he will not learn righteousness.
In the land of uprightness he acts wickedly
and does not see the majesty of Yahweh.
- ¹¹ Yahweh, your hand is lifted up,
but they do not notice.
But they will see your zeal for the people and be put to shame,
because fire of your adversaries will devour them.
- ¹² Yahweh, you will ordain peace for us;
for indeed, you have also performed all our works for us.
- ¹³ Yahweh our God, other masters besides you have ruled over us;
but we praise your name alone.
- ¹⁴ They are dead, they will not live;
they are deceased, they will not arise.
Indeed, you came in judgment and destroyed them,
and made every memory of them to perish.
- ¹⁵ You have increased the nation, Yahweh,
you have increased the nation; you are honored;
you have extended all the borders of the land.
- ¹⁶ Yahweh, in trouble have they looked to you;
they whispered prayers when your discipline was on them. ^[2]
- ¹⁷ As a pregnant woman nears the time for her to give birth,
when she is in pain and cries out in her labor pains,
so we have been before you, Lord.
- ¹⁸ We have been pregnant, we have been in labor,
but it is as if we have only given birth to wind.
We have not brought salvation to the earth,
and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

- 19** Your dead will live; their dead bodies will arise.
Awake and sing for joy, you who live in the dust;
for your dew is the dew of light,
and the earth will bring forth its dead.
- 20** Go, my people, enter into your rooms
and shut your doors behind you;
hide for a short time,
until the indignation has passed by.
- 21** For, look, Yahweh is about to come out of his place
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
the earth will uncover her bloodshed,
and will no longer conceal those she killed.

Footnotes

26:4 ^[1]Yah is a short form of the name Yahweh.

26:16 ^[2]This is a difficult verse and is translated in several ways by different modern English translations.

Isaiah 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"That day"

This is a common phrase in this section of Isaiah. This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. This chapter pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator should not add explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 26:1

In that day

"At that time"

this song will be sung in the land of Judah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people in the land of Judah will sing this song"

We have a strong city

This refers to the city of Jerusalem.

God has made salvation its walls and ramparts

God's power to protect and save his people is spoken of as if his salvation were walls around a city.

ramparts

Ramparts are walls built around a city to keep enemy armies from getting into the city.

Isaiah 26:2

the righteous nation that keeps faith

Here "nation" represents the people. Alternate translation: "the righteous and faithful people"

Isaiah 26:3

The mind that is stayed on you

Here "mind" represents a person's thoughts. Also "you" refers to Yahweh. The phrase "stayed on you" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The person who continually thinks about you"

Isaiah 26:4

Yahweh is an everlasting rock

Yahweh having the power to protect his people is spoken of as if he were a tall rock where people could go to escape from their enemies.

Isaiah 26:5

he will bring down those who live in the high place
Yahweh humiliating those who are proud is spoken of as if proud people were up high and he would cause them to come down low.

in the high place, the lofty city. He will abase it.
Another possible translation is, "in the high place. The lofty city he will abase."

the lofty city
This means fortified cities in general not a specific city.

He will abase ... he will cause it to fall
Yahweh causing an army to destroy fortified cities is spoken of as if Yahweh would do it himself.

abase

Isaiah 26:6

It will be trampled down by the feet of the poor and the treading of the needy
Both statements mean the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The poor and oppressed people will trample on the ruins of the city"

Isaiah 26:7

The path of the righteous is level ... the path of the righteous you make straight
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. People obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if they were walking on his path. Yahweh ensuring the people that what they do is right is spoken of as if he were making the path level and straight for them.

Isaiah 26:8

in the path of your judgments, Yahweh, we wait for you
Doing what Yahweh judged to be right is spoken of as if he were walking on his path. Alternate translation: "we wait for you, Yahweh, as we continue to do what you judged to be right"

of your judgments
"of your laws" or "of your teachings"

we wait
Here "we" refers to Isaiah and all righteous people who are speaking to Yahweh.

your name and your reputation are our desire
Here "name" and "reputation" represent Yahweh's character which represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "our only desire is to honor you"

Isaiah 26:9

my spirit within me seeks you earnestly
Wanting to know Yahweh and his laws better is spoken of as if the person were seeking to find Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I earnestly want to know you better"

my spirit within me seeks you earnestly
Here "spirit" represents the speaker as a whole.

Isaiah 26:10

Let favor be shown to the wicked one, but he will not learn righteousness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Even if Yahweh is kind to wicked people, they still do not learn to do what is right"

the wicked one
This means wicked people in general.

In the land of uprightness
Here "land" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "In the land where the people do what is right"

does not see the majesty of Yahweh
Here "see" represents realizing something. Alternate translation: "does not realize that Yahweh is great"

Isaiah 26:11

your hand is lifted up
Yahweh preparing to punish wicked people is spoken of as if his hand were raised and about to hit the wicked people.

but they do not notice
"but the wicked people do not notice"

they will see your zeal for the people
Here "see" represents realizing something. Alternate translation: "they will realize that you are eager to bless your people"

be put to shame
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will be ashamed"

fire of your adversaries will devour them
Yahweh punishing and completely destroying his adversaries is spoken of as if he would send a fire that will completely burn them up.

fire of your adversaries
Here "of" does not mean the fire belongs to the adversaries but that the fire is intended to be used against the adversaries. Alternate translation: "your fire will completely burn them up"

Isaiah 26:12

you will ordain peace for us

"you will enable us to live in peace" or "you will bring about peace for us"

for us

Here "us" refers to Isaiah and includes all the righteous people.

Isaiah 26:13

but we praise your name alone

Here "name" represents the person of God.
Alternate translation: "but we praise you alone"

Isaiah 26:14

they will not arise

"they will not come back to life"

made every memory of them to perish

Yahweh causing people to no longer remember those he destroyed is spoken of as if Yahweh made their memory perish or die.

Isaiah 26:15

You have increased the nation, Yahweh, you have increased the nation

This clause is repeated for emphasis. Here "nation" represents the people. Alternate translation: "You have greatly increased the number of people in our nation"

Isaiah 26:16

they looked to you

Here "they" refers to the people of Israel. This would include Isaiah. Alternate translation: "we looked to you"

looked to you

This idiom means they asked Yahweh for help.

when your discipline was on them

The abstract noun "discipline" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "when you disciplined them"

Isaiah 26:17

As a pregnant woman ... cries out in her labor pains

This compares the people to a woman giving birth. This emphasizes their suffering and crying when Yahweh disciplined them.

Isaiah 26:18

General Information:

Isaiah continues to compare the suffering of the people of Judah to a woman giving birth.

but it is as if we have only given birth to wind

"but it is as if we have only given birth to air" or "it is like we gave birth to nothing." This is a simile that emphasizes that the people's suffering resulted in nothing. Alternate translation: "but nothing good resulted from it"

We have not brought salvation to the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen

Here "earth" represents the people who live on the earth. The meaning is unclear, but it seems to mean that the people of Israel have not been able to save themselves or other people by defeating their enemy in battle.

We have not brought salvation to the earth

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "salvation" is expressed as the verb "save."
Alternate translation: "We have not saved the inhabitants of the earth"

and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen

"nor have we caused the wicked people of the world to fall in battle"

Isaiah 26:19

Your dead will live

This can be reworded so that the nominal adjective "dead" is expressed as the verb "have died."
Alternate translation: "Your people who have died will live again"

Your dead

Possible meanings are 1) "Your" refers to Yahweh or 2) "Your" refers to the people of Israel. If you choose option two you could translate it as "Our dead."

Awake

This speaks of dead people coming back to life as if they were waking up from sleep.

you who live in the dust

This is a polite way of referring to those who have died. Alternate translation: "those who are dead and buried"

for your dew is the dew of light

Yahweh acting kindly towards his people and bringing them back to life is spoken of as if it were the dew that causes the plants to live.

for your dew

Possible meanings are 1) "your" refers to Yahweh and this is the dew that Yahweh gives or 2) "your" refers to the people of Israel and this is the dew they receive from Yahweh.

dew of light

Possible meanings are 1) "light" refers to Yahweh's power to make dead people alive again. Alternate translation: "dew from Yahweh" or 2) "light" refers

to the morning time when dew is on the plants.
Alternate translation: "dew in the morning"

the earth will bring forth its dead

"the earth will give birth to those who died."
Yahweh causing dead people to come back to life is spoken of as if the earth would give birth to those who have died. Alternate translation: "and Yahweh will cause those who have died to rise from the earth"

Isaiah 26:20

my people

Here "my" refers to Isaiah. Also "people" refers to the people of Israel.

until the indignation has passed by

You may want to translate the abstract noun "indignation" as the adjective "indignant" or "angry." Alternate translation: "until Yahweh is no longer angry with us"

Isaiah 26:21

the earth will uncover her bloodshed, and will no longer conceal those she killed

Yahweh revealing all murders that have happened on the earth so that he can punish the murderers is spoken of as if the earth itself will reveal everyone who has been murdered.

Chapter 27

¹ On that day

Yahweh with his hard, great and fierce sword
will punish Leviathan the slithering serpent,
Leviathan the squirming serpent,
and he will kill the monster that is in the sea.

² In that day:

A vineyard of wine, sing of it.

³ "I, Yahweh, am its protector;
I water it every moment.

I guard it night and day
so no one will hurt it.

⁴ I am not angry,

Oh, that there were briers and thorns!
In battle I would march against them;
I would burn them all together;

⁵ unless they take hold of my refuge
and make peace with me; let them make peace with me.

⁶ In the coming day, Jacob will take root;
Israel will blossom and bud;
and they will fill the surface of the world with fruit."

⁷ Has Yahweh attacked Jacob and Israel
as he attacked those nations who attacked them?
Have Jacob and Israel been killed
as their killers were killed?

⁸ In exact measure you have contended,
sending Jacob and Israel away;
he drove them away with his severe breath
in the day of the east wind. ^[1]

⁹ So in this way, the iniquity of Jacob will be atoned for,
for this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin:
when he will make all the altar stones
as chalk and crushed to pieces,
and no Asherah poles or incense altars
will remain standing.

¹⁰ For the fortified city is desolate,
the habitation is deserted and abandoned like the wilderness.
There a calf feeds, and there he lies down
and consumes its branches.

¹¹ When the boughs are withered, they will be broken off.
Women will come and make fires with them,
for this is not a people of understanding.
Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them,
and he who made them will not be merciful to them.

¹² It will come about on that day that Yahweh will thresh from the Euphrates River to the Brook of Egypt
and you, the people of Israel, will be gathered together one by one. ¹³ On that day a great ram's horn will
be blown; and the perishing ones in the land of Assyria will come, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt.
They will worship Yahweh on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

Footnotes

27:8 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 27 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Leviathan

This was an ancient type of dragon or serpent. It is possible that this is a reference to Satan, who is also described as a serpent and a dragon.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"That day"

This is a common phrase in this section of Isaiah. This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. This chapter pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator should not add explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 27:1

On that day

"At that time"

Yahweh with his hard, great and fierce sword will punish

Yahweh having the power to destroy his enemies is spoken of as if he had strong, large sword.

the monster that is in the sea

This refers to Leviathan.

Isaiah 27:2

A vineyard of wine, sing of it

"Sing about the vineyard of wine." This speaks about the people of Israel as if they were a vineyard that produced fruit. Alternate translation: "Sing about the people of Israel as if they were a vineyard that produced grapes for wine"

Isaiah 27:3

I, Yahweh, am its protector

"I, Yahweh, protect the vineyard"

night and day

The words "night" and "day" are combined here to mean "all the time." Alternate translation: "all the time" or "continually"

Isaiah 27:4

Connecting Statement:

This continues to speak about the people of Israel as if they were a vineyard ([Isaiah 27:2-3](#)).

I am not angry, Oh, that there were briers and thorns! In battle I would march against them

"I am not angry. If there were briers and thorns I would march against them in battle"

I am not angry

It is understood that Yahweh is not angry with his people any longer. Alternate translation: "I am not angry with my people any longer"

that there were briers and thorns

The enemies of the people of Israel are spoken of as if they were briers and thorns growing in the vineyard.

briers and thorns

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 5:6.

In battle I would march against them

Yahweh fighting his enemies is spoken of as if he were a warrior in an army.

I would march against them; I would burn them all together

Here Isaiah combines different images to speak of Yahweh's enemies. He speaks of them as if they are briers and thorns but also as soldiers in an army.

Isaiah 27:5

unless they take hold of my refuge

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "refuge" is expressed as the verb "protect." Alternate translation: "unless they ask me to protect them"

make peace with me; let them make peace with me

"they ask to live peacefully with me; I want them to live peacefully with me"

Isaiah 27:6

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking. He continues to describe the people of Israel as a vineyard (Isaiah 27:2).

In the coming day

This speaks about a day as if it travels and arrives somewhere. Alternate translation: "In the future"

Jacob will take root; Israel will blossom and bud

Yahweh blessing the people of Israel and causing them to prosper is spoken of as if they were a vine that grows roots and blossoms. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Israel will prosper like a vine that has taken root and blossomed"

Jacob ... Israel

Here "Jacob" and "Israel" are metonyms that represent the descendants of Jacob.

they will fill the surface of the world with fruit

Yahweh causing the people of Israel to prosper greatly so that they can help other people is spoken of as if they were a vine that grows so much fruit that it would cover the earth.

Isaiah 27:7

Has Yahweh attacked Jacob and Israel as he attacked those nations who attacked them?

The question is used to contrast the severity of God's punishment. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has certainly punished the enemy nations more severely than he punished the people of Israel."

Jacob ... Israel

These represent the descendants of Jacob.

Have Jacob and Israel been killed as their killers were killed?

This question too is used to contrast the severity of God's punishment. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has not killed the people of Israel like they killed their enemies from other nations."

Isaiah 27:8

In exact measure you have contended

Here "you" refers to God. Yahweh punishing his people as much as they needed is spoken of as if God's punishment were something that could be measured. Alternate translation: "But you did punish them as much as was needed"

sending Jacob and Israel away

This represents the descendants of Jacob. Alternate translation: "sending the Israelites away"

he drove them away with his severe breath in the day of the east wind

Yahweh's power to send his people away to a foreign country is spoken of as if Yahweh used his breath to blow them to a foreign country. Alternate translation: "the power of Yahweh drove them out like a severe wind from the east"

Isaiah 27:9

So in this way

Possible meanings are 1) "this" refers to Yahweh sending the people into exile as Isaiah mentioned in the previous verse or 2) "this" refers to the actions that Isaiah will mention in the next part of verse 9.

the iniquity of Jacob will be atoned for

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will purge the sin from the Israelites" or "Yahweh will forgive the sins of the Israelites"

iniquity of Jacob ... removal of his sin

Here "Jacob" represents the descendants of Jacob. Alternate translation: "iniquity of the Israelites ... removal of their sins"

for this will be

Here "this" refers to the actions that Isaiah will describe in the next part of verse 9.

the full fruit

This speaks of the results of an action as if it were the fruit that grows as on a tree or vine. Alternate translation: "the result"

he will make all the altar stones as chalk and crushed to pieces, and no Asherah poles or incense altars will remain standing

Here "he" refers to Jacob who represents his descendants. Alternate translation: "They will completely destroy all the altars on which they sacrifice to false gods, and they will remove all the Asherah idols and the altars on which they burn incense to false gods"

Isaiah 27:10

For the fortified city is ... consumes its branches

Here Isaiah describes an event that will happen in the future as if it already happened. This emphasizes that it certainly will happen.

For the fortified city is desolate, the habitation is deserted and abandoned like the wilderness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The cities that were strong and had many people living in them will become empty like a desert"

the fortified city ... the habitation

This does not refer to a specific city or habitation but to cities and habitations in general.

a calf feeds, and there he lies down and consumes

Here "calf" represents calves or cattle in general. Alternate translation: "calves feed, and there they lie down and consume"

Isaiah 27:11

When the boughs ... not a people of understanding

The people becoming so weak because they disobey Yahweh so that enemies can easily destroy them is spoken of as if they are dry branches that women break off of a tree.

When the boughs are withered, they will be broken off. Women will come and make fires with them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the branches wither, women will come and break them off and make fires with them"

this is not a people of understanding

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "this is not a people who understands Yahweh or his law"

a people

Possible meanings are 1) "people" refers to the people of Israel or 2) "people" refers the people of foreign nations who oppress the people of Israel.

Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them, and he who made them will not be merciful to them

Both clauses mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "Because they do not understand, Yahweh, the one who made them, will not be merciful to them"

Isaiah 27:12

It will come about

This phrase marks an important event that will happen.

on that day

"at that time"

Yahweh will thresh

Yahweh gathering his people to bring them back from the foreign nations to the land of Israel is spoken of as if he were threshing wheat to separate the grain from the chaff.

from the Euphrates River to the Brook of Egypt

Isaiah mentions the Euphrates River and the Wadi of Egypt to mean that Yahweh will bring back the people of Israel who were exiled in lands near those waters, that is, Assyria and Egypt. The Euphrates River is northeast of Israel, and the Brook of Egypt is southwest of Israel.

you ... will be gathered together one by one

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will gather you together one by one"

Isaiah 27:13

a great ram's horn will be blown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will blow a ram's horn loudly"

will come

"will return to Jerusalem"

and the outcasts in the land of Egypt

The verb "will come" is understood from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "the outcasts in the land of Egypt will come"

holy mountain

The "holy mountain" is Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

Chapter 28

- ¹ Woe to the proud garland crown
that is worn by each of the drunkards of Ephraim,
and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
the garland that is set on the head of the lush Valley
of those who are overcome with wine!
- ² Behold, the Lord sends one who is mighty and strong;
like a storm of hail and a destructive windstorm,
like a driving rain and overflowing waters;
and he will throw each garland crown down to the ground.
- ³ The proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim
will be trodden underfoot.
- ⁴ The fading flower of his glorious beauty,
which is on the head of the rich valley,
will be as the first ripe fig before the summer,
that, when someone sees it,
while it is yet in his hand, he swallows it down.
- ⁵ In that day Yahweh of hosts will become a beautiful crown
and a diadem of beauty for the remainder of his people,
- ⁶ a spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment,
and strength for those who turn back their enemies at their gates.
- ⁷ But even these reel with wine,
and stagger with strong drink.
The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,
and they are swallowed up by wine.
They stagger with strong drink,
staggering in vision and reeling in decision.
- ⁸ Truly, all tables are covered with filthy vomit,
so that there is no clean place.
- ⁹ To whom will he teach knowledge,
and to whom will he explain the message?
To those who are weaned from milk
or to those just taken from the breasts?
- ¹⁰ For it is
command upon command, command upon command;
rule upon rule, rule upon rule;
here a little, there a little.
- ¹¹ Indeed, with mocking lips and a foreign tongue
he will speak to this people.
- ¹² In the past he said to them
"This is the rest, give rest to him who is weary;
and this is the refreshing,"
but they would not listen.
- ¹³ So the word of Yahweh will be to them
command upon command, command upon command;
rule upon rule, rule upon rule;
here a little, there a little;
so that they may go and fall backward,
and be broken, ensnared, and captured.
- ¹⁴ So listen to the word of Yahweh, you who mock,
you who rule over this people who are in Jerusalem.
- ¹⁵ This will happen because you said,
"We have made a covenant with death,
and with Sheol we have reached an agreement.
So when the overwhelming whip passes through,

- it will not reach us.
 For we have made a lie our refuge,
 and taken shelter in falsehood."
- 16 Therefore the Lord Yahweh says,
 "See, I will lay in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone,
 a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.
 He who believes will not be ashamed.
- 17 I will make justice the measuring stick,
 and righteousness the plumbline.
 Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
 and the floodwaters will overwhelm the hiding place.
- 18 Your covenant with death will be dissolved,
 and your agreement with Sheol will not stand.
 When the raging flood passes through,
 you will become its trampling place.
- 19 Whenever it passes through, it will overwhelm you,
 and morning by morning it will pass through
 and by day and night it will come.
 When the message is understood,
 it will cause terror.
- 20 For the bed is too short for a man to stretch out on,
 and the blanket too narrow for him to wrap himself in."
- 21 Yahweh will rise up as on Mount Perazim;
 he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon
 to do his work, his strange work,
 and perform his strange deed.
- 22 Now therefore do not mock,
 or your bonds will be tightened.
 I have heard from the Lord Yahweh of hosts,
 a decree of destruction on the earth.
- 23 Pay attention and listen to my voice;
 be attentive and listen to my words.
- 24 Does a farmer who plows all day to sow, only plow the ground?
 Does he continually break up and harrow the field?
- 25 When he has prepared the ground,
 does he not scatter caraway seed, sow the cumin,
 put in the wheat in rows and the barley in the right place,
 and the spelt at its edges? ^[1]
- 26 His God instructs him;
 he teaches him wisely.
- 27 Moreover, the caraway seed is not threshed with a sledge,
 nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cumin;
 but caraway is beaten out with a stick,
 and cumin with a rod.
- 28 Bread grain is crushed,
 but the one who grinds it does not thresh it forever.
 The wheel of his cart and his horses would destroy it,
 so he does not continue to grind it.
- 29 This too comes from Yahweh of hosts,
 who gives wonderful counsel
 and whose sound wisdom is great.

Footnotes

28:25 ^[1]The identification of some of these spices is in doubt, so different translations may have a different list of spices than here. In addition, other modern translations give different meaning to the expressions translated in the ULB as

Isaiah 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

There are many metaphors used to describe Yahweh's punishment as well as the sin of the people of Ephraim. In one such metaphor, they are described as being drunk. Construction and weather metaphors are also used in this chapter. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"That day"

This is a common phrase in this section of Isaiah. This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. This chapter pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 28:1

Woe to the proud garland ... on the head of the lush Valley of those who are overcome with wine

A "garland" is a crown made of flowers. Here it represents the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel, which sits above a fertile valley. Samaria and its people being destroyed is spoken of as if the flowers in the garland will grow old and stop being beautiful.

who are overcome with wine
"who are drunk with wine"

Isaiah 28:2

Behold
"Listen" or "Pay attention"

the Lord sends one who is mighty and strong
Here "one" refers to a mighty king who also represents his powerful army. Alternate translation: "the Lord sends a king with his powerful army"

storm of hail
A "storm of hail" or hailstorm happens when hard pieces of ice fall from the sky. Here it is a simile that refers to the enemy army that Yahweh will send to destroy the people of Samaria.

he will throw each garland crown down to the ground
The king and his powerful army destroying the people of Samaria and their city is spoken of as if the king will throw the people's garlands onto the ground.

Isaiah 28:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues to speak about the people and the city of Samaria as if they were a garland ([Isaiah 28:1-2](#)).

The proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden underfoot

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy army will crush the proud drunkards of Samaria as if they were crushing flowers under their feet"

proud garland ... of Ephraim

A "garland" is a crown made of flowers. Here it represents the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel, which sits above a fertile valley.

Isaiah 28:4

which is on the head of the rich valley
The city of Samaria, the capital of Israel, sits above a fertile valley.

will be as the first ripe fig ... swallows it down
This speaks of the enemy soldiers seeing the beauty of Samaria and quickly plundering it as if they were a person who sees the first fig of the season and quickly eats it.

Isaiah 28:5

Yahweh of hosts
See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

will become a beautiful crown and a diadem of beauty
Yahweh is spoken of as if he were to become a beautiful crown that the people who honor him as their true king would wear.

a beautiful crown and a diadem of beauty
These mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "a beautiful crown"

Isaiah 28:6

a spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment, and strength for those who
This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns "justice" and "strength" are expressed as adjectives. These words can begin a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause the judges to be just and will cause to be strong those who"

a spirit of justice
A person who has a "spirit of justice" is someone who has the characteristic of justice and is a just person.

sits in judgment
This idiom means the person has the authority to judge.

strength for those who turn back their enemies at their gates
Here "to turn back" is an idiom that means to defeat in battle. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause the soldiers to be strong so that they defeat their enemies when the enemies attack their city"

Isaiah 28:7

But even these
"But even the leaders"

The priest and the prophet
This does not mean a specific priest or prophet. It refers to priests and prophets in general. Alternate translation: "The priests and the prophets"

reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink
These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the priests and the prophets cannot do their job because they are very drunk. Alternate translation: "stumble around because they are drunk"

they are swallowed up by wine
Their drinking so much that they can no longer think properly is spoken of as if the wine swallowed them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the wine is causing them to be confused"

staggering in vision and reeling in decision
Just like they are too drunk to walk correctly, they are too drunk to understand the visions God gives them or to make good decisions.

Isaiah 28:8

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 28:9

To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message?
The drunk prophets and priests use a question to criticize Isaiah, who is trying to correct them. Alternate translation: "The drunk prophets and priests say, 'Isaiah should not be trying to teach us about Yahweh's message!'"

To those who are weaned from milk or to those just taken from the breasts?
The drunk prophets and priests use a question to criticize Isaiah, because they feel that he is treating them like babies. Alternate translation: "He should not treat us like babies!"

Isaiah 28:10

For it is command upon command, command upon command; rule upon rule, rule upon rule; here a little, there a little
The drunk prophets and priests criticize Isaiah because they feel that Isaiah is repeating simple commands as if he were talking to a child.

Isaiah 28:11

with mocking lips and a foreign tongue he will speak to this people
Here "lips" and "tongue" represent the foreigners who speak a different language than the Israelites do. It is implied that this refers to the Assyrian army that will attack Israel. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will speak to this people through enemy soldiers who will speak a foreign language"

mocking lips
"stammering lips"

Isaiah 28:12

This is the rest
The abstract noun "rest" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "This is the resting place"

give rest to him who is weary
The abstract noun "rest" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "let whoever is tired come and rest"

this is the refreshing
The abstract noun "refreshing" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "this is the place where you can be refreshed"

Isaiah 28:13

So the word of Yahweh
"So Yahweh's message"

**command upon command, command upon command;
rule upon rule, rule upon rule; here a little, there a little**
These are the words that the drunk priests and prophets used to criticize how Isaiah teaches them. See how you translated this in Isaiah 28:10.

so that they may go and fall backward, and be broken, ensnared, and captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in order that the army of Assyria will come and defeat them and take them as captives"

go and fall backward, and be broken

People losing in battle to the enemy army is spoken of as if the people will fall down and break.

ensnared

The enemy soldiers capturing the people of Israel is spoken of as if they were hunters that catch an animal in a snare.

Isaiah 28:14

So listen to the word of Yahweh
"So listen to Yahweh's message"

Isaiah 28:15

We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have reached an agreement

Both of these statements mean basically the same thing. Possible meanings are 1) the leaders of Jerusalem have used magic or sorcery to try to make an agreement with the gods of the place of the dead so that these gods would protect them from dying or 2) this is a metaphor that speaks of the leaders having made an agreement with the leaders of Egypt. The leaders of Jerusalem were so confident that the Egyptians would protect that it was like they had made an agreement with the gods of the place of the dead.

So when the overwhelming whip passes through, it will not reach us

This speaks of Yahweh's judgment and punishment as if it were a whip that would strike the people. And the whip is spoken of as if it were a flood that would pass through Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "As a result, when everyone else is suffering and dying, nothing will harm us"

For we have made a lie our refuge, and taken shelter in falsehood

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. A "lie" and "falsehood" are spoken of as if they were places where a person could go to hide. The leaders in Jerusalem would not have said they trust in a lie. They believed they were truly safe. But Isaiah

knows they are not safe, because they trust in lies. Alternate translation: "For lies and falsehoods have become like a place where we can hide from danger"

a lie our refuge ... taken shelter in falsehood

Possible meanings are 1) the leaders trust in their own lies that they have said in order to protect themselves or 2) the leaders trust that the covenant they have made with the false gods of the place of the dead will keep them safe or 3) the leaders trust that the agreement they have made with the Egyptians will keep them safe.

Isaiah 28:16

See

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

I will lay in Zion a foundation stone ... sure foundation

Yahweh sending a strong person to help the people of Israel is spoken of as if Yahweh is constructing a strong foundation for a building.

a tried stone

"a stone that is solid"

a sure foundation

"a firm support"

He who believes will not be ashamed

"Anyone who trusts in this foundation stone will not be sorry"

Isaiah 28:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues to compare what he will do for the people in Jerusalem to a builder setting up a building (Isaiah 28:16).

I will make justice the measuring stick, and righteousness the plumbline

Yahweh testing according to his justice and righteousness to determine if the people are just and righteous is spoken of as if he were a builder using tools to determine that something is the correct length and perfectly level.

the measuring stick

A builder uses a measuring stick to determine if something is the correct length.

the plumbline

A builder uses a plumbline to determine if something is straight and level.

Hail will sweep away

Yahweh causing a large amount of hail to fall is spoken of as if it would be an overwhelming flood. Alternate translation: "Hailstorms will destroy"

Hail ... the floodwaters

Possible meanings are 1) these are a synecdoche representing anything in general that will cause destruction or 2) these are a metaphor referring to the enemy army that Yahweh will send to destroy the people of Jerusalem.

Hail

hard pieces of ice that fall from the sky

the refuge of lies ... the hiding place

This speaks about "lies" as if they were a place a person could go to hide. They represent what the leaders of Jerusalem trusted in to keep them safe from Yahweh's punishment. Possible meanings are 1) the leaders trust in their own lies that they have said in order to protect themselves or 2) the leaders trust that the covenant they have made with the false gods of the place of the dead will keep them safe or 3) the leaders trust that the agreement they have made with the Egyptians will keep them safe. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 28:15]

Isaiah 28:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Jerusalem.

Your covenant with death will be dissolved, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will cancel the covenant you have with death, and I will cancel the agreement you have with Sheol"

covenant with death ... agreement with Sheol

Possible meanings are 1) the leaders of Jerusalem had used magic or sorcery to try to make an agreement with the gods of the place of the dead so that these gods would protect them from dying or 2) this is a metaphor that speaks of the leaders having made an agreement with the leaders of Egypt. The leaders of Jerusalem were so confident that the Egyptians would protect that it was like they had made an agreement with the gods of the place of the dead. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 28:15]

will not stand

"will not last"

When the raging flood passes through

Possible meanings are 1) "flood" is a synecdoche that represents anything in general that will cause destruction or 2) "flood" is a metaphor referring to the enemy army that Yahweh will send to destroy the people of Jerusalem.

you will become its trampling place

The flooding river is personified as a soldier who tramples those who mock

Isaiah 28:19

morning by morning

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "every day"

by day and night

This means "throughout the entire day"

Isaiah 28:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Jerusalem.

For the bed is too short for a man to stretch out on, and the blanket too narrow for him to wrap himself in

This was probably a proverb that the people knew at the time. It means that what they believe will keep them safe from Yahweh's punishment will disappoint them like a bed that is too short or a blanket that is too narrow.

Isaiah 28:21

Yahweh will rise up

Yahweh preparing to act is spoken of as if he were sitting and then rising up.

Mount Perazim ... Valley of Gibeon

These refer to places where God miraculously defeated enemy armies.

he will rouse himself

"he will become very angry"

his strange work ... his strange deed

These two phrases mean the same thing. This work is strange because God is using a foreign army to defeat the people of Jerusalem rather than helping the people of Jerusalem defeat their enemies.

Isaiah 28:22

Now

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

your bonds will be tightened

Yahweh punishing the people even more severely is spoken of as if he would tighten their bonds. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will tighten your bonds" or "Yahweh will punish you even more severely"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

a decree of destruction on the earth

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "destruction" is expressed as the verb "destroy." Alternate translation: "that he is going to destroy people throughout the land"

Isaiah 28:23

General Information:

This begins a parable that ends in 28:29.

Pay attention and listen to my voice; be attentive and listen to my words

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second phrase is used to strengthen the first.

to my voice

Here "voice" represents what Isaiah says. Alternate translation: "to what I say"

to my words

"to my message"

Isaiah 28:24

Does a farmer who plows all day to sow, only plow the ground? Does he continually break up and harrow the field?

Isaiah uses rhetorical questions to make the people think deeply. Alternate translation: "A farmer does not plow the ground over and over and continually work the soil without ever sowing seed."

Isaiah 28:25

General Information:

Isaiah continues telling a parable to the people of Jerusalem.

When he has prepared the ground

"When the farmer has plowed the soil"

does he not scatter caraway seed, sow the cumin, put in the wheat in rows and the barley in the right place, and the spelt at its edges?

Isaiah uses a question to make the people of Jerusalem think deeply. If your language does not have a word for each of these seeds, they can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "he will certainly plant each kind of seed in the correct way and in the proper places."

caraway ... cumin

These are names of plants that are spices. Translators may represent them in general as seeds of spices used to spice food.

wheat ... barley ... spelt

These are all names of plants that are grains. Translators may represent them in general as seeds of grains.

Isaiah 28:26

His God instructs him; he teaches him wisely

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Yahweh helps the farmer know how to care for each kind of plant"

Isaiah 28:27

General Information:

Isaiah continues telling a parable to the people of Jerusalem.

the caraway seed is not threshed with a sledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the farmer does not separate the caraway seed from the plant with a heavy club"

caraway

See how you translated this in Isaiah 28:25.

nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cumin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "nor does he roll a heavy wheel over the cumin seed"

cumin

See how you translated this in Isaiah 28:25.

but caraway is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod

Isaiah describes the correct way for a farmer to separate the seed from the plant. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but he beats the caraway with a stick, and he beats cumin with a rod"

Isaiah 28:28

Bread grain is crushed, but the one who grinds it does not thresh it forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The farmer grinds the grain for bread, but he eventually stops grinding it"

Isaiah 28:29

This too comes ... whose sound wisdom is great

This concludes the parable started in [Isaiah 28:23]

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:9.

Chapter 29

- ¹ Woe to Ariel, Ariel,
the city where David encamped!
Add year to year;
let the festivals come round.
- ² But I will besiege Ariel,
and she will be mourning and lamenting;
and she will be to me like Ariel.
- ³ I will encamp against you in a circle
and will lay siege against you with a garrison,
and I will raise siege works against you.
- ⁴ You will be abased and will speak from the ground;
your speech will be bowed down from the dust.
Your voice will sound like a spirit that speaks from the ground,
and out of the dust your speech will whisper.
- ⁵ The great number of your invaders will become like fine dust,
and the multitude of the ruthless ones as chaff that passes away.
It will happen suddenly, in an instant.
- ⁶ Yahweh of hosts will come to you
with thunder, earthquake, great noise,
with strong winds and violent storm, and the flames of a devouring fire.
- ⁷ It will be like a dream, a vision of the night:
A horde of all the nations will fight against Ariel
and her stronghold.
They will attack her and her fortifications to press upon her.
- ⁸ It will be like when a hungry man dreams he is eating,
but when he awakes, his stomach is empty.
It will be like when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking
and he awakes faint, with his thirst not quenched.
Yes, so will be the great number of nations
that fights against Mount Zion.
- ⁹ Astonish yourselves and be astonished;
blind yourselves and be blind!
Be drunk, but not with wine;
stagger, but not with strong drink.
- ¹⁰ For Yahweh has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep.
He has closed your eyes, the prophets,
and has covered your heads, the seers.
- ¹¹ All revelation has become to you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men might give to one who is learned, saying, "Read this." He also says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." ¹² If the book is given to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."
- ¹³ The Lord said,
"This people comes close to me with their mouths
and honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me.
Their honor for me
is only a commandment of men that has been taught.
- ¹⁴ Therefore, see, I will proceed to do a marvelous thing
among this people, wonder after wonder.
The wisdom of their wise men will perish,
and the understanding of their prudent men will disappear."
- ¹⁵ Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from Yahweh,
and whose deeds are in darkness.
They say, "Who sees us, and who knows us?"
- ¹⁶ You turn things upside down!

Should the potter be considered like clay,
so that the thing that is made should say about him who made it,
"He did not make me,"
or the thing formed say about him who formed it,
"He does not understand"?

- 17 In just a little while,
Lebanon will be turned into a field,
and the field will become a forest.
- 18 On that day the deaf will hear the words of a book,
and the eyes of the blind will see out of the deep darkness.
- 19 The oppressed will again rejoice in Yahweh,
and the poor among men will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
- 20 For the ruthless will cease, and the mocker will vanish.
All those who love to do evil will be eliminated,
- 21 who by a word make a man out to be an offender.
They lay a snare for him who seeks justice at the gate
and put the righteous down with empty lies.

- 22 Therefore this is what Yahweh says concerning the house of Jacob—Yahweh, who redeemed Abraham,
"Jacob will no longer be ashamed,
nor will his face be pale.
- 23 But when he sees his children, the work of my hands,
they will make my name holy.
They will make holy the name of the Holy One of Jacob
and they will stand in awe of the God of Israel.
- 24 Those who err in spirit will gain understanding,
and complainers will accept instruction."
-

Isaiah 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter begins a series of "woes" against specific nations. It presents judgments against the kingdoms of Ephraim and eventually Judah. (See: woe and judge)

Special concepts in this chapter

Ariel

This is another name for Jerusalem. It is an uncommon name.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Prophecies

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and prophet and fulfill)

Isaiah 29:1

Woe to Ariel

Here "Ariel" represents the people who live in the city of Ariel. Alternate translation: "How terrible it will be for the people of Ariel"

Ariel

This is another name for Jerusalem, and it means "altar." If possible translate this as "Ariel" rather than "Jerusalem" since the meaning of "Ariel" is important in 29:2.

David encamped

"David dwelled" or "David lived"

Add year to year; let the festivals come round

"Keep celebrating your festival year after year."

This is an ironic statement. Yahweh tells the people to keep celebrating their festivals where they sacrifice to him, but he knows it will not prevent him from destroying them.

Isaiah 29:2

But I will besiege

The word "I" refers to Yahweh. This represents Yahweh causing an enemy army to besiege Jerusalem.

she will

Here "she" refers to Ariel, which represents the people of Ariel. Alternate translation: "the people of Ariel will"

mourning and lamenting

The words "mourning" and "lamenting" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of mourning. Alternate translation: "they will mourn deeply"

like Ariel

Translators may add a footnote that says, "The name Ariel means 'altar.'"

Isaiah 29:3

I will encamp against you

The word "I" refers to Yahweh. This represents Yahweh causing an enemy army to surround Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "I will command the army of your enemies to surround you"

Isaiah 29:4

You will be abased

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your enemy will humble you"

your speech will be bowed down from the dust

"you will speak with a quiet voice from the dust" or "you will be talking as you lie facedown in the dust"

Isaiah 29:5

The great number of your invaders will become like fine dust, and the multitude of the ruthless ones as chaff that passes away

This emphasizes how weak and insignificant the invading army is before God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will easily remove the horde of your invaders and the multitude of the ruthless ones"

great number of your invaders

"many soldiers that will attack you"

the ruthless ones as chaff

The translator can supply the verb "will become."

Alternate translation: "the ruthless ones will become as chaff" or "the soldiers who show you no mercy will become as chaff"

Isaiah 29:6

Yahweh of hosts will come to you

The word "you" refers to the people of Jerusalem. Possible meanings are 1) "Yahweh of hosts will come to help you" or 2) "Yahweh of hosts will come to punish you."

Isaiah 29:7

It will be like a dream, a vision of the night

The phrase "a vision of the night" is the same thing as "a dream." The two phrases emphasize that soon it will be like the invading army was never there.

A horde of all the nations

"Large armies from all the nations"

fight against Ariel

The name "Ariel" is another name for Jerusalem, and it represents the people who live there. See how you translated "Ariel" in [Isaiah 29:1]

her stronghold. They will attack her and her fortifications to press upon her

The word "her" refers to Ariel which represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "their stronghold. They will attack the city of Ariel and its defenses and cause the people to be in great distress"

Isaiah 29:8

It will be like when a hungry man dreams he is eating ... his thirst not quenched

These similes mean that the enemy will expect victory but they will fail because God will not allow them to conquer Jerusalem.

Yes, so will be the great number of nations that fights against Mount Zion

Here "Mount Zion" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "Yes, this will be what happens to the armies from the nations who fight against the people who live on Mount Zion"

Isaiah 29:9

Astonish yourselves and be astonished

The word "yourselves" refers to the people of Jerusalem. Why they are astonished can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Be astonished at what I am telling you"

blind yourselves and be blind

The people ignoring what Yahweh says is spoken of as if they would make themselves blind. Alternate

translation: "keep being ignorant and spiritually blind to what I am showing you"

Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink

The people being senseless and not understanding what Yahweh is doing is spoken of as if they were drunk. Alternate translation: "Be senseless like a drunk person, but it is not because you have drunk too much wine or strong drink"

Isaiah 29:10

For Yahweh has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep

Here "the spirit of" means "to have the characteristic of" being asleep. Yahweh causing the people to be asleep is spoken of as if "the spirit" were a liquid that he poured out on the people. Also "deep sleep" is a metaphor that means the people are senseless and cannot understand what Yahweh is doing. Alternate translation: "The reason you are senseless is because Yahweh has caused you to be spiritually asleep"

He has closed your eyes, the prophets, and has covered your heads, the seers

Yahweh causing the people to be senseless and not to understand what he is doing is spoken of as if he closed their eyes and covered their heads so they could not see. Alternate translation: "It is as though Yahweh has closed the eyes of the prophets and covered the heads of the seers"

Isaiah 29:11

All revelation has become to you as the words of a book that is sealed

The other prophets in Jerusalem are unable to hear or understand God's message. Alternate translation: "All that Yahweh has revealed is to you like a sealed book"

is sealed, which men might give to one who is learned

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "is sealed. A person may take the sealed book to someone who can read"

Isaiah 29:12

If the book is given to one who cannot read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If a person takes the book to someone who cannot read"

Isaiah 29:13

This people comes close to me with their mouths and honors me with their lips

The words "mouths" and "lips" represent what people say. Here it also represents saying something but not truly meaning it. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem pretend to worship me and honor me with what they say"

but their heart is far from me

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents a person's thoughts and emotions. The people not being truly devoted to Yahweh is spoken of as if their hearts were far away from him. Alternate translation: "but they do not honor me in their thoughts" or "but they are not truly devoted to me"

Their honor for me is only a commandment of men that has been taught

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They honor me only because that is what people tell them to do"

Isaiah 29:14

Therefore, see, I will proceed to do a marvelous thing among this people, wonder after wonder

"Therefore, look and see! I am going to do wonderful and marvelous things among you that you will not be able to explain"

The wisdom of their wise men will perish, and the understanding of their prudent men will disappear

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Yahweh showing that the wise people cannot understand or explain what Yahweh does is spoken of as if their wisdom and understanding will vanish.

Isaiah 29:15

General Information:

This may be Isaiah speaking or it may continue Yahweh's speech in 29:13-14.

who deeply hide their plans from Yahweh

People trying to make plans without Yahweh knowing about it is spoken of as if they hide their plans in a deep place where Yahweh cannot see. Alternate translation: "who try to hide their plans from Yahweh" or "who try to keep Yahweh from finding out what they are planning to do"

whose deeds are in darkness

It is implied that they are secretly doing evil things. Alternate translation: "who do evil things in the dark so no one can see them"

Who sees us, and who knows us?

They use a question to emphasize that they believe no one knows what they are doing. Alternate translation: "No one, not even Yahweh, sees us or knows what we are doing!"

Isaiah 29:16

You turn things upside down

This is an idiom that means to distort what is true. Alternate translation: "You make things opposite of the way they should be" or "You distort the truth"

Should the potter be considered like clay, so that the thing that is made should say about him who made it ... "He does not understand"?

Yahweh who created humans is spoken of as if he were a potter and humans were the clay. This metaphor emphasizes that it is foolish for humans to reject or criticize the one who created them. Alternate translation: "Should you consider me, your maker, to be like the clay rather than the potter? It is as if a potter created something, and that thing said about the potter, 'He did not make me,' or 'He does not understand.'"

Should the potter be considered like clay ... "He does not understand"?

This question is used to scold the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Obviously, the potter should not be considered like clay ... 'He does not understand.'"

Isaiah 29:17

Lebanon will be turned into a field, and the field will become a forest

Possible meanings are 1) this is literal and Yahweh will cause the places where trees grew wild in Lebanon to become fruitful fields or 2) this is a metaphor and the large forests of Lebanon represent powerful oppressors, and the crops that grow in the field and become a forest are the common people who are suffering. This means Yahweh will humble those who are powerful, but he will honor those who are suffering.

Lebanon will be turned into a field

Here "Lebanon" represents the large cedar forests in Lebanon. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will turn the mighty forests of Lebanon into a field"

Isaiah 29:18

the deaf will hear the words of a book, and the eyes of the blind will see out of the deep darkness

Possible meanings are 1) this is literal and Yahweh will cause deaf people to hear and blind people to see or 2) this is a metaphor that means Yahweh will enable the people to hear and understand his message or 3) it may mean both options 1 and 2.

the eyes of the blind

Here "eyes" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "those who are blind"

Isaiah 29:19

The oppressed will again rejoice in Yahweh, and the poor among men will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "The poor and oppressed people will again be happy because of what Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, has done"

Isaiah 29:20

For the ruthless will cease

The nominal adjective "the ruthless" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "For the ruthless people will cease" or "For there will no longer be cruel people"

the mocker will vanish

The nominal adjective "the mocker" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "those who mock will vanish" or "the people who mock will disappear"

All those who love to do evil will be eliminated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will eliminate all those who love to do evil"

Isaiah 29:21

who by a word make a man out to be an offender

This refers to giving testimony in court against someone. Alternate translation: "who testify against a man and make him out to be an offender" or "who say in court that an innocent man is guilty of doing something wrong"

They lay a snare for him who seeks justice at the gate and put the righteous down with empty lies

The evil people doing anything they can to stop a good person is spoken of as if the evil people set a trap like a hunter catching his prey. Alternate translation: "They lie and try to stop those who want to do what is fair and right"

who seeks justice at the gate

The city gate was often the place where the city leaders made official decisions.

Isaiah 29:22

who redeemed Abraham

This possibly refers to when Yahweh called Abraham from his home country and sent him to the promised land.

Jacob will no longer ... his face

Here "Jacob" represents his descendants. Alternate translation: "Jacob's descendants will no longer ... their faces"

nor will his face be pale

This is an idiom that means he will no longer be afraid. Alternate translation: "nor will he be afraid"

Isaiah 29:23

he sees his children

The words "he" and "his" speak of Jacob

But when he sees his children, the work of my hands

Here "hands" represents Yahweh's power and action. Alternate translation: "When they see all the children I have given them and all that I have done"

they will make my name holy

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "they will honor me"

They will make holy the name of the Holy One of Jacob

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Yahweh refers to himself as "the Holy One of Jacob." Alternate translation: "They will honor me, the Holy One of Jacob"

of the God of Israel

Yahweh refers to himself as "the God of Israel." Alternate translation: "of me, the God of Israel"

Isaiah 29:24

Those who err in spirit

Here "spirit" represents a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "Those who are wrong in what they think" or "Those who are wrong in their attitude"

will gain understanding

This can be made more explicit to explain what they will understand. Alternate translation: "will begin to understand Yahweh and his laws"

Chapter 30

- ¹ "Woe to the rebellious children—
 this is Yahweh's declaration—
 They make plans, but not from me;
 they make alliances with other nations,
 but they were not directed by my Spirit,
 so they add sin to sin.
- ² They set out to go down into Egypt,
 but have not asked for my direction.
 They seek protection from Pharaoh
 and take refuge in the shadow of Egypt.
- ³ Therefore Pharaoh's protection will be your shame,
 and the refuge in Egypt's shade, your humiliation,
- ⁴ although their princes are at Zoan,
 and their messengers have come to Hanes.
- ⁵ They will all be ashamed
 because of a people who cannot help them,
 who are neither help nor aid,
 but a shame, and even a disgrace."

⁶ A declaration about the animals of the Negev:

Through the land of trouble and anguish,
 of the lioness and the lion,
 the viper and fiery flying serpent,
 they carry their riches on the backs of donkeys,
 and their treasures on the camels' humps,
 to a people who cannot help them.

- ⁷ For Egypt's help is vain and empty;
 therefore I have called her Rahab, who sits still.
- ⁸ Now go, write it in their presence on a tablet,
 and inscribe it on a scroll,
 that it may be preserved
 for the time to come as a testimony.
- ⁹ For these are a rebellious people, lying children,
 children who will not hear the instruction of Yahweh.
- ¹⁰ They say to the seers, "Do not see;"
 and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy the truth to us;
 speak flattering words to us,
 prophesy illusions. ¹¹ Turn aside from the way, stray off the path;
 cause the Holy One of Israel
 to cease speaking before our face."

¹² Therefore the Holy One of Israel says,

"Because you reject this word
 and trust in oppression and deceit and lean on it,

- ¹³ so this iniquity will be to you
 like a broken part ready to fall, like a bulge in a high wall
 whose fall will happen suddenly, in an instant."
- ¹⁴ It will break as a potter's vessel is broken;
 he will not spare it,
 so that there will not be found among its pieces a shard
 with which to scrape fire from the hearth,
 or to scoop up water out of the cistern.

¹⁵ For this is what the Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel says,

"In returning and resting you will be saved;
in quietness and in trust will be your strength.
But you were not willing.

16 You said, 'No, for we will flee on horses,'
so you will flee;
and, 'We will ride upon swift horses,'
so those who pursue you will be swift.

17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one;
at the threat of five you will flee
until your remnant will be
like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain,
or like a signal flag on a hill."

18 Yet Yahweh is waiting to be gracious to you,
therefore he is ready to show you mercy.
For Yahweh is a God of justice;
blessed are all those who wait for him.

19 For a people will live in Zion, in Jerusalem, and you will weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When he hears it, he will answer you. **20** Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, even so, your teacher will not hide himself anymore, but you will see your teacher with your own eyes. **21** Your ears will hear a word behind you saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. **22** You will desecrate your carved figures overlaid with silver and your gold cast figures. You will throw them away like a menstrual rag. You will say to them, "Get out of here."

23 He will give the rain for your seed when you sow the ground, and bread with abundance from the ground, and the crops will be abundant. In that day your cattle will graze in broad pastures. **24** The oxen and the donkeys, who plow the ground, will eat seasoned feed that has been winnowed with a shovel and a fork. **25** On every high mountain and on every high hill, there will be flowing brooks and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall. **26** The light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the sunlight of seven days. Yahweh will bind up the breaking of his people and heal the bruises of his wounding them.

27 Look, the name of Yahweh comes from a distant place,
burning with his anger and in dense smoke.
His lips are full of fury,
and his tongue is like a devouring fire.

28 His breath is like an overflowing torrent
that reaches up to the middle of the neck,
to sift the nations with the sieve of worthlessness.
His breath is a bridle in the jaws of the peoples
to cause them to wander away.

29 You will have a song
as in the night when a holy feast is observed,
and gladness of heart,
as when one goes with a flute to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the Rock of Israel.

30 Yahweh will make the splendor of his voice heard
and show the motion of his arm
in raging anger and flames of fire,
with windstorm, rainstorm, and hailstones.

31 For at the voice of Yahweh, Assyria will be dismayed;
he will strike them with a staff.

32 Every stroke of the appointed rod
that Yahweh will lay on them
will be accompanied with the music of tambourines and harps
as he battles, waving his weapons, and fights with them.

33 For a place of burning was prepared long ago.
Indeed, it is prepared for the king,

and God has made it deep and wide.
The pile is ready with a fire and much wood.
The breath of Yahweh, like a stream of sulfur,
will set it on fire.

Isaiah 30 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter continues the series of "woes" against specific nations. It presents judgments against the people of Ephraim and Judah when they desired to make an alliance with Egypt. (See: woe and judge)

Special concepts in this chapter

Negev

This is an area between Egypt and Judah. The people would have had to travel through it in order to get to Egypt. No one really lived in this area and it was known to be very dangerous.

Trust

The people were to trust in Yahweh. Only he could provide them with protection. The people were punished for their lack of trust when they were in trouble, but Yahweh only required that they trust him. (See: trust)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"That day"

This is a common phrase in this section of Isaiah. The chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 30:1

the rebellious children

Yahweh speaks about his people as if they were his children.

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared"

They make plans, but not from me

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "plans" can be stated as the verb "plan." Alternate translation: "They plan to do things, but they do not ask me what I want them to do"

but they were not directed by my Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but my Spirit did not direct them"

they add sin to sin

Continuing to sin is spoken of as if sins were objects that could be stacked on one another.

Alternate translation: "they continue to sin more and more"

Isaiah 30:2

They seek protection from Pharaoh

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "protection" is expressed as the verb "protect." Alternate translation: "They ask Pharaoh to protect them"

take refuge in the shadow of Egypt

Egypt's protection from enemy armies is spoken of as if it were a shadow that protects someone from the burning heat of the sun. Alternate translation: "they rely on the Egyptians to keep them safe"

Isaiah 30:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Judah.

Therefore Pharaoh's protection will be your shame, and the refuge in Egypt's shade, your humiliation

This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns "protection," "shame," and "humiliation" are expressed as adjectives or verbs. Alternate translation: "Therefore you will be ashamed

because you relied on Pharaoh to protect you; you will be humiliated because you relied on the Egyptians to keep you safe"

the refuge in Egypt's shade

Egypt's protection from enemy armies is spoken of as if it were a shadow that protects someone from the burning heat of the sun.

Isaiah 30:4

their princes

Here "princes" mean an official or ambassador, not necessarily sons of the king.

their ... their

belonging to the people of Judah

Zoan ... Hanes

These were cities in the northern part of Egypt.

have come to Hanes

Here "come" can be stated as "gone."

Isaiah 30:5

They ... them

These words refer to the people of Judah.

because of a people

"because of the people of Egypt"

Isaiah 30:6

General Information:

This continues God's declaration concerning the people of Judah.

A declaration

"This is what Yahweh declares"

of the lioness and the lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent

This refers to these types of animals in general. Alternate translation: "where lionesses and lions dwell, and where there are vipers and serpents"

fiery flying serpent

Here the word "fiery" probably refers to the serpent's poisonous bite and the word "flying" refers to its quick movements. See how you translated this in Isaiah 14:29.

they carry their riches

"the people of Judah carry their riches"

Isaiah 30:7

vain and empty

This doublet emphasizes that Egypt's help is worthless.

I have called her Rahab, who sits still

There were popular stories about a sea monster named Rahab. The name Rahab means "strength" or "arrogance." Alternate translation: "I call Egypt a loud boaster who does nothing"

Isaiah 30:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Isaiah.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in Yahweh's declaration about Judah. Here he tells Isaiah to do something.

in their presence

"in the presence of the people of Judah"

for the time to come

This speaks of time as if it travels and arrives somewhere. Alternate translation: "for a future time"

Isaiah 30:9

lying children, children who will not hear the instruction of Yahweh

This speaks of Yahweh's people as if they were his children. This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "They behave like children who lie and do not listen to what Yahweh commands"

Isaiah 30:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Judah.

Isaiah 30:11

Turn aside from the way, stray off the path

How Yahweh wants his people to behave is spoken of as if it were a way or path on which to walk. To disobey Yahweh is spoken of as if the person strays away from Yahweh's path.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this name in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 30:12

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this name in Isaiah 1:4.

you reject this word

"you reject this message"

trust in oppression and deceit and lean on it

Possible meanings are 1) the leaders of Judah are trusting in the Egyptian leaders who rule by

oppressing and deceiving others or 2) the leaders of Judah have oppressed and deceived their own people in order to take their money and send it to the Egyptians leaders as payment for protection.

lean on it

Here the word "it" refers to "oppression and deceit." Alternate translation: "lean on them"

lean on

This is an idiom that means to trust or rely on something.

Isaiah 30:13

so this iniquity will be to you like a broken part ... in an instant

This simile means that God will destroy the people of Judah suddenly because of their iniquity.

like a broken part ready to fall

It is understood that this is a broken part of a wall. Alternate translation: "like a broken part of a wall that is ready to fall"

whose fall will happen suddenly

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "fall" is expressed as the verb "fall." Alternate translation: "that will suddenly fall"

suddenly, in an instant

These mean the same thing and emphasize how quickly the wall will fall.

Isaiah 30:14

General Information:

Isaiah describes how Yahweh will destroy the people of Judah ([Isaiah 30:12-13](#)).

It will break

Here "it" refers to the part in the wall that is about to fall. The part in the wall is a metaphor that represents the people of Judah and their sin mentioned in [Isaiah 30:12-13]

as a potter's vessel is broken

This simile means that the piece of wall will break as quickly and completely as a clay jar that falls to the ground.

potter

A potter is a person who makes pots and jars out of clay.

there will not be found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will be able to find" or "there will not be"

a shard with which to scrape

"a shard big enough to scrape"

fire from the hearth

The word "fire" here refers here to ashes. Alternate translation: "ashes from the fireplace"

Isaiah 30:15

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this name in Isaiah 1:4.

In returning and resting you will be saved

Repenting is spoken of as if it were physically returning to Yahweh. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will save you from your enemies if you will repent and rest knowing that I will take care of you"

resting

It is implied that the people rest because they trust that Yahweh will take care of them.

in quietness and in trust will be your strength

Quietness here refers to not being anxious and worried. It is implied that they are not worried because they trust in Yahweh. Alternate translation: "You will be strong if you are quiet and trust in me"

Isaiah 30:16

we will flee on horses

Apparently these are horses that the people of Judah received from the Egyptians.

Isaiah 30:17

One thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will flee

The word "solider" is understood. Alternate translation: "One thousand soldiers will flee at the threat of one enemy soldier; at the threat of five enemy soldiers all of your soldiers will flee"

One thousand

"1,000"

until your remnant will be like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, or like a signal flag on a hill

This simile means there will be so few people left that they will be like a single signal flag on top of a hill.

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

Isaiah 30:18

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

Isaiah 30:19

you will ... to you ... answer you

Here "you" refers to the people who will live in Zion.

he will answer you
"he will help you"

Isaiah 30:20

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

the bread of adversity and the water of affliction

Here "bread" and "water" make up the diet of a very poor person. The whole phrase represents the hard times and poverty of the people.

your teacher

This refers to Yahweh.

you will see your teacher with your own eyes

Here "eyes" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "you yourselves will see your teacher"

Isaiah 30:21

Your ears will hear

Here "ears" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "You will hear"

a word behind you saying

"him speaking behind you saying"

This is the way, walk in it

How Yahweh wants his people to behave is spoken of as if it were a way or path. To obey Yahweh is spoken of as if it were a person walking on his path.

when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left

Disobeying Yahweh is spoken of as if the person turned left or right off of Yahweh's path.

Isaiah 30:22

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

You will throw them away like a menstrual rag

This simile means they will throw away their idols like they were garbage.

You will say to them, "Get out of here."

This speaks of the idols as if they could hear and get up and leave a place. Yahweh means that the people will no longer need or want the idols.

Isaiah 30:23

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

He will give

"Yahweh will give"

bread with abundance from the ground

Here "bread" represents food in general. Alternate translation: "he will cause the ground to produce plenty of food for you to eat"

In that day

"At that time"

Isaiah 30:24

that has been winnowed with a shovel and a fork

Shovels and forks were used to throw the grain in the air so the wind would blow away the chaff, leaving only the part that could be eaten. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that you have winnowed with a shovel and a pitchfork"

Isaiah 30:25

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

On every high mountain ... every high hill

Isaiah describes what will be an ideal situation after Yahweh rescues his people. Although the language may be exaggerated, you should translate this just as Isaiah described it.

in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall

"when Yahweh slaughters your enemies and causes their strong towers to fall"

in the day

"at the time"

Isaiah 30:26

The light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the sunlight of seven days

Isaiah describes what will be an ideal situation after Yahweh rescues his people. Although the language may be exaggerated, you should translate this just as Isaiah described it.

the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the sunlight of seven days

"the sun will shine as bright as seven suns" or "the sun will give as much light in one day as it normally does in seven days"

Yahweh will bind up the breaking of his people and heal the bruises of his wounding them

Yahweh comforting his people and causing their suffering to end is spoken of as if he would put bandages on their wounds.

Isaiah 30:27

the name of Yahweh ... like a devouring fire

Yahweh being extremely angry is spoken of as if he were a large fire.

the name of Yahweh comes

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Yahweh comes"

His lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire

Here "lips" and "tongue" are metonyms that represent Yahweh speaking. And, Yahweh speaks with so much anger and power that it is spoken of as if his tongue were a fire. Alternate translation: "When he speaks his fury is like a fire that destroys everything"

Isaiah 30:28

His breath is like an overflowing torrent

This compares the air coming out of Yahweh's mouth to a flood to emphasize its power to destroy.

to sift the nations with the sieve of worthlessness

Yahweh separating the people of the nations and destroying the wicked people is spoken of as if Yahweh puts the nations in a sieve. This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will separate and destroy the wicked people of the nations"

sieve of worthlessness

"sieve that gets rid of what is worthless." Many modern translations read, "sieve of destruction."

His breath is a bridle in the jaws of the peoples to cause them to wander away

Yahweh having the power to cause people's plans to fail or causing them to be destroyed is spoken of as if his breath were a bridle that steers people off the correct path.

a bridle in the jaws of the peoples

A "bridle" is a device that people put over a horse's head to guide it. The bridle contains a small piece called a "bit" that goes in the horse's mouth. Alternate translation: "a bridle on the heads of the peoples" or "a bit in the jaws of the peoples"

Isaiah 30:29

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

You will have a song

This can be reworded so the noun "song" is stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "You will sing"

as in the night when a holy feast is observed

This simile emphasizes how happy the people will be.

when a holy feast is observed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when you observe a holy feast"

gladness of heart

Here "heart" represents a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "you will be glad"

as when one goes ... Rock of Israel

This simile emphasizes how happy the people will be.

to the Rock of Israel

Yahweh having the power to protect his people is spoken of as if he were a rock on which the people could climb and escape from enemies. Alternate translation: "to Israel's protective rock" or "which is like a protective rock for Israel"

Isaiah 30:30

show the motion of his arm

Here "arm" represents the power of God. It is implied that Yahweh will show his power by destroying his people's enemies. Alternate translation: "show that he is powerful by destroying your enemies"

in raging anger and flames of fire

Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it were a storm or a fire. Alternate translation: "in anger that is like a storm and flames of fire" or "in great anger"

with windstorm, rainstorm, and hailstones

"with storms full of wind, rain, and hail"

hailstones

hard pieces of ice that fall from the sky like rain

Isaiah 30:31

Assyria will be dismayed

The word "dismayed" can also mean "shattered," a metaphor for "totally defeat." Possible meanings of this phrase are 1) the Assyrians will hear Yahweh's voice and become terrified that he will strike them with his staff. Alternate translation: "Assyria will be terrified" Or 2) Yahweh will shatter Assyria with his voice and staff. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will shatter Assyria" or "Yahweh will totally defeat Assyria"

Assyria

Here this is a metonym for the soldiers of Assyria.

Isaiah 30:32

Every stroke of the appointed rod that Yahweh will lay on them

Yahweh causing an army to defeat the Assyrians is spoken of as if Yahweh would hit the Assyrians with a rod.

will be accompanied

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah will accompany it"

tambourines

This is a musical instrument with a head like a drum that can be hit and with pieces of metal around the side that sound when the instrument is shaken. See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:12.

he battles, waving his weapons, and fights with them

Yahweh causing the enemy army to defeat the Assyrians is spoken of as if Yahweh were a warrior who would fight along with the enemy army.

Isaiah 30:33

For a place of burning was prepared long ago

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For long ago Yahweh prepared a place for burning"

a place of burning

Some English translations read, "Topheth," the name of a place in the Hinnom Valley, south of Jerusalem, where at one time people burned their children as sacrifices to a false god.

it is prepared for the king

It is implied that this refers to the king of Assyria. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh prepared it for the king of Assyria"

The pile is ready with a fire and much wood

"The pile is ready with much wood to make a fire"

The breath of Yahweh, like a stream of sulfur, will set it on fire

This speaks of Yahweh's breath as if it were a river of fire that will set the pile on fire.

Chapter 31

- ¹ Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help
and lean on horses,
and trust in chariots (for they are many)
and in horsemen (for they are mighty).
But they are not concerned about the Holy One of Israel,
nor do they seek Yahweh!
- ² Yet he is wise, and he will bring disaster
and will not retract his words.
He will arise against the evil house
and against the helpers of those who behave wickedly.
- ³ Egypt is a man and not God,
their horses flesh and not spirit.
When Yahweh reaches out with his hand,
both the one who helps will stumble,
and the one who is helped will fall; both will perish together.
- ⁴ This is what Yahweh says to me,
"As a lion, even a young lion, growls over its torn prey,
when a group of shepherds is called out against it,
but it is not frightened by their voices,
nor does it creep away from their sound;
thus Yahweh of hosts will descend
to fight on Mount Zion, on that hill.
- ⁵ Like birds in flight,
so Yahweh of hosts will protect Jerusalem;
he will protect and rescue
as he passes over it and preserves it.
- ⁶ Return to him from whom you have deeply turned away, people of Israel. ⁷ For in that day each one will throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold that your own hands have made as a sin.
- ⁸ Assyria will fall by the sword;
a sword not wielded by man will consume him.
He will flee from the sword,
and his young men will be forced to do hard labor.
- ⁹ They will lose all confidence because of terror,
and his princes will be afraid
at the sight of Yahweh's signal flag—
this is the declaration of Yahweh—
whose fire is in Zion and whose firepot is in Jerusalem."

Isaiah 31 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter continues the series of "woes" against specific nations. It presents judgments against the people of Ephraim and Judah when they desired to make an alliance with Egypt. It also prophesies the destruction of Assyria. (See: woe and judge and prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

The people were to trust in Yahweh. Only he could provide them with protection. They were punished for their lack of trust when they were in trouble, but Yahweh only required that they trust him. (See: trust)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"That day"

This is a common phrase in this section of Isaiah. This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and fulfill)

Israel

The use of the term "Israel" in this chapter is in reference to the northern kingdom of Israel exclusively.

Isaiah 31:1

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Judah.

go down to Egypt

The phrase "go down" is used here because Egypt is lower in Elevation than Jerusalem.

those who go down

"those people of Judah who go down"

lean on horses

This speaks about people relying on their horses to help them as if they were leaning on their horses. Alternate translation: "rely on their horses"

they are mighty

The word "mighty" here implies that they are mighty because there are so many of them.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this name in Isaiah 1:4.

nor do they seek Yahweh

"nor do they ask Yahweh to help them"

Isaiah 31:2

he will bring disaster

Here the word "bring" means to "cause." Alternate translation: "he will cause disasters to happen"

will not retract his words

The phrase "retract his words" speaks of a person not fulfilling what they said they will do as if the words that he had said were something that he could pull back to himself. Here it says that Yahweh will not do this, meaning he will fulfill what he has said. Alternate translation: "he will do what he said he would do"

arise against

"punish"

evil house

This refers to evil people who live there. Alternate translation: "all who do evil things"

Isaiah 31:3

Egypt is a man

Here Egypt refers to the soldiers of Egypt. Alternate translation: "The soldiers of Egypt are men"

their horses flesh and not spirit

This means that their horses are only horses and not spiritual beings. Alternate translation: "their horses are only horses; they are not powerful spirits"

When Yahweh reaches out with his hand

The term "hand" is often used in reference to God's power and action. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh uses his power against them"

both the one who helps will stumble, and the one who is helped will fall

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Stumbling and falling are metaphors of failing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "these two things will happen: I will destroy Egypt, who helps you, and I will destroy you, whom Egypt helps"

the one who is helped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who is seeking help"

Isaiah 31:4

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to Isaiah.

As a lion ... thus Yahweh of hosts

"A lion ... in the same way Yahweh of hosts." Here Yahweh speaks of how he will defend the people who belong to him and not be scared away by comparing himself to a lion who guards its prey.

thus Yahweh of hosts will descend ... that hill

It may be more clear if you move the last line to before the first line: "Yahweh of hosts will descend to fight on Mount Zion, on that hill, as a lion, even a young lion"

a lion, even a young lion

"a female lion or killer lion." This is a doublet with both phrase referring to a fierce lion. Alternate translation: "a lion"

growls

warns others to stay away

when a group of shepherds is called out against it

The phrase "called out against it" means to be sent out to chase the lion away. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone sends shepherds to chase the lion away"

from their sound

The shepherds would make loud noises to try and chase away the lion. Alternate translation: "from the loud noises that they make"

will descend

"will come down." This refers to descending from heaven. Alternate translation: "will come down from heaven"

on Mount Zion, on that hill

Both of the phrases refer to Mount Zion. Alternate translation: "on Mount Zion"

Isaiah 31:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Like birds in flight, so Yahweh of hosts will protect Jerusalem

Here the way that Yahweh protects Jerusalem is compared to the way that a mother bird protects her baby birds in their nest.

he will protect and rescue as he passes over it and preserves it

This speaks of how Yahweh protects and rescues Jerusalem, describing him as a bird that flies over the city. Alternate translation: "he will protect and rescue the city from its enemies"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:9.

Jerusalem

This refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "the people of Jerusalem"

Isaiah 31:6

Return to him from whom you have deeply turned away

"Return to the one against whom you have rebelled"

Isaiah 31:7

that your own hands have made as a sin

Here the people are referred to by their "hands" the emphasize that they made something with their hands. Alternate translation: "that you have sinned by making with your own hands"

Isaiah 31:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Judah, referring to the Assyrians as though they are one person.

Assyria will fall by the sword; a sword not wielded by man will consume him

"Sword" refers to military might. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God's sword, and not a man's sword, will destroy the Assyrian army"

He will flee

"The Assyrians will flee"

his young men will be forced to do hard labor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "enemies will capture their young men and force them to do hard labor"

Isaiah 31:9

They will lose all confidence because of terror

The word "confidence" can be expressed with the adjective "confident." The word "terror" can be expressed with the adjective "terrified." Alternate translation: "They will no longer be confident because they are so terrified"

his princes

"their leaders"

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

whose fire is in Zion and whose firepot is in Jerusalem

Both of these clauses mean the same thing and are used together for emphasis. Here God's presence and his power to judge and destroy are spoken of as if they were a fire. Alternate translation: "whose powerful presence is in Zion"

Chapter 32

- ¹ Look, a king will reign in righteousness,
and princes will rule in justice.
- ² Each one will be like a shelter from the wind
and a refuge from the storm,
like streams of water in a dry place,
like the shade of a great rock in a land of weariness.
- ³ Then the eyes of those who see will not be dim,
and the ears of those who hear will hear attentively.
- ⁴ The rash will think carefully with understanding,
and the stutterer will speak distinctly and with ease.
- ⁵ The fool will no longer be called honorable,
nor the deceiver called principled.
- ⁶ For the fool speaks folly,
and his heart plans evil
and godless actions,
and he speaks wrongly against Yahweh.
He makes the hungry empty,
and the thirsty he causes to lack drink.
- ⁷ The deceiver's methods are evil.
He devises wicked schemes
to destroy the poor with deceitful words,
even when the poor say what is right.
- ⁸ But the honorable man makes honorable plans;
and because of his honorable actions he will stand.
- ⁹ Rise up, you women who are at ease,
and listen to my voice;
you carefree daughters,
give ear to my word.
- ¹⁰ For in a little more than a year
your confidence will be broken,
you carefree women,
for the grape harvest will fail,
the ingathering will not come.
- ¹¹ Tremble, you women who are at ease;
be troubled, you confident ones;
take off your fine clothes and make yourselves bare;
gird your loins with sackcloth.
- ¹² You will wail for the pleasant fields,
for the fruitful vines.
- ¹³ The land of my people
will be overgrown with thorns and briers,
even in all the joyful houses in the jubilant city.
- ¹⁴ For the palace will be abandoned,
the crowded city will be deserted;
the hill and the watchtower will become caves forever,
a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks;
- ¹⁵ until the Spirit is poured on us from on high,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is considered as a forest.
- ¹⁶ Then justice will reside in the wilderness;
and righteousness will live in the fruitful field.
- ¹⁷ The work of righteousness will be peace;
and the result of righteousness,
quietness and confidence forever.
- ¹⁸ My people will live in a peaceful habitation,
in secure homes, and in quiet resting places.

- 19 Though hail flattens the forest
and the city is completely brought down,
20 you will be blessed
when you sow your seed beside every stream
and let the foot of the ox and donkey range free.
-

Isaiah 32 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Reign of the Messiah

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 32:1

Look

This word is used here to draw peoples' attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

Isaiah 32:2

Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm

This compares the king and princes who protect the people to a shelter. Alternate translation: "the rulers will protect the people like a shelter does in a storm"

like streams of water in a dry place

This is another comparison that means that the rulers will provide for the needs of the people. Alternate translation: "they will provide for the people like streams of water in a dry place"

like the shade of a great rock in a land of weariness

This is another comparison that means that the rulers will provide comfort and rest for the people. Alternate translation: "they will provide rest for the people like a huge rock gives shade to weary people"

Isaiah 32:3

Then the eyes ... attentively

Both of these phrases emphasize that the leaders will enable the people to understand God's truth.

will not be dim

"will see clearly"

Isaiah 32:4

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing the people after God restores righteous rulers in Judah ([Isaiah 32:1-3](#)).

The rash ... the stutterer

This refers to people who act rashly and people who stutter. Alternate translation: "The rash person ... the stuttering person"

Isaiah 32:5

The fool will no longer be called honorable

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will give honor to the fool"

nor the deceiver called principled

This can be stated in active form. "The deceiver" refers to a person who is deceptive. Alternate translation: "nor will anyone show respect to the person who deceives"

Isaiah 32:6

For the fool speaks folly, and his heart plans evil

"The fool" refers to foolish people. Also, "folly" and "evil" may be expressed as adjectives. Alternate translation: "For the foolish person says foolish things and his heart plans evil things"

his heart plans evil

Here the foolish person is referred to by his heart to emphasize his inner thoughts. Alternate translation: "he plans evil things in his heart"

He makes

The word "he" refers to the foolish person.

the hungry empty

"The hungry" refers to hungry people. They are hungry because they have empty stomachs. Alternate translation: "the hungry person have an empty stomach"

the thirsty he causes to lack drink

"The thirsty" refers to people who are thirsty. Alternate translation: "he causes the thirsty person to have nothing to drink"

Isaiah 32:7

The deceiver's

This refers to a person who deceives others. Alternate translation: "The deceptive person's"

to destroy the poor with deceitful words

"The poor" refers to poor people. Also, the phrase "to destroy" does not mean to kill them but to harm them by telling lies about them. Alternate translation: "to harm the poor people by telling lies"

Isaiah 32:8

he will stand

This means that he will be successful. Alternate translation: "he will be successful"

Isaiah 32:9

Rise up

"Stand up" or "Pay attention"

at ease

"secure" or "carefree"

my voice

Isaiah refers to himself by his voice to emphasize what he says. Alternate translation: "me speak"

give ear to my word

The phrase "give ear" is a metonym for listening with the ear, and it implies that the hearer is to obey a command or act in accordance with what he learns. Alternate translation: "listen to what I am saying and prepare to act"

Isaiah 32:10

your confidence will be broken

This can be stated in active form. Also, Isaiah speaks of them no longer being confident as if their confidence were a physical object that is broken. Alternate translation: "you will no longer be confident"

the grape harvest will fail

This means that there would not be good grapes to harvest. Alternate translation: "there will be no grapes for you to harvest"

the ingathering will not come

"the time for gathering crops will not happen"

Isaiah 32:11

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

Tremble

shake from fear

at ease

"secure" or "carefree"

take off your fine clothes and make yourselves bare

Here "bare" does not necessarily mean naked, but to wear minimal covering such as undergarments. Alternate translation: "take off your fine clothes and make yourself unclothed" or "take off your fancy clothes"

gird your loins with sackcloth

The girding of loins with sackcloth is an act of grieving or mourning. "Gird your loins" is also a metonym, a command to prepare for work or battle, so this is an ironic way of emphasizing how miserable the people will be. Alternate translation: "put sackcloth around waists as you grieve"

Isaiah 32:12

You will wail for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines

This means that they will cry out loudly as they grieve what happens to their fruitful fields and vines. Alternate translation: "You will wail because of what happens to your pleasant fields and fruitful vines"

Isaiah 32:13

thorns and briers

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 5:6.

in all the joyful houses in the jubilant city

"in all the formerly joyful houses in the formerly jubilant city." The houses and city will not be joyful after the thorns and briers grow up.

the joyful houses

Here the houses are described as joyful because of the joyful people in them. Alternate translation: "your houses where you were joyful"

the jubilant city

Here the city is described as joyful because of the joyful people in it. Alternate translation: "your city where you were joyful"

Isaiah 32:14

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

For the palace will be abandoned, the crowded city will be deserted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the people will abandon the palace, and the crowds will leave the city" or "For the people will leave the palace, and the city that was crowded with people will be empty"

the hill

This refers to the fort built on the top of the hill. Alternate translation: "the fort on the hill"

the hill and the watchtower will become caves

This speaks of the fort and the watchtower being abandoned as if they became caves. Alternate translation: "the hill and the watchtower will become abandoned and empty"

a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks

This means the these animals will enjoy the grass that grows among the abandon fort and watchtower. Alternate translation: "the wild donkeys and the flocks of sheep will eat the grass there"

forever

This is an exaggeration for a very long time. Alternate translation: "an extremely long time"

Isaiah 32:15

until the Spirit is poured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until Yahweh pours the Spirit"

the Spirit is poured on us

This speaks of Yahweh giving him Spirit to his people as if his Spirit were a liquid that he would pour on them. Alternate translation: "the Spirit is given to us"

from on high

Here heaven is referred to as "on high." Alternate translation: "from heaven"

the fruitful field is considered as a forest

This can be written in active form. This compares how overly bountiful the fruitful fields are by comparing them to a thick, dense forest. Alternate translation: "people will say that the fruitful fields have grown thick like a forest" or "the fruitful fields will be overly bountiful"

Isaiah 32:16

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

justice will reside ... righteousness will live

Isaiah describes "justice" and "righteousness" as a person who lives in these places. This means the people who live in these places will do what is just and right. Alternate translation: "people will act justly in the wilderness and people will act righteously in the fertile fields"

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness will be peace; and the result of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever

These two phrases are parallel and both give results of righteousness. These can be combined. Alternate translation: "The result of people acting righteously is that there will be peace, and quietness, and confidence forever"

Isaiah 32:18

habitation

place where people live

Isaiah 32:19

hail

See how you translated this in Isaiah 28:2.

hail flattens the forest and the city is completely brought down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "hail destroys the forest and completely destroys the city"

Isaiah 32:20

you will be blessed when you sow your seed beside every stream and let the foot of the ox and donkey range free

This can be stated in active form. This refers to Yahweh blessing all of his people and speaks of the things that are normal for his people to do. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will bless you when you plant your crops in fields alongside the streams and as you send out your ox and donkey to graze in the pasture"

Chapter 33

- ¹ Woe to you, destroyer who has not been destroyed!
 Woe to the betrayer whom they have not betrayed!
 When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed.
 When you stop betraying, they will betray you.
- ² Yahweh, be gracious to us; we wait for you;
 be our arm every morning,
 our salvation in the time of trouble.
- ³ At the loud noise the peoples flee;
 when you arise, the nations are scattered.
- ⁴ Your plunder is gathered as the locusts gather;
 as locusts leap, men leap on it.
- ⁵ Yahweh is exalted. He lives in a high place.
 He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness.
- ⁶ He will be the stability in your times,
 abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;
 the fear of Yahweh is his treasure.
- ⁷ Look, their envoys cry in the streets;
 the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.
- ⁸ The highways are deserted;
 there are no more travelers.
 Covenants are broken, witnesses are despised,
 and mankind is not respected. ^[1]
- ⁹ The land mourns and wastes away;
 Lebanon is ashamed and withers away; ^[2]
 Sharon is like a desert plain;
 and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.
- ¹⁰ "Now will I arise," says Yahweh;
 "now I will be lifted up; now I will be elevated.
- ¹¹ You conceive chaff, and you give birth to stubble;
 your breath is a fire that will consume you.
- ¹² The peoples will be burned to lime,
 as thornbushes are cut down and are burned.
- ¹³ You who are far away, hear what I have done;
 and, you who are near, acknowledge my might."
- ¹⁴ The sinners in Zion are afraid;
 trembling has seized the godless ones.
 Who among us can sojourn with a raging fire?
 Who among us can sojourn with everlasting burnings?
- ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks honestly;
 who despises the gain of oppression,
 who shakes his hand so that it will not accept a bribe,
 who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed,
 and who shuts his eyes from looking on evil—
- ¹⁶ this is the man who will dwell on the heights,
 his stronghold will be the fortress among the cliffs,
 his food will be given,
 and his water will be in steady supply.
- ¹⁷ Your eyes will see the king in his beauty;
 they will see a land off in the distance.
- ¹⁸ Your heart will recall the terror;
 where is the scribe,
 where is he who weighed the money?

- Where is he who counted the towers?
- 19 You will no longer see the defiant people,
people who mock you
in a language that you do not understand.
- 20 Look at Zion, the city of our feasts;
your eyes will see Jerusalem as a quiet habitation,
a tent that will not be removed,
whose stakes will never be pulled up
nor will any of its cords be broken.
- 21 There Yahweh in majesty will be with us,
in a place of broad rivers and streams,
where no warship with oars will travel,
and no large ships will sail.
- 22 For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver,
Yahweh is our king; he will save us.
- 23 Your riggings are slack;
they cannot hold the mast in place;
they cannot spread the sail;
when the plunder of abundant prey is divided,
even the lame will take away booty.
- 24 The inhabitants will not say, "I am sick;"
the people who live there will be forgiven for their iniquity.

Footnotes

33:8 ^[1]Some ancient Hebrew copies have the word for

33:9 ^[2]The word

Isaiah 33 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter continues the series of "woes." It speaks against ungodly or evil people in general. (See: woe and godly and evil)

Isaiah 33:1

General Information:

Isaiah speaks in poetry for Yahweh to the Assyrians.

who has not been destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom others have not destroyed"

you will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "others will destroy you"

they will betray

"others will betray"

Isaiah 33:2

be our arm

Here Yahweh's arm refers to his strength. This speaks of Yahweh strengthening them as if Yahweh would use his strength to act for them. Alternate translation: "give us strength"

every morning

This refers to the whole day, not just the morning. Alternate translation: "every day"

our salvation

This understood verb "be" may be supplied. Also, the word "salvation" may be expressed with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "be our salvation" or "save us"

in the time of trouble

This refers to the times when they are experiencing trouble. Alternate translation: "when we have troubles"

Isaiah 33:3

At the loud noise the peoples flee

Possible meanings of "the loud noise" are 1) it refers to Yahweh's voice. Alternate translation: "The peoples flee at the sound of your loud voice" or 2) it refers the loud sounds of Yahweh's army. Alternate translation: "The people flee at the sound of your army"

arise

This means to begin doing something. Alternate translation: "begin acting"

the nations are scattered

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "the nations scatter"

Isaiah 33:4

Your plunder is gathered as the locusts gather; as locusts leap, men leap on it

This compares how quick and eager Yahweh's people are when they gather the spoils from their enemies to the eagerness of locusts when they gather food. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your people gather spoils from your enemies with the same fierceness as the locusts have who devour green plants"

Isaiah 33:5

General Information:

Isaiah speaks to the people of Judah.

Yahweh is exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is greater than anyone else"

He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness

This speaks of Yahweh ruling Zion with his justice and righteousness as if he were filling Zion with justice and righteousness. Alternate translation: "He will rule Zion with justice and righteousness"

Isaiah 33:6

He will be the stability in your times

This speaks of Yahweh causing his people to be secure as if he were the stability himself. The phrase "your times" refers to their lives. Alternate translation: "He will make you secure all your lives"

abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge

This refers to the things that Yahweh will give to them. The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with the verb "save." The abstract nouns "wisdom" and "knowledge" can be expressed with

adjectives. Alternate translation: "and he will give you an abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge" or "he will save you and cause you to be very wise and knowledgeable"

the fear of Yahweh is his treasure

This speaks of fearing Yahweh as if it were a treasure that Yahweh gives his people. Alternate translation: "revering Yahweh will be like a valuable treasure that he will give to you" or "to fear Yahweh will be as valuable to you as a treasure"

Isaiah 33:7

Look

This word is used here to draw peoples' attention to what is said next. It is also used here to mark a new section in the book. Alternate translation: "Listen"

envoys

messengers

the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly

This means they weep because they do not succeed in making peace. Alternate translation: "the ambassadors who hope for peace do not succeed, and so they weep bitterly"

Isaiah 33:8

The highways are deserted; there are no more travelers

Both of the phrases emphasize that there are no travelers on the highways. These can be combined and stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People no longer travel on the highways"

Covenants are broken, witnesses are despised, and mankind is not respected

This passage may refer to general conditions of corruption in Israel, or it may refer to the nation's inability to make reliable peace treaties with Assyria. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People break covenants that they have made, people ignore the testimony of witnesses, and people do not respect one another"

Isaiah 33:9

The land mourns and wastes away

This speaks of the land becoming dry as if it were a person mourning. Alternate translation: "The land becomes dry and its plants wither away"

Lebanon is ashamed and withers away

Here "Lebanon" represents Lebanon's trees. This speaks of the trees withering and decaying as if they were a person who is ashamed. Alternate translation: "Lebanon's trees wither and decay"

Sharon ... Bashan ... Carmel

Many trees and flowers once grew in these places.

Sharon is like a desert plain

This compares how dry Sharon is to a desert plain. Alternate translation: "Sharon is as dry as a desert plain"

Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves

Here Bashan and Carmel are represented by their trees. Alternate translation: "there are no more leaves on the trees in Bashan and Carmel"

Isaiah 33:10

will I arise

To arise or stand up is a metaphor for no longer watching and thinking and instead beginning to act. Alternate translation: "will I begin to act"

now I will be lifted up; now I will be elevated

This can be stated in active form. These two phrases have basically the same meaning and emphasize Yahweh being exalted. Alternate translation: "now I will exalt myself and show that I deserve for everyone to honor me"

Isaiah 33:11

You conceive chaff, and you give birth to stubble

This speaks of the Assyrians making plans as if they were conceiving and giving birth to their plans as a mother gives birth to a baby. This speaks of their plans being useless by comparing them to chaff. Alternate translation: "You make plans that are as useless as chaff and straw"

stubble

The dry pieces of plants that are left in the ground after the stalks have been cut.

your breath is a fire that will consume you

Here the Assyrians' plans are referred to as their "breath." This speaks of their plans causing them to die as if their plans would literally burn up their bodies. Alternate translation: "your plans will cause you to die"

Isaiah 33:12

The peoples will be burned to lime, as thornbushes are cut down and are burned

This compares how the peoples' dead bodies will be burned to the way thornbushes are burned. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Fire will burn the peoples' bodies to lime in the same way that a farmer cuts down thornbushes and burns them"

lime

the ashes from burned bones

Isaiah 33:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak.

You who are far away, hear what I have done; and, you who are near, acknowledge my might

Yahweh uses the words "far away" and "near" to mean all people. The word "might" can be expressed with the adjective "mighty." Alternate translation: "All people everywhere hear what I have done and acknowledge that I am mighty"

Isaiah 33:14

trembling has seized the godless ones

This speaks of the godless people trembling as if their trembling were an enemy that had seized them. Alternate translation: "the godless ones are overwhelmed with trembling"

Who among us ... burnings?

It is implied that the sinners in Zion ask these questions. Alternate translation: "They say, 'Who among us ... burnings?'"

Who among us can sojourn with a raging fire? Who among us can sojourn with everlasting burnings?

These rhetorical questions have basically the same meaning and emphasize that no one can live with fire. Here fire represents Yahweh's judgment. Alternate translation: "No one can live with raging fire! No one can sojourn where things are always burning!" or "No one can live bearing Yahweh's judgment, it is like an everlasting fire!"

sojourn

live in a place that is not one's home

everlasting burnings

"things that never stop burning"

Isaiah 33:15

He who walks

Here walking refers to living. Alternate translation: "He who lives"

who despises the gain of oppression

The noun phrase "the gain of oppression" can be expressed as a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "who hates the riches that come from harming other people"

Isaiah 33:16

this is the man who will dwell on the heights, his stronghold will be the fortress among the cliffs

This speaks of the man being safe as if he lived in a home on a high hill. These two phrase are parallel and the second phrase describes the place where the man lives. Alternate translation: "he will be safe, like a man whose home is built on a high hill, in a rocky place that is easy to defend"

the heights

This refers to a high hill or mountainside. Alternate translation: "the high hill" or "the mountainside"

the fortress among the cliffs

This speaks of rocky areas that are easy to defend as if they were actually fortresses. Alternate translation: "the large piles of rocks"

will be in steady supply

"will always be available"

Isaiah 33:17

Your eyes will see ... they will see

This refers the audience by their "eyes." Alternate translation: "You will see ... you will see"

the king in his beauty

The king's royal robes are referred to as "his beauty." Alternate translation: "the king in his beautiful robes"

Isaiah 33:18

Your heart will recall the terror

This refers to the audience by their "hearts." "The terror" refers to their war with the Assyrians. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "You will remember the terror that the Assyrians caused you when they attacked"

where is the scribe, where is he who weighed the money? Where is he who counted the towers?

These rhetorical question are asked to emphasize that the Assyrian officials are gone. These questions may be written as statements. Alternate translation: "The officers of Assyria who counted the tax money that we were forced to pay to them have disappeared! Those men who counted our towers are gone!"

weighed the money

Money was valuable metal; its value was determined by its weight.

Isaiah 33:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 33:20

General Information:

Isaiah continues to speak to the people of Judah.

the city of our feasts

This means that they have their festival and feasts at this city. Alternate translation: "the city where we have our feasts" or "they city where we celebrate our festivals"

your eyes will see

The people are referred to by their "eyes" to emphasize what they are seeing. Alternate translation: "you will see"

a tent that will not be removed

This speaks of Zion being secure and well establish as if it were secure tent. This can be stated in active form and written as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "it will be secure, like a tent that no one will ever remove"

whose stakes will never be pulled up nor will any of its cords be broken

This is part of the metaphor that compares Zion to a secure tent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose stakes no one will ever pull up and whose cords no one will ever break"

Isaiah 33:21

There Yahweh in majesty will be with us, in a place of broad rivers and streams

Here "us" refers to Isaiah and includes the people of Judah. This speaks of the safety of living with Yahweh as if it were a place that has rivers around it so that enemies cannot attack it. Alternate translation: "Yahweh who is majestic will be with us there, and we will be safe as if we were in a place surrounded by broad rivers"

Isaiah 33:22

our ... us

This refers to Isaiah and includes the people of Judah.

Isaiah 33:23

Your riggings are slack; they cannot hold the mast in place; they cannot spread the sail

Possible meanings: 1) The Assyrian army is like a boat that is unable to move through the water: the ropes that support the mast and sail have come loose and no longer support the mast, so the sail is useless

mast

tall poles that support the sail

sail

a large cloth that fills with wind and moves a boat through the water

when the plunder of abundant prey is divided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they divide the plunder of abundant prey"

the plunder of abundant prey

"the plunder they can take from all of their victims"

the lame

This refers to people who are cannot walk. Alternate translation: "those who are lame"

Isaiah 33:24

the people who live there will be forgiven for their iniquity

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will forgive the sins of the people who live there"

Chapter 34

- ¹ Come near, you nations, and listen;
pay attention, you people!
The earth and all that fills it must listen,
the world and all its produce.
- ² For Yahweh is angry with all the nations,
and furious against all their armies;
he has completely destroyed them,
he has handed them over to the slaughter.
- ³ The bodies of their dead will be thrown out.
The stench of the dead bodies will be everywhere;
and the mountains will soak up their blood.
- ⁴ All the host of heaven will waste away,
and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll;
and all their stars will fade away,
as the leaf fades from off the vine,
and as the overripe figs from the fig tree.
- ⁵ For when my sword will have drunk its fill in heaven;
look, it will now come down on Edom,
on the people I am setting apart for destruction.
- ⁶ The sword of Yahweh is dripping with blood
and covered with fat,
dripping with the blood of lambs and goats,
covered with the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah
and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
- ⁷ Wild oxen will fall with them,
and young bulls with the mighty ones.
Their land will be drunk with blood,
and their dust made fat with fatness.
- ⁸ For it will be a day of vengeance for Yahweh
and a year when he will pay them back for the cause of Zion.
- ⁹ The streams of Edom will be turned into pitch,
her dust into sulfur,
and her land will become burning pitch.
- ¹⁰ It will burn night and day;
its smoke will rise forever;
from generation to generation it will be a wasteland;
no one will pass through it forever and ever.
- ¹¹ But wild birds and animals will live there;
the owl and the raven will make their nest in it.
He will stretch over it the measuring line of ruin
and the plumbline of destruction.
- ¹² Her nobles will have nothing left to call a kingdom,
and all her princes will be nothing.
- ¹³ Thorns will overgrow her palaces,
nettles and thistles her fortresses.
It will be a habitation of jackals,
a place for ostriches.
- ¹⁴ The wild animals of the desert and the hyenas will meet there,
and the wild goats will cry to one another.
Nocturnal animals will settle there
and find for themselves a resting place.
- ¹⁵ Owls will make nests, lay and hatch their eggs,
hatch and protect their young.
Yes, there hawks will gather,
each one with its mate.

- 16 Search through the scroll of Yahweh;
not one of these will be missing.
None will lack for a mate; for his mouth has commanded it,
and his spirit has gathered them.
- 17 He has cast lots for their places,
and his hand has measured it out for them by a cord.
They will possess it forever;
from generation to generation they will live there.
-

Isaiah 34 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Destruction

There are many images used in this chapter which describe destruction. Here each of these metaphors describes complete destruction.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Prophecy

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and prophet and fulfill)

Isaiah 34:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking in poetry.

The earth and all that fills it must listen, the world and all its produce

Here the earth is spoken of as being required to listen to Yahweh to emphasize that it is under Yahweh's authority. These two parallel phrases are metonyms for all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "In all places everywhere on earth, everyone must listen to what I say"

the world and all its produce

This is the second of two parallel phrases. The understood words may be supplied in this phrase. Alternate translation: "the world and all things that come from it must listen"

Isaiah 34:2

he has completely destroyed them, he has handed them over to the slaughter

Often prophets speak of things that will happen in the future as if they have already happened. This emphasizes the event will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "he will completely destroy them, he will give them over to the slaughter"

Isaiah 34:3

The bodies of their dead will be thrown out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will bury their dead"

their dead

This refers to the dead people. Alternate translation: "those who died"

the mountains will soak up their blood

"the mountains will be covered in their blood"

Isaiah 34:4

the host of heaven

The stars in the sky are spoken of as an army.

the sky will be rolled up like a scroll

This can be stated in active form. This compares what Yahweh will do to the sky to a person rolling up a scroll. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will roll up the sky in the same way that a person rolls up a scroll"

all their stars will fade away, as the leaf fades from off the vine, and as the overripe figs from the fig tree

This emphasizes even the things in the sky that people thought would be there forever will fall as easily as a leaf. Alternate translation: "all the stars

will fall from the sky like a leaf falls from a vine or a fig falls from a tree"

Isaiah 34:5

when my sword will have drunk its fill in heaven

Yahweh describes himself as a warrior bearing a sword. The phrase "drunk its fill" speaks of Yahweh's sword as if it were a person who has eaten and become satisfied. Yahweh uses this imagery to emphasize that there will be a lot of destruction in heaven and to state its completion. Alternate translation: "when I am finished destroying things in heaven"

look

This word is used here to draw the listener's attention and to have them imagine the things being said. Alternate translation: "listen" or "and then"

it will now come down on Edom, on the people I am setting apart for destruction

The word "it" refers to Yahweh's sword. This continues the metaphor about Yahweh destroying things with a sword. Alternate translation: "I will come to punish the people of Edom, the people whom I have set aside for me to destroy"

on Edom

Edom refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: "on the people of Edom"

Isaiah 34:6

The sword of Yahweh is dripping with blood and covered with fat ... of rams

This speaks of Yahweh killing the people as if he were a priest sacrificing animals. He does this by describing the sword of a priest. Alternate translation: "Yahweh sacrifices them as a priest sacrifices animals, whose sword drips with the blood and fat of lambs, goats, and rams"

For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom

The words "sacrifice" and "slaughter" may be expressed here as verbs. Alternate translation: "For Yahweh will sacrifice many people in Bozrah and kill many people in the land of Edom"

Bozrah

This is an important city in Edom.

Isaiah 34:7

will fall

"will die"

young bulls with the mighty ones

"both young bulls and mighty bulls" or "both weak and strong bulls"

Their land will be drunk with blood

This describes the amount of blood that will soak into the ground by comparing the land to a drunk person. Alternate translation: "Their land will be soaked with blood"

their dust made fat with fatness

Here "dust" means the dirt on the ground. This describes the amount of fat that will soak into the dirt by comparing it to a person that has become fat from eating so much animal fat. Alternate translation: "the dirt will be full of the fat of the animals"

Isaiah 34:8

it will be a day of vengeance for Yahweh

Here "day" is an idiom for a point in time; it is not a literal "day." Alternate translation: "it will be the time when Yahweh gets revenge"

he will pay them back for the cause of Zion

This means that he will take revenge on them for how they had previously waged war against the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "he will give them the punishment they deserve for what they had done to the people of Zion"

Isaiah 34:9

The streams of Edom will be turned into pitch ... become burning pitch

The water and land becoming useless for drinking or growing food because it is burnt and covered in pitch and sulfur is spoken of as if their streams and land will actually become pitch and sulfur. Alternate translation: "The streams in Edom will be full of pitch and the ground will be covered with burning sulfur and burning pitch"

her dust ... her land

"Edom's dust ... Edom's land"

pitch

a thick, black substance that burns for a long time

Isaiah 34:10

It will burn night and day

This means all of the time. Alternate translation: "It will burn throughout the night and the day" or "It will burn constantly, all night and all day"

from generation to generation

The phrase "generation to generation" refers to all generations of people who will live in the future. See how you translated this phrase in [Isaiah 13:20]

Isaiah 34:11

will live there

"will live in the land of Edom"

owl

See how you translated this in Isaiah 13:21.

raven

This is a large black bird. It is difficult to identify some of the precise kinds of birds mentioned in this passage. However, they were all birds that preferred to live in places where there were no people, so they symbolize deserted places.

in it

"there." This refers to Edom.

He will stretch over it the measuring line of ruin and the plumbline of destruction

This speaks of Yahweh as if he were a careful builder as he causes destruction in Edom. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will measure that land carefully; he will measure it to to decide where to cause ruin and destruction"

measuring line ... plumbline

These are builders' tools. See how you translated similar words in Isaiah 28:17.

Isaiah 34:12

Her nobles ... her princes

"The nobles of Edom ... the princes of Edom"

all her princes will be nothing

This exaggerates the princes losing their royal status by saying that they will become nothing. Alternate translation: "all her princes will no longer rule"

Isaiah 34:13

Thorns ... nettles ... thistles

These are all weeds with thorns. Nettles' thorns have poison that causes itching.

jackals

Translate the name of this animal the same as you did in Isaiah 13:22.

ostriches

Translate the name of this animal the same as you did in Isaiah 13:21.

Isaiah 34:14

wild animals of the desert

Translate this the same as you did in Isaiah 13:21.

hyenas

Translate the name of this animal as you did in Isaiah 13:22.

Nocturnal animals

animals that are awake and active at night

Isaiah 34:15

Owls

Translate this word the same as you did in Isaiah 13:21.

hawks

birds that kill small animals for food

Isaiah 34:16

Search through the scroll of Yahweh

The phrase "the scroll of Yahweh" means that it contains the messages spoken by Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Read carefully what is written in this scroll that contains the messages of Yahweh"

not one of these

"not one of the animals"

None will lack for a mate

"Each will have a mate"

for his mouth has commanded it

Yahweh is referred to by his "mouth" to emphasize what he has said. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh has commanded it"

Isaiah 34:17

He has cast lots for their places

This speaks of Yahweh deciding where to cause the animals to live as if he actually cast lots for their places. Alternate translation: "He has determined where they will live"

his hand has measured it out for them by a cord

This refers to the way that people measured things in biblical times. Alternate translation: "he has given the animals their places"

from generation to generation they will

The phrase "generation to generation" refers to all generations of people who will live in the future. See how you translated the phrase "from generation to generation" in [Isaiah 13:20]

Chapter 35

- ¹ The wilderness and the Arabah will be glad;
and the desert will rejoice and blossom.
Like the rose,
² it will blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and joyful shouting;
the glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of Yahweh,
the splendor of our God.
- ³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make steady the knees that shake.
- ⁴ Say to those with a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Look, your God will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."
- ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will see,
and the ears of the deaf will hear.
- ⁶ Then the lame man will leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue will shout for joy,
for water breaks out in the Arabah,
and streams in the wilderness.
- ⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the place where jackals lived,
in their resting place, will be grass with reeds and rushes.
- ⁸ A highway will be there called The Holy Way.
The unclean will not travel it.
But it will be for him who walks in it.
No fool will go on it.
- ⁹ No lion will be there, no ferocious beast will be on it;
they will not be found there,
but the redeemed will walk there.
- ¹⁰ The ransomed of Yahweh will return
and come with singing to Zion,
and everlasting joy will be on their heads;
gladness and joy will overtake them;
sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 35 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Reign of the Messiah

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. (See: restore and prophet and christ)

Isaiah 35:1

The wilderness and the Arabah will be glad; and the desert will rejoice

These two phrases have basically the same meaning. These places are described as being glad, like a person is glad, because they have received water and are blossoming. Alternate translation: "It will be like the wilderness and the Arabah are glad and the desert will rejoice"

blossom

This speaks of the plants in the desert blossoming as if the desert itself were blossoming. Alternate translation: "its plants will blossom"

Isaiah 35:2

it will blossom abundantly

This compares the way the plants of the desert blossom to the way a rose

and rejoice with joy and joyful shouting

This speaks of the desert as if it were happy and shouting joyfully like a person. Alternate translation: "it will be as though everything is rejoicing and shouting joyfully"

the glory of Lebanon will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. This speaks of Yahweh making the desert look as glorious as Lebanon as if he were giving the desert Lebanon's glory. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will give it the glory of Lebanon" or "Yahweh will make it as glorious as Lebanon"

the splendor of Carmel and Sharon

This speaks of Yahweh making the desert look beautiful as Carmel and Sharon as if he were giving the desert their splendor. The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "the splendor of Carmel and Sharon will be given to it" or "Yahweh will make it as splendid as Carmel and Sharon"

the glory of Yahweh, the splendor of our God

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize Yahweh's appearance.

Isaiah 35:3

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking to the people of Judah.

Strengthen the weak hands, and make steady the knees that shake.

The words "weak hands" and "knees that shake" represent a person who is fearful. Alternate translation: "Strengthen those whose hands are weak and whose knees shake from fear"

Isaiah 35:4

those with a fearful heart

Here people are referred to by their hearts, which emphasize their inner feelings. Alternate translation: "to those who are fearful"

Look

This is used here to draw the listeners' attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God

This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns "vengeance" and "recompense" are expressed as the verb "punish." The words "vengeance" and "recompense" mean the same thing and emphasize that God will punish Judah's enemies. Alternate translation: "your God will punish your enemies for what they have done"

Isaiah 35:5

General Information:

These verses begin a description of the glorious future for God's people.

the eyes of the blind will see

"The blind" refers to people who are blind. They are referred to by their "eyes" to emphasize their healing. Alternate translation: "blind people will see"

the ears of the deaf will hear

"The deaf" refers to people who cannot hear. They are referred to by their "ears" to emphasize their healing. Alternate translation: "deaf people will hear"

Isaiah 35:6

the lame man will leap like a deer

Deer can jump far and high. Jumping like a deer is an exaggeration for being able to move about quickly and easily. Alternate translation: "the lame man will jump high"

the mute tongue will shout for joy

This refers to people who cannot speak. They are referred to by their "tongues" to emphasize their healing. Alternate translation: "mute people will shout for joy"

streams in the wilderness

The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: "streams will flow in the wilderness"

Isaiah 35:7

The burning sand will become a pool

This means that a pool of water will appear in the hot sand. The full meaning of this statement can be

made clear. Alternate translation: "A pool will appear in the burning sand"

the thirsty ground

Here the dry ground is described as being thirsty. Alternate translation: "the dry ground"

the thirsty ground springs of water

This means that springs will appear in the dry ground. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "springs of water will appear in the thirsty ground"

jackals

See how you translated this in Isaiah 13:22.

reeds and rushes

These are plants that grow in wet areas.

Isaiah 35:8

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the glorious future for God's people.

A highway will be there called The Holy Way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A highway will be there that has the name The Holy Way"

highway

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 11:16.

The unclean

This refers to unclean people. A person who God considers spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. Alternate translation: "Those who are unclean" or "People who are not acceptable to God"

him who walks in it

This is an idiom. Here "walking" refers to "living." This refers to the person who lives a holy life. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "who lives in the holy way" or "who lives a holy life"

Isaiah 35:9

they will not be found there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will find them there"

the redeemed

This refers to people who God has redeemed. Alternate translation: "those who are redeemed" or "those who God has redeemed"

Isaiah 35:10

The ransomed of Yahweh

To "ransom" means to "rescue." This refers to people whom Yahweh has rescued. Alternate translation: "Those whom Yahweh has rescued"

everlasting joy will be on their heads

This uses a person's head to mean the person as a whole. Alternate translation: "they will have everlasting joy"

gladness and joy ... sorrow and sighing

The words "gladness" and "joy" mean basically the same thing, as do "sorrow" and "sighing." Together they emphasize the intensity of these emotions.

gladness and joy will overtake them

This speaks of the people being overwhelmed by gladness and joy by giving these emotions the human quality of being able to overtake someone by force. Alternate translation: "they will be overwhelmed by joy and gladness"

sorrow and sighing will flee away

This speaks of the people no longer being sorrowful and sighing by giving these emotions the human ability to run away. Alternate translation: "they will no longer be sorrowful and sighing"

Chapter 36

¹ In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. ² Then the king of Assyria sent the chief commander from Lachish to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a great army. He approached the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the launderers' field, and stood by it. ³ The Israelite officials who went out of the city to talk with them were Hilkiah's son Eliakim, the palace administrator, Shebna the king's secretary, and Asaph's son Joah, who wrote down the government decisions.

⁴ The chief commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah that the great king, the king of Assyria, says, 'What is the source of your confidence? ⁵ You speak only useless words, saying there is counsel and strength for war. Now in whom are you trusting? Who has given you courage to rebel against me? ⁶ Look, you are trusting in Egypt, that splintered reed that you use as a walking staff, but if a man leans on it, it will stick into his hand and pierce it. That is what Pharaoh king of Egypt is to anyone who trusts in him. ⁷ But if you say to me, 'We are trusting in Yahweh our God,' is not he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem'? ⁸ Now therefore, I want to make you a good offer from my master the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able to find riders for them. ⁹ How could you resist even one captain of the least of my master's servants? You have put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen! ¹⁰ Now then, have I traveled up here without Yahweh to fight against this land and destroy it? Yahweh said to me, 'Attack this land and destroy it.'"

¹¹ Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah said to the chief commander, "Please speak to your servants in the Aramean language, Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak with us in the language of Judah in the ears of the people who are on the wall." ¹² But the chief commander said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words? Has he not sent me to the men who sit on the wall, who will have to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you?"

¹³ Then the chief commander stood and shouted in a loud voice in the language of Judah, saying, "Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. ¹⁴ The king says, 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to rescue you. ¹⁵ Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, 'Yahweh will surely rescue us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'" ¹⁶ Do not listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: 'Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and from his own fig tree, and drink from the water in his own cistern. ¹⁷ You will do this until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.' ¹⁸ Do not let Hezekiah mislead you, saying, 'Yahweh will rescue us.' Has any of the gods of the peoples rescued them from the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁹ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my power? ²⁰ Among all the gods of these lands, is there any god who has rescued his land from my power, as if Yahweh could save Jerusalem from my power?"

²¹ But the people remained silent and did not respond, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him."

²² Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and reported to him the words of the chief commander.

Isaiah 36 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The previous chapters have been constructed as prophecy and contain many poetic elements. This chapter switches to a narrative and is a discussion between the officials from Assyria and Judah. To make the meaning clear here, it may be helpful to set apart the extended quotations by setting them farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

The people of Judah were to trust in Yahweh because only he could provide them with protection. The people of Jerusalem were protected because they trusted in Yahweh. (See: trust)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The Assyrian commanders use rhetorical questions in this chapter to mock or insult Judah and their God, Yahweh.

Isaiah 36:1

the fourteenth year
"year 14"

King Hezekiah

See how you translated the name of this king in Isaiah 1:1.

Sennacherib

This is the name of the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib ... attacked all the fortified cities

Here Sennacherib represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "Sennacherib and his army ... attacked all the fortified cities"

Isaiah 36:2

the chief commander

Some versions of the Bible translate this as "the Rabshakeh." This is the Assyrian word for one of the highest ranking military leaders in Assyria.

Lachish

This is a city southwest of Jerusalem.

conduit

man-made ditch or tunnel through which water flows. See how you translated this in Isaiah 7:3.

the launderers' field

Possible meanings are 1) this is the proper name by which the people called the field or 2) this is the common noun that the people used to talk about the field, "the launderers' field" or "the field where men wash wool" or "the field where women wash clothes." See how you translated this in Isaiah 7:3.

the launderers' field

Launderer are either 1) men who wash wool that someone has cut from the sheep, "wool washers field," or 2) women who wash dirty clothes, "clothes washers field." See how you translated this in Isaiah 7:3.

Isaiah 36:3

Hilkiah ... Eliakim

See how you translated these men's names in [Isaiah 22:20]

Shebna

See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 22:15]

Asaph ... Joah

These are names of men.

Isaiah 36:4

said to them

"said to Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah"

What is the source of your confidence?

The king of Assyria uses this question to challenge Hezekiah and to say that he does not have a good source for confidence. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have no reliable source for your confidence."

Isaiah 36:5

there is counsel and strength for war

"you have the council and the strength to go to war." The phrase "strength for war" refers to having a large enough and strong enough army with weapons. Alternate translation: "you have enough military council, strong men, and weapons to go to war"

Now in whom are you trusting? Who has given you courage to rebel against me?

The king of Assyria uses questions to ridicule Hezekiah for believing he has the strength to rebel. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No matter in whom you trust, you will not have the courage to rebel against me."

Isaiah 36:6

General Information:

This continues the king of Assyria's message to Hezekiah. The chief commander is speaking the message to Hezekiah's men ([Isaiah 36:4-5](#)).

Look

Sennacherib uses this word to draw Hezekiah's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

trusting in Egypt

Here "Egypt" refers to the Egyptian army. Alternate translation: "trusting in the Egyptian army"

that splintered reed that you use as a walking staff, but if a man leans on it, it will stick into his hand and pierce it

This speaks of Egypt, specifically its army and its Pharaoh, as if it were a splintered reed to emphasize that relying on them would not help them but would only harm them. Alternate translation: "that is like walking with a splintered reed for a staff. If a man leans on it, it will stick into his hand and pierce it"

splintered reed

A reed is the long, thin stem of a plant like tall grass. If it is splintered or damaged it cannot carry any weight.

walking staff

This is a stick that someone would use for support when walking, made of whatever kind of tree limb that is found along the way.

Isaiah 36:7

is not he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has taken away ... Jerusalem"?

The king of Assyria uses this question to ridicule the people and to imply that Yahweh was angry about what Hezekiah did and would not protect them. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "he is the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has taken away ... Jerusalem." or "he is the one whom Hezekiah insulted by tearing down his high places and altars ... Jerusalem."

has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem"?

This can be written as an indirect quote. "Judah" and "Jerusalem" refer to the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "has told the people of Judah and Jerusalem that they must worship only at this altar in Jerusalem."

Isaiah 36:8

General Information:

This continues the king of Assyria's message to Hezekiah by speaking the message to Hezekiah's men ([Isaiah 36:4-5](#)).

two thousand horses

"2,000 horses"

if you are able to find riders for them

The chief commander continues to ridicule Hezekiah and his army by implying that he did not have many soldiers.

Isaiah 36:9

General Information:

This continues the king of Assyria's message to Hezekiah by speaking the message to Hezekiah's men ([Isaiah 36:4-5](#)).

How could you resist even one captain ... servants?

The chief commander continues to ridicule Hezekiah and his army. When he says "you," referring to Hezekiah, he is actually referring to Hezekiah's army. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Your army could not even defeat one captain ... servants."

Isaiah 36:10

Now then, have I traveled up here without Yahweh to fight against this land and destroy it?

The chief commander uses another question to ridicule Hezekiah and the people of Judah. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I came here with Yahweh's command to destroy Jerusalem."

without Yahweh

Here "Yahweh" refers to Yahweh's orders. Alternate translation: "without Yahweh's command"

against this land and destroy it ... Attack this land and destroy it

This means to fight against the people and cause destruction in the place where they live. The land referred to here is Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "against this people and destroy their land ... Attack these people and destroy their land"

Isaiah 36:11

Eliakim ... Hilkiah ... Shebna

See how you translated these men's names in [Isaiah 22:20](#).

Shebna

See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 22:15](#).

Joah

See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 36:3](#)

chief commander

See how you translated this in [Isaiah 36:2](#).

Please speak to your servants

Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah refer to themselves as the chief commander's servants. This is a polite way to speak to someone who has greater authority.

the Aramean language, Aramaic

"Aramean" is the name of a people group.
"Aramaic" is the name of their language.

in the ears of the people who are on the wall

The idiom "to speak in someone's ear" means to speak where they can hear you. Alternate translation: "where the people who are on the wall may hear us"

who are on the wall

This means that they are standing on the wall. The top of the wall was wide and a place where people could sit or stand. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "who are standing on the wall"

Isaiah 36:12

Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words?

The chief commander uses this question to emphasize that his message is for all the people of Judah. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Certainly, my master has sent me to speak this message to you and to all who can hear."

Has he not sent me to the men who sit on the wall, who will have to ... you?

The chief commander uses this question to emphasize his insult. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "My master has sent me to everyone who hears this, who will have to ... you."

will have to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you

This is a very offensive statement. He is implying that they will need to eat these things because they will have nothing else to eat because their city will be under attack. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "will soon need to eat their own dung and drink their own urine, just as you will, because you will have nothing else to eat"

Isaiah 36:13

the chief commander

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 36:2.

Isaiah 36:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 36:15

this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will not give Jerusalem into the hand of the king of Assyria"

the hand of the king

The king's "hand" refers to his "control." Alternate translation: "the control of the king"

Isaiah 36:16

General Information:

The chief commander continues speaking to the people of Judah.

Make peace with me

This idiom means to agree officially to act peacefully towards one another. Alternate translation: "Let us agree to have peace"

come out to me

This idiom means to surrender. Alternate translation: "surrender to me"

Isaiah 36:17

until I come and take

Here the king of Assyria is referring to his army as himself. Alternate translation: "until my army comes and takes"

a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards

These two phrase have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize how prosperous the land will be.

a land of grain ... a land of bread

This means that they land is full of natural resources, such as grain. Alternate translation: "a land where there is plenty of grain ... a land where there is plenty of bread"

Isaiah 36:18

General Information:

The chief commander continues speaking the king of Assyria's message to the people of Judah (Isaiah 36:16).

Has any of the gods of the peoples rescued them from ... Assyria?

The chief commander uses this question to ridicule the people of Judah. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "None of the gods of the peoples rescued them from ... Assyria."

the hand of the king

The king's control is referred to as his "hand." Alternate translation: "the control of the king"

Isaiah 36:19

Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my power?

The chief commander uses these questions to ridicule the people of Judah. These questions may be combined and written as a statement. Alternate translation: "The gods of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, and Samaria did not rescue their people from my power."

Hamath ... Arpad

Translate the names of these cities the same as you did in [Isaiah 10:9]

Sepharvaim

This is the name of a city.

Isaiah 36:20

is there any god who has rescued ... as if Yahweh could save Jerusalem from my power?

The chief commander uses this question to ridicule the people of Judah. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "there is no god who has rescued ... and Yahweh will not save you in Jerusalem from my power."

his land

This refers to the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: "his people"

Isaiah 36:21

General Information:

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Isaiah 36:22

Eliakim ... Hilkiyah ... Shebna ... Joah ... Asaph

Translate the names of these men the same as you did in [Isaiah 36:3]

over the household

This idiom means that he was in charge of the affairs of the palace household. Alternate translation: "in charge of the palace"

with their clothes torn

Hezekiah's officials tore their clothes as a sign of mourning and distress. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "with their clothes torn because they were extremely distressed"

Chapter 37

¹ It came about that when King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Yahweh. ² He sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, all covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet. ³ They said to him, "Hezekiah says, 'This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace, like when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to give birth to her child. ⁴ It may be Yahweh your God will hear the words of the chief commander, whom the king of Assyria his master has sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which Yahweh your God has heard. Now lift up your prayer for the remnant that is still here.'"

⁵ So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶ and Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master: 'Yahweh says, "Do not be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have insulted me. ⁷ Look, I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear a rumor and go back to his own land. I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

⁸ Then the chief commander returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had gone away from Lachish. ⁹ Then Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah king of Cush and Egypt had mobilized to fight against him, so he sent messengers again to Hezekiah with a message: ¹⁰ "Say to Hezekiah, king of Judah, 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ¹¹ See, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them completely. So will you be rescued? ¹² Have the gods of the nations rescued them, the nations that my fathers destroyed: Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden in Tel Assar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the cities of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?"

¹⁴ Hezekiah received this letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the house of Yahweh and spread it before him. ¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed to Yahweh: ¹⁶ "Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, you who sit above the cherubim, you are God alone over all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. ¹⁷ Turn your ear, Yahweh, and listen. Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁸ It is true, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the nations and their lands. ¹⁹ They have put their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, just wood and stone. So the Assyrians have destroyed them. ²⁰ So now, Yahweh our God, save us from his power, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are Yahweh alone."

²¹ Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah, saying, "Yahweh, the God of Israel says, 'Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, ²² this is the word that Yahweh has spoken about him:

"The virgin daughter of Zion despises you and mocks you;
the daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head at you.

²³ Whom have you defied and insulted?
Against whom have you exalted your voice
and lifted up your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel.

²⁴ By your servants you have defied the Lord
and have said, 'With the multitude of my chariots
I have gone up to the heights of the mountains,
to the highest elevations of Lebanon.
I will cut down its tall cedars
and choice cypress trees there,
and I will enter into its farthest high places,
its most fruitful forest.

²⁵ I have dug wells and drunk water; ^[1]
I dried up all the rivers of Egypt under the soles of my feet.'

²⁶ Have you not heard
how I determined it long ago

and worked it out in ancient times?
Now I am bringing it to pass.
You are here to reduce impregnable cities
into heaps of ruins.

²⁷ Their inhabitants, of little strength,
are dismayed and ashamed.
They are plants in the field, green grass,
the grass on the roof or in the field,
before the east wind.

²⁸ But I know your sitting down, your going out,
your coming in, and your raging against me.

²⁹ Because of your raging against me,
and because your arrogance has reached my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose, and my bit in your mouth;
I will turn you back the way you came."

³⁰ This will be the sign for you:

This year you will eat what grows wild,
and in the second year what grows from that.
But in the third year you must plant and harvest,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

³¹ The remnant of the house of Judah that survives
will again take root and bear fruit.

³² For from Jerusalem a remnant will come out;
from Mount Zion an escaped remnant will come.
The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this."

³³ Therefore Yahweh says this about the king of Assyria:

"He will not come into this city
and he will not shoot an arrow here.
He will not come before it with shield
or build up a siege ramp against it.

³⁴ The way by which he came will be the same way he will leave;
he will not enter this city—this is Yahweh's declaration.

³⁵ For I will defend this city and rescue it
for my own sake and for the sake of David my servant."

³⁶ Then the angel of Yahweh went out and attacked the camp of the Assyrians, putting to death 185,000 soldiers. When the men arose early in the morning, dead bodies lay everywhere. ³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria left Israel and went home and stayed in Nineveh. ³⁸ Later, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisrok his god, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword. Then they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Footnotes

37:25 ^[1] Some ancient and modern translations have

Isaiah 37 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 37:22-38.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tearing clothes and putting on sackcloth

This was a sign of great distress. While it is often accompanies repentance, in this chapter it is intended to show the king's anger at the blasphemy of the Assyrians when they spoke against Yahweh. (See: sign and repent and blasphemy)

Prayer

Hezekiah was different from the other kings because when he was threatened by Assyria, he went to Yahweh in prayer. He did not trust in his army or make an alliance with Egypt. (See: trust)

Isaiah 37:1

It came about that

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

he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth

This is a sign of mourning and distress. Alternate translation: "he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth because he was very distressed"

Isaiah 37:2

Eliakim ... Shebna

Translate the names of these men the same as you did in [Isaiah 36:3]

over the household

This is an idiom that means that he was in charge of the affairs of the palace household. Alternate translation: "in charge of the palace"

all covered with sackcloth

This is a sign of mourning and distress.

Isaiah 37:3

They said to him

"The men sent by Hezekiah said to Isaiah"

like when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to give birth to her child

This comparison is made to emphasize that they are in a time of extreme difficulty. Alternate translation: "It is as terrible as the day when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to give birth to her child"

Isaiah 37:4

It may be Yahweh your God will hear the words

Hezekiah is indirectly suggesting that if the people pray Yahweh may listen and act upon what the chief commander had said. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Maybe if you pray to Yahweh your God will hear the message"

the chief commander

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 36:2.

his master

This phrase means that the king is the chief commander's master.

will rebuke the words which Yahweh your God has heard

Here the phrase "the words which Yahweh your God has heard" refers to what the king of Assyria had said. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Yahweh your God will rebuke the king of Assyria for what he has said"

lift up your prayer

Praying to Yahweh is described this way to emphasize that Yahweh is in heaven. A prayer is spoken of as if they were objects that could be lifted high into the sky. Alternate translation: "pray"

for the remnant that is still here

This refers to the people who are left in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "for the few of us that are still here"

Isaiah 37:5

General Information:

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Isaiah 37:6

General Information:

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Isaiah 37:7

I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear a rumor and go back to his own land

The phrase "put a spirit in him" means that God will influence him to make a specific decision. The word "spirit" here means a strong attitude or feeling. Alternate translation: "he will hear a rumor, and when he does, I will cause him to go back to his own land"

Look

This word is used here to draw the peoples' attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land

The phrase "fall by the sword" is an idiom that means that his enemy will kill him with a sword. Alternate translation: "And there in his own land, I will cause his enemies to kill him with their swords"

Isaiah 37:8

Lachish

See how you translated the name of this city in [Isaiah 36:2]

Libnah

This is a city in southern Judah.

Isaiah 37:9

Sennacherib

See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 36:1]

Tirhakah king of Cush and Egypt had mobilized to fight against him

"Tirhakah" is the name of a man. He had mobilized his army so that they were ready to fight. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Tirhakah king of Cush and Egypt had mobilized his army"

to fight against him

The word "him" represents Sennacherib. Here Sennacherib represents his army. Alternate translation: "to fight against the army of Sennacherib"

Isaiah 37:10

Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria

This can be stated in active form. The word "hand" refers to the king's military power. Alternate translation: "The king of Assyria and his army will not conquer you in Jerusalem"

Isaiah 37:11

General Information:

This continues the king of Assyria's message to Hezekiah.

See, you have heard

The word "see" here is used to add emphasis to what is said next. Alternate translation: "You have certainly heard"

So will you be rescued?

The king of Assyria uses this question to ridicule Hezekiah and his army. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "So you too will not be saved." or "So of course no one will rescue you either!"

Isaiah 37:12

Have the gods of the nations rescued them ... Tel Assar?

The king of Assyria uses this question to ridicule Hezekiah and his army. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "The nations' god did not rescue the nations that my fathers destroyed ... Tel Assar!"

that my fathers destroyed

These men destroyed the cities listed by conquering them with their armies. Here the word "fathers" refers to his father and his other ancestors who were kings. Alternate translation: "that my fathers destroyed with their armies"

Gozan ... Haran ... Rezeph ... Eden ... Tel Assar

These are places that the Assyrians had conquered.

Isaiah 37:13

Hena ... Ivvah

These are places that the Assyrians had conquered.

Where is the king ... Ivvah?

The king of Assyria uses this question to ridicule Hezekiah and his army. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We also conquered the king ... Ivvah!"

Hamath ... Arpad ... Sepharvaim

Translate the names of these cities the same as you did in Isaiah 36:19.

Isaiah 37:14

from the hand of the messengers

Here the messengers are referred to by their "hand" to emphasize that they personally gave it to the king. Alternate translation: "that the messengers gave him"

he went up to the house of Yahweh

The house of Yahweh was at the highest place in Jerusalem, so it is spoken of as "up."

spread it before him

"spread out the letter in front of Yahweh." Being in the house of Yahweh is considered the same as being in Yahweh's presence. The letter was a scroll that could be unrolled and spread out.

Isaiah 37:15

General Information:

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Isaiah 37:16

you who sit above the cherubim

You may need to make explicit that the cherubim are those on the lid of the ark of the covenant. The

biblical writers often spoke of the ark of the covenant as if it were Yahweh's footstool upon which he rested his feet as he sat on his throne in heaven above. Alternate translation: "you who sit on your throne above the cherubim on the ark of the covenant"

you are God alone
"only you are God"

over all the kingdoms
This idiom means to have authority and to rule over all the kingdoms. Alternate translation: "have authority over all the kingdoms"

You made the heavens and the earth
This means that he created everything. Alternate translation: "You made everything"

Isaiah 37:17

General Information:
Hezekiah continues praying to Yahweh.

which he has sent
Hezekiah is referring to the letter from Sennacherib. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "in the message he has sent"

Turn your ear
"Incline your ear" or "Turn your head." This means to turn your head so that you can hear something better.

Sennacherib
See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 36:1]

Isaiah 37:18

all the nations and their lands
This is a generalization. The kings had destroyed many of the nearby lands, but not necessarily all lands. Alternate translation: "many of the nations and their lands"

Isaiah 37:19

General Information:
Hezekiah continues praying to Yahweh.

for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, just wood and stone
This emphasizes that humans made these idols with their own hands and are therefore worthless. Alternate translation: "because they were false gods that men made out of wood and stone"

Isaiah 37:20

from his power
"from the king of Assyria's power"

all the kingdoms
This refers to the people in the kingdoms. Alternate translation: "all the people in the kingdoms"

you are Yahweh alone
"only you, Yahweh, are God"

Isaiah 37:21

sent a message
This means that he sent a messenger to give a message to the king. Alternate translation: "sent someone to give a message"

Isaiah 37:22

is the word that Yahweh has spoken
"is what Yahweh has said"

shakes her head
This is a gesture of scorn.

The virgin daughter of Zion ... the daughter of Jerusalem
These are idioms. Both of these phrases have the same meaning. The "daughter" of a city means the people who live in the city. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 1:8]

Isaiah 37:23

Whom have you defied and insulted? ... Against the Holy One of Israel.
Yahweh uses these rhetorical questions to ridicule the king of Assyria. These can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You have defied and insulted Yahweh, you have shouted at and acted proudly against the Holy One of Israel!"

have you exalted your voice
This refers to speaking loudly as if the person's voice were an object that they lifted high. Alternate translation: "have you shouted"

lifted up your eyes in pride
This is an idiom that means to look at something proudly, considering yourself more important than you should. Alternate translation: "looked at proudly" or "acted proudly"

Isaiah 37:24

General Information:
This continues Yahweh's message to the king of Assyria.

By your servants
This refers to the servants that he had sent to Hezekiah with a message. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "In the messages you sent with your servants"

I have gone ... I will cut ... I will enter

Here Sennacherib speaks of himself conquering many things. He is actually conquering them with the armies and chariots that he commands.
Alternate translation: "We have gone ... We will cut ... we will enter"

its tall cedars

"Lebanon's tall cedars"

its most fruitful forest

Here the word "fruitful" refers to the forest being dense and full of healthy trees. The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "and into its most fruitful forest"

Isaiah 37:25

I have dug ... I dried ... my feet

Here Sennacherib speaks of himself conquering many things. He is actually conquering them with the armies and chariots that he commands.
Alternate translation: "We have dug ... we dried ... our feet"

I dried up all the rivers of Egypt under the soles of my feet

Here Sennacherib is exaggerating his conquest and travels across the rivers of Egypt by claiming to have dried up the rivers when he marched his army through them. Alternate translation: "I have marched through all the rivers of Egypt as if they were dry under my feet"

Isaiah 37:26

General Information:

This continues Yahweh's message to the king of Assyria.

Have you not heard how ... times?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to remind Sennacherib of information that he should already be aware of. This can be written as a statement.
Alternate translation: "Certainly you have heard how ... times."

You are here to reduce impregnable cities into heaps of ruins

Yahweh had planned for Sennacherib's army to destroy the cities that they had destroyed. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I planned that your army would destroy cities and cause them to become piles of rubble"

impregnable

strong and heavily guarded

I am bringing it to pass

The idiom "to bring something to pass" means to cause a specific thing to happen. Alternate translation: "I am causing it to happen" or "I am causing these things to take place"

Isaiah 37:27

of little strength

"who are weak"

They are plants in the field, green grass, the grass on the roof or in the field, before the east wind

This speaks of how weak and vulnerable the cities are before the Assyrian army by comparing the cities to grass. Alternate translation: "The cities are as weak as the grass in the fields before your armies. They are as weak as the grass that grows on the roofs of houses and is scorched by the hot east wind"

before the east wind

The east wind is hot and dry from the desert and plants die when it blows.

Isaiah 37:28

General Information:

This continues Yahweh's message to the king of Assyria.

But I know your sitting down, your going out, your coming in

This refers to all activities of life. Alternate translation: "I know everything you do"

and your raging against me

The word "raging" can be expressed as a verb.
Alternate translation: "how you rage against me"

Isaiah 37:29

your arrogance

Here the king's "arrogance" refers to his arrogant speech. Alternate translation: "your arrogant speech"

your arrogance has reached my ears

This speaks of Yahweh hearing the king's speech as if the king's speech were something that traveled to his ear. Alternate translation: "I have heard you speaking arrogantly"

I will put my hook in your nose, and my bit in your mouth

A person uses a hook and bit to lead an animal around. This speaks of Yahweh controlling the king as if the king were an animal Yahweh controlled with a bit and hook. Alternate translation: "I will control you like a man controls his animal by place a hook in its nose and a bit in its mouth"

I will turn you back the way you came

This refers to causing the king to return to his own home country. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "I will force you to return to your own country"

Isaiah 37:30

General Information:

This continues Yahweh's message to Hezekiah (Isaiah 37:21).

sign for you

"sign for you, Hezekiah." Here "you" is singular and refers to Hezekiah.

you will eat ... you must plant

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Judah.

in the second year what grows

This describes what the people will eat. The words "you will eat" are understood from the previous phrase Alternate translation: "in the second year you will eat what grows" or "next year you will eat what grows"

what grows from that

"what grows wild from that" or "what grows wild"

in the third year

This refers to the year after the second year. Alternate translation: "the year after that" or "in the following year"

Isaiah 37:31

General Information:

This continues Yahweh's message to Hezekiah.

remnant

A "remnant" is a part of something that remains after the rest is gone. Here this refers to the people who are left in Judah.

the house of Judah

Here Judah's "house" refers to his descendants. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Judah"

will again take root and bear fruit

This speaks of the people of Judah becoming prosperous as if they were plants that would root and bear fruit. Alternate translation: "will prosper like a plant that takes root and produces fruit"

Isaiah 37:32

The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this

This speaks of Yahweh doing something because of his zeal as if his "zeal" were actually doing the action. Alternate translation: "Because of his zeal, Yahweh of hosts will do this" or "Yahweh of hosts will do this because of his zeal"

Isaiah 37:33

He will not come ... He will not come

Here the Assyrian king refers to both him and his army. Alternate translation: "His army will not come ... They will not come"

with shield

"with shields"

siege ramp

a large mound of dirt built against the wall of a city that better enables an army to attach the city

Isaiah 37:34

he came ... he will not enter

Here the Assyrian king refers to both him and his army. Alternate translation: "they came ... they will not enter"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

Isaiah 37:35

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

for my own sake and for the sake of David my servant

"so that things will be better for me and for my servant David"

Isaiah 37:36

putting to death

This idiom means to kill. Alternate translation: "killing"

185,000 soldiers

"one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers"

Isaiah 37:37

Sennacherib king of Assyria left Israel and went home and stayed in Nineveh

Here Sennacherib refers to both him and his army. They all left Israel and returned home to Assyria. Sennacherib returned to the city Nineveh. Alternate translation: "Sennacherib and his army left Israel and went home, and Sennacherib stayed in Nineveh"

Sennacherib

See how you translated this man's name in [Isaiah 36:1]

Isaiah 37:38

as he was worshiping

"as Sennacherib was worshiping"

Nisrok

This is the name of a false god.

Adrammelek ... Sharezer ... Esarhaddon

These are the names of men.

with the sword

"with their swords"

Chapter 38

¹ In those days Hezekiah was sick to the point of dying. So Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet, came to him, and said to him, "Yahweh says, 'Set your house in order; for you will die, not live.'" ² Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to Yahweh. ³ He said, "Please, Yahweh, I beg you, call to mind how I have faithfully walked before you with my whole heart, and how I have done what was good in your sight." Then Hezekiah wept loudly. ⁴ Then the word of Yahweh came to Isaiah, saying, ⁵ "Go and say to Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, says: I have heard your prayer, and I have seen your tears. See, I am about to add fifteen years to your life.' ⁶ Then I will rescue you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city. ⁷ This will be the sign to you from Yahweh, that I will do what I have promised. ⁸ Look, I will cause the shadow on the stairs of Ahaz to go back ten steps.'" So the shadow went back ten steps of the stairs on which it had advanced.

⁹ This was the written prayer of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and then recovered:

- ¹⁰ "I said that halfway through my life
I will go through the gates of Sheol;
I am sent there for the rest of my years.
- ¹¹ I said that I will no longer see Yah,
Yah in the land of the living; ^[1]
I will no longer look on mankind
or the inhabitants of the world. ^[2]
- ¹² My dwelling place is removed
and carried away from me like a shepherd's tent;
I have rolled up my life like a weaver;
you are cutting me off from the loom;
between day and night you are ending my life.
- ¹³ I cried out ^[3] until the morning;
like a lion he breaks all my bones.
Between day and night you are ending my life.
- ¹⁴ Like a swallow I chirp;
I coo like a dove;
my eyes grow tired with looking upward.
Lord, I am oppressed; help me.
- ¹⁵ What can I say?
He has both spoken to me, and has done it;
I will walk slowly all my years
because of the bitterness of my soul.
- ¹⁶ Lord, the sufferings you send are good for me;
may my life be given back to me;
you have restored my life and health.
- ¹⁷ It was for my benefit
that I experienced such bitterness.
You have rescued me from the pit of destruction;
for you have thrown all my sins behind your back.
- ¹⁸ For Sheol does not thank you;
death does not praise you;
those who go down into the pit
do not hope in your trustworthiness.
- ¹⁹ The living person, the living person,
he is the one who gives you thanks, as I do this day;
a father makes known to children
your trustworthiness.
- ²⁰ Yahweh is about to save me,
and we will celebrate with music
all the days of our lives in the house of Yahweh."

²¹ Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs and put it on the boil, and he will recover." ²² Hezekiah also had said, "What will be the sign that I should go up to the house of Yahweh?"

Footnotes

38:11 ^[1]Yah is a short form of the name Yahweh.

38:11 ^[2]Most modern translations have this meaning. Ancient Hebrew copies have

38:13 ^[3]The Hebrew could be read:

Isaiah 38 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 38:10-20.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Poetry

This chapter is written as a narrative, but the section including Hezekiah's prayer is written as poetry. The tone of this prayer shifts from sorrow to praise.

Isaiah 38:1

Set your house in order

This means to prepare your family and those in charge of your affairs so that they know what to do after you die. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "You should tell the people in your palace what you want them to do after you die"

Isaiah 38:2

General Information:

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Isaiah 38:3

call to mind

This idiom means to remember. Alternate translation: "remember"

faithfully walked before you

This is an idiom. Here "walk" means to "live." The phrase means to live in a way the pleases Yahweh. Alternate translation: "faithfully lived before you" or "faithfully served you"

with my whole heart

Here the "heart" refers to the inner-being which represents a person's complete devotion. Alternate translation: "with all my inner being" or "with my complete devotion"

what was good in your sight

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "what pleases you" or "what you consider to be good"

Isaiah 38:4

the word of Yahweh came

This is an idiom that is used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. Alternate translation: "Yahweh spoke this message" or "Yahweh spoke these words"

Isaiah 38:5

See

This is used to ask the listener to pay attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

fifteen years

"15 years"

Isaiah 38:6

the hand of the king of Assyria

Here the king's "hand" refers to his power. Alternate translation: "the power of the king of Assyria"

Isaiah 38:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Hezekiah.

Isaiah 38:8

Look

Yahweh uses this word to draw the listener's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

stairs of Ahaz

These stairs are referred to this way because they were built while Ahaz was king. You can make this information clear.

Isaiah 38:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 38:10

that halfway through my life

"that before I have grown old." This refers to dying at middle age, before growing old.

I will go through the gates of Sheol

This speaks of dying as if Sheol were a kingdom that has gates that one enters. Alternate translation: "I will die and go to Sheol"

I am sent there for the rest of my years

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "before I have lived all of my years I will go to the grave"

Isaiah 38:11

in the land of the living

"The living" refers to people who are alive. Alternate translation: "in the land where people are alive" or "in this world where people are alive"

Isaiah 38:12

General Information:

Hezekiah continues his written prayer.

My dwelling place is removed and carried away from me like a shepherd's tent

This speaks of how Yahweh is ending Hezekiah's life quickly by comparing it to how a shepherd removes his tent from the ground. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has taken my life away from me quickly like a shepherd packs up his tent and carries it away"

My dwelling place is removed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has taken my dwelling place"

I have rolled up my life like a weaver; you are cutting me off from the loom

This speaks of Yahweh quickly ending Hezekiah's life by comparing it to how a weaver cuts his cloth from the loom and rolls it up. Alternate translation:

"you are ending my life quickly, like a weaver cuts his cloth from the loom when it is finished"

you are cutting

Here "you" is singular and refers to God.

loom

a device used to weave thread together to make cloth

Isaiah 38:13

like a lion he breaks all my bones

Hezekiah speaks of how he is in extreme pain by comparing it to having his body torn apart by lions. Alternate translation: "my pain was as though I were being torn apart by lions"

Isaiah 38:14

General Information:

Hezekiah continues his written prayer.

Like a swallow I chirp; I coo like a dove

Both of these clauses mean the same thing and they emphasize how sad and pitiful Hezekiah's cries were. A swallow and a dove are types of birds. Alternate translation: "My cries are pitiful—they sound like the chirp of a swallow and the coo of a dove"

my eyes

Here Hezekiah refers to himself my his "eyes" to emphasize that he is looking for something. Alternate translation: "I"

with looking upward

This refers to Hezekiah looking to heaven for God to help him. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "of waiting for help to come from heaven" or "of waiting for you to help me"

I am oppressed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My sickness oppresses me"

Isaiah 38:15

What can I say?

Hezekiah uses a question to emphasize he has nothing left to say. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have nothing left to say."

I will walk slowly

This is an idiom. Here "walking" refers to living. Alternate translation: "I will live humbly"

all my years

This refers to the rest of his life. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "the rest of my life"

because of the bitterness of my soul

The word "soul" is a metonym for the whole person. The phrase "bitterness of my soul" is an idiom for being very sad. Alternate translation: "because I am very sad"

Isaiah 38:16

General Information:

Hezekiah continues his written prayer.

may my life be given back to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "may you give my life back to me"

Isaiah 38:17

from the pit of destruction

Hezekiah did not die but he was close to dying. This refers Yahweh saving him from dying. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "from dying and going to the pit of destruction" or "so that I did not die"

for you have thrown all my sins behind your back

Hezekiah speaks of Yahweh forgiving his sins as if they were objects that Yahweh threw behind himself and forgot about. Alternate translation: "for you have forgiven all my sins and no longer think about them"

Isaiah 38:18

General Information:

Hezekiah continues his written prayer.

For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you

Here "Sheol" and "death" refer to "dead people." Alternate translation: "For those in Sheol do not thank you; dead people do not praise you"

those who go down into the pit

"those who go down to the grave"

do not hope in your trustworthiness

"do not have hope in your faithfulness." Here "your" is singular and refers to Yahweh.

Isaiah 38:19

The living person, the living person

Hezekiah repeats this phrase to emphasize that only a living person, not a dead person, can give thanks to Yahweh.

Isaiah 38:20

General Information:

Hezekiah continues his written prayer.

save me

This refers to him being saved from dying. It can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "save me from dying"

we will celebrate

Here "we" refers to Hezekiah and the people of Judah.

Isaiah 38:21

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. This gives background information about Isaiah and Hezekiah.

Let them

"Let Hezekiah's servants"

a lump of figs

This was used as an ointment. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "use an ointment of mashed figs"

boil

a painful area on the skin that is infected

Isaiah 38:22

General Information:

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Chapter 39

¹ At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah; for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick and had recovered. ² Hezekiah was pleased by these things; he showed the messengers his storehouse of valuable things—the silver, the gold, the spices and precious oil, the storehouse of his weapons, and all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his kingdom, that Hezekiah did not show them. ³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say to you? Where did they come from?" Hezekiah said, "They came to me from the distant country of Babylon." ⁴ Isaiah asked, "What have they seen in your house?" Hezekiah answered, "They have seen everything in my house. There is nothing among my valuable things that I have not shown them." ⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to the word of Yahweh of hosts: ⁶ 'Look, the days are about to come when everything in your palace, the things that your ancestors stored away until this present day, will be carried to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says Yahweh. ⁷ They will take away some of your own descendants, whom you will father, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" ⁸ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of Yahweh that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and stability in my days."

Isaiah 39 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Pride

Although it is not said why it was sinful for Hezekiah to show the king of Babylon his riches, the sin was probably because of his pride. It can be viewed as bragging to another king about how rich and powerful he was without giving proper credit to Yahweh. Because of this sin, Yahweh punished him.

Babylon

At this time, Babylon was not very powerful, but was little more than a city. In a short time, however, Babylon became a very powerful nation and conquered Assyria.

Isaiah 39:1

Marduk-Baladan ... Baladan

These are names of men.

Isaiah 39:2

Hezekiah was pleased by these things

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: "When the king's messengers arrived, Hezekiah was pleased with what they brought to him"

showed the messengers his storehouse of valuable things

"he showed the messengers everything of value he had"

storehouse

a building where goods are kept

all that was found in his storehouses

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that was in his storehouses"

There was nothing in his house, nor in all his kingdom, that Hezekiah did not show them

This is a generalization, as Hezekiah probably showed them everything that the writer thought was important, but not absolutely everything. Also, this can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "Hezekiah showed them every important thing in his house and in his kingdom"

Isaiah 39:3

General Information:

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Isaiah 39:4

They have seen everything in my house. There is nothing among my valuable things that I have not shown them

These two sentences mean the same thing and are used together to emphasize how much Hezekiah showed the men.

everything in my house

This is a generalization, as Hezekiah showed them many things, but not necessarily everything in the palace. Alternate translation: "almost everything in my house"

There is nothing among my valuable things that I have not shown them

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "I showed them all the valuable things in my palace"

Isaiah 39:5

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:9.

the word

"the message"

Isaiah 39:6

Look

This word is used here to draw Hezekiah's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

when everything in your palace ... will be carried to Babylon

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "when the enemy army will take everything in your palace ... back to Babylon"

Isaiah 39:7

General Information:

Isaiah continues to speak Yahweh's message to Hezekiah.

They will take

"The Babylonians will take"

your own descendants, whom you will father

Hezekiah was really the ancestor, not the father, of the generation that Yahweh sent to Babylon.

Yahweh uses this hyperbolic metaphor to emphasize that Hezekiah should be as sad to know that his distant descendants would go to Babylon as he would be if it were his own son. Alternate translation: "your descendants, whom you should love as your own sons"

Isaiah 39:8

General Information:

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Chapter 40

¹ "Comfort, comfort my people,"
says your God.

² "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem;
and proclaim to her
that her warfare has ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received double
from Yahweh's hand for all her sins."

³ A voice cries out,

"In the wilderness prepare the way of Yahweh;
make straight in the Arabah a highway for our God." ^[1]

⁴ Every valley will be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill will be brought low;
and the rugged land will be made level,
and the rough places a plain;

⁵ and the glory of Yahweh will be revealed,
and all people will see it together;
for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it.

⁶ A voice says, "Cry."

Another answers, "What should I cry?"

"All flesh is grass,
and all their covenant faithfulness is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flower fades
when the breath of Yahweh blows on it;
surely humanity is grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever."

⁹ Go up on a high mountain,
Zion, bearer of good news. ^[2]

Shout out loud,

Jerusalem. You who bring good news, raise your voice, do not be afraid. ^[3]

Say to the cities of Judah,

"Here is your God!"

¹⁰ Look, the Lord Yahweh comes as a victorious warrior,
and his strong arm rules for him.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense goes before him.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather in his arm the lambs,
and carry them close to his heart,
and will gently lead the ewes nursing their young.

¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
measured the sky with the span of his hand,
held the dust of the earth in a basket,
weighed the mountains in scales,
or the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who has comprehended the mind of Yahweh,
or instructed him as his counselor?

¹⁴ From whom did he ever receive instruction?
Who taught him the correct way to do things,
and taught him knowledge,
or showed to him the way of understanding?

¹⁵ Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket,

- and are regarded like the dust on the scales;
see, he weighs the isles as a speck.
- 16 Lebanon is not sufficient fuel,
nor its wild animals sufficient for a burnt offering.
- 17 All the nations are insufficient before him;
they are regarded by him as nothing and emptiness.
- 18 To whom then will you compare God?
To what idol will you liken him?
- 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it:
The goldsmith overlays it with gold
and forges silver chains for it.
- 20 To make an offering
one chooses a wood that will not rot;
he seeks a skillful artisan
to make an idol that will not fall over.
- 21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- 22 He is the one who sits above the horizon of the earth;
and the inhabitants are like grasshoppers before him.
He stretches out the heavens like a curtain
and spreads them out as a tent to live in.
- 23 He reduces rulers to nothing
and makes the rulers of the earth emptiness.
- 24 They are barely planted, barely sown,
their stem has barely taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them and they wither,
and the wind carries them away like straw.
- 25 "To whom then will you compare me,
whom do I resemble?" says the Holy One.
- 26 Look up at the sky!
Who has created all these stars?
He leads out their formations
and calls them all by name.
By the greatness of his might and by the strength of his power,
not one is missing.
- 27 Why do you say, Jacob, and declare, Israel,
"My way is hidden from Yahweh,
and my God is not concerned about my vindication"?
- 28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, Yahweh,
the Creator of the ends of the earth,
does not get tired or weary;
there is no limit to his understanding.
- 29 He gives strength to the tired;
and to the one who lacks might he gives power.
- 30 Even young people become tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall:
- 31 but those who wait for Yahweh will renew their strength;
they will soar with wings like eagles;
they will run and not be weary;
they will walk and not faint.
-

Footnotes

40:3 ^[1]Some older English translations have

40:9 ^[2]Instead of

40:9 ^[3]Some modern translations have

Isaiah 40 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Yahweh uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. These rhetorical questions help to prove the point he is making and convince the reader.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"She has received double from Yahweh's hand for all her sins"

It is common in many languages to use the feminine "she" to refer to a nation, rather than the word "it," which is neither masculine or feminine. The translator should use the pronoun that aligns with the common usage in the target language. Therefore, it is acceptable to use "he," "she," or "it" in reference to a nation.

The phrase "received double" indicates that Jerusalem was punished more severely than the other nations. This is because they had the privilege of a special relationship to Yahweh and had more knowledge than the other nations.

Reign of Yahweh

This chapter appears to prophesy about a time of restoration when the Messiah will reign. It pictures a time of great peace and harmony in the world. The translator does not need to add an explanation, but should try to maintain the tense of the original text, as a future or uncompleted action. It does not appear that this prophecy was fulfilled in the days of Isaiah. (See: restore, prophet and christ and fulfill)

Isaiah 40:1

Comfort, comfort

The word "comfort" is repeated for emphasis.

says your God

Here "your" is plural and refers to those whom the prophet tells to comfort God's people.

Isaiah 40:2

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem

The prophet speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a woman whom Yahweh has forgiven. As such, Jerusalem represents the people who live in that city. Alternate translation: "Speak tenderly to the people of Jerusalem"

proclaim to her ... her warfare ... her iniquity ... she has received ... her sins

These pronouns refer to Jerusalem but may be changed if "the people of Jerusalem" is adopted as a

translation. Alternate translation: "proclaim to them ... their warfare ... their iniquity ... they have received ... their sins"

her warfare

Possible meanings are that the word "warfare" refers 1) to military battle or 2) to forced labor.

her iniquity is pardoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has pardoned her iniquity"

from Yahweh's hand

Here the word "hand" represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "from Yahweh"

Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries out

The word "voice" represents the person who cries out. Alternate translation: "Someone cries out"

In the wilderness prepare the way of Yahweh; make straight in the Arabah a highway for our God

These two lines are parallel and mean basically the same thing. The people preparing themselves for Yahweh's help is spoken of as if they were to prepare roads for Yahweh to travel upon.

Arabah

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 35:1.

Isaiah 40:4

Every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and hill will be brought low

These phrases explain how the people are to prepare a highway for Yahweh. They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Lift up every valley, and bring low every mountain and hill"

Every valley will be lifted up

Making the valleys level with the rest of the ground is spoken of as if it were lifting up the valleys. Alternate translation: "Every valley will be filled in"

brought low
made level

and the rugged land will be made level, and the rough places a plain

These phrases explain how the people are to prepare a highway for Yahweh. They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "make the rugged land level, and make the rough places into a plain"

and the rough places a plain

The words "will be made" are understood from the context. Alternate translation: "and the rough places will be made a plain"

Isaiah 40:5

the glory of Yahweh will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will reveal his glory"

for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it

The word "mouth" represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh has spoken it"

Isaiah 40:6

All flesh is grass

The word "flesh" refers to people. The speaker speaks of humans as if they are grass, because they both die quickly. Alternate translation: "All people are like grass"

all their covenant faithfulness is like the flower of the field

The speaker compares the covenant faithfulness of people to flowers that bloom and then die quickly. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as

"faithful." See how you translated "covenant faithfulness" in [Isaiah 16:5]

covenant faithfulness

Possible meanings are 1) covenant faithfulness or 2) beauty.

Isaiah 40:7

when the breath of Yahweh blows on it

Possible meanings are 1) "when Yahweh blows his breath on it" or 2) "when Yahweh sends a wind to blow on it."

humanity is grass

The speaker speaks of humans as if they are grass, because they both die quickly. Alternate translation: "people die as quickly as grass"

Isaiah 40:8

the word of our God will stand forever

The speaker speaks of what God says lasting forever as if his word stands forever. Alternate translation: "the things that our God says will last forever"

Isaiah 40:9

Go up on a high mountain, Zion, bearer of good news

The writer speaks of Zion as if it were a messenger who declares good news from a mountain top.

Go up on a high mountain

Messengers would often stand on elevated land, such as mountains, so that many people could hear what they proclaimed.

Zion

This refers to the people who live in Zion. Alternate translation: "you people of Zion"

Jerusalem. You who bring good news

The writer speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a messenger who declares good news.

Isaiah 40:10

his strong arm rules for him

Here the word "arm" represents God's power. Alternate translation: "he rules with great power"

his recompense goes before him

The word "recompense" is a metaphor for the people he has rescued. They are his "reward" for his work. Alternate translation: "those he has rescued go before him"

Isaiah 40:11

He will feed his flock like a shepherd

The writer speaks of Yahweh's people as if they were sheep and of Yahweh as if he were their

shepherd. Alternate translation: "He will care for his people like a shepherd feeds his flock"

Isaiah 40:12

Who has measured ... or the hills in a balance?

These rhetorical questions anticipate a negative answer and emphasize that only Yahweh is able to do these things. Alternate translation: "No one but Yahweh has measured ... and the hills in a balance."

measured the waters in the hollow of his hand

Yahweh knowing how much water is in the oceans is spoken of as if Yahweh held the water in his hand.

measured the sky with the span of his hand

A "span" is the measure of length between the thumb and little finger when the hand is outstretched. Yahweh knowing the length of the sky is spoken of as if he measured it with his hand.

held the dust of the earth in a basket

Yahweh knowing how much dust there is on the earth is spoken of as if he carried it in a basket.

weighed the mountains in scales, or the hills in a balance?

Yahweh knowing how heavy the mountains are is spoken of as if he weighed them in scales and balances.

Isaiah 40:13

General Information:

Isaiah continues using questions to emphasize Yahweh's uniqueness.

Who has comprehended the mind of Yahweh, or instructed him as his counselor?

This rhetorical question anticipates a negative answer and emphasizes that no one is able to do these things. Alternate translation: "No one has comprehended the mind of Yahweh, and no one has instructed him as his counselor."

comprehended the mind of Yahweh

Here the word "mind" refers not only to Yahweh's thoughts, but also to his desires and motivations.

Isaiah 40:14

From whom did he ever receive instruction?

This rhetorical question anticipates a negative answer and emphasizes that no one has ever done this. Alternate translation: "He has never received instruction from anyone."

Who taught him the correct way to do things, and taught him knowledge, or showed to him the way of understanding?

This rhetorical question anticipates a negative answer and emphasizes that no one has ever done these things. Alternate translation: "No one taught

him the correct way to do things. No one taught him knowledge. No one showed to him the way of understanding."

Isaiah 40:15

Look ... see

These words add emphasis to what follows.

the nations are like a drop in a bucket, and are regarded like the dust on the scales

The prophet compares the nations to a drop of water and to dust in order to emphasize how small and insignificant they are to Yahweh.

like a drop in a bucket

Possible meanings are 1) a drop of water that falls into a bucket or 2) a drop of water that drops out of a bucket.

are regarded like the dust on the scales

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh regards them as dust on the scales"

Isaiah 40:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 40:17

they are regarded by him as nothing

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he regards them as nothing"

Isaiah 40:18

To whom then will you compare God? To what idol will you liken him?

Isaiah uses two similar questions to emphasize that there is no idol that can compare with God. Alternate translation: "There is no one to whom you can compare God. There is no idol to which you can liken him."

you

This is plural and refers to all of God's people.

Isaiah 40:19

A craftsman casts it: The goldsmith overlays it with gold and forges silver chains for it

"A skilled worker forms it, another covers it with gold and makes a silver chain for it"

Isaiah 40:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 40:21

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to God's people.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Isaiah uses these questions to emphasize that the people should know Yahweh's greatness as the creator. Alternate translation: "You certainly know and have heard! It has been told to you from the beginning; you have understood from the foundations of the earth!"

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Have people not told you from the beginning?"

from the foundations of the earth

The prophet speaks of Yahweh creating the earth as if the earth were a building for which Yahweh laid the foundation. Alternate translation: "from the time that Yahweh created the earth"

Isaiah 40:22

He is the one who sits above the horizon of the earth

The prophet speaks of Yahweh ruling the earth as if Yahweh were seated on a throne above the earth.

the inhabitants are like grasshoppers before him

The prophet compares the way Yahweh considers humans to the way humans would consider grasshoppers. Just as grasshoppers are small to humans, humans are small and weak before God.

He stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out as a tent to live in

These two lines share similar meanings. The prophet speaks of Yahweh creating the heavens as if he had erected a tent in which to live. Alternate translation: "He spreads out the heavens as easily as a person would stretch out a curtain or erect a tent in which to live"

Isaiah 40:23

He reduces

"Yahweh reduces"

emptiness

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 40:17

Isaiah 40:24

They are barely planted ... and they wither

The prophet speaks of rulers being helpless before Yahweh as if they were new plants that wither away when a hot wind blows on them.

They are barely planted, barely sown

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and refer to the point at which the plants or seeds are placed into the ground. They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As soon as someone plants them ... as soon as someone sows them"

he blows upon them

The prophet speaks of Yahweh removing the rulers from power as if Yahweh were a scorching wind that blows upon the plants and causes them to wither.

the wind carries them away like straw

This simile extends the metaphor of the rulers as plants and Yahweh as the wind that causes them to wither. The wind of Yahweh's judgement will remove the withered plants as easily as wind blows away straw.

Isaiah 40:25

To whom then will you compare me, whom do I resemble?

Yahweh uses two similar rhetorical questions to emphasize that there is no one like him. Alternate translation: "There is no one to whom you can compare me. There is no one whom I resemble."

Isaiah 40:26

Who has created all these stars?

This is a leading question that anticipates the answer, Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has created all these stars!"

He leads out their formations

Here the word "formations" refers to military formations. The prophet speaks of the stars as if they were soldiers whom Yahweh commands to appear.

By the greatness of his might and by the strength of his power

The phrases "the greatness of his might" and "the strength of his power" form a doublet that emphasizes Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "By his great might and powerful strength"

not one is missing

This negative statement emphasizes the positive. Alternate translation: "every one is present"

Isaiah 40:27

Why do you say, Jacob, and declare, Israel ... vindication?"

The question emphasizes that they should not say what they say. Alternate translation: "'You should not say, O people of Israel ... vindication'."

Why do you say, Jacob, and declare, Israel

These two phrases both refer to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "Why do you say, O people of Israel"

My way is hidden from Yahweh

Yahweh not knowing what happens to them is spoken of as if Yahweh could not see the road upon which they travel. Alternate translation: "Yahweh does not know what happens to me"

my God is not concerned about my vindication

Possible meanings are 1) "my God is not concerned about others treating me unjustly" or 2) "my God is not concerned about treating me justly."

Isaiah 40:28

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

Isaiah uses these questions to emphasize that the people should know Yahweh's greatness. See how you translated these in [Isaiah 40:21]

the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. This phrase also forms a merism and

refers to everywhere in between the ends. Alternate translation: "the farthest places of the earth" or "the entire earth"

Isaiah 40:29

He gives strength

"Yahweh gives strength"

Isaiah 40:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 40:31

they will soar with wings like eagles

People receiving strength from Yahweh is spoken of as if the people were able to fly like eagles fly. An eagle is a bird often used as a symbol for strength and power.

they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint

These two lines share similar meanings. People receiving strength from Yahweh is spoken of as if they were able to run and walk without tiring.

Chapter 41

- ¹ "Listen before me in silence, you coastlands;
let the nations renew their strength;
let them come near and speak;
let us come near together to argue a dispute.
- ² Who has stirred up one from the east,
calling him in righteousness to his service?
He hands nations over to him
and helps him subdue kings.
He turns them to dust with his sword,
like windblown stubble with his bow.
- ³ He pursues them and passes by safely,
by a swift path that his feet scarcely touch.
- ⁴ Who has performed and accomplished these deeds?
Who has summoned the generations from the beginning?
I, Yahweh, the first, and with the last ones, I am he.
- ⁵ The isles have seen and are afraid;
the ends of the earth tremble;
they approach and come.
- ⁶ Everyone helps his neighbor,
and every one says to one another, 'Be encouraged.'
- ⁷ So the carpenter encourages the goldsmith,
and he who works with the hammer
encourages him who works with an anvil,
saying of the welding, 'It is good.'
They fasten it with nails so it will not topple over.
- ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
the descendants of Abraham my friend,
- ⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth
and called you from the farthest places,
saying to you, 'You are my servant.'
I have chosen you and I have not rejected you.
- ¹⁰ Do not fear, for I am with you.
Do not be anxious, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, and I will help you,
and I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
- ¹¹ See, they will be ashamed and disgraced,
all who have been angry with you;
they will be as nothing and will perish,
those who oppose you.
- ¹² You will seek and will not find
those who contended with you;
those who warred against you
will be like nothing, absolutely nothing.
- ¹³ For I, Yahweh your God, will hold your right hand,
saying to you, 'Do not fear; I am helping you.'
- ¹⁴ Do not fear, Jacob you worm, and you men of Israel;
I will help you—this is the declaration of Yahweh,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
- ¹⁵ Look, I am making you like a sharp threshing sledge,
new and two-edged;
you will thresh the mountains and crush them;
you will make the hills like chaff.
- ¹⁶ You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away;
the wind will scatter them.

You will rejoice in Yahweh,
you will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

- 17** The oppressed and needy look for water, but there is none,
and their tongues are parched for thirst;
I, Yahweh, will respond to their prayers;
I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them.
- 18** I will make streams to flow down the slopes,
and springs in the middle of the valleys;
I will make the desert into a pool of water,
and the dry land into springs of water.
- 19** In the wilderness I will set the cedar,
the acacia, and the myrtle, and the olive tree.
I will set the cypress in the desert plain,
with the pines and the cypress box trees.
- 20** I will do this so that the people
may see, learn, consider, and gain understanding together,
that the hand of Yahweh has done this,
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.
- 21** 'Present your case,' says Yahweh,
'present your best arguments for your idols,'
says the King of Jacob.
- 22** Let them bring us their own arguments;
have them come forward and declare to us what will happen,
so we may know these things well.
Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations,
so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.
- 23** Tell things about the future,
that we may know if you are gods;
do something good or evil,
that we may be frightened and impressed.
- 24** See, you idols are nothing and your deeds are nothing;
the one who chooses you is detestable.
- 25** I have raised up one from the north, and he comes;
from the sun's rising I summon him who calls on my name,
and he will trample the rulers like mud,
like a potter who is treading on the clay.
- 26** Who announced this from the beginning, that we might know?
Before this time, that we may say, 'He is in the right'?
Indeed none of them decreed it,
yes, none heard your words.
- 27** I first said to Zion,
'Look here they are!' I sent a herald to Jerusalem.
- 28** When I look, there is no one,
not one among them who can give good advice,
who, when I ask, can answer a word.
- 29** Look, all of them are nothing,
and their deeds are nothing;
their cast metal figures are wind and emptiness.

Isaiah 41 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Mocking

Yahweh tells the people to present their best arguments in favor of honoring their idols. In this Yahweh challenges the people. Yahweh mocks or insults these false gods because they are not real and have no power. (See: falsegod)

Isaiah 41:1

Listen before me in silence

Here "me" refers to God.

you coastlands

This refers to the people who live on the islands and in the lands bordering or beyond the Mediterranean Sea.

renew their strength

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 40:31.

let them come near and speak; let us come near together to argue a dispute

These two phrases share similar meanings. The second explains the reason for the first. Alternate translation: "then let them come near so they may speak and reason with me"

Isaiah 41:2

Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is the one who caused this ruler from the east to be victorious. Alternate translation: "I am the one who called this powerful ruler from the east and put him in my good service."

He hands nations over to him

"I give the nations over to him" or "The one who does these things hands nations over to him"

subdue kings

"conquer kings and force them to obey him"

He turns them to dust with his sword, like windblown stubble with his bow

Turning them to dust and stubble is a metaphor or exaggeration for completely destroying everything the people of these nations have made. The armies of one from the east will conquer these nations and scatter the people easily.

Isaiah 41:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the coastlands and the nations.

He pursues them and passes by safely

"The ruler from the east pursues the nations"

by a swift path that his feet scarcely touch

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor in which he and his army moving very quickly is spoken of as if his feet barely touch the ground. Alternate translation: "by a path on which he moves with great speed" or 2) "feet" represents the whole person and the phrase indicates that this is a path that they have not traveled before. Alternate translation: "by a path that he has never traveled before"

Isaiah 41:4

Who has performed and accomplished these deeds?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is the one who has done these things. Alternate translation: "I have performed and accomplished these deeds."

Who has summoned the generations from the beginning?

Here the word "generations" represents all of human history, which Yahweh created and directed throughout history. The rhetorical question anticipates the answer, Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I have summoned the generations of humanity from the beginning."

performed and accomplished

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh is the one who has done these things.

the first, and with the last ones

Possible meanings are 1) that Yahweh existed before creation and will exist at the end of creation or 2) that Yahweh was before the first generation of humanity and will be at the last generation of humanity.

Isaiah 41:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

The isles ... the ends of the earth

These phrases represent the people who live in those places. Alternate translation: "People who live on the isles ... people who live at the ends of the earth"

The isles

You can translate "isles" the same way you translated "coastlands" in Isaiah 41:1.

the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. Alternate translation: "the farthest places of the earth"

they approach and come

This doublet means that the people gather together. Alternate translation: "they come together"

Isaiah 41:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 41:7

anvil

an iron block on which a person shapes metal with a hammer

saying of the welding

Here the word "welding" refers to the process of fastening the gold to the wood as the workers finish making the idol.

They fasten it with nails so it will not topple over.

Here "it" refers to the idol that they have made.

Isaiah 41:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Isaiah 41:9

I took you from the ends of the earth and called you from the farthest places

These two lines mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh is bringing the people of Israel back to their land from distant countries.

the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 41:5]

I have chosen you and I have not rejected you

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second states in negative terms what the first states in positive terms.

Isaiah 41:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand

Yahweh strengthening his people is spoken of as if he were holding them with his hand.

my righteous right hand

Here "right hand" represents Yahweh's power. Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh's right hand is righteous in that he will always do the right thing. Alternate translation: "my righteous power" or 2) Yahweh's right hand is victorious in that he will always succeed in what he does. Alternate translation: "my victorious power"

Isaiah 41:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

they will be ashamed and disgraced, all who have been angry with you

"all who have been angry with you will be ashamed and disgraced"

ashamed and disgraced

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize the greatness of their shame.

they will be as nothing and will perish, those who oppose you

"those who oppose you will be as nothing and will perish"

Isaiah 41:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 41:13

I ... will hold your right hand

Yahweh helping the people of Israel is spoken of as if he were holding their right hand.

Isaiah 41:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Jacob you worm, and you men of Israel

Here "Jacob" and "men of Israel" mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "you people of Israel who are like worms"

Jacob you worm

Possible meanings are 1) that this refers to the opinions of other nations regarding the people of Israel or 2) that this refers to Israel's own opinion of themselves. Yahweh speaks of their insignificance as if they were a worm.

this is the declaration of Yahweh

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 41:15

I am making you like a sharp threshing sledge ... you will make the hills like chaff

Yahweh speaks of enabling Israel to defeat their enemies as if he were making the nation a threshing sledge that will level mountains.

a sharp threshing sledge

A threshing sledge was a board with sharp spikes that someone would drag over the wheat to separate the grain from the chaff.

two-edged

This refers to the edges of the spikes that were attached to the threshing sledge. That they are "two-edged" means that they are very sharp.

you will thresh the mountains and crush them

This is a double metaphor. The mountains are a metaphor for grain, and threshing grain is a metaphor for the Israelites defeating the powerful enemy nations near them. Alternate translation: "you will thresh your enemies and crush them as if they were grain, even though they appear to be as strong as mountains"

you will make the hills like chaff

The hills are a metaphor for the powerful enemy nations near Israel. People having the wind blow the chaff away after they have threshed the grain is a metaphor for them allowing Yahweh to destroy their enemies.

Isaiah 41:16

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to use the metaphor of separating grain from chaff to describe how Israel will defeat their enemies.

You will winnow them ... the wind will scatter them

Here the word "them" refers to the mountains and hill in [Isaiah 41:15]

the wind will carry them away; the wind will scatter them

These two phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "the wind will blow them away"

Isaiah 41:17

General Information:

Yahweh speaks of people who are in extreme need as if they are extremely thirsty, and of his provision for them as if he caused water to appear in places where it normally would not appear.

Isaiah 41:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 41:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

the myrtle ... the pines and the cypress box trees

These are types of trees.

Isaiah 41:20

the hand of Yahweh has done this

Here the word "hand" represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has done this"

Isaiah 41:21

General Information:

In these verses, Yahweh is mocking the people and their idols. He is challenging the idols to tell what will happen in the future, but he knows they cannot.

Isaiah 41:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 41:23

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to mock the idols and the people who worship them ([Isaiah 41:21-22](#)).

do something good or evil

The words "good" and "evil" form a merism and represent anything. Alternate translation: "do anything at all"

Isaiah 41:24

the one who chooses you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the idols. Alternate translation: "the person who chooses you idols"

Isaiah 41:25

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I have raised up one

Yahweh speaks of appointing a person as if he raised that person up. Alternate translation: "I have appointed one"

from the sun's rising

This refers to the east, the direction from which the sun rises. Alternate translation: "from the east"

him who calls on my name

Possible meanings are 1) that this person invokes Yahweh for his success or 2) that this person worships Yahweh.

he will trample the rulers

Conquering the rulers of other nations is spoken of as if it were trampling them under foot. Alternate translation: "he will conquer the rulers"

like a potter who is treading on the clay

Yahweh compares the way in which this person will trample the other rulers with the way that a potter tramples on clay to mix it with water.

Isaiah 41:26

Who announced this from the beginning, that we might know? Before this time, that we may say, 'He is in the right'?

Yahweh uses these rhetorical questions to mock the idols that the people worship. The implied answers are 1) that the idols have not done these things and 2) that Yahweh is the one who has done these things. The ellipsis in the second question can be filled in. Alternate translation: "None of the idols announced this from the beginning, that we might know. And none of them announced this before time, that we may say, 'He is in the right.'"

Before this time

The words "who announced this" are understood from the previous question. Alternate translation: "Who announced this before this time"

Indeed none of them decreed it, yes, none heard your words

"Indeed, none of the idols decreed it. Indeed, no one heard you idols say anything"

Isaiah 41:27

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Isaiah 41:28

not one among them

"not one idol"

Isaiah 41:29

their cast metal figures are wind and emptiness

Yahweh speaks of the worthlessness of the idols as if the idols are wind and nothing at all. Alternate translation: "their idols are all worthless"

Chapter 42

- ¹ Behold, my servant, whom I uphold;
my chosen one, in him I take delight.
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring justice to the nations.
- ² He will not cry out nor shout,
nor make his voice heard in the streets.
- ³ A crushed reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench:
he will faithfully execute justice.
- ⁴ He will neither grow faint nor be crushed
until he has established justice on the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.
- ⁵ This is what God Yahweh says—
the one who created the heavens and stretched them out,
the one who made the earth and all its produce,
the one who gives breath to the people on it
and life to those who live on it:
- ⁶ "I, Yahweh, have called you in righteousness
and will hold your hand.
I will keep you and set you as a covenant for the people,
as a light for the Gentiles,
- ⁷ to open the eyes of the blind,
to release the prisoners from the dungeon,
and from the house of imprisonment
those who sit in darkness.
- ⁸ I am Yahweh, that is my name;
and my glory I will not share with another
nor my praise with carved idols.
- ⁹ See, the previous things came to pass,
now I am about to declare new events.
Before they begin to occur I will tell you about them."
- ¹⁰ Sing to Yahweh a new song,
and his praise from the end of the earth;
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
the coastlands, and those who live there.
- ¹¹ Let the desert and the cities cry out,
the villages where Kedar lives, shout for joy!
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing;
let them shout from the mountaintops.
- ¹² Let them give glory to Yahweh
and declare his praise in the coastlands.
- ¹³ Yahweh will go out as a warrior;
as a man of war he will stir up his zeal.
He will shout, yes, he will roar his battle cries;
he will show his enemies his power.
- ¹⁴ I have kept quiet for a long time;
I have been still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;
I will gasp and pant.
- ¹⁵ I will lay waste mountains and hills
and dry up all their vegetation;
and I will turn the rivers into islands
and will dry up the marshes.
- ¹⁶ I will bring the blind by a way that they do not know;
in paths that they do not know I will lead them.

- I will turn the darkness into light before them,
and make the crooked places straight.
These things I will do,
and I will not abandon them.
- 17 They will be turned back, they will be completely put to shame,
those who trust in carved figures,
who say to cast metal figures, "You are our gods."
- 18 Listen, you deaf;
and look, you blind, that you may see.
- 19 Who is blind but my servant?
Or deaf like my messenger I send?
Who is as blind as my covenant partner,
or blind as Yahweh's servant?
- 20 You see many things, but do not comprehend;
ears are open, but no one hears.
- 21 It pleased Yahweh to praise his justice
and to make his law glorious.
- 22 But this is a people robbed and plundered;
they are all trapped in pits, held captive in prisons;
they have become prey with no one to rescue them,
and no one says, "Bring them back!"
- 23 Who among you will listen to this?
Who will listen and hear in the future?
- 24 Who gave Jacob over to the robber,
and Israel to the looters?
Was it not Yahweh, against whom we have sinned,
in whose ways they refused to walk,
and whose law they refused to obey?
- 25 Therefore he poured out on them
the heat of his anger and the violence of war,
Its flames encircled them, yet they did not understand;
it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart.

Isaiah 42 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Many scholars believe that there are four songs or poems which Isaiah records about the Messiah. Isaiah 42:1-4 is the first of these songs. They are often called the "servant songs" because they focus on the Messiah being a servant. (See: christ)

Special concepts in this chapter

Servant

Israel is called Yahweh's servant. The Messiah is also called the servant of Yahweh. It is likely that the two different usages of the word "servant" are intended to contrast with one another.

Isaiah 42:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Behold, my servant

"Look, my servant" or "Here is my servant"

in him I take delight

"with whom I am very happy"

Isaiah 42:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 42:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

A crushed reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench

Yahweh speaks of weak and helpless people as if they were crushed reeds and dimly burning wicks.

crushed reed

A reed is the long, thin stem of a plant like tall grass. If it is crushed, it cannot carry any weight. See how you translated this in Isaiah 36:6.

he will not break

"My servant will not break"

Isaiah 42:4

be crushed

This is a metaphor for being discouraged. Alternate translation: "be discouraged"

the coastlands

This refers to the people who live on the islands and in the lands bordering or beyond the Mediterranean Sea. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 41:1]

Isaiah 42:5

the one who created the heavens and stretched them out, the one who made the earth

The prophet speaks of Yahweh creating the heavens and the earth as if the heavens and earth were fabric which Yahweh stretched out.

gives breath to the people on it and life to those who live on it

These phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh gives life to every person. The word "breath" is a metonym for life. Alternate translation: "gives life to the people who live on the earth"

Isaiah 42:6

have called you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Yahweh's servant.

I will ... set you as a covenant for the people

Here the word "covenant" is a metonym for the one who establishes or mediates a covenant. Alternate translation: "I will ... make you be the mediator of a covenant with the people"

a light for the Gentiles

Yahweh speaks of making his servant the one who delivers the nations from bondage as if he were making him a light that shines in dark places for the Gentiles.

Isaiah 42:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues describing what his servant will do.

to open the eyes of the blind

Causing blind people to see is spoken of as if it were opening their eyes. Also, Yahweh speaks of his servant delivering those who have been wrongly imprisoned as if his servant were restoring sight to blind people. Alternate translation: "to enable the blind to see"

to release the prisoners from the dungeon, and from the house of imprisonment those who sit in darkness

The verb may be supplied in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "to release the prisoners from the dungeon, and to release those who sit in darkness from the house in which people have imprisoned them"

Isaiah 42:8

nor my praise with carved idols

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "nor will I share my praise with carved idols"

my praise

This refers to the praise that Yahweh receives from people.

Isaiah 42:9

I will tell you

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

Isaiah 42:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

the sea, and all that is in it, the coastlands, and those who live there

"and all the creatures that live in the sea, and all those who live on the coastlands"

Isaiah 42:11

Let the desert and the cities cry out

This refers to the people who live in the desert and the cities.

Kedar

This is a city north of Arabia. See how this was translated in Isaiah 21:16

Sela

a city in Edom

Isaiah 42:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Let them give glory

Here "them" refers to the people along the coastlands.

Isaiah 42:13

Yahweh will go out as a warrior; as a man of war

Yahweh is compared with a warrior who is ready to defeat his people's enemies.

he will stir up his zeal

Here "zeal" refers to the passion that a warrior experiences when he is about to fight a battle. Yahweh stimulating his zeal is spoken of as if he stirred it up like the wind stirs up waves of water.

Isaiah 42:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I have kept quiet for a long time; I have been still and restrained myself

These two lines share similar meanings. Yahweh's inactivity is described as quietness and stillness.

I have been still and restrained myself

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and indicate that Yahweh has kept himself from acting. Alternate translation: "I have kept myself from doing anything"

I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant
Yahweh's activity as a shouting warrior is compared with a pregnant woman who cries from labor pains. This emphasizes sudden unavoidable action after a period of inactivity.

Isaiah 42:15

I will lay waste mountains ... will dry up the marshes

Yahweh uses this metaphorical language to describe his great power to conquer his enemies.

the marshes

A marsh is an area of soft, wet land with pools of water.

Isaiah 42:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I will bring the blind by a way that they do not know; in paths that they do not know I will lead them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "I will lead the blind in paths that they do not know"

the blind

Yahweh speaks of his people being helpless as if they could not see because they were blind.

that they do not know

Possible meanings are 1) "that they have never traveled" or 2) "with which they are unfamiliar."

I will turn the darkness into light before them

Yahweh speaks of his people being helpless as if they could not see because they walked in darkness, and of his helping them as if he caused light to shine in the darkness.

Isaiah 42:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

They will be turned back, they will be completely put to shame

Rejecting those who worship idols is spoken of as if it is forcing them to turn back and move the opposite direction. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will reject them and put them to shame"

Isaiah 42:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

you deaf ... you blind

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel. Yahweh speaks of their failure to listen to him and obey him as if they are deaf and blind.

Isaiah 42:19

Who is blind but my servant? Or deaf like my messenger I send?

Yahweh asks these rhetorical questions to scold his people and to emphasize that no one is as blind or deaf as they are. Alternate translation: "No one is as blind as my servant. No one is as deaf as my messenger whom I send."

Who is as blind as my covenant partner, or blind as Yahweh's servant?

Yahweh asks these rhetorical questions to scold his people and to emphasize that no one is as blind or deaf as they are. Alternate translation: "No one is as blind as my covenant partner. No one is as blind as Yahweh's servant."

Isaiah 42:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

You see many things, but do not comprehend

"Although you see many things, you do not understand what they mean"

ears are open, but no one hears

The ability to hear is spoken of as if the ears were open. Here the word "hears" refers to understanding what one hears. Alternate translation: "people hear, but no one understands what they hear"

Isaiah 42:21

It pleased Yahweh to praise his justice and to make his law glorious

"Yahweh was pleased to honor his justice by making his law glorious." The second part of the phrase explains how Yahweh accomplished the first part.

Isaiah 42:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

But this is a people robbed and plundered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But the enemy has robbed and plundered this people"

robbed and plundered

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize how badly the enemy had plundered them.

they are all trapped in pits, held captive in prisons

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy has trapped them all in pits and held them captive in prisons"

Isaiah 42:23

General Information:

Here Isaiah begins speaking.

Who among you

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

Isaiah 42:24

Who gave Jacob over to the robber, and Israel to the looters?

These two phrases mean the same thing. Isaiah uses this as a leading question in order to emphasize the answer that he will give in the next phrase. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who

gave the people of Israel over to robbers and looters."

Was it not Yahweh ... refused to obey?

Isaiah uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that Yahweh alone was responsible for Israel's situation, and to explain the reason that Yahweh did it. Alternate translation: "It was certainly Yahweh ... refused to obey."

against whom we have sinned

Here the word "we" refers to the people of Israel and to Isaiah.

in whose ways they refused to walk, and whose law they refused to obey

The word "they" also refers to the people of Israel and to Isaiah. The two phrases mean the same thing. In the first, obeying Yahweh's laws is spoken of as if it were walking in the paths in which Yahweh commanded them to walk.

Isaiah 42:25

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

Therefore he

"Therefore Yahweh"

he poured out on them the heat of his anger

Isaiah speaks of Yahweh's anger as if it were a liquid that could be poured out. Alternate translation: "he showed them just how angry he was"

on them

"against us." Here "them" refers to the people of Israel, but Isaiah still included himself as part of the people.

and the violence of war

The word "devastation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "by devastating them with war"

Its flames encircled them ... it consumed them

Isaiah speaks of Yahweh's fierce anger as if it were a fire that burned the people.

they did not take it to heart

Paying attention to something and learning from it is spoken of as if it were placing that thing on one's heart. Alternate translation: "they did not pay attention" or "they did not learn from it"

Chapter 43

- ¹ But now this is what Yahweh says,
 he who created you, Jacob, and he who formed you, Israel:
 "Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by your name, you are mine.
- ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you.
 When you walk through the fire you will not be burned,
 and the flames will not destroy you.
- ³ For I am Yahweh your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
 I have given Egypt as your ransom,
 Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
- ⁴ Since you are precious and special in my sight, I love you;
 therefore I will give people in exchange for you,
 and other peoples in exchange for your life.
- ⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and gather you from the west.
- ⁶ I will say to the north, 'Hand them over;'
 and to the south, 'Do not hold any back;'
 Bring my sons from afar,
 and my daughters from the remote regions of the earth,
- ⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I have created for my glory,
 whom I have formed, yes, whom I have made.
- ⁸ Bring out the people who are blind,
 even though they have eyes,
 and the deaf,
 even though they have ears.
- ⁹ All the nations gather together,
 and the peoples assemble.
 Who among them could have declared this
 and announced to us earlier events?
 Let them bring their witnesses so they can be justified;
 let them listen and affirm, 'It is true.'
- ¹⁰ You are my witnesses—this is Yahweh's declaration—
 and my servant whom I have chosen,
 so that you may know and believe in me,
 and understand that I am he.
 Before me there was no god formed,
 and there will be none after me.
- ¹¹ I, I am Yahweh,
 and there is no savior but me.
- ¹² I have declared, saved, and proclaimed,
 and there is no other god among you.
 You are my witnesses—
 this is Yahweh's declaration—I am God.
- ¹³ From this day on I am he,
 and no one can rescue anyone from my hand.
 I act, and who can turn it back?"
- ¹⁴ This is what Yahweh says,
 your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
 "For your sake I send to Babylon
 and lead them all down as fugitives,
 turning the Chaldeans' expressions of joy
 into songs of lamentation.
- ¹⁵ I am Yahweh, your Holy One,

the Creator of Israel, your King."

- 16** This is what Yahweh says
(who opened a way through the sea
and a path in the mighty waters,
17 who led out the chariot and the horse,
the army and the mighty man. They fell down together;
they will never rise again;
they are extinguished, quenched like a burning wick.)
18 "Do not think about these former things,
nor consider the things of long ago.
19 Look, I am about to do a new thing;
now it begins to happen; do you not know it?
I will make a road in the desert
and streams of water in the wilderness.
20 The wild animals of the field will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches,
because I give water in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert,
for my chosen people to drink,
21 this people whom I formed for myself,
that they might recount my praises.

22 But you have not called on me, Jacob;
you have become tired of me, Israel.
23 You have not brought me
any of your sheep as burnt offerings,
or honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with grain offerings,
nor wearied you with demands for incense.
24 You have bought me no sweet-smelling cane with money,
neither have you poured out to me the fat of your sacrifices;
but you have burdened me with your sins,
you have wearied me with your evil deeds.

25 I, yes, I, am he who blots out your offenses for my own sake;
and I will not call to mind your sins any longer.
26 Remind me of what happened. Let us debate together;
present your cause, that you may be proved to be in the right.
27 Your first father sinned,
and your teachers have transgressed against me.
28 Therefore I will defile the holy officials;
I will hand Jacob over to complete destruction,
and Israel to abusive humiliation."

Isaiah 43 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Exodus

This chapter pictures Judah's eventual return from exile in Babylon as a kind of second exodus. It was reminiscent of their exodus from Egypt.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Exile

This chapter prophesies about the Jews return from Babylon, but the exile has yet to happen and is still more than a hundred years in the future. These events will show that Yahweh alone is God.

Isaiah 43:1

he who created you, Jacob, and he who formed you, Israel

Both clauses mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "the one who created you, O people of Israel"

Isaiah 43:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

When you pass through the waters ... the flames will not destroy you

Yahweh speaks of suffering and difficult experiences as if they are deep waters and fires through which the people walk. The words "waters" and "flames" form a merism and emphasize any difficult circumstance.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you

These two statements mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the people will experience no harm because Yahweh is with them.

you will not be burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will not burn you"

Isaiah 43:3

I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Yahweh will allow Israel's enemy to conquer these nations instead of Israel.

Seba

This is the name of a nation.

Isaiah 43:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Since you are precious and special in my sight

The words "precious" and "special" mean basically the same thing and emphasize how much Yahweh values his people. Alternate translation: "Because you are very precious to me"

therefore I will give people in exchange for you, and other peoples in exchange for your life

Both phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "therefore I will let the enemy conquer other peoples instead of you"

Isaiah 43:5

I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west

The directions "east" and "west" form a merism and represent from every direction. Alternate translation: "I will bring you and your offspring from every direction"

Isaiah 43:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

say to the north ... to the south

Yahweh speaks to "the north" and "the south" as if commanding the nations in those locations.

my sons ... my daughters

Yahweh speaks of the people who belong to him as if they were his children.

Isaiah 43:7

everyone who is called by my name

Here to be called by someone's name represents belonging to that person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone whom I have called by my name" or "everyone who belongs to me"

whom I have formed, yes, whom I have made

Both of these mean the same thing and emphasize that it is God who made the people of Israel.

Isaiah 43:8

the people who are blind ... the deaf

Yahweh speaks of those who do not listen to him or obey him as if they were blind and deaf.

Isaiah 43:9

Who among them could have declared this and announced to us earlier events?

This rhetorical question applies to the gods whom the people of the nations worship. The implied answer is that none of them could do this. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "None of their gods could

have declared this or announced to us earlier events."

announced to us earlier events

This phrase refers to their ability to tell about events that happened in the past before they happened. Alternate translation: "announced to us earlier events before they happened"

Let them bring their witnesses so they can be justified; let them listen and affirm, 'It is true.'

Yahweh challenges the gods whom the nations worship to provide witnesses who will testify that they have been able to do these things, although he knows that they cannot do so. Alternate translation: "These gods have no witnesses who will prove them right, witnesses who will listen and affirm, 'It is true'"

Isaiah 43:10

You ... my servant

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel. The phrase "my servant" refers to the nation, as a whole.

Before me ... after me

In speaking this way, Yahweh is not saying that there was a time before which he did not exist or a time after which he will not exist. He is asserting that he is eternal and that the gods whom the people of other nations worship are not.

Before me there was no god formed

Here the word "formed" indicates that Yahweh is speaking of idols that people have made. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "None of the gods whom people have formed existed before me"

there will be none after me

"none of those gods will exist after me"

Isaiah 43:11

I, I am Yahweh

The word "I" is repeated to emphasize the focus on Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I alone am Yahweh" or "I myself am Yahweh"

there is no savior but me

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "I am the only savior" or "I am the only one who can save you"

Isaiah 43:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 43:13

no one can rescue anyone from my hand

Here the word "hand" represents Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "no one can rescue anyone from my power"

who can turn it back?

Yahweh uses this question to say that no one can turn back his hand. It can be translated as a statement. Turning back his hand represents stopping him from doing something. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 14:27]

Isaiah 43:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:4.

I send to Babylon and lead them all down

The object of the verb "send" may be supplied in translation. Alternate translation: "I send an army to Babylon"

lead them all down as fugitives

"lead all of the Babylonians down as fugitives"

fugitives

A fugitive is a person who runs away so that his enemy will not capture him.

Isaiah 43:15

General Information:

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Isaiah 43:16

who opened a way ... mighty waters

Isaiah speaks of the events following the exodus from Egypt, when Yahweh divided the sea to let the Israelites walk through on dry ground but then drowned the Egyptian army. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

Isaiah 43:17

who led out ... a burning wick

Isaiah speaks of the events following the exodus from Egypt, when Yahweh divided the sea to let the Israelites walk through on dry ground but then drowned the Egyptian army. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

They fell down together; they will never rise again

Dying is spoken of as if it were falling down to the ground. Alternate translation: "They all died together; they will never live again"

they are extinguished, quenched like a burning wick

The people dying is spoken of as if they were burning candle wicks that someone has extinguished. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their lives have ended, like a person extinguishes the flame of a burning candle"

Isaiah 43:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Do not think about these former things, nor consider the things of long ago.

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that they are not to worry about what happened in the past.

Isaiah 43:19

Look

This word is used to draw attention to the important information that follows. Alternate translation: "Listen" or "Pay attention"

do you not know it?

Yahweh uses a question to teach the people of Israel. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "surely you have noticed it."

Isaiah 43:20

wild animals of the field will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches

Here animals honor Yahweh as if they were people.

the jackals and the ostriches

These are examples of "the animals of the field" that will honor Yahweh. See how you translated the names of these animals in Isaiah 13:21-22.

Isaiah 43:21

General Information:

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Isaiah 43:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 43:23

General Information:

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Isaiah 43:24

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

sweet-smelling cane

This is a plant with a pleasant smell used to make anointing oil. It did not grow in the land of Israel so the people had to buy it from other nations.

burdened me with your sins, you have wearied me with your evil deeds

These both mean the same thing and emphasize the complaint Yahweh has with his people.

burdened me with your sins

"troubled me with your sins"

Isaiah 43:25

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I, yes, I

The word "I" is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "I alone"

who blots out your offenses

Forgiving sins is spoken of as either 1) blotting them out or wiping them away or 2) erasing a written record of the sins. Alternate translation: "who forgives your offenses like someone wiping something away" or "who forgives your offenses like someone who erases a record of sins"

for my own sake

"for my own honor" or "for my own reputation"

call to mind

"remember"

Isaiah 43:26

present your cause, that you may be proved to be in the right

Yahweh challenges the people to offer proof that they are innocent of the charges that he has brought against them, although he knows that they cannot do so. Alternate translation: "present your case, but you cannot prove yourselves to be in the right"

that you may be proved to be in the right

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that you may prove yourselves to be in the right"

Isaiah 43:27

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Your first father sinned

This refers to the founder of Israel and may represent either Abraham or Jacob.

your teachers

the false prophets

Isaiah 43:28

I will hand Jacob over to complete destruction

Here to "hand over" represents putting someone under the power of another. The noun "destruction" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I will cause the enemy to completely destroy Jacob"

Israel to abusive humiliation

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase, with which this phrase is parallel. The noun "humiliation" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I will hand Israel over to abusive humiliation" or "I will allow the enemy to abuse and humiliate Israel"

Chapter 44

- ¹ Now listen, Jacob my servant,
and Israel, whom I have chosen:
- ² This is what Yahweh says,
he who made you and formed you in the womb
and who will help you: "Do not fear, Jacob my servant;
and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
- ³ For I will pour water on the thirsty ground,
and flowing streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit on your offspring
and my blessing on your descendants.
- ⁴ They will spring up among the grass,
like willows by the streams of water.
- ⁵ One will say, 'I belong to Yahweh,'
and another will call out the name of Jacob,
and another will write on his hand 'Belonging to Yahweh,'
and name himself by the name of Israel."
- ⁶ This is what Yahweh says—
the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts:
"I am the first, and I am the last;
and there is no God but me.
- ⁷ Who is like me? Let him announce it and explain to me
the events that occurred since I established my ancient people,
and let them declare the events to come.
- ⁸ Do not fear or be afraid.
Have I not declared to you long ago, and announced it?
You are my witnesses: Is there any God besides me?
There is no other Rock; I know of none."
- ⁹ All who fashion idols are nothing;
the things they delight in are worthless;
their witnesses cannot see or know anything,
and they will be put to shame.
- ¹⁰ Who would form a god
or cast an idol that is worthless?
- ¹¹ Look, all his associates will be put to shame;
the craftsmen are only men.
Let them assemble together; let them stand up;
they will tremble and be put to shame.
- ¹² The smith works with his tools,
forming it, working over the coals.
He shapes it with hammers
and works it with his strong arm.
He is hungry, and his strength wanes;
he drinks no water and becomes faint.
- ¹³ The carpenter measures the wood with a line,
and marks it with a stylus.
He shapes it with his tools
and marks it out with a compass.
He shapes it after the figure of a man,
like a glorious human, so it may stay in a house.
- ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars,
or chooses a cypress tree or an oak tree.
He makes it grow for himself among the trees in the forest.
He plants a fir tree and the rain makes it grow.
- ¹⁵ Then a man uses it for a fire and warms himself.
Yes, he kindles a fire and bakes bread.
Then he makes from it a god and bows down to it;

- he makes an idol and bows down to it.
- 16 He burns part of the wood for the fire,
roasting his meat over it. He eats and is satisfied.
He warms himself and says,
"Ah, I am warm, I have seen the fire."
- 17 With the rest of the wood he makes a god, his carved image;
he bows down to it and reverences it,
and prays to it saying, "Rescue me, for you are my god."
- 18 They do not know, nor do they understand,
for their eyes are blind and cannot see,
and their hearts cannot gain understanding.
- 19 No one's heart remembers, and no one has the knowledge,
no one has the understanding to say,
"I have burned part of the wood in the fire;
yes, I have also baked bread upon its coals.
I have roasted meat over its coals and eaten.
Now should I make the other part
of the wood into an abomination?
Should I bow down to a block of wood?"
- 20 It is as if he were eating ashes; his deceived heart misleads him.
He cannot rescue himself, nor does he say,
"This thing in my right hand is a false god."
- 21 Think about these things, Jacob,
and Israel, for you are my servant:
I have formed you; you are my servant:
Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.
- 22 I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your rebellious deeds,
and like a cloud, your sins;
return to me,
for I have redeemed you.
- 23 Sing, you heavens, for Yahweh has done this;
shout for joy, you depths of the earth.
Break out into a shout of joy, you mountains,
you forest with every tree in it;
for Yahweh has redeemed Jacob,
and will show his glory in Israel.
- 24 This is what Yahweh says, your Redeemer,
he who formed you from the womb:
"I am Yahweh, who made everything,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who alone fashioned the earth.
- 25 I who frustrate the omens of the empty talkers
and who disgrace those who interpret omens;
I who overturn the wisdom of the wise
and make their advice foolish.
- 26 I, Yahweh, who confirmed the words of his servant
and brings to pass the predictions of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, 'She will be inhabited,'
and of the towns of Judah,
'They will be built again, and I will raise up their ruins';
- 27 who says to the deep sea,
'Be dry, and I will dry up your currents.'
- 28 Yahweh is the one who says of Cyrus,
'He is my shepherd, he will do my every wish;
he will decree about Jerusalem, 'She will be rebuilt,'
and about the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'"

Isaiah 44 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's power

There is a prophecy in this chapter that gives the name of the king who will end the exile of the Jews from Babylon and rebuild the temple, even though the exile has not yet even occurred. This emphasizes that Yahweh knows the future, so the translator should translate the name of Cyrus given here. There are many other aspects of this chapter that show Yahweh's power as well. (See: prophet and temple)

Isaiah 44:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Jacob my servant

This refers to Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "descendants of Jacob, my servants"

Isaiah 44:2

he who made you and formed you in the womb

Yahweh speaks of creating the nation of Israel as if it were forming the nation as a baby in its mother's womb. Alternate translation: "he who made you, as I form a baby in the womb"

you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen, do not fear"

Jeshurun

This also refers to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 44:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I will pour water on the thirsty ground, and flowing streams on the dry ground

Yahweh speaks of giving his Spirit to the people of Israel as if he were causing rain to fall and streams to flow on dry ground.

and flowing streams on the dry ground

The words "I will pour" are understood from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "and I will pour flowing streams on the dry ground"

the thirsty ground

Dry ground is spoken of as if it were a thirsty person. Alternate translation: "the dry ground"

I will pour my Spirit on your offspring

Yahweh speaks of giving his Spirit to the people as if his Spirit were liquid that he pours out on them. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit to your offspring"

my blessing on your descendants

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "I will pour out my blessing on your descendants" or "I will give my blessing to your descendants"

Isaiah 44:4

They will spring up among the grass, like willows by the streams of water

The people of Israel being prosperous and multiplying is spoken of as if they were plants that grow because they have plenty of water.

willows

A willow is a tree with thin branches that grows near the water.

Isaiah 44:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel

another will call out the name of Jacob

"another person will say he is a descendant of Jacob"

name himself by the name of Israel

"call himself a descendant of Israel"

Isaiah 44:6

his Redeemer

"Israel's Redeemer"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:9.

I am the first, and I am the last

This phrase emphasizes Yahweh's eternal nature. Possible meanings are 1) "I am the one who began all things, and I am the one who ends all things" or 2) "I am the one who has always lived, and I am the one who always will live."

Isaiah 44:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Who is like me? Let him announce

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that there is no one like him. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone thinks he is like me, let him announce"

Isaiah 44:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Do not fear or be afraid

Yahweh uses two similar expressions in order to strengthen his encouragement. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid"

Have I not declared to you long ago, and announced it?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is the one who predicted the events that have now happened. This can be translated as a statement. The word "announced" means basically the same thing as "declared." Alternate translation: "I declared these things to you long ago."

Is there any God besides me?

Yahweh uses a question again to emphasize that there is no other God. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is no God besides me."

There is no other Rock

Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were a large rock under which people can find shelter. This means he has the power to protect his people.

Isaiah 44:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

the things they delight in are worthless

"the idols they delight in are worthless"

their witnesses cannot see or know anything

This phrase refers to those who worship these idols and who claim to be witnesses of the idols' power. Yahweh speaks of their inability to understand the truth as if they were blind. Alternate translation: "those who serve as witnesses for these idols are like blind people who know nothing"

they will be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will be ashamed" or "their idols will put them to shame"

Isaiah 44:10

Who would form a god or cast an idol that is worthless?

Yahweh is using this question to rebuke those who make idols. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Only fools would form a god or cast an idol that is worthless."

cast an idol that is worthless

The word "worthless" does not distinguish worthless idols from idols that have worth, because all idols are worthless. Alternate translation: "cast worthless idols"

Isaiah 44:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

all his associates

These words could refer to 1) the associates of the craftsman who makes the idol. Alternate translation: "all of the craftsman's associates" Or 2) those who associate themselves with the idol by worshiping it. Alternate translation: "all those who worship the idol"

be put to shame

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

Let them assemble together

"Let them all come together before me"

they will tremble

"they will be terrified." To "cower" is to bend over in fear.

Isaiah 44:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

forming it

"forming the idol" or "creating the idol"

Isaiah 44:13

with a line

A string was used to outline the shape of the idol in the wood.

stylus

This is a sharp tool to scratch the wood so the craftsman can see where to cut.

a compass

This is a tool with two points that spread out used to help mark the wood to make the idol.

Isaiah 44:14

He cuts down

"The carpenter cuts down" or "the woodcarver cuts down"

makes it grow for himself

He works so that the tree will grow strong and he can use it.

cypress tree

a tall evergreen tree

Isaiah 44:15

Then a man uses it

"The man uses the wood"

he makes an idol and bows down to it

This part of the sentence says basically the same as the first to emphasize it.

Isaiah 44:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 44:17

General Information:

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Isaiah 44:18

for their eyes are blind and cannot see

Yahweh speaks of those who cannot understand the foolishness of worshiping idols as if they were blind.

for their eyes are blind

Here "their eyes" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "for they are blind"

their hearts cannot gain understanding

Here the people are represented by their "hearts." Alternate translation: "they cannot understand"

Isaiah 44:19

Now should I make ... an abomination? Should I bow down to a block of wood?

Yahweh says that these people should be asking themselves these rhetorical questions. The questions anticipate negative answers and emphasize how foolish it would be for a person to do these things. These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "I should not

now make ... something disgusting to worship. I should not bow down to a block of wood."

Isaiah 44:20

It is as if he were eating ashes

Yahweh speaks of a person worshiping an idol as if that person were eating the burned ashes of the wood from which he made the idol. Just as eating ashes does not benefit a person, neither does worshiping an idol.

his deceived heart misleads him

The heart represents the inner person. Alternate translation: "he misleads himself because he is deceived"

He cannot rescue himself

"The person who worships idols cannot save himself"

Isaiah 44:21

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Jacob, and Israel

This refers to people descended from Jacob, Israel. Alternate translation: "you descendants of Israel"

you will not be forgotten by me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not forget you"

Isaiah 44:22

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your rebellious deeds, and like a cloud, your sins

Yahweh speaks of how he has forgiven Israel's sins as if he were a cloud that has completely covered the sun. Alternate translation: "Like a thick cloud that covers the sun, I have blotted out your rebellious deeds, and like a cloud covers the sun, I have forgiven your sins"

like a cloud, your sins

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "like a cloud, I have blotted out your sins"

Isaiah 44:23

Sing, you heavens ... glory in Israel

Here Isaiah speaks various parts of creation as if they were people and commands them to praise Yahweh.

you depths of the earth

"you lowest parts of the earth." Possible meanings are 1) that this refers to very deep places on the earth such as caves or canyons and forms a merism with "heavens" in the previous phrase or 2) that this refers to the place of the dead.

Isaiah 44:24

Redeemer

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 41:14.

he who formed you from the womb

Yahweh speaks of creating the nation of Israel as if it were forming the nation as a baby in its mother's womb. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 44:2]

who alone stretched out the heavens

Yahweh speaks of creating the heavens as if they were fabric which he stretched out. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 42:5]

Isaiah 44:25

omens

These are signs that people used to attempt to predict the future.

the empty talkers

This refers to people who say things that are meaningless.

Isaiah 44:26

who confirmed the words of his servant and brings to pass the predictions of his messengers

Yahweh is saying the same thing twice to emphasize that it is only he, Yahweh, who causes the prophecies to be fulfilled.

the words of his servant ... the predictions of his messengers

The abstract nouns "words" and "predictions" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "what

his servant declares ... what his messengers announce"

She will be inhabited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will live there again"

They will be built again

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will rebuild them"

I will raise up their ruins

The phrase "ruins" refers to places that have been destroyed. Yahweh speaks of rebuilding them as if he were raising them up. Alternate translation: "I will rebuild what others have destroyed"

Isaiah 44:27

General Information:

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Isaiah 44:28

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

He is my shepherd

Yahweh speaks of Cyrus ruling and protecting the people of Israel as if Cyrus is their shepherd.

She will be rebuilt

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let the people rebuild the city"

Let its foundations be laid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let the people lay its foundations"

Chapter 45

- ¹ This is what Yahweh says to his anointed,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I hold,
in order to subdue nations before him, to disarm kings,
and to open the doors before him, so that gates remain open:
- ² "I will go before you
and level the mountains;
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut in pieces their iron bars,
- ³ and I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden away,
that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, who call you by your name,
I, the God of Israel.
- ⁴ For Jacob my servant's sake,
and Israel my chosen,
I have called you by your name,
giving you a title of honor,
though you have not known me.
- ⁵ I am Yahweh, and there is no other;
there is no God but me.
I will gird you,
though you have not known me;
- ⁶ that people may know
from the rising of the sun, and from the west,
that there is no god but me:
I am Yahweh, and there is no other.
- ⁷ I form the light and create darkness;
I bring peace and create disaster;
I am Yahweh, who does all these things.
- ⁸ You heavens, rain down from above!
Let the skies rain down righteousness.
Let the earth absorb it,
that salvation may bear fruit,
and righteousness spring up together with it.
I, Yahweh, have created them both.
- ⁹ Woe to anyone who argues with the one who formed him,
to him who is like any other earthen pot
among all the earthen pots in the ground!
Does the clay say to the potter,
'What are you making?'
or 'Your work has no handles on it'?
- ¹⁰ Woe to him who says to a father,
What are you fathering?'
or to a woman,
'What are you giving birth to?'
- ¹¹ This is what Yahweh says,
the Holy One of Israel, his Maker:
'Why do you ask questions about what I will do for my children?
Do you command me concerning the work of my hands?'
- ¹² 'I made the earth
and created man on it.
It was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all the stars to appear.
- ¹³ I stirred Cyrus up in righteousness,
and I will smooth out all his paths.
He will build my city;
he will let my exiled people go home,

and not for price nor bribe,"
says Yahweh of hosts.

14 This is what Yahweh says,

"The produce of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush
with the Sabeans, men of tall stature,
will be brought to you.
They will be yours.
They will follow after you,
coming in chains.
They will bow down to you
and plead with you saying,
'Surely God is with you,
and there is no other except him.'"

15 Truly you are a God who hides yourself,
God of Israel, Savior.

16 They will all be ashamed and disgraced together;
those who carve idols will walk in humiliation.

17 But Israel will be saved by Yahweh
with an everlasting salvation;
you will never again be ashamed or humiliated.

18 This is what Yahweh says,
who created the heavens,
the true God
who created the earth and made it,
who established it.
He created it, not as a waste,
but designed it to be inhabited:
"I am Yahweh,
and there is no other.

19 I have not spoken in secret,
in some dark land;
I did not say to Jacob's descendants,
'Seek me in vain!'
I am Yahweh, who speaks what is right;
I declare the things that are upright.

20 Assemble yourselves and come!
Gather together, you refugees from among the nations!
They have no knowledge, those who carry carved images
and pray to gods that cannot save.

21 Come close and declare it to me, bring the evidence!
Let them conspire together.
Who has shown this from long ago?
Who announced it?
Was it not I, Yahweh?
There is no God except me,
a just God and a Savior;
there is no one besides me.

22 Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.

23 By myself I swear,
speaking my just decree,
and it will not turn back:
'To me every knee will bend,

- every tongue will swear.
- ²⁴ They will say of me, "In Yahweh alone
are righteousness and strength."""
They will all be ashamed
who are angry at him.
- ²⁵ In Yahweh all the descendants of Israel will be justified;
they will take pride in him.
-

Isaiah 45 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Potter and clay

The potter and the clay are important images used in Scripture. They emphasize the power and control of God. This chapter connects this to the truth that Yahweh is the creator of all, which it repeatedly emphasizes. He is even able to "anoint" or chose a future, pagan king. (See: anoint)

Isaiah 45:1

whose right hand I hold

Yahweh helping Cyrus and causing him to be successful is spoken of as if he were holding his right hand.

Isaiah 45:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Cyrus.

level the mountains

Yahweh speaks of removing obstacles that would hinder Cyrus's success as if it were leveling mountains before him.

the mountains

The Hebrew word used in the text is rare and is of an uncertain meaning. Some modern versions have "rough places" or "crooked places."

their iron bars

This refers to the iron bars on the bronze gates.

Isaiah 45:3

the treasures of darkness

Here "darkness" refers to places that are secret. Alternate translation: "treasures in dark places" or "the treasures in secret places"

Isaiah 45:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Cyrus.

Jacob ... Israel

These both refer to the descendants of Israel.

Isaiah 45:5

I will gird you

Possible meanings are 1) "I will strengthen you for battle" or 2) "I will equip you for battle."

Isaiah 45:6

from the rising of the sun, and from the west

Since the sun rises in the east, this phrase forms a merism and means everywhere on earth. Alternate translation: "from every place on earth"

Isaiah 45:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I form the light and create darkness; I bring peace and create disaster

Both of these expressions form merisms that emphasize that Yahweh is sovereign creator of everything.

Isaiah 45:8

You heavens, rain down from above ... righteousness spring up together with it

Yahweh speaks of his righteousness as if it were rain that falls on the earth, and of his righteousness and salvation as plants that grow on the earth.

You heavens

Yahweh momentarily turns his attention from his people and begins to speak to the heavens.

Isaiah 45:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

any other earthen pot among all the earthen pots in the ground

Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were a potter, and of the one who would argue with him as if that person and the rest of humanity were all clay pots. Alternate translation: "like one piece of pottery among many other pieces of pottery scattered on the ground"

earthen pot

Possible meanings are 1) "clay pot" or 2) "piece of broken clay pottery."

Does the clay say to the potter ... on it'?

Yahweh asks this question to rebuke those who argue with him about what he does. Alternate translation: "The clay should not say to the potter ... on it!"

Isaiah 45:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues to scold those who argue with him about what he does.

Woe to him who says to a father, ... 'What are you giving birth to?'

Yahweh speaks of those who would argue him as if they were unborn children who argue with their own parents.

What are you fathering? ... What are you giving birth to?

The unborn child asks these rhetorical questions to scold his parents for giving birth to him. These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You should not be my father ... You should give birth to me." or "You are not fathering me correctly ... You are not giving birth to me correctly."

Isaiah 45:11

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:4.

Why do you ask questions about what I will do for my children? Do you command me concerning the work of my hands?

Yahweh uses questions to scold those who argue with him about what he does. Alternate translation: "Do not question me about what I do for my children. Do not command me concerning the work of my hands."

my children

This refers to the people of Israel.

the work of my hands

Here the word "hands" represents Yahweh.

Alternate translation: "the things that I have made"

Isaiah 45:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

It was my hands that

Here the word "hands" represents Yahweh.

Alternate translation: "It was I who"

stretched out the heavens

Yahweh speaks of creating the heavens as if they were fabric that he stretched out. See how you translated a similar phrase in Isaiah 42:5.

Isaiah 45:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

I stirred Cyrus up in righteousness

Here the word "righteousness" refers to right action. Possible meanings are 1) that Yahweh has stirred up Cyrus to do the right thing or 2) that Yahweh was right to stir up Cyrus.

I stirred Cyrus

Yahweh speaks of causing Cyrus to act as if it were stirring him from slumber.

I will smooth out all his paths

Yahweh speaks of removing obstacles and causing Cyrus to be successful as if he were making the paths smooth on which Cyrus walks.

He will build my city

This refers to Jerusalem.

not for price nor bribe

Here the words "price" and "bribe" share similar meanings. Cyrus will not do these things for financial gain. Alternate translation: "he will not do these things for money"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 45:14

The produce of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush with the Sabeans, men of tall stature, will be brought to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Egypt, Cush, and the tall people of Seba will bring to you their produce and their merchandise"

The produce of Egypt

"The crops that grow in Egypt"

Sabeans

These are people from the nation of Seba.

to you

Here "you" refers to the people of Jerusalem.

there is no other except him

This double negative emphasizes that the speakers believe that the God of Israel is the only true God. Alternate translation: "the only true God is your God"

Isaiah 45:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 45:16

They will all be ashamed and disgraced together; those who carve idols will walk in humiliation

These two lines share similar meanings, with the second clarifying the subject of the first.

They will all be ashamed and disgraced together

The words "ashamed" and "disgraced" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of shame. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Their idols will leave them all completely ashamed"

will walk in humiliation

Living in continual humiliation is spoken of as if it were walking in humiliation. Alternate translation: "will be continually humiliated"

Isaiah 45:17

Israel will be saved by Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will save the people of Israel"

you will never again be ashamed or humiliated

Here "you" refers to the people of Israel. The words "ashamed" and "humiliated" mean basically the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will ever humiliate you again"

Isaiah 45:18

not as a waste

"not to be empty." Here the word "waste" refers to an empty, barren place.

but designed it to be inhabited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but he designed it so people could live on it"

Isaiah 45:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

things that are upright

Here "upright" is a metaphor for things that are true and morally good. Alternate translation: "things that are good and true"

Isaiah 45:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking

refugees

people who have fled from their homes so the enemy will not capture or kill them

Isaiah 45:21

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the refugees (Isaiah 45:20).

Let them conspire together

Here the word "them" refers to the refugees from among the nations who worship idols.

Who has shown this from long ago? Who announced it? Was it not I, Yahweh?

Yahweh uses questions to emphasize that he was the one who told them these things would happen. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who has shown this from long ago. I will tell you who announced it. It was I, Yahweh."

There is no God except me ... there is no one besides me

These double negatives emphasize that the speaker is the only God. Alternate translation: "I am the only God ... I am the only one"

Isaiah 45:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Turn to me and be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Turn to me and I will save you"

all the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. This phrase also forms a merism and refers to everywhere in between the ends. Alternate translation: "all the farthest places of the earth" or "the entire earth"

all the ends of the earth

Here this phrase represents the people who live at "the ends of the earth." Alternate translation: "you"

who live at the farthest places of the earth" or "all of you who live on the earth"

Isaiah 45:23

To me every knee will bend, every tongue will swear
The words "knee" and "tongue" represent the people. Alternate translation: "Every person will kneel before me, and everyone will swear"

Isaiah 45:24

They will say
All the people on the earth are speaking.

Isaiah 45:25

In Yahweh all the descendants of Israel will be justified
Here the word "justified" does not refer to Yahweh forgiving their sins, but to proving to the nations that Israel was right to worship him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will justify all the descendants of Israel" or "Yahweh will vindicate all the descendants of Israel"

Chapter 46

- ¹ Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low.
 Their idols weigh down the animals who carry them,
 and you load your cattle with heavy burdens
 for weary animals.
- ² Together they bend low, kneel down;
 they cannot rescue the images,
 and they themselves have gone off into captivity.
- ³ Listen to me, house of Jacob,
 all the remnant of the house of Israel,
 who have been carried by me from before your birth,
 carried from the womb.
- ⁴ Even to your old age I am he,
 and until your hair is gray I will carry you.
 I made you and I will bear you;
 I will carry you and I will rescue you.
- ⁵ To whom will you compare me? Who do you think I resemble,
 so that we may be compared?
- ⁶ People pour out gold from the bag
 and weigh silver on the scale.
 They hire a metalsmith, and he makes it into a god;
 they bow down and worship it.
- ⁷ They lift it on their shoulder and carry it;
 they set it in its place, and it stands in its place
 and does not move from it.
 They cry out to it, but it cannot answer
 nor save anyone from his trouble.
- ⁸ Think about these things;
 never ignore them, you rebels!
- ⁹ Think about the earlier things, those of times past,
 for I am God, and there is no other,
 I am God, and there is no one like me.
- ¹⁰ I announce the end from the beginning,
 and beforehand what has not yet happened;
 I say, "My plan will happen,
 and I will do as I desire."
- ¹¹ I call a bird of prey from the east,
 the man of my choice from a distant land;
 yes, I have spoken; I will also accomplish it;
 I have purposed, I will also do it.
- ¹² Listen to me, you stubborn people,
 who are far from doing what is right.
- ¹³ I am bringing my righteousness near;
 it is not far away,
 and my salvation does not wait;
 and I will give salvation to Zion
 and my beauty to Israel.

Isaiah 46 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Yahweh and the false gods

This chapter is intended to compare Yahweh with various false Gods whom the Israelites worship. There really is no comparison at all because Yahweh alone is God. (See: falsegod)

Isaiah 46:1

Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low. Their idols ... for weary animals

Isaiah speaks of people placing the idols of Bel and Nebo into a cart for animals to transport as if these gods were made to "bow down" and "stoop." These are both postures of humiliation.

Bel ... Nebo

These were the two primary gods whom the Babylonians worshiped.

Their idols

the idols that represented Bel and Nebo

Isaiah 46:2

they cannot rescue the images

"Bel and Nebo cannot rescue their images"

they themselves have gone off into captivity

Isaiah speaks of people carrying off these idols as if the false gods whom they represent are being carried off to captivity.

Isaiah 46:3

Listen to me

Here "me" refers to Yahweh.

who have been carried by me from before your birth, carried from the womb

Yahweh speaks of the nation of Israel as if it were a person, and of the nation's beginning as if it were its birth.

who have been carried by me

Yahweh speaks of helping and rescuing the people of Israel as if he were carrying them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom I have carried"

Isaiah 46:4

Even to your old age I am he, and until your hair is gray I will carry you

Yahweh speaks of the nation of Israel becoming very old as if it were an old man with gray hair.

Isaiah 46:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

To whom will you compare me? Who do you think I resemble, so that we may be compared?

Yahweh uses questions to emphasize that there is no one like him. Alternate translation: "There is no one to whom you can compare me. I resemble no one, so that we might be compared."

so that we may be compared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you may compare us"

Isaiah 46:6

General Information:

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Isaiah 46:7

They lift it

"They" refers to the people who make idols and "it" refers to the idol that they have created.

Isaiah 46:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to his people.

Isaiah 46:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 46:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to his people.

I announce the end from the beginning, and beforehand what has not yet happened

This basically repeats the same idea for emphasis. The verb from the first phrase may be supplied for the second. Alternate translation: "I announce the end from the beginning, and I announce beforehand what has not yet happened"

Isaiah 46:11

I call a bird of prey from the east

Yahweh speaks of Cyrus as if he were "a bird of prey." As a bird swiftly captures its prey, so Cyrus will swiftly accomplish Yahweh's purpose to conquer the nations.

I have spoken; I will also accomplish it; I have purposed, I will also do it.

This repeats the same idea for emphasis.

Isaiah 46:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

who are far from doing what is right

Yahweh speaks of the people stubbornly doing wrong as if they were physically far away from doing the right thing.

Isaiah 46:13

my salvation does not wait

Yahweh speaks of saving his people soon as if his salvation were a person who does not wait to act. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "I will not wait to save you"

Chapter 47

- ¹ Come down and sit in the dust,
virgin daughter of Babylon;
sit on the ground without a throne,
daughter of the Chaldeans.
You will no longer be called
dainty and delicate.
- ² Take the millstone and grind flour;
remove your veil,
strip off your flowing robe, uncover your legs,
cross the streams.
- ³ Your nakedness will be uncovered,
yes, your shame will be seen:
I will take vengeance
and will not spare a man.
- ⁴ Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is his name,
the Holy One of Israel.
- ⁵ Sit in silence and go into darkness,
daughter of the Chaldeans;
for you will no longer be called
queen of kingdoms.
- ⁶ I was angry with my people;
I defiled my heritage
and gave them over into your hand,
but you showed them no mercy;
you placed a very heavy yoke on the old people.
- ⁷ You said, "I will rule forever
as sovereign queen."
You did not take these things to heart,
nor did you consider how they would turn out.
- ⁸ So now hear this, you who love pleasure
and sit securely;
you who say in your heart,
"I exist, and there is no one else like me;
I will never sit as a widow,
nor will I ever experience loss of children."
- ⁹ But these two things will come to you
in a moment in one day:
the loss of children and widowhood;
in full force they will come on you,
despite your sorceries
and your many incantations and amulets.
- ¹⁰ You have trusted in your wickedness;
you have said, "No one sees me";
your wisdom and your knowledge lead you astray,
but you say in your heart,
"I exist, and there is no one else like me."
- ¹¹ Disaster will overcome you;
you will not be able to drive it away with your incantations.
Destruction will fall on you;
you will not be able to ward it off.
Calamity will strike you suddenly,
before you know it.
- ¹² Persist in casting your spells
and your many sorceries
which you have faithfully recited since your childhood;

- perhaps you will profit from them,
perhaps you will cause trembling.
- 13** You are tired out from so much counsel;
let those men stand up and save you—
those who chart the heavens and prophesy by the stars,
those who declare the new moons—
let them save you from what will happen to you.
- 14** See, they will become like stubble.
The fire will burn them up.
They will not save themselves
from the hand of the flame.
There are no coals to warm them
and no fire for them to sit by!
- 15** This is what they have become to you—
those with whom you have worked,
and you have bought and sold with them since your youth—
they wandered about each one in his own direction;
there is no one who can rescue you."

Isaiah 47 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Babylon

This chapter prophesied the destruction of Babylon. At the time that the prophesy was written, Assyria was still in power and Babylon had not yet become a world power. The Chaldeans were not yet a powerful nation either. The people of Judah would become servants or slaves of Babylon and be forced to work very hard. (See: prophet)

Isaiah 47:1

General Information:

In this chapter, Yahweh speaks to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

sit in the dust, virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground ... daughter of the Chaldeans.

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Sitting in the dust was a sign of humiliation.

virgin daughter of Babylon ... daughter of the Chaldeans

Both of these phrases refer to the city, Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a daughter. That the city is a "daughter" indicates how people think fondly of her.

without a throne

Here "throne" refers to the power to rule. Alternate translation: "without the power to rule"

You will no longer be called dainty and delicate

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will no longer call you dainty and delicate"

dainty and delicate

These two words share similar meanings. They describe one who is beautiful and lives in luxury. Alternate translation: "very beautiful" or "very luxurious"

Isaiah 47:2

millstone

a large stone used to grind grain

Isaiah 47:3

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

Your nakedness will be uncovered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You will be naked"

your shame will be seen

Here the word "shame" is a euphemism for one's private parts. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will see your shame" or "people will see your private parts"

Isaiah 47:4

Our Redeemer

"Our" refers to Isaiah and the people of Israel. See how you translated "Redeemer" in [Isaiah 41:14]

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:24.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 5:16.

Isaiah 47:5

daughter of the Chaldeans

This phrase refers to the city, Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a daughter. That the city is a "daughter" indicates how the Chaldeans think fondly of her. See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 47:1.

for you will no longer be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for people will no longer call you"

queen of kingdoms

Yahweh speaks of Babylon being the capital city of the Babylonian empire as if it were a queen who ruled many kingdoms.

Isaiah 47:6

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

I was angry

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

I defiled my heritage

Yahweh speaks of the people of Israel being his special possession as if they were his heritage or inheritance. Alternate translation: "I defiled my people, who are my special possession"

gave them over into your hand

Here the word "hand" represents Babylon's power or control. Alternate translation: "I put them under your power"

you placed a very heavy yoke on the old people

Yahweh speaks of the Babylonians oppressing the old people as if they had treated the old people like cattle and put heavy yokes on their necks.

Isaiah 47:7

I will rule forever as sovereign queen

Babylon speaks of permanently ruling over many nations as if she were a queen who would rule forever.

You did not take these things to heart

Yahweh speaks of thinking carefully about something as if it were placing that thing on one's heart. Alternate translation: "You did not consider these things"

Isaiah 47:8

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

you who love pleasure

"you luxurious one." This refers to the many luxuries that Babylon enjoyed.

sit securely

This refers to Babylon's false sense of security in thinking that she will never lose her position of wealth and honor. Alternate translation: "who think you are safe"

I will never sit as a widow ... loss of children

Babylon believing that other nations will never be able to conquer her is spoken of as if she will never become a widow or never have children die.

I will never sit as a widow

"I will never become a widow"

Isaiah 47:9

in a moment in one day

"suddenly at the same time"

amulets

ornaments or jewelry that people wear because they believe that those things will protect them from evil, danger, or sickness

Isaiah 47:10

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

you say in your heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the inner person. Alternate translation: "you say to yourself"

Isaiah 47:11

Disaster will overcome you

Yahweh speaks of disaster as if it were a person who captures Babylon. Alternate translation: "You will experience disaster"

Destruction will fall on you

Yahweh speaks of Babylon being destroyed as if destruction were an object that falls upon the city. Alternate translation: "You will experience destruction" or "Others will destroy you"

Calamity will strike you

Yahweh speaks of Babylon experiencing calamity as if calamity were a person who strikes Babylon.

Alternate translation: "You will experience calamity"

Isaiah 47:12

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

Persist in casting your spells ... perhaps you will cause trembling

Yahweh mocks Babylon by telling her to continue to practice her sorcery to keep bad things away, but he knows that it will not help her.

cause trembling

The one whom Babylon would cause to tremble in fear is probably the personification of disaster. Babylon would be trying to keep disaster away or to avoid suffering disaster. Alternate translation: "cause disaster to tremble in fear and stay away" or "keep yourselves from suffering disaster"

Isaiah 47:13

General Information:

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Isaiah 47:14

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Babylon about her downfall as if she were a queen who is humiliated.

they will become like stubble. The fire will burn them up

Yahweh compares the magicians and sorcerers to straw that burns quickly in a fire. This means that Yahweh will destroy them as easily as fire burns stubble, and so they are powerless to save Babylon.

the hand of the flame

Here the word "hand" represents strength.

Alternate translation: "the power of the flame"

There are no coals to warm them and no fire for them to sit by

Yahweh emphasizes that this is a destructive fire by stating that it is not one that people will use to warm themselves.

Isaiah 47:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 48

- ¹ Hear this, house of Jacob,
 who are called by the name Israel
 and have come from the waters of Judah;
 you who swear by the name of Yahweh
 and invoke the God of Israel,
 but not sincerely nor in a righteous manner.
- ² For they call themselves people of the holy city
 and trust in the God of Israel.
 Yahweh of hosts is his name.
- ³ "I have declared the things from long ago;
 they came out from my mouth, and I made them known;
 then suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.
- ⁴ Because I knew that you were obstinate,
 your neck muscles tight as iron,
 and your forehead like bronze,
- ⁵ therefore I declared these things to you beforehand;
 before they happened I informed you,
 so you could not say,
 'My idol has done them,'
 or 'My carved figure and my cast metal figure has ordained these things.'
- ⁶ You heard about these things; look at all this evidence;
 and you, will you not admit what I said is true?

From now on, I am showing you new things,
 hidden things that you have not known.

- ⁷ Now, and not from previously, they come into being,
 and before today you have not heard about them,
 so you will not be able to say,
 'Yes, I knew about them.'
- ⁸ You never heard; you did not know;
 these things were not unfolded to your ears beforehand.
 For I knew that you have been very deceitful,
 and that you have been a rebel from birth.
- ⁹ For the sake of my name I will defer my anger,
 and for my honor I will hold back from destroying you.
- ¹⁰ Look, I refined you, but not as silver;
 I have purified you in the furnace of affliction.
- ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake I will act;
 for how can I allow my name to be profaned?
 I will not give my glory to anyone else.

- ¹² Listen to me, Jacob,
 and Israel, whom I called:
 I am he;
 I am the first, I also am the last.

- ¹³ Yes, my hand laid the foundation of the earth,
 and my right hand spread out the heavens;
 when I call to them,
 they stand up together.

- ¹⁴ Assemble yourselves, all of you, and listen!
 Who among you has announced these things?
 Yahweh's ally will accomplish his purpose against Babylon.
 He will carry out Yahweh's will against the Chaldeans.

- ¹⁵ I, I have spoken,
 yes, I have summoned him,
 I have brought him,
 and he will succeed.

- 16** Come near to me, listen to this:
From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; when it happens, I am there."
Now the Lord Yahweh has sent me, and his Spirit.
- 17** This is what Yahweh,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel says,
"I am Yahweh your God,
who teaches you how to profit,
who leads you by the way that you should go.
- 18** If only you had obeyed my commandments!
Then your peace and prosperity would have flowed like a river,
and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
- 19** Your descendants would have been as numerous as the sand,
and the offspring from your womb as numerous as the grains of sand;
their name would not have been cut off
nor blotted out from before me.
- 20** Come out from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With the sound of a ringing cry announce it!
Make this known,
make it go out to the ends of the earth!
Say, 'Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob.'
- 21** They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made the water to flow out of the rock for them;
he split open the rock,
and the waters gushed out.
- 22** There is no peace for the wicked—says Yahweh."
-

Isaiah 48 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Yahweh and the false gods

This chapter is set up to compare Yahweh with various false Gods whom the Israelites worship. There really is no comparison between the two because Yahweh alone is God. (See: falsegod)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Exile

Yahweh explains purpose behind the Jews exile in Babylon, even though it is still in the future. This emphasizes that that Yahweh is much more powerful than the false gods.

Isaiah 48:1

Hear this

"Listen to my message." Yahweh is speaking.

house of Jacob

Here "house" refers to the descendants of Jacob.
Alternate translation: "descendants of Jacob"

who are called by the name Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom everyone calls the people of Israel"

have come from the waters of Judah

This phrase emphasizes that they are the direct, physical descendants of Judah. Alternate translation: "are the descendants of Judah"

the waters of Judah

The word "waters" here is a euphemism for semen. You may need either to translate using a different euphemism or to specify the meaning of the euphemism. Alternate translation: "the family line of Judah" or "the loins of Judah" or "the sperm of Judah"

invoke the God of Israel

"call on the God of Israel"

Isaiah 48:2

they call themselves

This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "you call yourselves"

the holy city

This refers to Jerusalem.

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 48:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

they came out from my mouth

"Mouth" refers to someone speaking. Alternate translation: "I spoke these things"

Isaiah 48:4

your neck muscles tight as iron, and your forehead like bronze

Yahweh compares the tightness of their neck muscles and the hardness of their foreheads to the hardness of iron and bronze. Here, to have a tight neck or a hard forehead is a metaphor that means the people are stubborn. Alternate translation: "it is as if your necks were iron and your heads were bronze"

Isaiah 48:5

I declared these things to you beforehand; before they happened I informed you

This is saying the same thing twice for emphasis.

Isaiah 48:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

will you not admit what I said is true?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people of Israel for not admitting what they should know is true. Alternate translation: "you are stubborn and will not admit what I said is true."

Isaiah 48:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 48:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

these things were not unfolded to your ears beforehand

Yahweh speaks of explaining something as if it were unfolding it. The word "ears" represents the people who are listening. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I did not explain these things to you beforehand"

from birth

Yahweh speaks of the nation's beginning as if it were its birth.

Isaiah 48:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

For the sake of my name I will defer my anger

Here the word "name" refers to Yahweh's reputation. Alternate translation: "For the sake of my reputation I will delay my anger"

for my honor I will hold back from destroying you

This part of the sentence means basically the same thing as the first part.

Isaiah 48:10

Look, I refined you, but not as silver; I have purified you in the furnace of affliction

Yahweh speaks of using affliction to purify his people as if they were precious metals and affliction were a furnace in which he refines them.

Isaiah 48:11

for how can I allow my name to be profaned?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he can never allow his own name to be dishonored. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for I cannot allow anyone to profane my name."

Isaiah 48:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Jacob, and Israel

Both of these refer to the people of Israel.

I am the first, I also am the last

This phrase emphasizes Yahweh's eternal nature. Possible meanings are 1) "I am the one who began

all things, and I am the one who ends all things" or 2) "I am the one who has always lived, and I am the one who always will live." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 44:6]

Isaiah 48:13

my hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens

Here "hand" refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I laid the foundation of the earth, and I spread out the heavens"

the foundation of the earth

The word "foundation" normally refers to a stone structure that gives support to a building from underneath. Here it describes a similar structure that was thought to support and hold the earth in place. See how you translated this in Isaiah 24:18.

spread out the heavens

Yahweh speaks of creating the heavens as if they were fabric which Yahweh stretched out. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 42:5]

when I call to them, they stand up together

Standing up when Yahweh calls is a metaphor for being ready to obey him. Yahweh speaks of the earth and the heavens as if they were able to hear him and obey him.

when I call to them

Possible meanings are 1) "when I call the earth and the heavens" or 2) "when I call the stars in the heavens."

Isaiah 48:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Who among you has announced these things?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that the idols have not told them these things. Alternate translation: "None of your idols has told this to you."

Yahweh's ally will accomplish his purpose against Babylon. He will carry out Yahweh's will against the Chaldeans

Here "ally" refers to Cyrus. Both of these sentences mean the same thing and are used for emphasis.

his purpose

"Yahweh's purpose"

Isaiah 48:15

I, I

The word "I" is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "I myself"

Isaiah 48:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I have not spoken in secret

"I have spoken plainly and clearly"

sent me

Here "me" refers to an unknown servant of Yahweh, maybe Isaiah or Cyrus or the promised Messiah.

Isaiah 48:17

your Redeemer ... your God

Here "your" refers to the people of Israel.

Redeemer

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 41:14.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:4.

who leads you by the way that you should go

Yahweh teaching the people how they should live is spoken of as if he were leading them to walk on the correct paths.

to profit

to succeed

Isaiah 48:18

If only you had obeyed my commandments

Yahweh describes something that could have happened but did not.

Then your peace and prosperity would have flowed like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea

These two phrases share similar meanings. In both, Yahweh speaks of Israel's experiencing abundant blessings as if those blessings flowed like water.

your righteousness like the waves of the sea

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "your righteousness would have flowed like the waves of the sea"

righteousness

This is probably a metonym for the salvation that come from righteousness. Alternate translation: "salvation"

Isaiah 48:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Israel what would have happened if they had obeyed his commandments, but they had not obeyed.

Your descendants would have been as numerous as the sand, and the offspring from your womb as numerous as the grains of sand

These both mean that the people would have had more descendants than they could count.

the offspring from your womb

Yahweh speaks of the descendants of the people of Israel as if they were children to which the nation gives birth.

their name would not have been cut off nor blotted out

The people of Israel being destroyed is spoken of as if their name had been cut off, as one would cut a piece of cloth or cut a branch from a tree, or blotted out. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I would not have cut off nor blotted out their name"

their name

Here the word "name" refers to the descendants who would carry on the name of Israel. Alternate translation: "they"

cut off nor blotted out

These two expressions in this context refer to destroying the people. Alternate translation: "destroyed"

Isaiah 48:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

to the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. This phrase also forms a merism and refers to everywhere in between the ends. Alternate translation: "to all the farthest places of the earth" or "to the entire earth"

his servant Jacob

This refers to the descendants of Jacob. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel, his servants"

Isaiah 48:21

They did not thirst ... the waters gushed out

This refers to an event in the history of the people of Israel when Yahweh took care of them while they lived in the desert after escaping Egypt.

Isaiah 48:22

General Information:

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Chapter 49

- ¹ Listen to me, you coastlands!
Now pay attention, you distant peoples.
Yahweh has called me from birth by name,
when my mother brought me into the world.
- ² He has made my mouth like a sharp sword;
he hid me in the shadow of his hand;
he has made me into a polished arrow;
in his quiver he has hidden me.
- ³ He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, through whom I show my glory."
- ⁴ But I replied, "Though I thought I have labored in vain,
I have spent my energy for nothing,
yet my justice is with Yahweh,
and my reward is with my God."
- ⁵ Now Yahweh has spoken—
he who formed me from birth to be his servant,
to restore Jacob again to himself,
so that Israel would be gathered to him,
for I am honored in the eyes of Yahweh,
and my God has become my strength—
- ⁶ and he says, "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to reestablish the tribes of Jacob,
and to restore the survivors of Israel.
I will make you a light to the Gentiles,
that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth."
- ⁷ This is what Yahweh says,
the Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
to the one whose life is despised, hated by the nations,
and a slave of rulers,
"Kings will see you and arise,
and princes will see you and bow down,
because of Yahweh who is faithful,
even the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."
- ⁸ This is what Yahweh says,

"At a time I decide to show my favor I will answer you,
and in a day of salvation I will help you;
I will protect you,
and give you as a covenant for the people,
to rebuild the land,
to reassign the desolate inheritance.
- ⁹ You will say to the prisoners, 'Come out;'
to those in dark dungeons, 'Show yourselves.'
They will graze along the roads,
and on all the bare slopes will be their pasture.
- ¹⁰ They will not be hungry or thirsty;
nor will the heat or sun beat on them,
for he who has mercy on them will lead them;
he will guide them to springs of water.
- ¹¹ Then I will make all my mountains into a road,
and make my highways level."
- ¹² Look, these will come from far away,
some from the north and the west;

and others from the land of Sinim.

13 Sing, heavens, and be joyful,
earth; break into joyful shouting, you mountains!
For Yahweh comforts his people,
and will have compassion on his afflicted.

14 But Zion said, "Yahweh has abandoned me,
and the Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can a woman forget her baby, nursing at her breast,
so she does not have compassion on the son she has borne?
Yes, they may forget,
but I will not forget you.

16 Look, I have inscribed your name on my palms;
your walls are continually before me.

17 Your children are hurrying back,
while those who destroyed you and made you desolate are going away.

18 Look around and see,
they are all gathering and coming to you.
As surely as I live—this is Yahweh's declaration—
you will surely wear them like jewelry,
and you will put them on like a bride.

19 Though you were a waste and desolate,
a land that was in ruins,
now you will be too small for the inhabitants,
and those who devoured you will be far away.

20 The children born during the time of your bereavement
will say in your hearing,
'The place is too cramped for us,
make room for us, so we may live here.'

21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who has borne these children for me?
I was bereaved and barren,
exiled and divorced.
Who has raised these children?

Look, I was left all alone;
where did these come from?"

22 This is what the Lord Yahweh says,

"Look, I will raise my hand to the nations;
I will raise my signal flag to the peoples.
They will bring your sons in their bosoms
and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

23 Kings will be your foster fathers,
and their queens your nursemaids;
they will bow down to you with their faces to the earth
and lick the dust of your feet;
and you will know that I am Yahweh;
those who wait for me will not be put to shame."

24 Can the booty be taken from the warrior,
or captives be rescued from the ruthless? ^[1]

25 But this is what Yahweh says,

"Yes, the captives will be taken away from the warrior,
and booty will be rescued from the ruthless;
for I will oppose your adversary
and save your children.
26 I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh;
and they will get drunk on their own blood, as if it were wine.
Then all mankind will know
that I, Yahweh, am your Savior and your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Jacob."

Footnotes

49:24 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 49 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Many scholars believe that there are four songs or poems which Isaiah records about the Messiah. Isaiah 49:1-6 is the second of these songs. They are often called the "servant songs" because they focus on the Messiah being a servant. (See: christ)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

A day of salvation

It is unclear if this is a reference to the gospel proclaimed by the Messiah or to the day of restoration of all things. The translator should not try to explain its reference to the reader. (See: save, goodnews and restore)

Isaiah 49:1

Listen to me

Here "me" refers to Yahweh's servant.

you coastlands

This refers to the people who live on the coastlands.
Alternate translation: "you who live on the coastlands"

Isaiah 49:2

He has made my mouth like a sharp sword

Here the word "mouth" represents the words that he speaks. His words are compared to a sharp sword to emphasize that they will be effective.
Alternate translation: "He has made my words as effective as a sharp sword"

he hid me in the shadow of his hand

Yahweh protecting his servant and keeping his purpose secret is spoken of as if Yahweh's hand cast a shadow over him.

he has made me into a polished arrow; in his quiver he has hidden me

Yahweh's servant being able to carry out Yahweh's purposes effectively is spoken of as if the servant were a sharp, new arrow.

in his quiver he has hidden me

Yahweh protecting his servant and keeping his purpose secret is spoken of as if Yahweh kept him hidden in a quiver.

quiver

a case used to carry arrows

Isaiah 49:3

General Information:

Yahweh's servant continues speaking.

He said

"Yahweh said"

You are my servant, Israel

"You are my servant, whom I call Israel"

Isaiah 49:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 49:5

General Information:

Yahweh's servant continues speaking.

that Israel would be gathered to him

This part of the sentence means the same as the part before it. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to bring the people of Israel back to himself"

I am honored in the eyes of Yahweh

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has honored me"

Isaiah 49:6

I will make you a light to the Gentiles

The servant bringing Yahweh's message to the Gentiles and helping them to understand it is spoken of as if Yahweh made the servant a light that shines among the Gentiles. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 42:6]

to the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. This phrase also forms a merism and refers to everywhere in between the ends. Alternate translation: "to all the farthest places of the earth" or "to the entire earth"

Isaiah 49:7

Redeemer

See how you translated this word in Isaiah 41:14.

to the one whose life is despised, hated by the nations, and a slave of rulers

Here the word "life" represents the person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to the one whom people despised, whom the nations hated and held as slaves"

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 49:8

At a time I decide to show my favor I will answer you, and in a day of salvation I will help you

These two clauses mean basically the same thing.

I will answer you

Here "you" refers to Yahweh's servant.

in a day of salvation

The word "salvation" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "when the time comes for me to save you"

give you as a covenant for the people

Here the word "covenant" is a metonym for the one who establishes or mediates a covenant. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 42:6]

to rebuild the land

Here the word "land" represents the cities in the land that had been destroyed. Alternate translation: "to rebuild the ruined places in the land"

to reassign the desolate inheritance

Yahweh speaks of the land as if it were an inheritance that the people of Israel received as a permanent possession. It is implied that the servant is to reassign the land to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "to reassign the desolate land to the people of Israel as their inheritance"

Isaiah 49:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to his servant.

They will graze along the roads, and on all the bare slopes will be their pasture

Yahweh speaks of the people living freely and prosperously as if they were sheep that had plenty of pasture in which to graze.

Isaiah 49:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

They will not

Here "they" refers to God's people.

nor will the heat or sun beat on them

Here the word "heat" describes the word "sun." The people suffering from the sun's heat is spoken of as if the heat struck them. Alternate translation: "nor will they suffer from the sun's heat"

for he who has mercy on them ... he will guide them

Yahweh speaks of himself in the third person. He speaks of protecting the people and caring for them as if he were their shepherd. Alternate translation: "I, the one who has mercy on them ... I will guide them"

Isaiah 49:11

I will make all my mountains into a road, and make my highways level

Yahweh speaks of guiding his people safely and removing obstacles from their path as if he turned mountains into roads and level highways.

Isaiah 49:12

the land of Sinim

The location of this place is uncertain, but it may refer to a region in the southern part of Egypt.

Isaiah 49:13

Sing, heavens, and be joyful, earth; break into joyful shouting, you mountains!

Isaiah turns his attention from the people of Israel and speaks to the heavens, earth, and mountains as if they were people.

Isaiah 49:14

But Zion said

The word "Zion" is another name for Jerusalem. Isaiah speaks of the city as if it were a woman who complains that Yahweh has forgotten her.

Isaiah 49:15

Can a woman forget her baby, nursing at her breast, so she does not have compassion on the son she has borne?

Yahweh uses a question to help his people understand that he will never forget about them or stop caring for them. Alternate translation: "A woman would not forget her nursing baby or stop caring for the son she bore."

Isaiah 49:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion.

I have inscribed your name on my palms

Yahweh speaks of his unwavering devotion to Zion as if he had written her name on the palms of his hands.

your walls are continually before me

Yahweh speaks of always thinking about Zion as if her walls were always before him. The word "walls" is a metonym for the city. Alternate translation: "I am continually thinking about your walls" or "I am always thinking about you"

Isaiah 49:17

Your children are hurrying back

Yahweh speaks of the people who are returning to live in Jerusalem as if they were the city's children. Alternate translation: "Your inhabitants are hurrying back"

destroyed you and made you desolate

This is a doublet. Alternate translation: "completely destroyed you"

Isaiah 49:18

you will surely wear them like jewelry, and you will put them on like a bride

Yahweh speaks of the inhabitants of Zion as if they were jewelry that the city wears to show her beauty and joy.

you will put them on like a bride

The last part of the phrase can be clarified from the previous line. Alternate translation: "you will put them on, like a bride wears jewelry"

Isaiah 49:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a woman.

Though you were a waste and desolate

The words "a waste" and "desolate" mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the enemy has destroyed Zion and left it empty. Alternate translation: "Though you were completely desolate"

those who devoured you

The enemy destroying Zion is spoken of as if they had devoured it. Alternate translation: "those who destroyed you"

Isaiah 49:20

The children born during the time of your bereavement

Yahweh speaks of the time when the people of Jerusalem were in exile as if the city was bereaved of her children. Those who were born while the people were in exile are spoken of as the city's children. Alternate translation: "Those who will inhabit you, who were born while the people were in exile"

The place is too cramped for us

This means that there will be so many people that the city will be too small for them all to live in it.

Isaiah 49:21

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a woman.

say in your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: "say to yourself" or "ask yourself"

Who has borne these children for me?

Zion speaks of the people who are returning to inhabit the city as if those people were her children. Zion's question expresses her surprise that so many children now belong to her.

I was bereaved and barren, exiled and divorced
Zion describes herself as a woman incapable of having more children. She indicates the reasons for her great surprise.

I was bereaved and barren

"I was mourning over my dead children and unable to have more"

exiled and divorced

"I was sent away, without a husband"

Who has raised these children? Look, I was left all alone; where did these come from?

Again, Zion uses questions to express her surprise. Alternate translation: "Look, I was left all alone; now all of these children that I did not raise have come to me."

Isaiah 49:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a woman. He explains how she is able to have so many children.

I will raise my hand to the nations; I will raise my signal flag to the peoples

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "I will raise my hand and signal with a flag for the people of the nations to come"

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

They will bring your sons in their bosoms and carry your daughters on their shoulders

Yahweh speaks of the people who will inhabit Jerusalem as if they were the city's children. He also speaks of the people of other nations helping the Israelites to return to Jerusalem as if they were carrying the Israelites.

bosoms

The word "bosom" refers to the chest, shoulders, and arms.

Isaiah 49:23

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a woman.

Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursemaids

Yahweh speaks of the people who will inhabit Zion as if they were the city's children. The terms "foster fathers" and "nursemaids" refer to men and women who become responsible for the care of children. Alternate translation: "The kings and queens of other nations will provide for your inhabitants"

they will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of your feet

These phrases describe gestures that people used to express complete submission to a superior.

lick the dust of your feet

Possible meanings are 1) that this is a literal expression of submission where the person licks the dust off of a superior's foot or from the ground at the superior's foot or 2) that this is an idiom that describes a person prostrating himself before a superior.

will not be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not be ashamed" or "will not be disappointed"

Isaiah 49:24

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a woman.

Can the booty be taken from the warrior, or captives be rescued from the ruthless?

Isaiah uses a question to express the difficulty of taking anything from a mighty soldier or a very strong warrior. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A person cannot take the booty from a warrior or rescue captives from ruthless soldiers."

booty

valuable items taken from the losers in a battle

the ruthless

This nominal adjective refers to any ruthless person, not to one particular ruthless person. Alternate translation: "ruthless people"

Isaiah 49:25

the captives will be taken away from the warrior, and booty will be rescued

Yahweh says that he will do what is usually impossible for people to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will take the captives from the warrior, and I will rescue the booty"

the ruthless

This nominal adjective refers to any ruthless person, not to one particular ruthless person. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 49:24]

I will ... save your children

Yahweh speaks of the people who will inhabit Zion as if they were the city's children.

Isaiah 49:26

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Zion as if it were a person.

I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh

Possible meanings are 1) the oppressors will be so hungry that they will eat the flesh of their friends who have died. Alternate translation: "I will cause your oppressors to eat their own flesh" or 2) Yahweh speaks of the oppressors fighting against and destroying themselves as if they were eating

themselves. Alternate translation: "I will cause your oppressors to destroy themselves, as if they were eating their own flesh"

they will get drunk on their own blood, as if it were wine

Possible meanings are 1) the oppressors will be so thirsty that they drink the blood of their friends who have died. Alternate translation: "they will drink their friends' blood and be like weak people who are drunk on wine" or 2) Yahweh speaks of the oppressors fighting against and destroying themselves as if they were drinking their own blood. Alternate translation: "they will shed so much of their friends' blood that it will be as though they were getting drunk with wine"

Chapter 50

¹ This is what Yahweh says,

"Where is the certificate of divorce
with which I divorced your mother?
To which of my creditors did I sell you?
Look, you were sold because of your iniquities,
and because of your rebellion your mother was sent away.

² Why did I come but there was no one there?
Why did I call but no one answered?
Was my hand too short to ransom you?
Was there no power in me to rescue you?
Look, at my rebuke I dry up the sea;
I make the rivers a desert;
their fish die for lack of water and rot.

³ I clothe the sky with darkness;
I cover it with sackcloth."

⁴ The Lord Yahweh has given me a tongue as one of those who are taught,
so that I speak a sustaining word to the weary one; he wakes me morning by morning;
he awakens my ear to hear like those who are taught.

⁵ The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
nor did I turn away backward.

⁶ I gave my back to those who beat me,
and my cheeks to those who plucked out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from acts of shame and spitting.

⁷ For the Lord Yahweh will help me;
therefore I am not disgraced;
so I have made my face like flint,
for I know that I will not be put to shame.

⁸ He who will justify me is close by.
Who will oppose me?
Let us stand and confront one another.
Who is my accuser?
Let him come near to me.

⁹ See, the Lord Yahweh will help me.
Who will declare me guilty?
See, they will all wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

¹⁰ Who among you fears Yahweh?
Who obeys the voice of his servant?
Who walks in deep darkness
without light?
He should trust in the name of Yahweh
and lean on his God.

¹¹ Look, all you who light fires,
who equip yourselves with torches:
walk in the light of your fire
and in the flames that you have ignited.
This is what you have received from me:
You will lie down in a place of pain.

Isaiah 50 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Many scholars believe that there are four songs or poems which Isaiah records about the Messiah. Isaiah 50:4-9 is the third of these songs. They are often called the "servant songs" because they focus on the Messiah being a servant. (See: christ)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

There are many rhetorical questions in this chapter. These questions prove Yahweh's point and are intended to convince the readers.

Isaiah 50:1

Where is the certificate of divorce with which I divorced your mother?

Yahweh speaks of Zion as if the city were the mother of the people who lived there and of sending the people into exile as if he were divorcing their mother.

Where is the certificate of divorce with which I divorced your mother?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question so that the people would produce "the certificate of divorce," which would provide the reason Yahweh sent them into exile. Alternate translation: "Show me the certificate of divorce with which I divorced your mother."

To which of my creditors did I sell you?

Yahweh speaks of sending the people into exile as if he were selling them.

To which of my creditors did I sell you?

Yahweh asks this question to emphasize that he did not sell them because he owed a debt to a creditor. It is implied that this is what the people had thought. Alternate translation: "I did not sell you because I owed a debt to someone."

you were sold because of your iniquities, and because of your rebellion your mother was sent away

Yahweh gives the reason for sending the people into exile, which he speaks of as if he had sold them and divorced their mother. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I sold you because of your sins, and I divorced your mother because of your rebellion"

Isaiah 50:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Why did I come but there was no one there? Why did I call but no one answered?

These two sentences mean basically the same thing. Yahweh uses questions to emphasize that the people are in exile because they did not respond to him, not because he was unwilling to save them. Alternate translation: "When I came to you, you should have been there, but you were not. When I called you, you should have answered, but you did not." or "When I came to speak to you, you did not respond to me."

Was my hand too short to ransom you? Was there no power in me to rescue you?

Yahweh uses two similar questions to rebuke the people for believing that he was not strong enough to rescue them. Alternate translation: "My hand was certainly not too short for me to ransom you, and I had the power to rescue you!" or "I certainly have the power to rescue you from your enemies."

Was my hand too short

Here the word "hand" represents Yahweh's power. Yahweh not being strong enough is spoken of as if his hand were short. Alternate translation: "Was I not strong enough"

Was there no power in me

"Did I not have the power"

I make the rivers a desert

Yahweh speaks of drying up the rivers as if he were turning them into a desert. Alternate translation: "I make the rivers as dry as a desert"

their fish die for lack of water and rot

"their fish die and rot for lack of water." The word "their" refers to the sea and the rivers.

Isaiah 50:3

I clothe the sky with darkness; I cover it with sackcloth

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of causing the sky to become dark as if he were clothing it with sackcloth. Alternate

translation: "I make the sky dark, as if it were wearing dark sackcloth"

Isaiah 50:4

General Information:

Yahweh's servant begins to speak.

The Lord Yahweh has given me a tongue as one of those who are taught

The word "tongue" represents what he says. Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh has enabled him to speak as one who has learned to speak skillfully. Alternate translation: "The Lord Yahweh has enabled me to be a skillful speaker" or 2) Yahweh has taught him what to say. Alternate translation: "The Lord Yahweh has enabled me to speak what he has taught me"

he awakens my ear to hear

Here "my ear" refers to Yahweh's servant. Yahweh enabling him to hear and understand what Yahweh teaches him is spoken of as if Yahweh awakened his ear from sleep. Alternate translation: "he has enabled me to understand what he says"

like those who are taught

The servant compares himself with a student who learns from his teacher. Possible meanings are 1) "like one who learns from his teacher" or 2) "like one whom he has taught"

Isaiah 50:5

General Information:

The servant of Yahweh continues speaking.

The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear

Yahweh enabling his servant to hear and understand is spoken of as if Yahweh opened his ear. Alternate translation: "The Lord Yahweh has enabled me to hear and understand him"

I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away backward

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Disobeying what Yahweh said is spoken of as if it were turning one's back toward him. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "I obeyed what he said"

Isaiah 50:6

I gave my back to those who beat me, and my cheeks to those who plucked out my beard

Allowing people to beat him and pluck out his beard is spoken of as if it were giving his back and cheeks to them. Alternate translation: "I allowed people to beat me on my back and to pluck out my beard from my cheeks"

I did not hide my face from acts of shame and spitting

Hiding one's face means to protect oneself. Alternate translation: "I did not defend myself when they mocked me and spat on me"

Isaiah 50:7

General Information:

Yahweh's servant continues speaking.

therefore I am not disgraced

Even though the servant has been mistreated, he will not be ashamed because he has obeyed Yahweh. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "therefore I will not be ashamed"

so I have made my face like flint

Here "my face" refers to the servant. The servant being steadfastly determined to obey Yahweh is spoken of as if his face were as hard as flint. Alternate translation: "so I am absolutely determined"

for I know that I will not be put to shame

The servant looks to the future with confidence, secure in Yahweh's calling. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for I know that my enemies will not be able to make me feel shame"

Isaiah 50:8

General Information:

Yahweh's servant continues speaking.

Who will oppose me? Let us stand ... Who is my accuser? Let him come

The servant uses these questions to emphasize that there is no one who can legitimately accuse him of wrong. Alternate translation: "If anyone would oppose me, let us stand ... If anyone would accuse me, let him come"

Isaiah 50:9

Who will declare me guilty?

The servant uses this question to assert that no one can declare him guilty. Alternate translation: "There is no one who can declare me guilty."

they will all wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up

There being no one left to accuse the servant of being guilty is spoken of as if the accusers were garments that wear thin and are eaten by moths.

Isaiah 50:10

General Information:

The servant continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Who among you fears Yahweh? Who obeys the voice of his servant? Who walks in deep darkness without light? He should ... his God.

The servant uses these questions to identify those to whom he is speaking. Alternate translation: "If someone among you fears Yahweh and obeys the

voice of his servant, but he walks in deep darkness without light, then he should ... his God."

obeys the voice of his servant

Here the word "voice" represents what the servant says. Alternate translation: "obeys his servant"

walks in deep darkness without light

The servant speaks of people who are suffering and feel helpless as if they were walking in a very dark place. Alternate translation: "is suffering and feels helpless"

trust in the name of Yahweh and lean on his God

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Here the word "name" represents Yahweh himself. Trusting in God is spoken of as if it were leaning on

him. Alternate translation: "trust in Yahweh, his God"

Isaiah 50:11

all you who light fires ... flames that you have ignited

This continues the metaphor from the previous verse of people who walk in darkness. Here people who try to live according to their own wisdom instead of trusting in Yahweh are spoken of as if they lit their own fires and carried about torches in order to see in the dark.

You will lie down in a place of pain

Here to "lie down" refers to dying. Dying painfully is spoken of as if it were lying down in a place where they will experience pain. Alternate translation: "You will die with great suffering"

Chapter 51

- ¹ Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek Yahweh:
look at the rock from which you were chiseled
and to the quarry from which you were cut.
- ² Look at Abraham, your father,
and to Sarah, who bore you;
for when he was a lone individual,
I called him. I blessed him and made him many.
- ³ Yes, Yahweh will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places;
her wilderness he made like Eden,
and her desert plains beside the Jordan River valley like the garden of Yahweh;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving, and the sound of singing.
- ⁴ "Be attentive to me, my people;
and listen to me, my people!
For a law will go out from me,
and I will make my justice to be a light for the nations.
- ⁵ My righteousness is near;
my salvation will go out,
and my arm will judge the nations;
the coastlands will wait for me;
for my arm they will eagerly wait.
- ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the sky,
and look at the earth beneath,
for the heavens will vanish away like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and its inhabitants will die like flies.
But my salvation will continue forever,
and my righteousness will never stop working.
- ⁷ Listen to me, you who know what is right,
you people who have my law in your heart:
Do not fear the scorn of men,
nor be dismayed by their abuse.
- ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool;
but my righteousness will be forever,
and my salvation to all generations."
- ⁹ Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength,
arm of Yahweh.
Awake as in the days of old,
the generations of ancient times.
Is it not you who crushed Rahab,
you who pierced the sea monster?
- ¹⁰ Did you not dry up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
and make the depths of the sea into a way
for the redeemed to pass through?
- ¹¹ The ransomed of Yahweh will return
and come to Zion with cries of joy
and with gladness forever on their heads;
and gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and mourning will flee away.
- ¹² "I, I, am he who comforts you.
Why are you afraid of men, who will die,

- the sons of mankind, who are made like grass?
- 13 Why have you forgotten Yahweh your Maker,
 who stretched out the heavens
 and laid the foundations of the earth?
 You are in constant dread every day
 because of the hot fury of the oppressor
 when he decides to destroy.
 Where is the fury of the oppressor?
- 14 The one who is bent down, Yahweh will hurry to release;
 he will not die and go down to the pit, nor will he lack bread.
- 15 For I am Yahweh your God,
 who churns up the sea so that its waves roar—
 Yahweh of hosts is his name.
- 16 I have placed my words in your mouth,
 and I have covered you in the shadow of my hand,
 that I may plant the heavens,
 lay the foundations of the earth,
 and say to Zion, 'You are my people.'"
- 17 Awake, awake,
 stand up, Jerusalem,
 you who have drunk out of the hand of Yahweh
 from the bowl of his anger;
 you who have drunk out of the bowl,
 down to the dregs from the cup of staggering.
- 18 There is no one among all the sons she has born
 to guide her;
 there is no one among all the sons that she has raised
 to take her by the hand.
- 19 These two troubles happened to you—
 who will grieve with you?—
 desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword.
 Who will comfort you? ^[1]
- 20 Your sons have fainted;
 they lie at every street corner,
 like an antelope in a net;
 they are filled with the anger of Yahweh,
 the rebuke of your God.
- 21 But now hear this, you oppressed one
 and drunken one, but not drunk with wine:
- 22 Your Lord Yahweh, your God,
 who pleads the cause of his people, says this,
 "See, I have taken the cup of staggering from your hand—
 the bowl, which is the cup of my anger—
 so that you will not drink it again.
- 23 I will put it into the hand of your tormentors,
 those who have said to you,
 'Lie down, that we may walk over you';
 you made your back like the ground
 and like the street for them to walk on."

Footnotes

51:19 ^[1]The copies of the ancient Hebrew text and some modern translations have

Isaiah 51 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

There are many rhetorical questions in this chapter. These questions prove Yahweh's point and are intended to convince the readers.

Awake

In this chapter the author uses sleeping as a metaphor for sin. The people are told to "awake," meaning they are to repent and return to Yahweh. (See: sin and repent)

Isaiah 51:1

Listen to me

Here the word "me" refers to Yahweh.

look at the rock ... and to the quarry

Looking at something represents thinking about it. Alternate translation: "think about the rock ... and the quarry"

the rock from which you were chiseled and to the quarry from which you were cut

God speaks of the nation of Israel as if it were a building made of stones and as if their ancestors were a rock or quarry from which God cut them. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "your ancestors, who are like a rock from which you were chiseled and a quarry from which you were cut"

the rock from which you were chiseled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the rock from which I chiseled you"

chiseled

"cut with a chisel" or "cut"

the quarry from which you were cut

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the quarry from which I cut you"

Isaiah 51:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Abraham, your father

God speaks of their ancestor as if he were their father. Alternate translation: "Abraham, your forefather" or "Abraham, your ancestor"

Sarah, who bore you

God speaks of Abraham's wife as if she were their mother and had given birth to them. Alternate

translation: "Abraham's wife, Sarah, of whom you are all descendants"

when he was a lone individual

This means when he did not have any children yet. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "when he had no children"

made him many

God speaks of Abraham's descendants being many as if Abraham were many. Alternate translation: "made his descendants many" or "made him have many descendants"

Isaiah 51:3

Yahweh will comfort Zion

The city of Zion, which is also called Jerusalem, here represents the people of Zion. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will comfort the people of Zion"

he will comfort all her waste places

Here "waste places" represents the people who live in those desolate areas. Alternate translation: "he will comfort the people who live in all her waste places"

her waste places ... her wilderness ... her desert plains

The word "her" refers to Zion. Cities are often spoken of as if they were women.

waste places

places that have been destroyed

her wilderness he made like Eden, and her desert plains ... like the garden of Yahweh

These phrases mean that God will make the empty places in Israel beautiful. In prophecy, events that will happen in the future are often described as being in the past. This emphasizes that they will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "he will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert plains ... like the garden of Yahweh"

joy and gladness will be found in her

Joy and gladness mean the same thing. Being found there represents being there. Alternate translation: "there will be joy and gladness in Zion again"

Isaiah 51:4

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to the people of Israel.

Be attentive to me ... listen to me

These two phrases mean the same thing. Together they strengthen the command to listen.

I will make my justice to be a light for the nations

Here God's justice represents his law, and a light represents knowledge of what is right. This means the people of the nations will understand and obey God's law. Alternate translation: "my law will teach the nations what is right" or "the nations will know my law"

a law will go out from me

A law is spoken of as if it were able to move itself. Alternate translation: "I will issue a law"

law

or "decree" or "instruction"

Isaiah 51:5

My righteousness is near

The idea of "near" represents "soon." God's righteousness being near represents him soon showing his righteousness. He will do this by fulfilling his promises and saving people. Alternate translation: "I will soon show my righteousness"

my salvation will go out

God speaks of saving people as if his salvation were a thing that could go out to them. Alternate translation: "I will save people"

my arm will judge the nations

Here God's arm represents his power, and judging represents ruling. Alternate translation: "I will rule the nations with my power"

the coastlands

This refers to the people who live on the coasts of distant lands across the sea. Alternate translation: "the people who live on the coastlands" or "the people who live in the lands across the sea"

for my arm they will eagerly wait

Here God's arm represents what he will do. Here it refers to him saving people. Alternate translation: "they will eagerly wait for me to do something" or "they will eagerly wait for me to save them"

Isaiah 51:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Lift up your eyes to the sky

Lifting the eyes represents looking at something above. Alternate translation: "Look up at the sky"

like smoke ... like a garment ... like flies

All of these refer to things that quickly and easily disappear or become useless.

my salvation will continue forever

God's "salvation" here represents the result of his salvation, which is freedom. Alternate translation: "I will save you, you will be free forever"

my righteousness will never stop working

God's "righteousness" here represents him ruling righteously. Alternate translation: "my righteous rule will never end" or "I will rule righteously forever"

Isaiah 51:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

who have my law in your heart

Having God's law in the heart represents knowing God's law and wanting to obey it. Alternate translation: "who know and honor my law"

nor be dismayed by their abuse

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and do not lose your courage when they hurt you"

Isaiah 51:8

For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool

God speaks of people who abuse those who are righteous as if they were wool garments, and of their being destroyed as if insects ate them.

my righteousness will be forever

God's "righteousness" here represents him ruling righteously. Alternate translation: "my righteous rule will be forever" or "I will rule righteously forever"

and my salvation to all generations

God's "salvation" here represents the result of his salvation, which is freedom. Being "to all generations" represents lasting forever. Alternate translation: "I will save you, and you will be free forever"

Isaiah 51:9

Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, arm of Yahweh

People urgently ask Yahweh's arm to help them as if his arm were a person. If it would be odd to speak to the arm, this can be addressed directly to Yahweh instead. Alternate translation: "Awake, awake, Yahweh, and clothe your arm with strength"

Awake, awake ... arm of Yahweh

People speak as if Yahweh's arm were asleep because it has not been helping them. Here the "arm of Yahweh" represents Yahweh, specifically him helping people. The word "Awake" is repeated to show that they need God's help urgently.

clothe yourself with strength

Strength is spoken of as if it were some kind of clothing that people would wear to strengthen themselves in battle. Alternate translation: "make yourself strong"

Is it not you who crushed Rahab, you who pierced the sea monster?

The speaker uses a question to emphasize Yahweh's power to do mighty things. Alternate translation: "It is you who crushed Rahab, you who pierced the monster."

Rahab ... the sea monster

Rahab was the name of this mythological serpent in the sea. Rahab can symbolize either the nation of Egypt or evil and chaos.

Isaiah 51:10

Did you not dry up the sea ... for the redeemed to pass through?

Again, the speaker uses questions to emphasize Yahweh's power to do mighty things. This refers to Yahweh opening the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross and escape the army of Egypt. Alternate translation: "You dried up the sea ... for the redeemed to pass through."

Isaiah 51:11

General Information:

This is very similar to Isaiah 35:10.

The ransomed of Yahweh

To "ransom" means to "rescue." This refers to people whom Yahweh has rescued. Alternate translation: "Those whom Yahweh has rescued"

with gladness forever on their heads

This uses a person's head to mean the person as a whole. Alternate translation: "they will be glad forever"

gladness and joy ... sorrow and mourning

The words "gladness" and "joy" mean basically the same thing, as do "sorrow" and "mourning." Together they emphasize the intensity of these emotions.

gladness and joy will overtake them

This speaks of the people being overwhelmed by gladness and joy by giving these emotions the human quality of being able to overtake someone. Alternate translation: "they will be overwhelmed by joy and gladness" or "they will be extremely glad and joyful"

sorrow and mourning will flee away

This speaks of the people no longer being sorrowful and mourning by speaking of these emotions as if they could run away. Alternate translation: "they will no longer be sorrowful and mourning"

Isaiah 51:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I, I, am he

The word "I" is repeated for emphasis. If this is unnatural in your language, the repetition does not need to be used. Alternate translation: "I am he"

Why are you afraid of men ... like grass?

This rhetorical question emphasizes that people who have the Lord's protection should not be afraid of human beings. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of men ... like grass."

who are made like grass

This phrase compares men to grass to emphasize that their lives are short and that they die quickly. Alternate translation: "who live and die quickly like grass" or "who will wither and disappear like grass"

who are made like

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who are like"

Isaiah 51:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Why have you forgotten Yahweh ... earth?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that they should not forget Yahweh. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have forgotten Yahweh ... earth."

Maker

See how you translated this name for Yahweh in Isaiah 17:7.

who stretched out the heavens

"who spread out the sky." This speaks of Yahweh having created the heavens as if he had stretched them out in the same way one would stretch out a large garment. Alternate translation: "who stretched out the heavens like a garment"

the foundations of the earth

The word "foundation" normally refers to a stone structure that gives support to a building from underneath. Here it describes a similar structure that was thought to support and hold the earth in place. See how you translated this phrase in Isaiah 24:18.

the hot fury of the oppressor when he decides to destroy
"the oppressor's hot fury when he decides to cause destruction"

hot fury

Here the word "hot" means "strong" or "great."
Alternate translation: "great fury"

Where is the fury of the oppressor?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that the people should not fear those who want to oppress them. Their oppressors are no longer a threat to them. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "The fury of the oppressor is not a threat!"

Isaiah 51:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

The one who is bent down

This refers to the people of Israel who are slaves of the Babylonians. This phrase describes how they work. Alternate translation: "The slave"

the pit

This refers to Sheol. Alternate translation: "the pit of Sheol" or "the grave"

nor will he lack bread

Here "bread" represents food in general. This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: "nor will he be without food"

Isaiah 51:15

who churns up the sea

This speaks of Yahweh causing the sea to move and the waves to rise and fall as if he were stirring the sea as one stirs the contents of a bowl with a large spoon. Alternate translation: "who causes the sea to churn" or "who makes the sea move up and down"

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this name for Yahweh in Isaiah 1:9.

Isaiah 51:16

I have placed my words in your mouth

This speaks of Yahweh telling Isaiah what to say as if his words were a physical object Yahweh had placed in Isaiah's mouth. Alternate translation: "I have told you what to say"

I have covered you in the shadow of my hand

Yahweh's "hand" refers to his power. This speaks of Yahweh protecting Isaiah as if his hand were covering him to protect him. Alternate translation: "my power has kept you safe" or "I have protected you and kept you safe"

that I may plant the heavens

The word "plant" means to establish something in the ground. Here Yahweh firmly establishing the heavens is spoken of as if the heavens were a tent that he would spread out and firmly set it in place with tent pegs. Alternate translation: "that I may establish the heavens"

lay the foundations of the earth

The word "foundation" normally refers to a stone structure that gives support to a building from underneath. Here it describes a similar structure that was thought to support and hold the earth in place. See how you translated a similar phrase in Isaiah 24:18.

Isaiah 51:17

Awake, awake, stand up, Jerusalem

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people who live there. Yahweh speaks to the people of Jerusalem as if they were there listening to him. Alternate translation: "Awake, awake, stand up, you people of Jerusalem"

Awake, awake, stand up

"Be alert and arise." The repetition of the word "awake" emphasizes the urgency of the call to arouse the people of Israel. It is not used to wake them from literal sleep.

you who have drunk out of the hand of Yahweh ... from the cup of staggering

Yahweh speaks of having punished his people as if he had forced them to drink from a bowl that was filled with his anger. And when they drank from the bowl of his anger, they staggered as if they had drank a lot of wine.

down to the dregs

The word "dregs" means the solid pieces at the very bottom of a container that has a liquid in it. Alternate translation: "down to the very bottom"

out of the hand of Yahweh

Here Yahweh is referred to by his hand to emphasize that he is the one who gave the bowl to

his people. Alternate translation: "that he gave to you"

from the cup of staggering

"from the cup that caused you to stagger as if you were drunk on wine"

staggering

not walking straight, or stumbling while walking

Isaiah 51:18

There is no one ... to guide her; there is no one ... to take her by the hand

These two clauses have the same meaning and can be combined. This speaks of Jerusalem being helpless as if the city were a drunk woman without a son to help her walk safely. Alternate translation: "You have no one to help you! You are like a drunk old woman without a son to take her by the hand and guide her"

Isaiah 51:19

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

who will grieve with you? ... Who will comfort you?

Isaiah uses questions to emphasize that now there is no one to weep with them or comfort them. These questions may be written as statements. Alternate translation: "but there is no one to grieve with you ... There is no one to comfort you."

These two troubles

The two troubles refer to the following two phrases: "desolation and destruction" and "the famine and the sword."

desolation and destruction

These words have similar meanings and emphasize the destruction of the land caused by the opposing army. Alternate translation: "your enemies have left your city empty and ruined"

the famine and the sword

The words "famine" and "sword" describe the trouble that will come upon the people. The "sword" refers to "war." Alternate translation: "many of you have died from hunger and war"

Isaiah 51:20

they lie at every street corner

This is generalization. Many children will lie in the street, but not necessarily on every street corner. Alternate translation: "they lie on the street"

like an antelope in a net

This speaks of the children being exhausted and helpless as if they were an antelope caught in a trap. Alternate translation: "they are helpless, like an antelope caught in a net" or "as helpless as a trapped antelope"

antelope

This is an animal, similar to a deer, that has horns and runs very fast. Alternate translation: "deer"

they are filled with the anger of Yahweh, the rebuke of your God

The "anger of Yahweh" refers to Yahweh punishing his people because of his anger against them. This speaks of the people having been severely punished as if they had become full of Yahweh's anger. Also, the word "rebuke" can be written as a verb. Alternate translation: "they have been severely punished by Yahweh because he was angry with them and rebuked them"

Isaiah 51:21

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you oppressed one and drunken one

Yahweh uses the word "one" here to refer to all of the oppressed people. Alternate translation: "you oppressed people and drunken people"

drunken one, but not drunk with wine

This speaks of the people acting drunk because they are suffering as if they have become drunk from being forced to drink the bowl of Yahweh's anger. Alternate translation: "you who are drunk from drinking the wine of the bowl of Yahweh's anger" or "you who act drunk, because you have suffered greatly"

Isaiah 51:22

See, I have taken the cup of staggering from your hand—the bowl, which is the cup of my anger—so that

This speaks of Yahweh no longer being angry with his people as if his anger were the contents of a cup that he was taking away from them. Alternate translation: "I will no longer be angry with you. See, it is like I have taken away from you the cup that made you stagger, that is, the cup that was full of my anger, so that"

See

This is used to draw the listeners' attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

the cup of staggering

The word "cup" refers to what is in the cup. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 51:17]

the bowl, which is the cup of my anger

Yahweh speaks of having punished people as if he had forced them to drink from a bowl that was filled with his anger. See how you translated a similar phrase in Isaiah 51:17. Alternate translation: "the bowl which is filled with my anger" or "the cup which is filled with my anger"

Isaiah 51:23

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I will put it into the hand of your tormentors

This speaks of Yahweh punishing their enemies as if he were going to force them to drink from the cup filled with his anger.

I will put it into the hand of your tormentors

It is implied that by putting the cup of his anger in their hand Yahweh will be forcing them to drink what is in the cup. Alternate translation: "I will

force your tormentors to drink from the wine of the bowl of my anger"

your tormentors

The word "tormentors" may be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: "those who have tormented you" or "those who have caused you to suffer"

you made your back like the ground and like the street for them to walk on

This compares the way their enemies walked on their back to the way people walk on the street. Alternate translation: "you lay in the streets so your enemies could walk on your backs"

Chapter 52

¹ Awake, awake,
 put on your strength, Zion;
 put on your beautiful garments,
 Jerusalem, holy city;
 for never again will the uncircumcised
 or the unclean enter you.

² Shake yourself off from the dust;
 arise and sit, Jerusalem;
 take off the chain from your neck,
 captive, daughter of Zion.

³ For this is what Yahweh says,

 "You were sold for nothing,
 and you will be redeemed without money."

⁴ For this is what the Lord Yahweh says,

 "In the beginning my people went down to live temporarily in Egypt;
 and Assyria has oppressed them for no good reason.

⁵ Now what do I have here—this is Yahweh's declaration—

 seeing that my people are taken away for nothing?
 Those who rule over them mock—this is Yahweh's declaration—
 and my name is blasphemed continually
 all day long. ^[1]

⁶ Therefore my people will know my name;
 they will know in that day that I am the one who says,
 "Yes, it is I!"

⁷ How beautiful on the mountains
 are the feet of the messenger who brings good news,
 who announces peace,
 who bears good tidings,
 who announces salvation,
 who says to Zion,
 "Your God reigns!"

⁸ Listen, your watchmen raise their voices,
 together they shout for joy,
 for they will see, every eye of theirs,
 Yahweh's return to Zion.

⁹ Break out into joyful singing together,
 you ruins of Jerusalem;
 for Yahweh has comforted his people;
 he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰ Yahweh has bared his holy arm
 in the sight of all the nations;
 all the earth will see
 the salvation of our God.

¹¹ Leave, leave, go out from there;
 touch nothing unclean;
 leave from her midst; purify yourselves,
 you who carry the vessels of Yahweh.

- ¹² For you will not go out in a rush,
nor will you leave in a panic;
for Yahweh will go before you;
and the God of Israel will be your rearguard.
- ¹³ Look, my servant will act wisely;
he will be high and lifted up, and he will be exalted.
- ¹⁴ As many were horrified at you—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man,
and his form no longer looked like anything human.
- ¹⁵ Even so, my servant will sprinkle many nations
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For that which they had not been told, they will see,
and that which they had not heard, they will understand.

Footnotes

52:5 ^[1]Instead of the ULB

Isaiah 52 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

The prophecies of this chapter occur after the exile in Babylon and are not in reference to the people contemporary to Isaiah. (See: prophet)

There is an important teaching or prophecy about the Messiah beginning in this chapter and continues through the next chapter. This prophesy begins in 52:13 and scholars usually note that it portrays the Messiah as a "suffering servant." (See: christ)

Isaiah 52:1

Awake, awake

This word is repeated for emphasis and shows urgency. Isaiah trying to arouse the people is spoken of as if he were trying to wake them up from sleep.

put on your strength

Being strong again is spoken of as if strength were clothing that a person puts on. Alternate translation: "be strong"

Zion ... Jerusalem

Both of these refer to the people who live in Jerusalem. Isaiah is speaking to the people as if they were there listening to him. Alternate translation: "people of Zion ... people of Jerusalem"

the uncircumcised or the unclean

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "Those who are uncircumcised or those who are unclean"

the unclean

This refers to unclean people. A person who God considers spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. Alternate translation: "those who are not acceptable to God"

enter you

Here "you" refers to Jerusalem which represents the people who live there. It is understood that the uncircumcised and unclean people would enter the city to attack the people. Alternate translation: "enter your city to attack you"

Isaiah 52:2

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Shake yourself off from the dust; arise and sit, Jerusalem

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "People of Jerusalem, sit up and shake the dirt off of yourself"

take off the chain from your neck, captive

It is implied that the people of Jerusalem were wearing chains because they were slaves while exiled in Babylon. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

daughter of Zion

This is an idiom. The "daughter" of a city means the people of the city. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 1:8]

Isaiah 52:3

You were sold for nothing, and you will be redeemed without money

This speaks about Yahweh as if he were the owner of the people of Israel. Since he is the rightful owner he can give them away or take them back whenever he wants. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I sold you for nothing, and I will redeem you without money"

Isaiah 52:4

In the beginning

Here "beginning" refers to the start of Israel's history as they were first becoming a people.

went down to ... Egypt

"went to ... Egypt." It was common to use the phrase "went down" when speaking of traveling from Canaan to Egypt.

Assyria has oppressed them

Assyria refers to the people of Assyria. Alternate translation: "the people of Assyria have treated them badly"

Isaiah 52:5

Now what do I have here ... seeing that my people are taken away for nothing?

Yahweh uses a question to make the people pay attention to what he is about to say. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Now look at what is happening ... my people are again taken away for nothing."

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

seeing that my people are taken away for nothing

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I see the enemy taking my people away for nothing"

for nothing

Possible meanings are 1) "for nothing" means the Babylonians took the people unjustly and without

cause or 2) this continues the metaphor from [Isaiah 52:3]

Those who rule over them mock

This refers to the Babylonians who have conquered the people. However, some versions have, "Those who rule over them wail." For these versions, this passage refers to the leaders of the Israelites in captivity.

my name is blasphemed continually all day long

Here "name" represents Yahweh's reputation. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those who watch the enemy take away my people are continually saying evil things about me"

Isaiah 52:6

Therefore my people will know my name

Here "name" represents Yahweh's reputation. Alternate translation: "Therefore my people will truly know who I am"

Isaiah 52:7

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking to the people of Israel.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news

Here "feet" represents a messenger who is walking. Alternate translation: "It is beautiful to see a messenger coming over the mountains to announce good news"

to Zion

Here "Zion" represents the people of Zion. Alternate translation: "to the people of Zion"

Isaiah 52:8

raise their voices

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "shout loudly"

every eye of theirs

Here "eye" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "every one of them"

Isaiah 52:9

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you ruins of Jerusalem

Isaiah speaks of the ruins of Jerusalem as if they were a person that could rejoice. This represents the people of Jerusalem who were defeated. Alternate translation: "you people who live among the ruins of Jerusalem"

he has redeemed Jerusalem

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people. Alternate translation: "he has redeemed the people of Jerusalem"

Isaiah 52:10

bared his holy arm

Here "arm" represents Yahweh's power. Yahweh showing all the people of the nations that he is holy and powerful is spoken of as if Yahweh were a warrior who removed his cloak, baring his arms for battle. Alternate translation: "showed his holiness and mighty power"

all the nations; all the earth

Here "nations" and "earth" represent the people of all the nations all over the earth.

Isaiah 52:11

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Leave, leave

This word is repeated to emphasize that the people must indeed leave, although not necessarily right away.

go out from there

It is assumed knowledge that the people of Israel were slaves in Babylon. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "go out from the land where you are slaves"

touch nothing unclean

Something that Yahweh has stated is unfit to touch or eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. Alternate translation: "touch nothing that is unacceptable to Yahweh"

leave from her midst

Here "her" represents Babylon.

Isaiah 52:12

Yahweh will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearguard

Yahweh protecting his people from their enemies is spoken of as if he were the warriors who go ahead

of the people and the warriors who stay behind the people to protect them.

Isaiah 52:13

he will be high and lifted up, and he will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. These two phrases "high and lifted up" and "will be exalted" have basically the same meaning and emphasize that Yahweh will honor his servant. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 33:10]

Isaiah 52:14

his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man

It is implied that the servant is disfigured because enemies beat him very badly. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "his enemies beat his body so badly that he did not even look like a human anymore"

Isaiah 52:15

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about his servant.

my servant will sprinkle many nations

The servant causing the people of the nations to be acceptable to Yahweh is spoken of as if the servant were a priest who sprinkles the blood of a sacrifice to make someone or something acceptable to Yahweh.

will sprinkle

The Hebrew word translated "sprinkle" here can also be translated as "surprise" or "startle," which some versions of the Bible do.

many nations

Here "nations" represents the people of the nations.

kings will shut their mouths

The phrase "shut their mouths" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "kings will stop talking" or "kings will be silent"

that which they had not been told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that which no one had told them" or "something no one had told them"

Chapter 53

- ¹ Who has believed our message,
and to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?
- ² For he grew up before Yahweh like a sapling,
and like a sprout out of parched earth;
he had no remarkable appearance or splendor;
when we saw him, there was no beauty to attract us.
- ³ He was despised and rejected by people;
a man of sorrows, and one familiar with pain.
Like one from whom men hide their faces,
he was despised; and we considered him insignificant.
- ⁴ But surely he has borne our sicknesses
and carried our sorrows;
yet we thought he was being punished by God,
struck by God, and afflicted.
- ⁵ But he was pierced because of our rebellious deeds;
he was crushed because of our iniquities.
The punishment for our peace was on him,
and with his wounds we are healed.
- ⁶ We all like sheep have gone astray;
we have each turned to his own way,
and Yahweh has placed on him
the iniquity of us all.
- ⁷ He was oppressed; yet when he humbled himself,
he did not open his mouth;
as a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and as a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
- ⁸ By coercion and judgment he was taken away.
As for his generation, who thought that he was cut off from the land of the living,
or that he was punished
for the transgression of my people?
- ⁹ They placed his grave with the criminals,
with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
nor had there been any deceit in his mouth.
- ¹⁰ Yet it was Yahweh's will to crush him and make him ill.
When he makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring, he will prolong his days,
and Yahweh's purpose will be accomplished through him.
- ¹¹ After the suffering of his life,
he will see light and be satisfied by his knowledge. ^[1]
My righteous servant will justify many;
he will bear their iniquities. ^[2]
- ¹² Therefore will I give him his portion among the multitudes,
and he will divide the plunder with the many,
because he exposed himself to death
and was numbered with the transgressors.
He bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Footnotes

53:11 ^[1] Instead of

53:11 ^[2] Many modern translations supply

Isaiah 53 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

In this chapter there is an important teaching or prophecy about the Messiah and his life and ministry. It begins in 52:13 and scholars usually note that it portrays the Messiah as a "suffering servant." (See: prophet and christ)

Special concepts in this chapter

Atonement

This chapter prophesies about the death of Christ for sin. Most scholars believe it teaches that Christ was a righteous man who died for the sins of mankind. This is usually referred to as the atonement. (See: sin and righteous and atonement)

Isaiah 53:1

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant. Here Isaiah describes events that will happen in the future as if they happened in the past. This emphasizes that they certainly will happen.

Who has believed our message

What Isaiah just found out is so amazing that he wonders if the exiles will believe it. The "we" includes him and those in exile. Alternate translation: "It is hard for anyone to believe what we are telling them"

to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?

Arm refers to God's power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has revealed his power to people."

Isaiah 53:2

For he grew up before Yahweh like a sapling

Here "he" refers to God's servant whom Isaiah compares to a very young tree. This emphasizes that he will appear weak.

out of parched earth

"parched earth" is hard and dry ground that will not allow plants to grow and represents where the servant of Yahweh will come. Alternate translation: "out of an impossible situation"

Isaiah 53:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

He was despised and rejected by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People considered him as nothing and rejected him"

a man of sorrows

"a man knowing all kinds of sadness"

from whom men hide their faces

"Face" represents a person's attention or fellowship. Hiding one's face means to turn away from someone. Alternate translation: "from whom people turn away"

he was despised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they considered him to be worthless"

Isaiah 53:4

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

he has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows

To "bear" or carry an abstraction like sickness and sorrow represents taking it up. Alternate translation: "he has taken our sicknesses and sorrows upon himself"

yet we thought he was being punished by God, struck by God, and afflicted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "yet we thought God was punishing and afflicting him"

Isaiah 53:5

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

But he was pierced because of our rebellious deeds; he was crushed because of our iniquities

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that the servant suffered because of the people's iniquities. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed the enemy to stab him and kill him because of our iniquities"

The punishment for our peace was on him

This refers to peace with God. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "He accepted this punishment so we could live in harmony"

with his wounds we are healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed us by his suffering of the wounds"

Isaiah 53:6

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

We all like sheep have gone astray

Sheep often leave the path on which the shepherd leads them. Isaiah means that we do what we want instead of what God commands.

the iniquity of us all

Our "iniquity" here represents the guilt for our sin. Alternate translation: "the guilt for the sin of every one of us"

Isaiah 53:7

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

He was oppressed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They treated him harshly"

he did not open his mouth

"Mouth" represents what a person says. Opening one's mouth means to speak. Alternate translation: "he did not protest"

as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is silent

Isaiah compares the servant to a lamb and a sheep to emphasize that he will remain silent as people harm and humiliate him.

as a lamb that is led to the slaughter

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as a lamb is silent as a person slaughters it"

Isaiah 53:8

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

By coercion and judgment he was taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They coerced him, judged him, and took him away"

coercion

forcing a person to do what that person does not want to do

As for his generation, who thought that he was cut off ... my people?

Some modern translations read, "As for his generation, who thought about it? He was cut off ... my people." In this reading, the words "his generation" refers to "his descendants," and the rhetorical question can be translated as a statement, "No one thought about his descendants."

As for his generation, who thought that ... my people?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one in his generation thought that ... my people."

he was cut off from the land of the living

"Cut off" here refers to death. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died" or "death took him away"

of my people

"of the people of Israel"

Isaiah 53:9

nor had there been any deceit in his mouth

"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "nor did he deceive anyone when he spoke"

Isaiah 53:10

General Information:

Isaiah continues describing Yahweh's servant ([Isaiah 53:1-2](#)).

he will see his offspring

Here, "offspring" means those people that Yahweh has forgiven because of the servant's sacrifice.

he will prolong his days

This speaks of making him live for more time. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will make his servant live again"

Yahweh's purpose will be accomplished through him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will accomplish his purpose through his servant"

Isaiah 53:11

After the suffering of his life
Here "his life" refers to the servant. Alternate translation: "After the servant has suffered"

he will see light
Many versions understand "light" here to stand for life. That is, the servant will become alive again.

My righteous servant
Here "my" refers to Yahweh.

he will bear their iniquities
The word "bear" means carry. Possible meanings are 1) "their iniquities" is a metonym representing the punishment for their sins. Alternate translation: "he will take their punishment" or "he will be punished for their sins" or 2) "their iniquities" is a metonym representing their guilt. Alternate translation: "he will take their guilt upon himself" or "he will be guilty for their sins"

Isaiah 53:12

General Information:
Yahweh continues describing his servant.

Therefore will I give him his portion among the multitudes, and he will divide the plunder with the many
These two clauses mean basically the same thing. "Portion" and "plunder" refer to what a king rewards his army with after a battle. This means God will greatly honor his servant because of his sacrifice.

the multitudes
Many versions interpret this expression as "the many" or "the strong."

because he exposed himself to death
"Exposed" means to be vulnerable or unprotected. The servant of Yahweh put himself in a situation where he would die. Alternate translation: "he willingly accepted the possibility of death"

was numbered with the transgressors
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allowed people to treat him as a criminal"

Chapter 54

- 1 "Sing, you barren woman,
 you who have not given birth;
 break into joyful singing and cry aloud,
 you who have never been in birth labor.
 For the children of the desolate one
 are more than the children of the married woman,"
 says Yahweh.
- 2 "Make your tent larger
 and spread your tent curtains farther out,
 unsparingly;
 lengthen your ropes
 and strengthen your stakes.
- 3 For you will spread out to the right hand and to the left,
 and your descendants will conquer nations
 and resettle desolate cities.
- 4 Do not fear for you will not be ashamed,
 nor be discouraged for you will not be disgraced;
 you will forget the shame of your youth
 and you will remember no more the disgrace of your widowhood.
- 5 For your Maker is your husband;
 Yahweh of hosts is his name.
 The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
 he is called the God of the whole earth.
- 6 For Yahweh has called you back
 as a wife abandoned and grieved in spirit,
 like a woman married young and rejected,"
 says your God.
- 7 "For a short time I abandoned you,
 but with great compassion I will gather you.
- 8 In a flood of anger
 I hid my face from you for a moment;
 but with everlasting covenant faithfulness
 I will have mercy on you—
 says Yahweh, the one who rescues you.
- 9 For this is like the waters of Noah to me:
 as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again pass over the earth,
 so have I sworn
 that I will not be angry with you or rebuke you.
- 10 Though the mountains may fall
 and the hills be shaken,
 yet my steadfast love will not turn away from you,
 nor will my covenant of peace be shaken—
 says Yahweh, who has mercy on you.
- 11 Afflicted one, storm-driven and uncomforted one,
 look, I will set your pavement in turquoise,
 and lay your foundations with sapphires.
- 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies
 and your gates of sparkling stones,
 and your outer wall of beautiful stones.
- 13 Then all your children will be taught by Yahweh;
 and the peace of your children will be great.
- 14 In righteousness you will be established,
 and you will be far from oppression,
 for you will not fear;
 and you will be far from terror,

for it will not come near to you.

¹⁵ Look, if anyone stirs up trouble, it will not be from me;
anyone who stirs up trouble with you will fall in defeat.

¹⁶ See, I have created the craftsman,
who blows the burning coals
and forges weapons as his work,
and I have created the destroyer to destroy.

¹⁷ No weapon that is formed against you will succeed;
and you will condemn everyone who accuses you.
This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh,
and their vindication from me—
this is Yahweh's declaration."

Isaiah 54 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's covenant faithfulness

This chapter focuses on Yahweh's faithfulness to fulfill his covenants. It references several different covenant promises in this chapter. (See: covenantfaith, faithful, fulfill and covenant and promise)

Isaiah 54:1

you barren woman ... children of the married woman
Yahweh telling the people of Jerusalem to rejoice because there will be many people living in Jerusalem again is spoken of as if Yahweh were telling a barren woman she is going to have many children.

break into joyful singing and cry aloud, you who have never been in birth labor
This statement means the same thing as the first part of the sentence.

For the children of the desolate one are more
An event that will happen in the future is spoken of as if it happened in the past. This emphasizes that the event will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "For the children of the desolate woman will be more"

the desolate one
Here "desolate" means that the woman's husband had rejected and abandoned her

Isaiah 54:2

General Information:
Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Make your tent larger ... strengthen your stakes

This continues the metaphor that began in [Isaiah 54:1]

Isaiah 54:3

For you will spread out
Here "you" is singular and refers to the barren woman. She represents herself and all of her descendants. Alternate translation: "For you and your descendants will spread out"

will conquer nations
Here "nations" represents the people. Alternate translation: "will conquer the people of other nations"

Isaiah 54:4

General Information:
Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

you will remember no more the disgrace of your widowhood
When Israel is sent into exile, Yahweh says this is like a woman becoming a widow. When they come back from exile, they will be so happy they will be like a woman who no longer remembers the disgrace of being a widow. Alternate Translation: "you will not remember how disgraced you felt when you were like a widow"

Isaiah 54:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

For your Maker is your husband

Yahweh loving and taking care of his people is spoken of as if he were their husband.

Maker

See how you translated this in Isaiah 17:7.

Yahweh of hosts

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:24.

The Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:16.

Redeemer

See how you translated this in Isaiah 41:14.

he is called the God of the whole earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he is the God of the whole earth"

Isaiah 54:6

Yahweh has called you back as a wife ... like a woman married young and rejected

Yahweh sending his people away into exile then bringing them back is spoken of as if Yahweh were a husband who had rejected his wife but now accepts her.

grieved in spirit

Here "spirit" represents a person's inner being. Alternate translation: "grieved" or "made sad"

Isaiah 54:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 54:8

In a flood of anger

Yahweh being very angry is spoken of as if his anger were a flood that overwhelms people. Alternate translation: "When I was very angry"

I hid my face from you

Here "hid my face" is an idiom that means God abandoned his people and let them suffer. Alternate translation: "I abandoned you"

but with everlasting covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." See how you translated "covenant faithfulness" in [Isaiah 16:5]

says Yahweh, the one who rescues you

Here Yahweh speaks about himself in the third person. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "that is what I, Yahweh, your rescuer, say to you"

Isaiah 54:9

the waters of Noah

This refers to the flood that Yahweh caused during the time of Noah.

Isaiah 54:10

Though the mountains may fall and the hills be shaken, yet my steadfast love will not ... be shaken

Mountains and hills are normally stable. Yahweh speaks of the possibility of them falling and being shaken to show that his steadfast love and his covenant of peace are even more stable. Alternate translation: "Even if the mountains were to fall and the hills were to shake, my steadfast love will not ... be shaken"

the hills be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the hills may shake"

my steadfast love will not turn away from you

Yahweh's continuing to love his people is spoken of as if his love would not turn away from the people. Alternate translation: "I will not stop loving you"

nor will my covenant of peace be shaken

Yahweh's not canceling his covenant with the people is spoken of as if his covenant were an object that would not be shaken. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and I will not cancel my covenant of peace" or "and I will surely give you peace as I promised in my covenant"

says Yahweh, who has mercy on you

Here Yahweh speaks about himself in the third person. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "that is what I, Yahweh, who acts mercifully, say"

Isaiah 54:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Afflicted one

Here Yahweh speaks to the city of Jerusalem as if it were listening to him. Here Jerusalem represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "You afflicted people of Jerusalem"

storm-driven

Yahweh speaks of the people as if they were blown around and damaged by the winds and storms. This means the people were hurt and without stability.

uncomforted one
"without comfort"

I will set your pavement in turquoise ... lay your foundations with sapphires
Yahweh describes in ideal terms how he will restore Jerusalem and cause it to be beautiful again. Although the language may be exaggerated, you should translate this just as Yahweh described it.

turquoise ... sapphires
These are precious gemstones. Turquoise is light blue-to-green, sapphires are typically dark blue.

Isaiah 54:12

I will make ... beautiful stones
Yahweh describes in ideal terms how he will restore Jerusalem and cause it to be beautiful again. Although the language may be exaggerated, you should translate this just as Yahweh described it.

rubies
These precious gemstones are red to pink.

Isaiah 54:13

General Information:
Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Then all your children will be taught by Yahweh
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "And Yahweh will teach all your children"

by Yahweh
Yahweh speaks of himself in the third person. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "by me, Yahweh"

Isaiah 54:14

In righteousness you will be established
The abstract noun "righteousness" can be stated as the adjective "right." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will cause you to be strong again because you will do what is right"

it will not come near to you
No one in the city or outsiders will ever terrify the inhabitants of Jerusalem again.

Isaiah 54:15

General Information:
Yahweh continue speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

stirs up trouble
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "causes trouble" or "troubles you"

will fall in defeat
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "you will defeat them in battle"

Isaiah 54:16

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 54:17

General Information:
Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

No weapon that is formed against you will succeed
Enemies not succeeding against Yahweh's people is spoken of as if their weapons would not succeed against Yahweh's people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Enemies may form weapons to attack you but they will not defeat you"

This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh
The reward that Yahweh will give to those who serve him is spoken of as if the reward were something they would inherit.

this is Yahweh's declaration
Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

Chapter 55

- ¹ "Hey! Everyone who is thirsty,
 come to the water,
 and you who have no money,
 come, buy and eat!
 Come, buy wine and milk
 without money and without cost.
- ² Why do you weigh out silver for what is not bread,
 and why do you labor for what does not satisfy?
 Listen carefully to me and eat what is good,
 and delight yourselves in fatness.
- ³ Turn your ears and come to me!
 Listen, that you may live!
 I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
 my reliable, faithful love that I promised to David.
- ⁴ Look, I have placed him as a witness to the nations,
 as a leader and commander to the peoples.
- ⁵ Look, you will call to a nation that you did not know;
 and a nation that did not know you will run to you
 because of Yahweh your God,
 the Holy One of Israel,
 who has glorified you."
- ⁶ Seek Yahweh while he may be found;
 call on him while he is nearby.
- ⁷ Let the wicked leave his path,
 and the man of sin his thoughts.
 Let him return to Yahweh, and he will pity him,
 and to our God, who will abundantly forgive him.
- ⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
 nor are your ways my ways—
 this is Yahweh's declaration—
- ⁹ for as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 so are my ways higher than your ways,
 and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- ¹⁰ For as the rain and snow
 come down from heaven
 and do not return there
 unless they saturate the earth
 and make it produce and sprout
 and give seed to the farmer who sows and bread to the eater,
- ¹¹ so also my word will be that goes from my mouth—
 it will not return to me empty,
 but it will achieve the purpose
 for which I sent it.
- ¹² For you will go out in joy
 and be led along peacefully;
 the mountains and the hills
 will break out in joyful shouts before you,
 and all the trees of the fields
 will clap their hands.
- ¹³ Instead of the thornbushes, the cypress will grow;
 and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree will grow,
 and it will be for Yahweh, for his name,
 as an everlasting sign
 that will not be cut off."

Isaiah 55 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Gentiles

Many scholars believe this chapter prophesies that Gentiles will be able to come to a saving faith in Yahweh. At this time, the Israelites believed that only an Israelite could be saved. (See: prophet and save and faith)

Isaiah 55:1

General Information:

Yahweh speaks of blessing the people freely as if he were selling food and drink to needy people for free.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem in exile through Isaiah.

Hey

This short word is called or shouted at people to get their attention for any reason. You should use whatever word or sound is used in your language to get people's attention.

come ... come ... Come

This word is repeated three times so the hearers will know that the speaker is sincere.

buy wine and milk without money and without cost

There is a sense of irony in this statement since a person usually has to use money to buy something. This emphasizes Yahweh's amazing grace in giving these things freely.

Isaiah 55:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Why do you weigh out ... bread, and why do you labor ... satisfy?

Yahweh asks these questions to rebuke the people. He speaks of the people seeking happiness apart from Yahweh as if they were purchasing things to eat that were not food and working for things that could not satisfy them. Alternate translation: "You should not weigh out silver ... bread, and you should not labor ... satisfy"

weigh out silver

This refers to counting silver coins in order to pay someone for something. Alternate translation: "pay money"

for what is not bread

Here the word "bread" represents food in general. It is implied that the people were buying things to eat that were not really food. Alternate translation: "for things to eat that are not really food"

eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness

The people trusting Yahweh for blessing and happiness is spoken of as if they are eating good food that is making them happy.

in fatness

The word "fatness" refers to meat that has plenty of fat on it and is an idiom for fine food. Alternate translation: "with the best foods"

Isaiah 55:3

Turn your ears

Listening to or paying attention to someone is spoken of as if it were turning one's ears to someone. Alternate translation: "Pay attention"

Isaiah 55:4

I have placed him

These words could refer to 1) what Yahweh did for King David in the past or 2) what God will do through one of David's descendants.

Isaiah 55:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

the Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 55:6

Seek Yahweh while he may be found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Seek Yahweh while you can still find him"

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked leave his path

The word "wicked" refers to wicked people. Yahweh speaks of wicked people no longer sinning as if they were to stop walking along a path that they had been traveling. Alternate translation: "Let wicked people change the way they live"

the man of sin his thoughts

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "let the sinful man leave his thoughts"

his thoughts

Possible meanings are 1) "the way he thinks" or 2) "his plans"

he will pity him

"Yahweh will pity him"

to our God

The verb may be supplied from the first phrase in this sentence. Alternate translation: "let him return to our God"

Isaiah 55:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 55:9

for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts

Yahweh speaks of the things that he does and how he thinks as being far superior to or higher than what people do and think, just like the sky is much higher than the earth.

Isaiah 55:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

For as the rain and snow ... do not return there

This is likely a description of the rain and snow evaporating.

Isaiah 55:11

so also my word ... it will achieve the purpose for which I sent it

Yahweh speaks of his word as if it were a person whom he sends out as his messenger to accomplish a task.

my word will be that goes from my mouth

Here the word "mouth" represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "the word that I speak"

it will not return to me empty

Here the description of the word returning to Yahweh means that it has completed the task that Yahweh had sent it to complete. That it will not return "empty" means that it will not fail to accomplish its task. Alternate translation: "it will not fail to complete its task"

Isaiah 55:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

be led along peacefully

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will lead you along peacefully"

the mountains and the hills will break out in joyful shouts before you, and all the trees of the fields will clap their hands

Yahweh speaks of the mountains, hills, and trees as if they were people with voices and hands, celebrating as Yahweh rescues his people.

Isaiah 55:13

Instead of the thornbushes, the cypress will grow; and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree will grow

The words "thornbushes" and "brier" refer to species of plants that have sharp thorns growing on them. The words "cypress" and "myrtle" refer to species of evergreen trees. The thorny plants symbolize desolation, while the evergreens symbolize life and prosperity.

for his name

Here the word "name" represents Yahweh's fame. Alternate translation: "for his fame" or "for his honor"

that will not be cut off

Something ceasing to exist is spoken of as if it were cut off, as a branch is cut off of a tree or a piece of fabric is cut off of clothing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that will never end" or "that will last forever"

Chapter 56

¹ This is what Yahweh says,
 "Observe what is right, do what is just;
 for my salvation is near,
 and my righteousness is about to be revealed.

² Blessed is the man that does this,
 and who holds it tightly.
 He observes the Sabbath, not defiling it,
 and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

³ Let no foreigner who has become a follower of Yahweh say,
 "Yahweh will certainly exclude me from his people."
 The eunuch should not say,
 "See, I am a dry tree."

⁴ For this is what Yahweh says,

"To the eunuchs who observe my Sabbaths
 and choose what pleases me,
 and hold fast my covenant,

⁵ to them I will set up in my house and within my walls
 a monument
 that is better than having sons and of daughters.
 I will give them an everlasting monument
 that will never be cut off.

⁶ Also foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh—
 to serve him,
 and who love the name of Yahweh,
 to be his servants,
 every one who observes the Sabbath and who keeps from defiling it,
 and who holds fast my covenant—

⁷ I will bring to my holy mountain
 and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
 their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
 will be accepted on my altar.
 For my house will be called
 a house of prayer for all nations,

⁸ this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh,
 who gathers the outcasts of Israel—
 I will still gather others
 in addition to them."

⁹ All you wild beasts of the field,
 come and devour, all you beasts in the forest!

¹⁰ All their watchmen are blind,
 they do not understand.
 They are all silent dogs
 who cannot bark.
 They dream,
 and lying down they love to sleep.

¹¹ The dogs have big appetites;
 they can never get enough;
 they are shepherds without discernment;
 they have all turned to their own way,
 each one covetous for unjust gain.

¹² "Come," they say, "let us get wine
 and drink much strong drink.

Tomorrow will be like today,
a day great beyond measure."

Isaiah 56 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Gentiles

Many scholars believe this chapter prophesies that Gentiles will be able to come to a saving faith in Yahweh. At this time, the Israelites believed that only an Israelite could be saved. (See: prophet and save and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Beasts

The Israelites are compared to beasts and dogs in this chapter. This would have been very offensive to them.

Isaiah 56:1

for my salvation is near, and my righteousness is about to be revealed.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will soon save you and show you that I am righteous"

Isaiah 56:2

who holds it tightly

Here "holds it tightly" is an idiom that means to continue to observe something. Alternate translation: "who is careful to always do this"

keeps his hand from doing any evil

Here the "hand" represents the whole person and emphasizes the person's actions or behaviors. Alternate translation: "does not do evil things"

Isaiah 56:3

See, I am a dry tree

This means eunuchs may have thought they could not be a part of God's people because they were deformed by castration

Isaiah 56:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 56:5

in my house and within my walls

These two phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "inside the walls of my temple"

that will never be cut off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that will never end" or "that will never be forgotten"

Isaiah 56:6

who love the name of Yahweh

Yahweh's "name" represents himself. Alternate translation: "who love Yahweh"

Isaiah 56:7

holy mountain

See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

will be accepted on my altar

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will accept on my altar"

my house will be called a house of prayer

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "my house will be a house of prayer"

Isaiah 56:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 56:9

All you wild beasts of the field, come and devour, all you beasts in the forest

God is calling armies of other nations by comparing them to animals to come and attack the people of Israel.

Isaiah 56:10

All their watchmen are blind

This means Israel's leaders cannot or perhaps do not want to see what is going on in society.

They are all silent dogs

The leaders are supposed to open their mouths and warn the people, but they do not. Comparing someone to a dog in this society is a great insult.

They dream, and lying down they love to sleep

This means the leaders are not bringing God's word of warning to Israel but prefer their own comfort.

Isaiah 56:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues describing the evil leaders of his people.

The dogs have big appetites

Yahweh continues comparing Israel's bad leaders to dogs.

Isaiah 56:12

General Information:

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Chapter 57

- ¹ The righteous perish,
but no one considers it,
and the people of covenant faithfulness are gathered away,
but no one understands
that the righteous is gathered
away from the evil.
- ² He enters into peace;
they rest in their beds,
those who walk in their uprightness.
- ³ But come here, you sons of the sorceress,
children of the adulterer and the woman who has prostituted herself.
- ⁴ Whom are you merrily mocking?
Against whom are you opening the mouth
and sticking out the tongue?
Are you not children of rebellion,
children of deceit?
- ⁵ You heat yourselves up sleeping together under the oaks,
under every green tree,
you who kill your children in the dry riverbeds,
under the rocky overhangs.
- ⁶ Among the smooth things of the river valley are the things that have been assigned to you.
They are the object of your devotion.
You pour out your drink offering to them
and raise up a grain offering.
Concerning these things should I repent?
- ⁷ You prepared your bed on a high mountain;
you also went up there to offer sacrifices.
- ⁸ Behind the door and the doorposts
you set up your symbols;
you deserted me, made yourselves naked, and went up;
you made your bed wide.
You made a covenant with them; you loved their beds;
you saw their private parts.
- ⁹ You went to Molech with oil
and increased your perfumes. ^[1]
You send your ambassadors far away;
you went down to Sheol.
- ¹⁰ You were tired from your long journey,
but you never said, "It is hopeless."
You found life in your hand;
therefore you did not weaken.
- ¹¹ "Whom are you worried about? Whom do you fear?
Is that the reason that you have acted deceitfully,
so that you do not remember me
or think about me?
Is it because I was silent for so long
that you are no longer afraid of me?"
- ¹² I will proclaim all your righteous acts and tell all that you have done,
but they will not help you.
- ¹³ When you cry out,
let your collection of idols rescue you.
The wind will carry them all away,
a breath will carry them all away.
But he who takes refuge in me
will inherit the land
and will possess my holy mountain.

14 He will say,

'Build, build! Clear a way!
Remove all the stumbling blocks from the path of my people!'"

15 For this is what the high and elevated One says,
who lives eternally, whose name is holy,
"I live in the exalted and holy place,
with him also that is of a crushed and humble spirit,
to revive the spirit of the humble ones,
and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

16 For I will not accuse forever,
nor will I be angry forever,
for then man's spirit would faint before me,
the lives that I have made.

17 Because of the sin of his violent gain,
I was angry, and I punished him; I hid my face and was angry,
but he went backward in the way of his heart.

18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him.
I will lead him and comfort and console those who mourn for him,
19 and I create the fruit of the lips.

Peace, peace, to those who are far off and to those who are near—
says Yahweh—I will heal them.

20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
which cannot rest,
and its waters churn up mire and mud.

21 There is no peace for the wicked one—says God."

Footnotes

57:9 ^[1]Instead of

Isaiah 57 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Child sacrifice

This chapter references the killing of children. Some religions in the ancient Near East practiced the sacrificing of their children. This was considered evil by Yahweh. (See: evil)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Mocking

The people abandoned the worship of Yahweh in favor of other gods. When they needed help, he tells them to ask these false gods. This is mocking the power of the false gods and shows the people the uselessness of their worship of these gods. (See: falsegod)

Isaiah 57:1

the people of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." See how you translated "covenant faithfulness" in [Isaiah 16:5]

are gathered away ... is gathered away

"die and go away ... dies and goes away"

that the righteous is gathered away from the evil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the righteous people die, and Yahweh takes them away from all that is evil"

Isaiah 57:2

He enters into peace

"The righteous enter into peace"

they rest

they die

those who walk in their uprightness

"those who have done what is right"

Isaiah 57:3

But come here

God is calling all of the unfaithful people to come before him so he can judge them in a strong contrast to the promises for the righteous that came before.

sons of the sorceress

This is a strong insult against the people who practice sorcery because sorcery and magic includes idolatry.

children of the adulterer and the woman who has prostituted herself

This refers to actual and spiritual adultery. They have abandoned the worship of God and now worship other gods and idols along with actual prostitution in pagan Canaanite ceremonies.

Isaiah 57:4

Whom are you merrily mocking? Against whom are you opening the mouth and sticking out the tongue?

Yahweh uses questions to scold the people who are mocking him through false worship. Alternate translation: "You are mocking me and making fun of me by opening your mouth wide and sticking out the tongue!"

Are you not children of rebellion, children of deceit?

Yahweh uses another question to scold the people. This does not refer to their birth but to their spiritual state. Alternate translation: "You are children of rebellion, children of deceit!"

Isaiah 57:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

You heat yourselves ... under the rocky overhangs

All of these actions are associated with worshipping idols. The oaks were sacred trees to the Canaanites. People thought such activity would increase fertility for people and the land.

Isaiah 57:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

that have been assigned to you

This can be stated in active form. The exact meaning in Hebrew is unclear. Alternate translation: "that is your lot" or "that is your inheritance"

Concerning these things should I repent?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people. Alternate translation: "I should certainly not change my mind about how I will deal with these things you have done."

Isaiah 57:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

You prepared your bed

This refers to sleeping with prostitutes as a part of worshipping false gods.

on a high mountain

People often went on top of hills and mountains to worship false gods. They thought those were the best places for worship. This might even refer to Jerusalem, too.

Isaiah 57:8

You made a covenant with them

"You made a contract with them"

Isaiah 57:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

you went down to Sheol

The people did not literally go to Sheol, the world of the dead. Instead, Yahweh is indicating by exaggeration that the people were willing to go anywhere to find new gods to worship.

Isaiah 57:10

You found life in your hand

After trying so hard, the idolators found they still had strength to keep going. Here "hand" equals "strength" or "capacity."

Isaiah 57:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

Whom are you worried about? Whom do you fear? Is that the reason that you have acted deceitfully, so that you do not remember me or think about me?

Yahweh uses these questions to scold the people because they feared others rather than him. They didn't even think about him. Alternate translation: "Apparently you really fear others because you have acted deceitfully and you do not remember me or think about me!"

you have acted deceitfully

Possible meanings are that they lied to God or that they were not faithful to him.

so that you do not remember me or think about me

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that, although the people should have remembered Yahweh, they did not.

Isaiah 57:12

I will proclaim all your righteous acts and tell all that you have done

Yahweh is being sarcastic, calling their evil deeds so-called righteousness.

Isaiah 57:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the unfaithful people of Israel.

let your collection of idols rescue you

Yahweh is mocking the people and their idols. He knows the idols cannot rescue them.

The wind will carry them all away, a breath will carry them all away

This is saying the same thing in two ways to emphasize that idols are helpless and worthless. Alternate translation: "The wind, or even a breath, will blow them away"

holy mountain

The "holy mountain" is Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

Isaiah 57:14

Build, build! Clear a way! Remove all the stumbling blocks from the path of my people

Yahweh is emphatic and urgent that a clear and level road be available for the people to return to him and free of obstacles to worshiping Yahweh. This echoes [Isaiah 40:3]

Isaiah 57:15

For this is what the high and elevated One says

The words "high" and "elevated" have basically the same meaning here and emphasize Yahweh being exalted. See how you translated this in Isaiah 6:1 and Isaiah 33:10. See how you translated a similar phrase in Isaiah 52:13.

to revive the spirit of the humble ones, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh will strengthen and encourage those who humble themselves before him.

spirit ... heart

Here these refer to a person's thoughts and emotions, not the spirit and heart literally.

Isaiah 57:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 57:17

I hid my face

This means God gave up on his people and no longer helped or blessed them.

he went backward in the way of his heart

This means the Israelites kept rejecting the true God for false ones. Here "backward" and "way" are location words representing motivations and feelings.

Isaiah 57:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

his ways

"their ways." Here "his" refers to the people of Israel.

comfort and console those who mourn for him

"I will soothe and calm those who feel sad for the people's suffering because of their sinful behavior"

Isaiah 57:19

I create the fruit of the lips

Here "fruit of the lips" refers to what a person says.
Alternate translation: "I cause them to praise and thank me"

Peace, peace, to those who are far off

"I have made peace with them who are far off." The word "Peace" is repeated for emphasis.

Isaiah 57:20

But the wicked are like the tossing sea ... mire and mud

This compares the wicked to rough water on the shore that makes the water dirty.

Isaiah 57:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 58

- ¹ "Cry loudly; do not hold back.
Lift up your voice like a ram's horn.
Confront my people with their rebellion,
and the house of Jacob with their sins.
- ² Yet they seek me daily
and delight in the knowledge of my ways,
like a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not abandon the law of their God.
They ask me for righteous judgments;
they take pleasure in the thought of God coming near.
- ³ 'Why have we fasted,' they say,
'but you do not see it?'
Why have we humbled ourselves,
but you do not notice?'

Look, on the day of your fast you find your own pleasure
and oppress all your laborers.

- ⁴ Look, you fast in quarreling and strife,
and to hit with your fist of wickedness;
you do not fast today
to make your voice heard above.
- ⁵ Is this really the kind of fast that I would want:
A day for anybody to humble himself,
for him to bow down his head like a reed,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under himself?
Do you really call this a fast,
a day that pleases Yahweh?
- ⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
To release wicked bonds,
to undo the ropes of the yoke,
to set the crushed ones free,
and to break every yoke?
- ⁷ Is it not to break your bread with the hungry,
to bring the poor and homeless into your house,
to cloth the naked when you see them,
and not to hide yourself from your own relatives?
- ⁸ Then your light would be broken open like the sunrise,
and your healing would quickly sprout up;
your righteousness would go before you,
and the glory of Yahweh would be your rearguard.
- ⁹ Then you would call, and Yahweh would answer;
you would cry out for help, and he would say, 'Here I am.'

If you take away from among yourselves the yoke,
the accusing finger, and the speech of wickedness,

- ¹⁰ if you yourselves provide for the hungry
and satisfy the need of the distressed;
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your darkness will be like the noonday.
- ¹¹ Then Yahweh will lead you continually
and satisfy you in regions where there is no water,
and he will strengthen your bones.
You will be like a watered garden,
and like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.
- ¹² Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
you will raise up the ruins of many generations;
you will be called 'The repairer of the wall,'
'The restorer of streets to live on.'

- ¹³ Suppose that you turn back your feet from traveling on the Sabbath day,
and from doing your own pleasure on my holy day.
Suppose that you call the Sabbath a delight,
and that you call the matters of Yahweh holy and honored.
Suppose that you honor the Sabbath by leaving your own business,
and by not finding your own pleasure and by not speaking your own words.
- ¹⁴ Then you will find delight in Yahweh;
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will feed you from the inheritance of Jacob your father—
for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken."

Isaiah 58 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Fasting

The practice of fasting became more common after the exile. This was intended to bring people into a right relationship with God by creating a designated time to concentrate on him. It may have been believed that Yahweh heard people better when they fasted. The significance of fasting is derived from the faster's attitude of repentance and faith in Yahweh and not the practice itself. (See: repent and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Yet they seek me daily"

The people did not truly seek Yahweh every day. They practiced the outward aspects of the Jewish religion, but their hearts were far from Yahweh.

Isaiah 58:1

Lift up your voice like a ram's horn

This means shout loudly. Here "your" refers to Isaiah.

Confront my people with their rebellion, and the house of Jacob with their sins

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Together they strengthen the urgency to confront Yahweh's people.

Isaiah 58:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 58:3

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'but you do not see it? Why have we humbled ourselves, but you do not notice?' The people of Israel use questions to complain to God because they feel he is ignoring them.

Isaiah 58:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel by answering their challenging question.

Look

"Behold!" or "Pay attention." Yahweh confronts their questioning by telling them to pay attention.

fist of wickedness

"wicked fist." This shows that they fight viciously. "Fist" represents anger that is physically violent.

Isaiah 58:5

Is this really the kind of fast that I would want ... under himself?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people. They act like they are humble before God, but they are hurting other people. Alternate translation: "This is not the kind of fast I want ... under himself."

A day for anybody to humble himself, for him to bow down his head like a reed

This means the person is bowing down, but he is not truly humble. "A reed" represents a weak plant that bends easily.

Do you really call this a fast, a day that pleases Yahweh?
Yahweh uses a question to scold the people.

Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think this kind of fast pleases me!"

Isaiah 58:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Is not this the fast that I choose ... break every yoke?

Yahweh uses a question to teach the people about the kind of fast that pleases him. Alternate translation: "This is the fast that I choose ... break every yoke."

To release wicked bonds, to undo the ropes of the yoke, to set the crushed ones free, and to break every yoke
All of these phrases mean they should help those people whom the wicked are hurting and oppressing.

Isaiah 58:7

Is it not to ... your own relatives?

Yahweh uses another question to teach the people. The word "it" refers to the kind of fasting that God wants the people to do. Alternate translation: "It is to ... your relatives." or "The fast I choose for you to do is to ... your own relatives."

to break your bread with the hungry

This phrase represents sharing food with those who do not have any. The host would start the meal by tearing the loaf of bread apart. Alternate translation: "to share your food with those who are hungry"

Isaiah 58:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Then your light would be broken open like the sunrise

"Break open" here is an idiom that means when a light begins to shine brightly. This means that if they help people in need, their deeds will be like lights others will see, as when the sun comes up after a dark night. Or the light may refer to the light of the Lord, shining on them and blessing them.

your healing would quickly sprout up

This means God will bless and restore them quickly, as a wound heals quickly.

your righteousness would go before you, and the glory of Yahweh would be your rearguard

This refers to the time when God protected the people of Israel as they escaped from Egypt. This means God will again protect them from their enemies if they will do what is right.

your righteousness

This expression in Hebrew can also be interpreted as the one who gives righteousness or even victory. In this context, this expression would refer to God. A few modern versions have this interpretation.

Isaiah 58:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 58:10

then your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkness will be like the noonday

"Your light" represents the acts of kindness that will be examples to everyone, and the "darkness," the bad deeds, will be overcome by their good deeds.

Isaiah 58:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

satisfy you in regions where there is no water

"Water" represents all they need for an abundant life even when their surroundings do not have enough.

You will be like a watered garden

"A watered garden" represents abundance and plenty so they will have all they need.

like a spring of water, whose waters never fail

"A spring of water" represents a source of abundance in a land where water is precious.

Isaiah 58:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you will be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will call you"

Isaiah 58:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you turn back your feet from traveling on the Sabbath day, and from doing your own pleasure on my holy day

Here the people are represented by their "feet." God did not allow long travels or work on the day of rest. Alternate translation: "you stop traveling and

doing what you want to do on the Sabbath, my holy day"

Isaiah 58:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I will make you ride on the heights of the earth

This refers to God exalting the nation in reputation and power in response to living righteously.

for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken

The word "mouth" symbolizes what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh has spoken it"

Chapter 59

- ¹ Look, Yahweh's hand is not so short that it cannot save;
nor his ear so dull, that it cannot hear.
- ² Your iniquities, however,
have separated you from your God,
and your sins have made him hide his face from you
and from hearing you.
- ³ For your hands are stained with blood
and your fingers with iniquity.
Your lips speak lies
and your tongue speaks maliciously.
- ⁴ No one calls in righteousness,
and none pleads his case in truth.
They trust in empty words, and tell lies;
they conceive trouble and give birth to iniquity.
- ⁵ They hatch eggs of an adder
and weave a spider's web.
Whoever eats of their eggs dies,
and if an egg is crushed, it hatches into a viper.
- ⁶ Their webs cannot be used for garments,
nor can they cover themselves with their works.
Their works are works of sin,
and deeds of violence are in their hands.
- ⁷ Their feet run to evil,
and they run to pour out innocent blood.
Their thoughts are thoughts of sin;
violence and destruction are their roads.
- ⁸ The way of peace they do not know,
and there is no justice in their paths.
They have made crooked paths;
whoever travels these paths does not know peace.
- ⁹ Therefore justice is far from us,
nor does righteousness reach us.
We wait for light, but see darkness;
we look for brightness, but we walk in darkness.
- ¹⁰ We grope for the wall like the blind,
like those who cannot see.
We stumble at noonday as in the twilight;
among the strong we are like dead men.
- ¹¹ We growl like bears
and moan like doves;
we wait for justice, but there is none;
for rescue, but it is far from us.
- ¹² For our many transgressions are before you,
and our sins testify against us;
for our transgressions are with us,
and we know our iniquities.
- ¹³ We have rebelled, denying Yahweh
and turning away from following our God.
We have spoken extortion and turning aside,
conceived complaining from the heart and words of lying.
- ¹⁴ Justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands far off;
for truth stumbles in the public square,
and uprightness cannot come near.
- ¹⁵ Trustworthiness has gone away,
and he who turns away from evil makes himself prey.

Yahweh saw it and was displeased
that there was no justice.

16 He saw that there was no man,
and was appalled that there was no one to intervene.
Therefore his own arm brought salvation for him,
and his righteousness sustained him.

17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate
and a helmet of salvation upon his head.
He clothed himself with garments of vengeance
and wore zeal as a mantle.

18 He repaid them for their deeds,
wrath on his adversaries,
recompense to his enemies;
he repaid recompense to the islands.

19 So they will fear the name of Yahweh from the west,
and his glory from the sun's rising;
for he will come as a rushing stream,
driven by the breath of Yahweh.

20 "A redeemer will come to Zion
and to those who turn from their rebellious deeds in Jacob—
this is Yahweh's declaration.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them—says Yahweh—my spirit who is upon you, and my words
which I have put in your mouth, will not leave your mouth, or go out of the mouth of your children, or go
out of the mouths of your descendants—says Yahweh—from this time and forever."

Isaiah 59 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's deliverance

When Israel was conquered, they were being punished for their sin. Yahweh is strong enough to deliver them, but he did not because he desired to refine them through the experience of the exile. (See: deliverer and sin)

Isaiah 59:1

Look

"Behold!" or "You should know!" Yahweh tells the people to pay attention.

Yahweh's hand is not so short

"Hand" represents power and ability. A "short" hand does not have power and ability. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is fully able"

Isaiah 59:2

your ... you

These plural pronouns refer to the people of Israel as a single group.

your sins have made him hide his face from you

"Face" represents being present and looking upon. Alternate translation: "your sins have made him turn away from you"

Isaiah 59:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

For your hands are stained with blood and your fingers with iniquity

Here "hands" and "fingers" refers to their actions. This means they are guilty of doing violent and sinful things. "Your" is plural. Alternate translation: "For you have committed violent sins"

Your lips speak lies and your tongue speaks maliciously
The parts of the body that make speech represent what people say. Alternate translation: "You speak lies and malicious things"

Isaiah 59:4

they conceive trouble and give birth to iniquity
"Conceiving" and "giving birth" emphasize how carefully they plan to do sinful things. Here "they" still refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "they work hard to do sinful things"

Isaiah 59:5

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel about the evil they do using the metaphors of poisonous snakes and spider's webs. The metaphor here is meant to be emotional, not real: snakes are born alive, not from eggs that are laid.

They hatch eggs of an adder

Eggs of a poisonous snake hatch into more dangerous snakes. "Poisonous snakes" represents evil the people do that harms more and more. Alternate translation: "They make evil that spreads out to make more evil"

weave a spider's web

This represents the deeds of the people that are useless. Alternate translation: "produce things and activities that are useless"

Whoever eats of their eggs dies, and if an egg is crushed, it hatches into a viper

Eating a poisonous egg will kill the one that eats it and represents self-destruction. Breaking the egg allows the young poisonous snake to hatch and represents spreading destruction. Alternate translation: "The activities they do will destroy them and will spread destruction to others"

if an egg is crushed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if someone crushes an egg"

Isaiah 59:6

Their webs cannot be used for garments, nor can they cover themselves with their works

This means their sinful deeds cannot be covered and hidden, just as a web cannot serve as clothing and cover someone. Alternate translation: "Their evil deeds will be exposed as useless"

Their webs cannot be used for garments

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They cannot clothe themselves with their webs"

deeds of violence are in their hands

"Hands" represents the ability and power to do these things and therefore their responsibility. Alternate translation: "they are fully responsible for the violence they do"

Isaiah 59:7

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Their feet run to evil

Here people are represented by their "feet." This speaks of them doing something quickly as their feet running to it. Alternate translation: "They are quick to do evil things"

are their roads

"roads" represents their way of life. Alternate translation: "are all they do"

Isaiah 59:8

there is no justice in their paths

"paths" represents their way of life. Alternate translation: "they never do what is just" or "everything they do is unjust"

They have made crooked paths

"Crooked paths" represents the way of life that is corrupt. Alternate translation: "They say and do dishonest things. They are devious"

Isaiah 59:9

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

justice is far from us

Here "us" refers to Isaiah and the people of Israel. "Far" represents that justice is gone and difficult to get. Alternate translation: "justice is gone and very difficult to get"

We wait for light, but see darkness; we look for brightness, but we walk in darkness

Each of these phrases means that the people are waiting for God's goodness, but it seems like he has abandoned them.

Isaiah 59:10

We grope for the wall like the blind ... like dead men

This means that because God is not coming to them, they feel helpless, not finding the right path and despairing of the future, with no hope for a vibrant life.

Isaiah 59:11

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

We growl like bears and moan like doves

These refer to the sounds the people made because they were distressed and mourning.

Isaiah 59:12

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

our many transgressions

Here "our" refers to Isaiah and the people of Israel.

before you

Here "you" refers to Yahweh.

our sins testify against us

Isaiah describes the sins as a person who goes before God to declare that the people are guilty.

for our transgressions are with us

"With us" represents being aware of them.
Alternate translation: "for we are aware of our transgressions"

Isaiah 59:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 59:14

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

Justice is driven back

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people drive justice back"

Justice ... righteousness ... truth ... right

These are ideas that Isaiah describes as acting like persons.

Isaiah 59:15

Trustworthiness

Isaiah describes this idea as acting like a person.

Isaiah 59:16

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

He saw that there was no man, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene.

"Yahweh was appalled that no one came to help those who were suffering." or "Yahweh was astonished that no one came to help those who were suffering."

Therefore his own arm brought salvation for him

Yahweh's "arm" represents his ability and power.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh used his own power to save the people"

his righteousness sustained him

"Righteousness" here is a quality that acts like a person. The word can be translated as an adjective.
Alternate translation: "he did right as he always would do"

Isaiah 59:17

He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation upon his head. He clothed himself with garments of vengeance and wore zeal as a mantle

"breastplate," "helmet," "garments," and "mantle" are clothing for war and fighting. Isaiah describes Yahweh as putting these on to punish his people.

mantle

a loose, flowing robe

Isaiah 59:18

He repaid them

Isaiah is describing a future event as if it happened in the past. This means that it will certainly happen.

wrath on his adversaries

The word "wrath" is a metonym for the punishment he brought on his adversaries. Alternate translation: "punished his adversaries for what they had done"

he repaid recompense to the islands

"he punished the islands as they deserved"

the islands

This phrase is a metonym for the people who lived on the islands or coastlands. Alternate translation: "the people who live on the islands" or "the people who live on the coastlands"

Isaiah 59:19

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

fear the name of Yahweh

Here "name" refers to Yahweh's reputation and character. Alternate translation: "fear Yahweh"

from the west ... from the sun's rising

Isaiah combines these words to mean people in all places of the world.

for he will come as a rushing stream

Narrow valleys in Judah were dry most of the year until a sudden, heavy rain turned them into fast-moving water. When that happened there was a lot of noise and wind.

driven by the breath of Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which the breath of Yahweh drives"

Isaiah 59:20

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

Isaiah 59:21

my words which I have put in your mouth
"the message I have given you to speak"

Chapter 60

- ¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of Yahweh has risen on you.
- ² Though darkness will cover the earth,
and thick darkness the nations;
yet Yahweh will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen on you.
- ³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to your bright light that is rising.
- ⁴ Look all around and see.
They all gather themselves together and come to you.
Your sons will come from far,
and your daughters will be carried in their arms.
- ⁵ Then you will look and be radiant,
and your heart will rejoice and overflow,
because the abundance of the sea will be poured out to you,
the wealth of the nations will come to you.
- ⁶ Camel caravans will cover you,
the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
all of them will come from Sheba;
they will bring gold and frankincense,
and will bring the good news of the praises of Yahweh.
- ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you,
the rams of Nebaioth will serve your needs;
they will be acceptable offerings on my altar;
and I will glorify my glorious house.
- ⁸ Who are these who fly along like a cloud,
and like the doves to their shelters?
- ⁹ The coastlands look for me,
and the ships of Tarshish lead,
to bring your sons from far,
their silver and their gold with them,
for the name of Yahweh your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has honored you.
- ¹⁰ Sons of foreigners will rebuild your walls,
and their kings will serve you;
though in my wrath I punished you,
yet in my favor I will have compassion on you.
- ¹¹ Your gates also will remain open continually;
they will not be shut day or night,
so that the wealth of the nations may be brought,
with their kings being led.
- ¹² Indeed, nations and kingdoms that will not serve you will perish;
those nations will be completely ruined.
- ¹³ The glory of Lebanon will come to you,
the cypress tree, the fir, and the cypress box tree together,
to beautify my sanctuary;
and I will glorify the place of my feet.
- ¹⁴ They will come to you to bow down, the sons of those who humbled you;
those who showed contempt for you will bow at the soles of your feet;
they will call you The City of Yahweh,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
- ¹⁵ Instead of you remaining abandoned and hated,

- with no one passing through you,
I will make you a thing of pride forever,
a joy from generation to generation.
- 16 You will also drink the milk of the nations,
and will nurse at the breast of kings;
you will know that I, Yahweh, am your Savior and your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Jacob.
- 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
instead of iron I will bring silver;
instead of wood,
bronze, and instead of stones, iron.
I will appoint peace as your governors,
and justice your rulers.
- 18 Violence will no longer be heard in your land,
neither devastation nor crushing within your borders;
but you will call your walls Salvation,
and your gates Praise.
- 19 The sun will no longer be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you;
but Yahweh will be your everlasting light,
and your God your glory.
- 20 Your sun will no longer set,
nor will your moon withdraw and disappear;
for Yahweh will be your everlasting light,
and the days of your mourning will be ended.
- 21 All your people will be righteous;
they will take possession of the land for all time,
the branch of my planting,
the work of my hands,
that I may be glorified.
- 22 The least of you will become a thousand,
and the smallest one a mighty nation;
I, Yahweh, will swiftly accomplish these things
when the time comes.

Isaiah 60 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel's restoration

This chapter pictures a time when Israel will be fully restored to Yahweh. They will be everything Yahweh intended them to be. All the nations will look to Israel and acknowledge her special relationship to Yahweh. (See: restore)

Isaiah 60:1

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen on you

This refers to the glorious things Yahweh has done for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are now to

show that glory through what they do and say and have hope in the future.

Isaiah 60:2

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking to the people of Israel. He continues the metaphor about "light" (Isaiah 60:1).

Though darkness will cover the earth, and thick darkness the nations

Both of these phrases mean the same thing and are combined for emphasis. They refer to "spiritual darkness." This means all the other people of the world will not know Yahweh or how to please him. This is a metaphor for divine judgment.

yet Yahweh will arise upon you

This means the light of God's presence will appear for the people of Israel, and it will show the way they should go.

his glory will be seen on you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of the nations will see his glory on you"

Isaiah 60:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 60:4

General Information:

Here Yahweh begins speaking.

They all gather themselves

"They" refers to the rest of the people of Israel who will come together to return to Jerusalem.

your daughters will be carried in their arms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will carry your daughters in their arms" or "they will carry your daughters on their hips"

Isaiah 60:5

Then you will look and be radiant, and your heart will rejoice and overflow

These phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that they will be very happy because of what will happen in Jerusalem.

the abundance of the sea

This refers to the riches and goods that will come to Jerusalem by way of shipping, perhaps from along the Mediterranean Sea.

be poured out to you

This describes that the abundance will be like water that gushes out.

Isaiah 60:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

the dromedaries

"the young camels"

Ephah

an area in Arabia

bring the good news of the praises of Yahweh

"joyfully proclaim and praise the goodness of Yahweh"

Isaiah 60:7

Kedar ... Nebaioth

These are the names of areas in Arabia.

All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Kedar will gather their flocks for you"

the rams of Nebaioth will serve your needs

This refers to their need for sacrifices.

they will be acceptable offerings on my altar

"I, Yahweh, will accept them on my altar"

Isaiah 60:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Who are these who fly along like a cloud, and like the doves to their shelters?

Yahweh uses questions and poetic images to draw attention here. He compares the sails of the ships to clouds and doves. This is also a picture of the Israelites returning to the country where they belong. Alternate translation: "Look, I see something like clouds moving quickly and like doves returning to their shelters."

Isaiah 60:9

The coastlands

This refers to the people who live on the coastlands and describes the area of coastlands as if it was people looking out. Alternate translation: "The people from the coastlands"

the ships of Tarshish

This expression usually means large merchant ships suitable for long voyages.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:4.

he has honored you

"Yahweh has honored you, the people of Israel"

Isaiah 60:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 60:11

they will not be shut day or night

Here "day" and "night" together mean "all the time." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will ever shut them"

so that the wealth of the nations may be brought, with their kings being led

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the people of the nations may bring their wealth, along with their kings"

Isaiah 60:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

those nations will be completely ruined

The phrase "those nations" is a metonym for the people who live in those nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will completely destroy the people of those nations"

Isaiah 60:13

The glory of Lebanon

This refers to Lebanon being famous for its beautiful trees, especially cypress and cedar. The exact identification of all the trees is not known.

the place of my feet

This refers to Yahweh's temple.

Isaiah 60:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Holy One of Israel

See how you translated this in Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 60:15

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

with no one passing through you

"with everyone avoiding your land" or "with all the foreigners avoiding your land"

Isaiah 60:16

You will also drink the milk of the nations, and will nurse at the breast of kings

This refers to the wealth and plenty that will be drained from foreign nations. Both clauses repeat the same idea for emphasis.

Redeemer

See how you translated this in Isaiah 41:14.

the Mighty One of Jacob

See how you translated this in Isaiah 49:26.

Isaiah 60:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron

Yahweh will give more valuable building materials to them now. Alternate translation: "instead of wood, I will bring bronze, and instead of stones, I will bring iron"

I will appoint peace as your governors, and justice your rulers

Yahweh describes "peace" and "justice" as human rulers. This means there will be complete peace and justice in the land of Israel.

Isaiah 60:18

Violence will no longer be heard in your land

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There will no longer be reports of violence in your land"

but you will call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise

The physical objects have the names of spiritual qualities. The city of Jerusalem will be a safe place, and the people there will praise Yahweh.

Isaiah 60:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Isaiah 60:20

for Yahweh will be your everlasting light

Both verses repeat this same idea for emphasis.

Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon withdraw and disappear

The moon will not literally disappear. This exaggeration is saying that the light of the sun and the moon will be much less bright than the light of Yahweh.

Isaiah 60:21

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

the branch of my planting, the work of my hands

These phrases mean approximately the same and are repeated for emphasis.

the branch of my planting

Yahweh is comparing the people to young shoots coming up that he planted as if he was a gardener.

Yahweh has placed his people in the land of Israel.
This gives hope to the people.

the work of my hands

Yahweh compares the people of Israel to something
made by the skill of his handicraft.

that I may be glorified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate
translation: "so that all people may glorify me"

Isaiah 60:22

a thousand

"1,000"

Chapter 61

- ¹ The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me,
because Yahweh has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the afflicted.
He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison for those who are bound.
- ² He has sent me to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor,
the day of vengeance of our God,
and to comfort all who mourn.
- ³ He has sent me—to give to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a turban instead of ashes,
oil of joy
instead of mourning,
a mantle of praise
in place of a spirit of dullness,
to call them oaks of righteousness,
the planting of Yahweh,
that he may be glorified.
- ⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins;
they will restore the former desolations.
They will restore the ruined cities,
the desolations from many former generations.
- ⁵ Foreigners will stand and feed your flocks,
and sons of foreigners will be your farmers and vineyard workers.
- ⁶ You will be called the priests of Yahweh;
they will call you servants of our God.
You will eat the wealth of the nations,
and you will boast in their riches.
- ⁷ Instead of your shame
you will have double;
and instead of dishonor
they will rejoice over their share.
So they will have a double share of their land;
everlasting joy will be theirs.
- ⁸ For I, Yahweh, love justice,
and I hate robbery and violent injustice.
I will faithfully repay them,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- ⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge them,
that they are the people whom Yahweh has blessed.
- ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh;
in my God I will be very glad.
For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has clothed me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns himself with a turban,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- ¹¹ For as the earth produces its sprouting plants,
and as the garden makes its planting grow,
so the Lord Yahweh will cause righteousness
and praise to sprout up in front of all the nations.

Isaiah 61 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

The first part of this chapter is probably a prophecy about the coming Messiah and not Isaiah because this was different than the message Isaiah delivered. (See: christ)

Special concepts in this chapter

Restoration

This chapter prophesies concerning a future time of peace and restoration. It is unlikely to have been fulfilled in Isaiah's day. (See: restore and prophet and fulfill)

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me

"Spirit" here is the Holy Spirit of Yahweh who compels or motivates the person. See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:2 or in Isaiah 42:1.

the afflicted

This refers to poor people, those in great sorrow, or oppressed people who have problems they cannot overcome by themselves.

liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison for those who are bound

These two phrases mean the same thing. They state that God will certainly give freedom to captives.

Isaiah 61:2

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

the year of Yahweh's favor, the day of vengeance

Both of these phrases refer to the same span of time. "Year" and "day" are both specific examples that represent the greater whole.

year of Yahweh's favor

"time when Yahweh will act kindly toward his people"

Isaiah 61:3

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

to give ... to give

Isaiah repeats this for emphasis.

a turban

"a headdress" or "a beautiful head covering." This is a long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the head.

oil of joy ... a mantle of praise

People put oil on themselves and dressed in beautiful, long robes during times of celebration and joy.

in place of a spirit of dullness

"in place of sadness" or "in place of mourning"

oaks of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh

This means Yahweh has caused the people to be strong and sturdy.

that he may be glorified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the people's lives may glorify him"

Isaiah 61:4

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking using parallelisms in each line.

Isaiah 61:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 61:6

General Information:

Yahweh's servant continues speaking to the people of Israel with each line a parallelism.

You will be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will call you"

Isaiah 61:7

you will have double

This probably refers to a double portion of land.

they will rejoice over their share ... they will ... their land ... will be theirs

This still refers to the people of Israel. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "you will rejoice over your share ... you will ... your land ... will be yours"

Isaiah 61:8

General Information:

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Isaiah 61:9

Their descendants will be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples

These two clauses mean the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People from other nations will know their descendants"

their offspring among the peoples

This clause assumes the same verb as the previous one. Alternate translation: "their offspring will be known among the peoples"

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh

"I" refers to the people of God speaking as one person whom Yahweh has restored.

clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has clothed me with the robe of righteousness

The people of God speaking as one person now have salvation and righteousness as their distinct appearance visible to all. "Garments" and "robe" are clothing that everyone can see.

as a bridegroom adorns himself with a turban, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels

This comparison emphasizes that the speaker is extremely happy, joyful, celebrating.

turban

See how you translated this in Isaiah 61:3.

Isaiah 61:11

For as the earth produces its sprouting plants, and as the garden makes its planting grow

This is saying the same thing in two ways. The fact that whatever God says he will do is certainly going to happen is compared to the fact that seeds sprout after planting. Alternate translation: "Just as seeds sown in a garden sprout from the soil and grow"

righteousness and praise to sprout up

This expression describes these virtues as growing from seed like plants do.

Chapter 62

- ¹ For Zion's sake I will not be silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness proceeds brightly,
and her salvation as a burning torch.
 - ² The nations will see your righteousness,
and all kings your glory.
You will be called by a new name
that Yahweh will choose.
 - ³ You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Yahweh,
and a turban of kingship in the hand of your God.
 - ⁴ It will no more be said of you, "Abandoned";
nor of your land any longer will it be said, "Desolate."
Indeed, you will be called "My delight is in her,"
and your land "Married,"
for Yahweh delights in you,
and your land will be married.
 - ⁵ Truly, as a young man marries a young woman,
so your sons will marry you,
and as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
your God will rejoice over you.
 - ⁶ I have put watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem;
they are not silent day or night.
You who keep reminding Yahweh,
do not pause.
 - ⁷ Do not allow him to rest until he reestablishes Jerusalem
and makes it a praise on earth.
 - ⁸ Yahweh has sworn by his right hand
and by the arm of his strength,
"Surely I will no longer give your grain
as food for your enemies.
Foreigners will not drink your new wine,
for which you have worked.
 - ⁹ For those who harvest the grain will eat it
and praise Yahweh,
and those who gather the grapes will drink the wine
in the courts of my holy sanctuary."
 - ¹⁰ Come through, come through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people!
Build it, build the highway!
Gather out the stones!
Raise up a signal flag for the nations!
 - ¹¹ Look, Yahweh announces
to the ends of the earth,
"Say to the daughter of Zion:
Look, your salvation is coming!
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense is going before him."
 - ¹² They will call you, "The holy people;
the redeemed of Yahweh,"
and you will be called "Sought after;
a city not abandoned."
-

Isaiah 62 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Restoration

This chapter prophesies concerning a future time of peace and restoration. It is unlikely to have been fulfilled in Isaiah's day. (See: restore and prophet and fulfill)

Isaiah 62:1

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Here "Zion" and "Jerusalem" both represent the people who live in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "For the sake of the people of Jerusalem I will not be silent"

I will not be silent

It is most likely that "I" refers to Isaiah.

until her righteousness proceeds brightly, and her salvation as a burning torch

Both clauses reassure the people that God will eventually come and save the people of Israel and that it will be as apparent as light is.

Isaiah 62:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 62:3

You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Yahweh, and a turban of kingship in the hand of your God

These mean the same thing and are combined for emphasis. They say that Jerusalem will become a royal city under the power and authority of God. Yahweh's hand is a metonym for his power and authority.

Isaiah 62:4

It will no more ... will it be said, "Desolate."

These mean the same thing are combined for emphasis.

It will no more be said of you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will no longer say about you"

nor of your land any longer will it be said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "nor will people any longer say about your land"

your land will be married

This means Yahweh will love the people of Israel and will always be with them as is a husband.

Isaiah 62:5

as a young man marries a young woman, so your sons will marry you

Here "sons" refers to the people of Israel and "you" refers to Judah, the land of Israel. This means the people will take possession of the land as a man takes possession of his young wife.

as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, your God will rejoice over you

This emphasizes God's happiness about his relationship with his people.

Isaiah 62:6

I have put

Here "I" may refer to Isaiah or to Yahweh.

watchmen on your walls

This refers to prophets, officials, or possibly angels, who are constantly praying for the people of Jerusalem like watchmen who constantly guard the city. See how you translated "watchmen" in [Isaiah 52:8]

they are not silent day or night

This means they are continually pleading to Yahweh or calling to each other. Alternate translation: "they are earnestly praying to Yahweh throughout the entire day"

Isaiah 62:7

Do not allow him to rest

Here "him" refers to Yahweh.

Isaiah 62:8

by his right hand and by the arm of his strength

The right hand and arm represent power and authority. Alternate translation: "by his power and authority"

Surely I will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies

This means Yahweh will not let enemies conquer the people of Israel and take their grain anymore. Perhaps enemies took the grain in the past as a tax or to feed their own armies.

I will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies ... Foreigners will not drink your new wine

These statements are set together for emphasis and completion.

Isaiah 62:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 62:10

Come through, come through the gates

The phrase "come through" is repeated to show urgency.

Build it, build the highway

The word "build" is repeated to emphasize that Yahweh urgently wants the road prepared. The "highway" represents the way the people can return. This is similar to [Isaiah 40:3]

Gather out the stones

"Take the stones out of the road to make it smooth."
Stones represent all the obstacles to quick travel.

Raise up a signal flag for the nations

A signal flag represents something to draw the attention of others. This means Yahweh is calling the people of the other nations to take notice of the land of Israel and to see what Yahweh has accomplished as he said he would.

signal flag

See how you translated this in Isaiah 5:26.

Isaiah 62:11

Look

"Take notice!"

the ends of the earth

The places on the earth that are very far away are spoken of as if they were the places where the earth ends. This phrase also forms a merism and refers to everywhere in between the ends. See how you translated this in [Isaiah 40:28]

the daughter of Zion

"Daughter" represents the people of Jerusalem

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense is going before him

These clauses represent the same idea for emphasis. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Isaiah 40:10]

Isaiah 62:12

you will be called

This can be stated actively, "they will call you"

Chapter 63

- ¹ Who is this who comes from Edom,
wearing red garments, from Bozrah?
Who is this, splendid in his clothing,
marching in the greatness of his strength?
"It is I, speaking in righteousness,
and mighty to save."
- ² Why are your clothes red,
and why do your garments look like you have been treading grapes in a winepress?
- ³ "I have trodden grapes in the winepress alone,
and no one from the nations joined me.
I trod them in my anger
and trampled them in my fury.
Their blood is spattered on my clothes
and stained all my clothes.
- ⁴ For I looked forward to the day of vengeance,
and the year for my redemption had arrived.
- ⁵ I looked, and there was no one to help.
I was appalled that there was none to help,
but my own arm brought victory for me,
and my strong anger drove me on.
- ⁶ I trampled down the peoples in my anger
and made them drunk in my wrath,
and I poured out their blood on the earth."
- ⁷ I will tell of the acts of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness,
the praises of Yahweh.
I will tell of all that Yahweh has done for us,
and of his great goodness to the house of Israel.
This compassion he has shown us because of his mercy,
and with many deeds of covenant faithfulness.
- ⁸ For he said, "For certain they are my people,
children who are not disloyal."
He became their Savior.
- ⁹ Through all their suffering, he suffered too,
and the angel from his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he saved them,
and he lifted them up and carried them
through all the ancient times.
- ¹⁰ But they rebelled
and grieved his holy Spirit.
So he became their enemy
and fought against them.
- ¹¹ His people thought about the ancient times of Moses.
They said, "Where is God, who brought them up out of the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?
Where is God,
who put his holy Spirit among them?
- ¹² Where is God,
who made his glorious power go with the right hand of Moses,
and divided the water before them,
to make an everlasting name for himself?
- ¹³ Where is God, who led them through the deep water?
Like a horse running in the wilderness,
they did not stumble.
- ¹⁴ As the cattle that go down into the valley,

the Spirit of Yahweh gave them rest.
So you led your people,
to make yourself a glorious name.

- 15 Look down from heaven and take notice
from your holy and glorious habitation.
Where are your zeal and your mighty acts?
Your pity and your compassionate actions are kept from us.
- 16 For you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us,
and Israel does not recognize us,
you, Yahweh, are our Father.
'Our Redeemer' has been your name from ancient times.
- 17 Yahweh, why do you make us wander from your ways
and harden our hearts so we do not fear you?
Return for your servants' sake,
the tribes of your inheritance.
- 18 Your holy people possessed your sanctuary for a short time,
but then our enemies trampled it.
- 19 We have become like those over whom you never ruled,
like those who were never called by your name."
-

Isaiah 63 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Imagery

The imagery of judgment in this chapter is intended to be rather vivid. The translator should avoid euphemisms, if possible. Overall, this chapter prophesies a day of great judgment and God's wrath. (See: judge and prophet and wrath)

Isaiah 63:1

Who is this who comes from Edom ... Bozrah

Isaiah speaks as a watchman using the question and answer format to present this information about Yahweh's judgment on Edom, an enemy of Israel. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I, Yahweh, am coming from Edom, clothed in red from Bozrah"

Bozrah

This is the capital city of Edom.

It is I

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

Isaiah 63:2

Why are your clothes red, and why ... winepress?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The red on your clothing looks makes you look like you have been treading on grapes in a winepress."

winepress

A winepress is a low place carved out of rock in the ground where workers step on the grapes to crush them with their feet, in order to remove the grape juice.

Isaiah 63:3

I have trodden grapes

Here "I" refers to Yahweh. This imagery refers to Yahweh destroying his enemies.

Isaiah 63:4

the day of vengeance

"the time of vengeance" or "the time for vengeance"

vengeance

Yahweh will punish in an appropriate way to bring about justice. His kind of vengeance differs from man's vengeance.

the year for my redemption

Here "year" refers to a specific time appointed by Yahweh for restoring Israel. Alternate translation: "the time for my redemption"

Isaiah 63:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

but my own arm

Here "arm" represents power.

Isaiah 63:6

made them drunk in my wrath

This means Yahweh made them stunned and senseless by his full wrath and punishment.

I poured out their blood

Here "blood" represents the life of Yahweh's enemies that was gushing out so they would die.

Isaiah 63:7

I will tell of the acts of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithfully" or "faithful." See how you translated "covenant faithfulness" in [Isaiah 16:5]

the praises of Yahweh

The word "praises" is a metonym for the acts for which people praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the praiseworthy deeds of Yahweh"

I will tell

Here "I" refers to Isaiah.

done for us

Here "us" refers to Isaiah and the people of Israel.

Isaiah 63:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 63:9

Through all their suffering

"Through all our suffering." Here "their" refers to the people of Israel. Isaiah included himself as a member of the people.

he suffered too

Here "he" refers to Yahweh.

the angel from his presence

This is a representative who is sent from God's presence.

he lifted them up and carried them

This refers to when God protected and saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians many years earlier. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.

Isaiah 63:10

But they rebelled

"but we rebelled." Here "they" refers to the people of Israel. Isaiah included himself as a member of the people.

his holy Spirit

"Yahweh's Holy Spirit"

Isaiah 63:11

They said

"we said." Here "they" refers to the people of Israel. Isaiah included himself as a member of the people.

who brought them up out of the sea

The story of Yahweh miraculously splitting the waters of the Sea of Reeds so that the Israelites could cross and escape the Egyptians is assumed knowledge.

the shepherds of his flock

Leaders are sometimes referred to as "shepherds." Alternate translation: "the leaders of his people"

Isaiah 63:12

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking.

who made his glorious power go with the right hand of Moses

Here "right hand" represents the power of Yahweh through Moses. This means it was God's power that enabled Moses to divide the water of the Reed Sea.

Isaiah 63:13

Like a horse running in the wilderness, they did not stumble

This means that the people of Israel were sure-footed as horses in open country on their travels toward Israel from Egypt.

Isaiah 63:14

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking.

As the cattle that go down into the valley ... rest

This image pictures cattle going into a valley where there is green grass and water and emphasizes that God led the people of Israel and took care of them.

to make yourself a glorious name

Here "glorious name" refers to an honorable reputation. Alternate translation: "to make sure people know who you are and honor you"

Isaiah 63:15

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking.

Where are your zeal and your mighty acts?

The writer uses a question to express deep emotion and concern because it seems God is not helping them. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We do not see your zeal and your mighty acts!"

Your pity and your compassionate actions are kept from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You keep your pity and compassion from us"

Isaiah 63:16

though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not recognize us

These ancestors of the nation of Israel would not be able to identify their descendants because they changed so much. "Abraham" and "Israel" represent the people from the distant past.

Israel

This refers to the name also called "Jacob."

Isaiah 63:17

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking.

Yahweh, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not fear you?

Here the writer uses a question to express a complaint of the people to God. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, you have made us wander from your ways and become stubborn so that we do not fear you."

why do you make us wander from your ways

To not do what Yahweh commands is spoken of as if a person wanders off of the correct path. Alternate translation: "why do you make do what is wrong"

harden our hearts

This means to become resistant to Yahweh's teaching by refusing to listen and obey. Here "heart" represents their motives, feelings and desires.

Isaiah 63:18

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking.

Isaiah 63:19

who were never called by your name

This can be stated in active form. The word "name" refers to a family relationship. Alternate translation: "who never belonged to your family"

We have become ... called by your name

Some modern versions interpret this passage differently: "We are like the people over whom you have not ruled, like those who have not been called by your name."

Chapter 64

- ¹ "Oh, if you had split open the heavens and come down!
The mountains would have shaken at your presence,
- ² as when fire kindles the brushwood,
or the fire makes water boil.
Oh, that your name would be known by your adversaries,
that the nations would tremble at your presence!
- ³ Previously, when you did awesome things that we had not expected,
you came down, and the mountains trembled at your presence.
- ⁴ Since ancient times no one has heard or listened,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who takes action for the one who waits for him.
- ⁵ You come to help those who rejoice in doing what is right,
those who remember you in your ways.
You became angry with us because we sinned for a long time.
How will we be saved?
- ⁶ For we have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a menstrual rag.
We have all withered like leaves;
our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away.
- ⁷ There are none who calls on your name,
who makes an effort to take hold of you.
For you have hidden your face from us
and made us waste away in the hand of our iniquities.
- ⁸ Yet, Yahweh, you are our Father;
we are the clay. You are our potter;
and we all are the work of your hand.
- ⁹ Be not too angry, Yahweh,
nor remember our iniquity against us forever.
Please look at us all,
your people.
- ¹⁰ Your holy cities have become a wilderness;
Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.
- ¹¹ Our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised you,
has been destroyed by fire, and all that was so dear is in ruins.
- ¹² How can you still hold back, Yahweh?
How can you remain silent and continue to humiliate us?"

Isaiah 64 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

Special concepts in this chapter

Repentance

This chapter records the repentance of the righteous remnant of Judah. (See: repent, righteous and remnant and prophet)

Isaiah 64:1

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking to Yahweh (Isaiah 63:11).

Oh, if you had split open the heavens and come down!
Isaiah uses a strong exclamation to express what he wishes God had done. He wishes that God had shown himself very dramatically by tearing open the sky and coming down. The words "split open" are the same words used to describe ripping apart a piece of cloth.

mountains would have shaken

This is what would have happened if God had split open the heavens and come down. The mountains would have trembled as in an earthquake.

Isaiah 64:2

as when fire kindles the brushwood, or the fire makes water boil

This possibly emphasizes how easily God's presence would have caused the mountains and the people to tremble.

Isaiah 64:3

General Information:

The people of Israel continues speaking to Yahweh.

Isaiah 64:4

no eye has seen

Here the "eye" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "and no one has seen"

Isaiah 64:5

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking to Yahweh.

Isaiah 64:6

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking to Yahweh.

all our righteous deeds are like a menstrual rag

A "menstrual rag" is a cloth that a woman uses during the time of month when she bleeds from her womb. This means all their attempts to please God fail. This sentence was meant to be shocking.

We have all withered like leaves

Isaiah compares the people of Israel to leaves that dry up when dead.

our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away

This means their sins, as a community, are the reason for their failure. Isaiah compares the iniquities to the wind as the force for their suffering Yahweh's punishment.

Isaiah 64:7

you have hidden your face from us

This means God gave up on his people and let them suffer.

in the hand of our iniquities

Here the word "hand" is a metonym for the power of those who are punishing the people for their iniquities. Alternate translation: "as you punish us for our iniquities"

Isaiah 64:8

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking to Yahweh.

we are the clay. You are our potter; and we all are the work of your hand

This means God created the people of Israel.

Isaiah 64:9

look at us all

Isaiah asks Yahweh to pay attention to their situation.

Isaiah 64:10

General Information:

The people of Israel continue speaking to Yahweh.

Your holy cities have become a wilderness

This emphasizes that the cities have been destroyed and no one lives there.

Isaiah 64:11

Our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised you, has been destroyed by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy has destroyed our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised you, by fire"

Isaiah 64:12

How can you still hold back, Yahweh? How can you remain silent and continue to humiliate us?

They use questions to express their frustration because God has not yet come to help them. Alternate translation: "Please do not hold back, Yahweh! Please do not remain silent and continue to humiliate us!"

Chapter 65

- ¹ "I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek.
I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!'
to a nation that did not call on my name.
- ² I have spread out my hands all day
to a stubborn people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
who have walked after their own thoughts and plans!
- ³ They are a people who continually provoke me,
offering sacrifices in gardens,
and burning incense on brick tiles.
- ⁴ They sit among the graves
and keep watch all night,
and eat pork with the broth of foul meat in their dishes.
- ⁵ They say, 'Stand away, do not come near to me,
for I am holier than you.'
These things are smoke in my nose,
a fire that burns all day long.
- ⁶ Look, it is written before me:
I will not keep quiet, for I will pay them back;
I will repay them into their laps,
- ⁷ for their iniquities and the iniquities of their fathers together,"
says Yahweh.
"I will repay them for burning incense on the mountains
and for mocking me on the hills.
I will therefore measure out their past deeds
into their laps."
- ⁸ This is what Yahweh says,
- "As when new wine is found in a cluster of grapes,
when one says, 'Do not ruin it,
for there is good in it,'
this is what I will do for my servants' sake:
I will not ruin them all.
- ⁹ I will bring descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah ones who will possess my mountains.
My chosen ones will possess the land,
and my servants will live there.
- ¹⁰ Sharon will become a pasture for the flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds,
for my people who seek me.
- ¹¹ But you who abandon Yahweh,
who forget my holy mountain,
who prepare a table for Fortune,
and fill wine glasses of mixed wine for Destiny.
- ¹² I will appoint you for the sword,
and you will all bow down to the slaughter,
because when I called, you did not answer;
when I spoke, you did not listen.
But you did what was evil in my sight
and chose to do what displeases me."
- ¹³ This is what the Lord Yahweh says,

"Look, my servants will eat,
 but you will be hungry;
 look, my servants will drink,
 but you will be thirsty;
 look, my servants will rejoice,
 but you will be put to shame.

14 Look, my servants will shout with joy
 because of gladness of heart,
 but you will cry because of the pain of the heart,
 and will wail because of the crushing of the spirit.

15 You will leave behind your name
 as a curse for my chosen ones to speak;
 I, the Lord Yahweh, will kill you;
 I will call my servants by another name.

16 Whoever pronounces a blessing on the earth
 will be blessed by me, the God of truth.
 Whoever takes an oath on the earth
 will swear by me, the God of truth,
 because the former troubles will be forgotten,
 for they will be hidden from my eyes.

17 For see, I am about to create
 new heavens and a new earth;
 and the former things will not be remembered
 or be brought to mind.

18 But you will be glad and rejoice forever
 in what I am about to create.
 See, I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
 and her people as a source of gladness.

19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem
 and be glad over my people;
 the sounds of weeping and cries of distress
 will no longer be heard in her.

20 Never again will an infant live there
 only a few days;
 nor will an old man die before his time.
 One who dies at one hundred years old
 will be considered a young person.
 Anyone who fails to reach the age of one hundred years old
 will be considered cursed.

21 They will build houses and inhabit them,
 and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 No longer will they build a house and another live in it;
 they will not plant, and another eat;
 for as the days of trees
 will be the days of my people.
 My chosen will fully outlive
 the work of their hands.

23 They will not labor in vain,
 nor give birth to dismay.
 For they are the children of those blessed by Yahweh,
 and their descendants with them.

24 Before they call, I will answer;
 and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb will graze together,
 and the lion will eat straw like the ox;
 but dust will be the serpent's food.
 says Yahweh.

Isaiah 65 General Notes

Structure and formatting

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

This chapter is Yahweh's response to the repentance of the people. (See: repent)

Special concepts in this chapter

Judgment and hope

This chapter records that Yahweh's judgment on the people must come. Despite this, there is hope that in the end, Yahweh will make all things new and restore them to himself. (See: judge and hope and restore)

Isaiah 65:1

I was ready

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

Isaiah 65:2

I have spread out my hands all day to a stubborn people
"Spreading out my hands" here is a person's gesture to show imploring or a strong request.
Alternate translation: "I have continually begged a stubborn people to receive my help"

Isaiah 65:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Israel.

in gardens ... on brick tiles

These refer to Canaanite places for worshiping idols. Their sacred altars were made of bricks, which Yahweh forbid for his altars. Yahweh's altars were made of stone.

Isaiah 65:4

sit among the graves and keep watch all night

This is a reference to consulting the dead, a practice that Yahweh prohibited.

eat pork

Yahweh did not allow the people of Israel to eat meat from pigs.

Isaiah 65:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to and about the people of Israel.

These things are smoke in my nose

Yahweh compares these people who are continually annoying him to smoke that irritates a person's breathing.

a fire that burns all day long

Yahweh compares the people of Israel to a slow-burning fire that sends out smoke without stopping as it irritates.

Isaiah 65:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Israel.

Look, it is written

"Take notice and pay attention"

into their laps

This means God will punish them to the fullest extent. This expression compares Yahweh punishing the people to dumping on their legs as they are sitting.

Isaiah 65:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 65:8

As when new wine is found in a cluster of grapes

Yahweh compares the people of Israel to a cluster of grapes that still has some good new wine in it.

when new wine is found in a cluster

This can be stated in an active way. Alternate translation: "when you find new wine in a cluster"

I will not ruin them all

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "I will spare some of them who are righteous"

Isaiah 65:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

my mountains

This refers to the highest locations of Jerusalem and all of Judea.

Isaiah 65:10

Sharon

This was a fertile grazing area.

Valley of Achor

This is the name of a valley that possibly ran from Jerusalem to south of Jericho. This was also a fertile grazing area.

Isaiah 65:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

holy mountain

See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

who prepare a table ... and fill wine glasses of mixed wine

People would bring food and drink and place it in front of the idol as part of their worship.

mixed wine

wine mixed with spices

Fortune ... Destiny

These are names of false gods. They are also called "Gad" and "Meni."

Isaiah 65:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to those in Israel who worship idols.

appoint you for the sword

"The sword" represents various weapons of war that Yahweh will use to punish those who do not respond to Yahweh's call.

when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen

Both clauses mean the same and are repeated for emphasis.

Isaiah 65:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to those in Israel who worship idols.

Look, my servants

"Take notice and pay attention" Yahweh repeats this for emphasis.

Isaiah 65:14

but you will cry because of the pain of the heart, and will wail because of the crushing of the spirit

These clauses mean the same and the repetition is for emphasis.

crushing of the spirit

This expression compares the feeling of terrible disappointment and sorrow to something becoming deformed due to high pressure.

Isaiah 65:15

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to those in Israel who worship idols.

Isaiah 65:16

will be blessed by me, the God of truth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, the God who always speaks the truth, will bless him"

the former troubles will be forgotten ... will be hidden

These clauses can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will forget the former troubles, for these troubles will be out of my memory"

they will be hidden from my eyes

"hidden from my eyes" represents the attention and memory of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I will not even think about them again"

Isaiah 65:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

For see

"Notice! Pay attention!"

new heavens and a new earth

Both are extremes that also represent everything between.

the former things will not be remembered or be brought to mind

Both of these clauses mean the same thing and are combined for emphasis. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will not even think about what happened in the past"

Isaiah 65:18

But you will be glad

Here "you" refers to all of God's servants.

Isaiah 65:19

weeping and cries of distress will no longer be heard in her

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will hear weeping and cries of distress any longer in her"

Isaiah 65:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about his faithful people.

one hundred years

"100 years"

will be considered a young person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will consider him a young person"

will be considered cursed

This can be stated this in active form. Alternate translation: "people will consider this person as cursed"

Isaiah 65:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 65:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about his faithful people.

for as the days of trees will be the days of my people
"for my people will live as long as trees live"

Isaiah 65:23

they are the children of those blessed by Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they are the children of those whom Yahweh blessed"

Isaiah 65:24

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about his faithful people.

Isaiah 65:25

holy mountain

See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

Chapter 66

¹ This is what Yahweh says,

"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Where then is the house you will build for me?
Where is the place where I may rest?

² My hand has made all these things;
that is how these things came to be—
this is Yahweh's declaration.

This is the man of whom I approve,
the broken and contrite in spirit,
and who trembles at my word.

³ He who slaughters an ox
also murders a man;
he who sacrifices a lamb
also breaks a dog's neck;
he who offers a grain offering
offers swine's blood;
he who offers a memorial of incense
also blesses wickedness.
They have chosen their own ways,
and they take pleasure in their abominations.

⁴ In the same way I will choose their own punishment;
I will bring on them what they fear,
because when I called, no one answered;
when I spoke, no one listened.
They did what was evil in my sight,
and chose to do what displeases me."

⁵ Hear the word of Yahweh,
you who tremble at his word,
"Your brothers who hate
and exclude you for my name's sake have said,
'May Yahweh be glorified,
then we will see your joy,'
but they will be put to shame.

⁶ A sound of battle tumult comes from the city,
a sound from the temple,
the sound of Yahweh
giving recompense to his enemies.

⁷ Before she goes into labor,
she gives birth;
before pain is upon her,
she gave birth to a son.

⁸ Who has heard of such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Will a land be born in one day?
Can a nation be established in one moment?
Yet as soon as Zion goes into labor,
she gives birth to her children.

⁹ Do I bring a baby to the birth opening
and not permit the child to be born?—asks Yahweh.
Or do I bring a child to moment of delivery
and then hold it back?—asks your God."

¹⁰ Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her,

all you who love her;
 rejoice with her,
 all you who mourned over her!
11 For you will nurse and be satisfied;
 with her breasts you will be comforted;
 for you will drink them to the full
 and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 This is what Yahweh says,

"I am about to spread prosperity over her like a river,
 and the riches of the nations like an overflowing stream.
 You will nurse at her side, be carried in her arms,
 and be dandled on her knees.

13 As a mother comforts her child,
 so I will comfort you,
 and you will be comforted in Jerusalem."

14 You will see this, and your heart will rejoice,
 and your bones will sprout like the tender grass.
 The hand of Yahweh will be made known to his servants,
 but he will show his anger against his enemies.

15 For look, Yahweh is coming with fire,
 and his chariots are coming like the windstorm
 to bring the heat of his anger
 and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For Yahweh executes judgment on mankind
 by fire and with his sword.
 Those killed by Yahweh will be many.

17 They consecrate themselves and make themselves pure, so they may enter the gardens, following the one in the middle of those who eat the flesh of pig and abominable things like mice. ^[1] "They will come to an end—this is Yahweh's declaration.

18 For I know their deeds and their thoughts. The time is coming when I will gather all nations and languages. They will come and will see my glory. ^[2]**19** I will set a sign among them. Then I will send survivors from them to the nations: To Tarshish, the Libyans and Lydians, ^[3] who draw the bow, to Tubal, Greece, ^[4] and to the distant coastlands that have not heard reports about me nor seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. **20** They will bring back all your brothers out of all the nations, as an offering to Yahweh. They will come on horses, and in chariots, in wagons, on mules, and on camels, to my holy mountain Jerusalem—says Yahweh. For the people of Israel will bring a grain offering in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh. **21** Some of these I will even choose as priests and Levites—says Yahweh.

22 For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I will make will remain before me—this is Yahweh's declaration—so your descendants will remain, and your name will remain. **23** From one month to the next, and from one Sabbath to the next, all people will come to bow down to me—says Yahweh. **24** They will go out and see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me, for the worms that eat them will not die, and the fire that consumes them will not be quenched; and it will be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Footnotes

66:17 ^[1]Modern translations provide various interpretations for this difficult verse.

66:18 ^[2]Modern translations provide various interpretations for this difficult verse.

66:19 ^[3]Some modern English translations read,

66:19 ^[4]Some modern English translations read,

Isaiah 66 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 66:1-17, 21-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

In the end

In the end, Yahweh will enact his perfect justice. This is the true hope of this world. The new heaven and the new earth are an important part of this. In the end, this will be the perfect creation of Yahweh and will last forever. (See: justice and hope and eternity)

Isaiah 66:1

Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool

Yahweh compares heaven to a throne and the earth to a footstool to emphasize how great he is.

Where then is the house you will build for me? Where is the place where I may rest?

Yahweh uses questions to emphasize that humans cannot build a place for him to dwell.

Isaiah 66:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

My hand has made all these things

Yahweh is represented by his hand which emphasizes his power and authority. Alternate translation: "I have made all these things"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

the broken and contrite in spirit

Here "broken" and "contrite" refers to a person who is truly humble and who suffers for his faith.

Isaiah 66:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

He who slaughters ... also blesses wickedness

These four clauses all describe different ways evil people act and come to the same meaning for emphasis.

They have chosen their own ways

"They have chosen to do evil things that violate the ways of Yahweh"

Isaiah 66:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the wicked people.

what was evil in my sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation.

Alternate translation: "what I consider to be evil" or "what is evil in my judgement"

Isaiah 66:5

May Yahweh be glorified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Glorify Yahweh" or "May Yahweh glorify himself"

but they will be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I will put them to shame"

Isaiah 66:6

General Information:

Yahweh describes the punishment for the hypocrisy of the worshippers.

A sound of battle tumult

The sound represents the real fighting that is going on in the temple as Yahweh is carrying out the punishment.

Isaiah 66:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before pain is upon her, she gave birth to a son

Yahweh speaks about Zion as if it were a woman who is about to give birth. Although Zion was destroyed and the people no longer lived there, Yahweh promises that without delay and with little effort an entire nation will come from her.

Isaiah 66:8

Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Will a land be born in one day? Can a nation be established in one moment?

Yahweh uses questions to emphasize how unique this event will be. The series of questions builds tension until Zion is finally mentioned.

Isaiah 66:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about Jerusalem as if it were a mother ([Isaiah 66:7-8](#)).

Do I bring a baby to the birth opening ... born?

Yahweh uses questions to emphasize that he will not fail to fulfill his promises to the people of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about Jerusalem as if it were a mother and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as if they were newly born children ([Isaiah 66:7-8](#)).

Isaiah 66:11

For you will nurse and be satisfied; with her breasts you will be comforted

This means Jerusalem will be a place of safety and comfort for God's people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For she will satisfy you with her milk; she will comfort you with her breasts"

Isaiah 66:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about Jerusalem as if it were a mother ([Isaiah 66:7-8](#)).

like a river ... like an overflowing stream

This means God will cause the people of the nations to bring a very large amount of riches, which will be permanent like a river and abundant.

You will nurse at her side, be carried in her arms, and be dandled on her knees

This means Jerusalem will be a place of safety and comfort for God's people.

be carried in her arms, and be dandled on her knees

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she will carry you in her arms and bounce you on her knees with delight"

Isaiah 66:13

so I will comfort you, and you will be comforted in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so I will comfort you in Jerusalem"

Isaiah 66:14

General Information:

Isaiah is speaking to God's faithful people.

your bones will sprout

"Bones" refers to the whole body.

will sprout like the tender grass

"Tender grass" grows fast and strong and compares to the health and vigor of God's faithful people.

The hand of Yahweh will be made known to his servants

Here "hand" refers to his power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will reveal his power to his servants"

Isaiah 66:15

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking to God's faithful people.

coming with fire

Yahweh's appearances in the Old Testament are often accompanied by fire that represents Yahweh's anger and judgment.

like the windstorm

Storms represent Yahweh's powerful actions to make his judgment effective.

Isaiah 66:16

with his sword

"Sword" is one weapon that represents all of warfare and killing.

Those killed by Yahweh will be many

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will kill many people"

Isaiah 66:17

General Information:

Isaiah continues speaking.

They consecrate themselves

"They" are those who worship Yahweh but go against his laws.

enter the gardens

This is a place where people would go to worship idols.

the one in the middle

This describes the leader of those of go to worship idols.

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Translate as in [Isaiah 30:1]

Isaiah 66:18

For I know

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

their deeds ... their thoughts

Here "their" refers to the worshipers that are hypocrites whom Yahweh has described before.

Isaiah 66:19

the Libyans and Lydians, ... to Tubal, Greece

These are names of people groups and areas that are far from the land of Israel.

Isaiah 66:20

They will bring

Here "they" refers to the foreigners who survived and witnessed to the nations. They will return to Jerusalem with exiled Israelites.

holy mountain

See how you translated this in Isaiah 11:9.

Isaiah 66:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 66:22

the new heavens and the new earth

See how you translated this in Isaiah 65:17.

Isaiah 66:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Isaiah 66:24

General Information:

Yahweh finishes speaking.

They will go out

Here "they" refers to all the people, the faithful Israelites and foreigners, who come to worship Yahweh.

the worms ... and the fire

Both clauses describe the same idea to emphasize Yahweh's punishment.

the worms that eat them

The worms represent the horror of decay and rot that are Yahweh's punishment on the wicked.

the fire that consumes

Fire also represents Yahweh's judgment.

will not be quenched

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: "will burn forever"

all flesh

This expression represents all created living beings that shrink from the dead.

