

Language: English

Book: Judges

Judges

Chapter 1

¹ After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel asked Yahweh, saying, "Who first will attack the Canaanites for us, to fight against them?" ² Yahweh said, "Judah will attack. See, I have given them control of this land." ³ The men of Judah said to men of Simeon, their brothers, "Come up with us into our territory that was assigned to us that together we may fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you to the territory that was assigned to you." So the tribe of Simeon went with them. ⁴ The men of Judah attacked, and Yahweh gave them victory over the Canaanites and the Perizzites. They killed ten thousand of them at Bezek. ⁵ They found Adoni-Bezek at Bezek, and they fought against him and defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. ⁶ But Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him, and they cut off his thumbs and his big toes. ⁷ Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings, who had their thumbs and their big toes cut off, picked up food from under my table. As I have done, even so God has done to me." They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸ The men of Judah fought against the city of Jerusalem and took it. They attacked it with the edge of the sword and they set the city on fire. ⁹ After that, the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the Negev, and the lowlands. ¹⁰ Judah advanced against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron was previously Kiriath Arba), and they defeated Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

¹¹ From there the men of Judah advanced against the inhabitants of Debir (the name of Debir was previously Kiriath Sepher). ¹² Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kiriath Sepher and takes it, I will give him Aksah, my daughter, to be his wife." ¹³ Othniel, son of Kenaz (Caleb's younger brother) captured Debir, so Caleb gave him Aksah, his daughter, to be his wife. ¹⁴ Soon Aksah came to Othniel, and she urged him to ask her father to give her a field. As she was getting off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?" ¹⁵ She said to him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negev, also give me springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

¹⁶ The descendants of Moses' father-in-law the Kenite went up from the City of Palms with the people of Judah, into the wilderness of Judah, which is in the Negev, to live with the people of Judah near Arad. ¹⁷ The men of Judah went with the men of Simeon their brothers and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath and they completely destroyed it. The name of the city was called Hormah. ¹⁸ The people of Judah also captured Gaza and the land around it, Ashkelon and the land around it, and Ekron and the land around it. ¹⁹ Yahweh was with the people of Judah and they took possession of the hill country, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the plains because they had iron chariots. ²⁰ Hebron was given to Caleb (like Moses had said), and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak. ²¹ But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem. So the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

²² The house of Joseph prepared to attack Bethel, and Yahweh was with them. ²³ They sent out men to spy on Bethel (the city that was formerly named Luz). ²⁴ The spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, "Show us, please, how to get into the city, and we will be kind to you." ²⁵ He showed them a way into the city, and so they attacked the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family get away. ²⁶ Then the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called it Luz, which is its name to this day.

²⁷ The people of Manasseh did not drive out the people living in the cities of Beth Shan and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or those who lived in Dor and its villages, or those who lived in Ibleam and its villages, or those who lived in Megiddo and its villages, because the Canaanites were determined to live

in that land. ²⁸ When Israel became strong, they forced the Canaanites to serve them with hard labor, but they never drove them out completely.

²⁹ Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites continued to live in Gezer among them.

³⁰ Zebulun did not drive out the people living in Kitron, or the people living in Nahalol, and so the Canaanites continued to live among them, but Zebulun forced the Canaanites to serve them with hard labor.

³¹ Asher did not drive out the people living in Akko, or the people living in Sidon, or those living in Ahlab, Akzib, Helbah, Aphek, or Rehob. ³² So the tribe of Asher lived among the Canaanites (those who lived in the land), because they did not drive them out.

³³ The tribe of Naphtali did not drive out those who were living in Beth Shemesh, or those living in Beth Anath. So the tribe of Naphtali lived among the Canaanites (the people who were living in that land). However, the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were forced into hard labor for Naphtali.

³⁴ The Amorites forced the tribe of Dan out into the hill country, not allowing them to come down to the plain. ³⁵ So the Amorites lived at Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, but the military might of the house of Joseph conquered them, and they were forced to serve them with hard labor. ³⁶ The border of the Amorites ran from the hill of Akrabbim at Sela up into the hill country.

Judges 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"After the death of Joshua"

This statement creates a seamless transition from the book of Joshua.

Special concepts in this chapter

Finishing the conquest of the Promised Land

Israel fought to clear the land of the Canaanites, but they also made treaties with other peoples and made some of them do hard labor. This was against God's instruction to completely remove the Canaanite people from the land.

Judges 1:1

Connecting Statement:

The book of Judges continues the story about Joshua and is also the beginning of a new part of the story.

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.

will attack the Canaanites for us

The word "us" refers to the people of Israel, but not to Yahweh.

Judges 1:2

Judah will attack

Here "Judah" represents the men of the tribe of Judah. Yahweh is commanding these men to attack

first. Alternate translation: "The men of Judah must attack first"

See

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

this land

This refers to the land where the Canaanites lived. Alternate translation: "the land of the Canaanites"

Judges 1:3

their brothers

"their fellow Israelites" or "their relatives"

Come up with us

The people of the tribes of Judah and Simeon were camped with the rest of the Israelite people in the valley of the Jordan River. The land given to Judah was in the hills above the valley. Some languages do not usually indicate whether people were going up or down. Alternate translation: "Come with us" or "Go with us"

that was assigned to us ... that was assigned to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Yahweh assigned to us ... that Yahweh assigned to you"

We in turn will go with you
"In the same way, we will go with you"

Judges 1:4

The men of Judah attacked
It is implied that the men of Simeon attacked with the men of Judah.

They killed ten thousand
"They killed about 10,000" or "They killed a large number"

of them
"soldiers of the Canaanites and Perizzites" or "enemies"

Bezek
This is an area in the mountains of Canaan.

Judges 1:5

Adoni-Bezek
This man was the leader of the army of the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

they fought against him
Here "him" actually refers to Adoni-Bezek and his army. Alternate translation: "they fought against him and his army"

Judges 1:6

pursued him
"chased him"

Judges 1:7

Seventy kings
"70 kings"

who had their thumbs and their big toes cut off
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose thumbs and big toes I told my men to cut off" or "whose thumbs and big toes we cut off"

picked up food from under my table
The phrase "picked up" is a metonym for eating. Forcing these kings to eat food that fell from Adoni-Bezek's table represents all the ways that he humiliated them. Alternate translation: "ate scraps of food from under my table"

Judges 1:8

the city of Jerusalem and took it
Here "city" represents the people. Alternate translation: "the people who lived in Jerusalem and defeated them"

They attacked it
Here "it" refers to the city which represents the people of the city. Alternate translation: "They attacked the people of the city"

with the edge of the sword
"with the point of the sword." Here "sword" represents the swords and other weapons that the soldiers used in battle. Alternate translation: "with their swords" or "with their weapons"

Judges 1:9

the men of Judah went down to fight
It was common to use the word "down" when it refers to traveling from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the men of Judah went to fight"

in the Negev
"in the southern Judean wilderness"

lowlands
hills at the base of a mountain or mountain range

Judges 1:10

the name of Hebron was previously Kiriath Arba
This is background information. Some people who first read this book had probably heard of Kiriath Arba but did not know that it was the same as the city that they called Hebron.

Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi
These are the names of three Canaanite leaders of Hebron. Each leader represents his army. Alternate translation: "Sheshai, Ahiman, Talmi, and their armies"

Judges 1:11

the name of Debir was previously Kiriath Sepher
The author probably wrote this because his readers knew the city as Debir. But at the time Israel attacked it, it was called Kiriath Sepher. Alternate translation: "which used to be called Kiriath Sepher"

was previously
"was in times past" or "was at an earlier time"

Judges 1:12

Whoever attacks Kiriath Sepher and takes it

Here "Kiriath Sepher" represents the people.
Alternate translation: "Whoever attacks and defeats the people of Kiriath Sepher and takes their city"

Aksah

This is the name of Caleb's daughter.

Judges 1:13

Othniel, son of Kenaz

These are names of men.

Judges 1:14

she urged him

"Aksah urged Othniel"

Judges 1:15

Give me a blessing

"Do a favor for me" or "Do this for me"

Since you have given me the land of the Negev

Caleb gave Aksah in marriage to Othniel, so she lived with Othniel in the city that he had captured in the Negev. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Since you have given me in marriage to live in the Negev"

Since you have given me the land

This implies that Caleb did give her the field when she asked him for it (verse 14). She is now asking for springs of water in addition to that field.

Judges 1:16

of Moses' father-in-law

"of the father of Moses' wife"

father-in-law the Kenite went up

"father-in-law, who was one of the Ken people, went up"

went up from the City of Palms ... into the wilderness

"left the City of Palms ... and went into the wilderness"

City of Palms

This is another name for the city of Jericho.

Arad

This is the name of a city in Canaan.

Judges 1:17

the men of Simeon their brothers

Here "brothers" means relatives who were in another tribe of Israel.

Zephath

This is the name of a city in Canaan.

The name of the city was called Hormah

After the Israelites destroyed Zephath, they changed its name to "Hormah." The name "Hormah" means "complete destruction."

Judges 1:18

General Information:

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Judges 1:19

Yahweh was with the people of Judah

Here "was with" means that Yahweh helped the people of Judah.

plains

a very large area of level, treeless ground

Judges 1:20

Hebron was given to Caleb (like Moses had said)

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses had given Hebron to Caleb"

three sons of Anak

The leaders of the people groups are used to refer to the entire group. Alternate translation: "three sons of Anak and their people"

Anak

This is the name of a man. Anak and his descendants were famous for being very tall.

Judges 1:21

to this day

"until now." This refers to the time the book of Judges was written.

Judges 1:22

The house of Joseph

Here "house" represents descendants. Manasseh and Ephraim were sons of Joseph, and the "house of Joseph" can refer to the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim" or "The men of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim"

to attack Bethel

Here "Bethel" represents the people who live in Bethel.

Judges 1:23

spy

to get information secretly

the city that was formerly named Luz

This is background information. Some people who first read this book had probably heard of Luz but did not know that it was the same as the city that they called Bethel.

Judges 1:24

spies

people who get information secretly

Judges 1:25

they attacked the city

Here "city" represents the people. Alternate translation: "they attacked the people of the city"

with the edge of the sword

"with the point of the sword." Here "sword" represents the swords and other weapons that the soldiers used in battle. Alternate translation: "with their swords" or "with their weapons"

get away

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "escape"

Judges 1:26

Luz

This new town started in the land of the Hittites was named after the town of Luz, near Bethel, that the man had left.

which is its name to this day

"which is still its name." Here "to this day" refers to the time when the book of Judges was written.

Judges 1:27

Beth Shan ... Taanach ... Dor ... Ibleam ... Megiddo

These are names of cities.

because the Canaanites were determined to live in that land

To "determine" is to firmly decide something. Alternate translation: "because the Canaanites firmly decided not to leave that land"

Judges 1:28

When Israel became strong

Here "Israel" represents the people. Alternate translation: "When the people of Israel became stronger"

they forced the Canaanites to serve them with hard labor

"they forced the Canaanites to do hard work for them"

Judges 1:29

Ephraim did not

Here "Ephraim" the men or the soldiers of the tribe of Ephraim.

Gezer

The name of one of the cities in the Ephraim area.

Judges 1:30

Zebulun did not drive out

Here "Zebulun" represents the men or the soldiers of the tribe of Zebulun.

Kitron ... Nahalol

These are names of cities in the land of Canaan.

but Zebulun forced

Here "Zebulun" represents the people of the tribe of Zebulun.

hard labor

"difficult labor"

Judges 1:31

Asher did not drive

Here "Asher" represents the men or the soldiers of the tribe of Asher.

Akko ... Sidon ... Ahlab, Akzib, Helbah, Aphek ... Rehob

These are names of cities in the land of Canaan.

Judges 1:32

General Information:

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Judges 1:33

Beth Shemesh ... Beth Anath

These are names of cities.

the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were forced into hard labor for Naphtali

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Naphtali forced the people of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath to work for them as slaves"

Judges 1:34

not allowing them to come down

"stopping them from coming down"

plain

a very large area of flat land without trees

Judges 1:35

Mount Heres

This is the name of a large hill on which the city of Aijalon was built.

Aijalon ... Shaalbim

These are names of cities.

the military might of the house of Joseph conquered them

"the tribes of people who descended from Joseph were able to conquer them because of their powerful army"

house of Joseph

Here "house" represents descendants. Manasseh and Ephraim were sons of Joseph, and the "house of Joseph" can refer to the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim" or "the men of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim"

Judges 1:36

the hill of Akrabbim

This was a pass southwest of the Dead Sea. It is also called the "Scorpion Pass."

Sela

This is the name of a city.

Chapter 2

¹ The angel of Yahweh went up from Gilgal to Bokim, and said, "I brought you up from Egypt, and have brought you to the land I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you. ² You must make no covenant with those who live in this land. You must break down their altars.' But you have not listened to my voice. What is this that you have done? ³ So now I say, 'I will not drive the Canaanites out before you, but they will become thorns in your sides, and their gods will become a trap for you.'" ⁴ When the angel of Yahweh spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people shouted and wept. ⁵ They called the name of that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to Yahweh.

⁶ Now when Joshua had sent the people on their way, the people of Israel went, each to his own property, to take ownership of the land. ⁷ The people served Yahweh during the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him, those who had seen all of Yahweh's great deeds he had done for Israel. ⁸ Joshua son of Nun the servant of Yahweh, died at the age of 110 years old. ⁹ They buried him within the border of his property in Timnath Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ All that generation was also gathered to their fathers. Another generation grew up after them who did not know Yahweh or the deeds he had done for Israel.

¹¹ The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and they served the Baals. ¹² They broke away from Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, the very gods of the peoples who were around them, and they bowed down to them. They provoked Yahweh to anger because ¹³ they broke away from Yahweh and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and he gave them to the raiders who stole their possessions from them. He sold them as slaves who were held by the strength of their enemies around them, so they could no longer defend themselves against their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever Israel went out to fight, Yahweh's hand was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them and they were in terrible distress.

¹⁶ Then Yahweh raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who were stealing their possessions. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges. They were unfaithful to Yahweh and gave themselves like prostitutes to other gods and worshiped them. They soon turned aside from the way their fathers had lived—those who had obeyed the commandments of Yahweh—but they themselves did not do so. ¹⁸ When Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh helped the judges and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days the judge lived. Yahweh had pity on them as they groaned because of those who oppressed them and afflicted them. ¹⁹ But when the judge died, they would turn away and do things that were even more corrupt than their fathers had done. They would go after other gods to serve them and worship them. They refused to give up any of their evil deeds or their stubborn ways. ²⁰ The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel; he said, "Because this nation has broken the terms of my covenant that I had set in place for their fathers—because they have not listened to my voice— ²¹ I will not, from now on, drive out from before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died. ²² I will do this so that I may test Israel, whether or not they will keep the way of Yahweh and walk in it, as their fathers kept it." ²³ That is why Yahweh left those nations and did not drive them out quickly and give them into the hand of Joshua.

Judges 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh tests Israel

Yahweh said, "Because this nation has broken the terms of my covenant." Completely removing the Canaanites from the land was a test from Yahweh. While Yahweh displayed covenant faithfulness, Israel did not. (See: test and covenantfaith)

Judges 2:1

angel of Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) "angel who represents Yahweh" or 2) "messenger who serves Yahweh" or 3) it may refer to Yahweh himself, who looked like an angel as he talked to a person. Either one of these meanings would explain the angel's use of "I" as if Yahweh himself were talking.

went up from Gilgal to Bokim

"left Gilgal and went to Bokim"

Bokim

This is what the Israelites named this place in 2:5 after the angel rebukes the people. "Bokim" means "crying."

and said

It is understood that the angel of Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "and said to the people of Israel"

brought you up from Egypt

"led you from Egypt"

your fathers

"your ancestors" or "your forefathers"

break my covenant with you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "fail to do what I said I would do for you"

Judges 2:2

you have not listened to my voice

Here "voice" represents what Yahweh said. Alternate translation: "you have not obeyed my commands"

What is this that you have done?

This question is asked to cause the people of Israel to realize they have disobeyed Yahweh and will suffer because of it. Alternate translation: "You have done a terrible thing."

Judges 2:3

General Information:

The angel of Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel.

So now I say, 'I will not ... trap for you.'

This has a quotation within a quotation. This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "So now I tell you that I will not ... trap for you."

become thorns in your sides

The Canaanites troubling the Israelites is spoken of as if the Canaanites would be thorns in the side of the Israelites. Alternate translation: "cause you trouble"

thorns

sharp pieces of wood up to 7 centimeters long that stick out from some plants

their gods will become a trap for you

The Israelites worshiping the Canaanite gods is spoken of as if the false gods were a hunter's trap that catches an animal and causes it harm.

Judges 2:4

shouted and wept

"cried many tears"

Judges 2:5

General Information:

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Judges 2:6

Now when Joshua

Here "Now" is used to mark a stop in the main story. Here the narrator begins a summary that explains how the generations of Israelites after Joshua sinned and worshiped false gods so that Yahweh punished them, but then he would send judges to rescue them. This summary ends in 2:23.

when Joshua ... of the land

The events of 1:1-2:5 happened after Joshua died. This is recounting events that happened at the end of the book of Joshua.

to his own property

This statement can be made clearer. Alternate translation: "to the place Yahweh had given him"

Judges 2:7

Connecting Statement:

The background information that begins with the words "Now when Joshua" in verse 6 continues.

during the lifetime

This means the time that someone lived. Alternate translation: "during the life"

the elders

Here this means the men who helped lead Israel, participating in matters of social justice and in religious matters such as maintaining the law of Moses.

outlived him

This means to live longer than someone else. Alternate translation: "lived longer than he did"

Judges 2:8

Connecting Statement:

The background information that begins with the words "Now when Joshua" in verse 6 continues.

Joshua son of Nun ... died at the age of 110 years old

The background information that begins with the words "Now when Joshua" in verse 6 ends. The events of 1:1-2:5 happened after Joshua died.

Nun

This is the name of a man.

110 years old

"one hundred and ten years old"

Judges 2:9

Timnath Heres

This is the name of an area of land.

Mount Gaash

This is the name of a mountain.

Judges 2:10

All that generation was also gathered to their fathers

The phrase "was also gathered to their fathers" means that as the people of that generation died, their souls went to the same place as their ancestors who died before them. It is a polite way of saying they died.

fathers

Here this means the ancestors of a certain person or people group.

grew up

"grew older" or "became older"

who did not know Yahweh

Here "did not know" means they had not experienced Yahweh or his power the way the previous generation had.

Judges 2:11

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "what was evil in Yahweh's judgment" or "what Yahweh considered to be evil"

Baals

This is the plural of Baal. While "Baal" was generally the name of one false god, the word was also used for various other gods that were often worshiped along with Baal.

Judges 2:12

They broke away from Yahweh

The Israelites no longer obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if they physically broke away from him and left him.

their fathers

"their ancestors" or "their forefathers"

They went after other gods

The Israelites starting to worship false gods is spoken of as if the Israelites walked and went after the false gods.

bowed down to them

This is an act of worship and giving honor to someone.

They provoked Yahweh to anger

"They caused Yahweh to become angry"

Judges 2:13

Ashtoreths

This is the plural of Ashtoroth, who was worshiped as a goddess in many different forms.

Judges 2:14

The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel

The anger of Yahweh is described as burning like a fire. Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry with the people of Israel"

he gave them to the raiders who stole their possessions from them

"he let raiders steal their possessions"

He sold them as slaves who were held by the strength of their enemies around them, so they could no longer defend themselves against their enemies

Yahweh allowing the enemies to take the Israelites as slaves is spoken of as if he sold them into slavery. The phrase "who were held by" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He allowed their enemies to conquer them and take them as slaves, and they could no longer resist their powerful enemies"

Judges 2:15

Yahweh's hand was against them to defeat them

Here "hand" represents Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "Yahweh helped their enemies defeat them"

they were in terrible distress

"they were suffering terribly"

Judges 2:16

Then Yahweh raised up judges

Yahweh appointing persons to be judges is spoken of as if he were raising or lifting the persons up.

out of the hand of those

Here "hand" refers to power. Alternate translation: "from the power of the enemies"

Judges 2:17

they would not listen to their judges

"they would not obey their judges"

gave themselves like prostitutes to other gods and worshiped them

The people betraying Yahweh and worshiping other gods is spoken of as if the people were prostitutes. Alternate translation: "betrayed him by worshiping false gods"

their fathers

"their ancestors" or "their forefathers"

Judges 2:18

When Yahweh raised up judges

Yahweh appointing persons to be judges is spoken of as if he raised or lifted up the persons.

judges for them ... delivered them

The word "them" refers to the Israelites.

the hand of their enemies

Here "hand" refers to power of the enemies to hurt Israel. Alternate translation: "the power of their enemies"

all the days the judge lived

"as long as the judge lived"

pity

to have compassion for someone or something

as they groaned

The sound made by a person who suffers is used to describe the pain of the Israelites as they suffer. Alternate translation: "as they suffered"

Judges 2:19

they would turn away

The people no longer obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if they would physically turn away from Yahweh.

their fathers

"their ancestors" or "their forefathers"

They would go after other gods to serve them and worship them

The Israelites worshiping other gods is spoken of as if they were walking and going after other gods.

Alternate translation: "They would serve and worship other gods"

They refused to give up any of their evil deeds or their stubborn ways

"They refused to stop doing evil things and being stubborn." This can be stated in positive form.

Alternate translation: "They continued doing evil things and being stubborn"

Judges 2:20

The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel

The anger of Yahweh is described as burning like a fire. See how you translated this phrase in [Judges 2:14]

this nation has broken

Here "nation" represents the people. Alternate translation: "these people have broken" or "the Israelites have broken"

Judges 2:21

any of the nations

Here "nations" represents the people groups that lived in Canaan before the Israelites.

Judges 2:22

they will keep the way of Yahweh and walk in it

How Yahweh wants people to live or behave is spoken of as if it were a way or road. A person obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if they were walking in his way.

Judges 2:23

did not drive them out quickly and give them into the hand of Joshua

These two phrases mean the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: "he did not let Joshua quickly conquer them and drive them out"

into the hand of Joshua

Here "hand" is a metonym for power, and "Joshua" represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "into the power of Joshua and his army"

Chapter 3

¹ Now Yahweh left these nations to test Israel, namely everyone in Israel who had not experienced any of the wars fought in Canaan. ² (He did this to teach warfare to the new generation of the people of Israel who had not known it before.) ³ These are the nations: the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanon mountains, from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. ⁴ These nations were left as a means by which Yahweh would test Israel, to confirm whether they would obey the commands he gave their ancestors through Moses. ⁵ So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶ Their daughters they took to be their wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.

⁷ The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and forgot Yahweh their God. They worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore, the anger of Yahweh was set on fire against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim. The people of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim for eight years. ⁹ When the people of Israel called out to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up someone who would come to help the people of Israel, and who would rescue them: Othniel son of Kenaz (Caleb's younger brother). ¹⁰ Yahweh's Spirit empowered him, and he judged Israel and he went out to war. Yahweh gave him victory over Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram. The hand of Othniel defeated Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹ The land had peace for forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died.

¹² After that, the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and Yahweh gave strength to Eglon king of Moab to overpower Israel. ¹³ Eglon joined with the Ammonites and the Amalekites and they went and defeated Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms. ¹⁴ The people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years.

¹⁵ When the people of Israel called out to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud son of Gera, a Benjamite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent him, with their tribute payment, to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶ Ehud made himself a sword that had two edges, one cubit in length; he bound it to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷ He gave the tribute payment to King Eglon of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.) ¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute payment, he left with those who had carried it in. ¹⁹ As for Ehud himself, however, when he reached the place where the carved images were made near Gilgal, he turned and went back, and he said, "I have a secret message for you, my king." Eglon said, "Silence!" So all those serving him left the room. ²⁰ Ehud came to him. The king was sitting by himself, alone in the coolness of the upper room. Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." The king got up out of his seat. ²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh, and he stabbed it into the king's body. ²² The hilt of the sword also went into him following the blade. The tip of the sword came out of his back and the fat closed over it, for Ehud did not pull the sword out of his belly. ²³ Then Ehud went out on the porch and closed the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

²⁴ After Ehud had gone, the king's servants came; they saw that the doors of the upper room were locked, so they thought, "Surely he is relieving himself in the coolness of the upper room." ²⁵ They were growing more concerned until they felt they were neglecting their duty when the king still did not open the doors to the upper room. So they took the key and opened them, and there lay their master, fallen to the floor, dead.

²⁶ While the servants were waiting, wondering what they should do, Ehud escaped and passed beyond the place where there were carved images of idols, and so he escaped to Seirah. ²⁷ When he arrived, he blew a ram's horn in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hills, and he was leading them. ²⁸ He said to them, "Follow me, for Yahweh is about to defeat your enemies, the Moabites." They followed him and they captured the fords of the Jordan across from the Moabites, and they did not allow anyone to cross the river. ²⁹ At that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, and all were strong and capable men. Not one escaped. ³⁰ So that day Moab was subdued by the strength of Israel, and the land had rest for eighty years.

³¹ After Ehud the next judge was Shamgar son of Anath who killed 600 men of the Philistines with a stick used to goad oxen. He also delivered Israel from danger.

Footnotes

3:3 ^[1]Some modern English translations read,

Judges 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The people worship false gods

Israel worshiped idols and false gods. Because of this, Yahweh allowed Aram and Moab to rule over them. In the period of Judges, when Israel sinned, they were often placed under the rule of a foreign power. (See: falsegod and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Blew a trumpet"

When Ehud "blew a trumpet," he was calling all of the men to come help him fight.

Judges 3:1

Now Yahweh

Here "Now" begins a new section of the story.

these nations

This refers to the people groups that the narrator will list in 3:3.

who had not experienced any of the wars fought in Canaan

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had not fought in any of the wars in Canaan"

Judges 3:2

He did this to teach warfare to the new generation of the people of Israel who had not known it before

This changes from the main story. The narrator gives background information about why Yahweh left some of the people groups in Canaan. Alternate translation: "Yahweh left nations among the people of Israel to teach the young men who had not fought in battle before how to fight"

Judges 3:3

the five rulers

These five rulers represent themselves and their people. Alternate translation: "the five rulers and their people"

rulers

kings

Mount Baal Hermon

This is the highest mountain in Israel.

Lebo Hamath

This is the name of route between two mountains at the northern boundary of Canaan.

Judges 3:4

These nations were left

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh left these nations in Canaan" or "Yahweh allowed these nations to continue to live in Canaan"

as a means

"as a way"

whether they would ... gave their ancestors

The words "they" and "their" refer to the people of Israel.

the commands he gave

"the commands Yahweh gave"

Judges 3:5

General Information:

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Judges 3:6

General Information:

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Judges 3:7

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. See how you translated this in [Judges 2:11]

forgot Yahweh their God

Here "forgot" is an idiom that means "they stopped obeying."

Judges 3:8

the anger of Yahweh was set on fire

Yahweh becoming very angry is spoken of as if his anger were something that could be set on fire.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry"

sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim

Allowing the people of Israel to be conquered is spoken of as if Yahweh sold them to Cushan-Rishathaim. Alternate translation: "allowed Cushan-Rishathaim and his army to defeat them"

into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim

Here "hand" is a metonym that represents power or control. Also, "Cushan-Rishathaim" is a synecdoche that represents himself and his army.

Cushan-Rishathaim

This is the name of a man.

Aram Naharaim

This is the name of a country.

Judges 3:9

Yahweh raised up someone

Yahweh appointing someone to do a special work for him is spoken of as if Yahweh raised or lifted up the person.

Othniel ... Kenaz

See how you translated these men's names in Judges 1:13.

Judges 3:10

empowered him

This phrase means that Yahweh helped Othniel to have and develop the qualities he needed to be a great leader.

he judged Israel

Here "judged" means he led the people of Israel.

he went out to war

Here "he" refers to Othniel who represents himself and the army of Israel. Alternate translation: "Othniel and the Israelite soldiers went to fight against the army of Cushan-Rishathaim"

Yahweh gave him victory over Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram

Here "Cushan-Rishathaim" represents his army. Alternate translation: "Yahweh helped the Israelite army defeat the army of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram"

The hand of Othniel

Here "hand" is a metonym for army. Alternate translation: "The army of Othniel"

Judges 3:11

The land had peace

"The land" is used to refer to the people who lived in the land. Alternate translation: "The people lived peacefully"

forty years

"40 years"

Judges 3:12

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. See how you translated this in [Judges 2:11]

Yahweh gave strength to Eglon king of Moab

The abstract noun "strength" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Yahweh made Eglon king of Moab strong"

to Eglon king of Moab to overpower Israel

Here "Eglon king of Moab" represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "to Eglon king of Moab and his soldiers as they attacked the Israelite army"

Eglon

This is the name of a king.

to overpower Israel

The name "Israel" here is a metonym for the army or the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "to defeat the army of Israel" or "to conquer the people of Israel"

Judges 3:13

the City of Palms

This is another name for the city of Jericho. See how you translated this in Judges 1:16.

Judges 3:14

eighteen years

"18 years"

Judges 3:15

called out to Yahweh

Here this means to shout or speak loudly to someone far away. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.

raised up a deliverer

Yahweh appointing a deliverer to do a special service for him is spoken of as if he raised or lifted up the person.

Ehud ... Gera

These are names of men.

left-handed

Ehud was better able to hold a sword with his left hand.

Judges 3:16

one cubit

If it is necessary to use a modern measurement of length, here are two ways of doing it. Alternate translation: "46 centimeters" or "about one half meter"

thigh

the part of the leg between the knee and the hip

Judges 3:17

Now Eglon was a very fat man

Here "Now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the narrator tells background information about Eglon.

Judges 3:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 3:19

when he reached the place where the carved images were made near Gilgal

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when he arrived at the place near Gilgal where people made carved images"

Judges 3:20

in the coolness of the upper room

This is a room above the lower level that was used for rest and to remain cool during the hot part of the day.

The king got up out of his seat

Standing up was a sign of honoring God will listening to his message.

Judges 3:21

General Information:

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Judges 3:22

The tip of the sword came out of his back

"The sharp end of the sword came out of his back"

Judges 3:23

porch

an outside room with low walls and a roof covering

Judges 3:24

Surely he is relieving himself

This is a polite way to speak about a person having a bowel movement

Judges 3:25

until they felt they were neglecting their duty

They waited until they became worried that something was wrong and it was their duty to open the doors to their king's private room.

took the key and opened them

"took the key and opened the doors"

Judges 3:26

While the servants were waiting ... Ehud escaped

This tells what happened before the servants opened the doors to the upper room and found the king dead. Alternate translation: "Meanwhile, as the servants were still waiting outside of the upper room ... Ehud escaped"

Seirah

This is the name of a city.

Judges 3:27

When he arrived

This could be made clearer. Alternate translation: "When he arrived in Seirah"

Judges 3:28

General Information:

Ehud speaks to the people of Israel in Ephraim.

for Yahweh is about to defeat your enemies

Yahweh helping the Israelites to defeat their enemies is spoken of as if Yahweh were a warrior who would fight and defeat their enemies.

captured the fords

"gained control of the fords"

fords

the areas of a river where it is shallow and easy to walk across to the other side

did not allow anyone to cross
"did not let anyone cross"

Judges 3:29

ten thousand men
"10,000 men"

capable men
"able men" or "men able to fight well"

Judges 3:30

Moab was subdued by the strength of Israel
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelite army defeated the Moabites"

the strength of Israel
Here "strength" represents the Israelite army.

the land had rest
Here "land" represents the people. Alternate translation: "the Israelites lived peacefully"

eighty years
"80 years"

Judges 3:31

judge
God appointed judges to lead the people of Israel in times of trouble after they entered the Promised Land and before they had kings. Often judges rescued the Israelites from their enemies.

Shamgar
The name of a man.

Anath
The name of a man.

600 men
"six hundred men"

a stick used to goad oxen
Cattle farmers would poke their cattle with a sharp stick to make them move. Alternate translation: "a stick used to urge oxen to move" or "a stick used to direct oxen"

He also delivered Israel from danger
The word "danger" refers to enemies that tried to harm the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "He also delivered the people of Israel from their enemies"

Chapter 4

¹ After Ehud died, the people of Israel once again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. ² Yahweh sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was named Sisera, and he lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³ The people of Israel called out to Yahweh for help, because Sisera had nine hundred iron chariots and he oppressed the people of Israel with force for twenty years.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess (the wife of Lappidoth), was a leading judge in Israel at that time. ⁵ She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came to her to settle their disputes. ⁶ She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali. She said to him, "Yahweh, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from Naphtali and Zebulun.' ⁷ I will draw out Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Kishon River, with his chariots and his army, and I will give you victory over him.'" ⁸ Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go, but if you do not go with me, I will not go." ⁹ She said, "I will certainly go with you. However, the road on which you are going will not lead to your honor, for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ Barak called for the men of Zebulun and Naphtali to come together at Kedesh. Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah went along with him.

¹¹ Now Heber (the Kenite) had separated himself from the Kenites—they were the descendants of Hobab (Moses' father-in-law)—and he pitched his tent by the oak in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

¹² When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³ Sisera called out all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the soldiers who were with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River. ¹⁴ Deborah said to Barak, "Go! For this is the day in which Yahweh has given you victory over Sisera. Is not Yahweh leading you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ Yahweh confused Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and ran away on foot. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth Haggoyim, and the whole army of Sisera was killed by the edge of the sword, and not a man survived.

¹⁷ But Sisera ran away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸ Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my master; turn aside to me and do not be afraid." So he turned aside to her and came into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. ¹⁹ He said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." She opened a leather bag of milk and gave him drink, and then she covered him up again. ²⁰ He said to her, "Stand at the opening of the tent. If someone comes and asks you, 'Is anyone here?', say 'No'." ²¹ Then Jael (the wife of Heber) took a tent peg and a hammer in her hand and went in secretly to him, for he was in a deep sleep, and she hammered the tent peg into the side of his head until it went down into the ground, and he died. ²² As Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in the side of his head.

²³ So on that day God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before the people of Israel. ²⁴ The might of the people of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed him.

Judges 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 4 and 5 form one section about Barak and Deborah.

Special concepts in this chapter

Barak's leadership

At this time, it was very unusual for a woman to be a leader, especially a military leader. Barak lacked the strength to go into battle without Deborah. This indicates that Barak was a poor leader. If a woman won the battle for him, it would have brought Barak shame. It also indicates that Deborah was very well respected.

Judges 4:1

Ehud

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 3:15.

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. See how you translated this in [Judges 2:11]

Judges 4:2

Yahweh sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan

Here "hand" refers to Jabin's power over Israel. Yahweh's decision to give Jabin power over them is spoken of as if Yahweh had sold them to Jabin. Alternate translation: "Yahweh allowed them to be defeated by the power of Jabin king of Canaan"

Jabin ... Sisera

These are the names of men

Hazor ... Harosheth Haggoyim

These are the names of cities or places

Judges 4:3

nine hundred iron chariots

"900 iron chariots"

twenty years

"20 years"

Judges 4:4

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the narrator tells background information about Deborah.

Deborah

This is the name of a woman

Lappidoth

This is the name of a man

judge

God appointed judges to lead the Israelites in times of trouble. Often the judges rescued them from their enemies.

Judges 4:5

palm of Deborah

This tree was named after Deborah.

Judges 4:6

General Information:

The writer of Judges refers to men, a city, a mountain, and a river by their names.

Barak ... Abinoam

These are the names of men.

Mount Tabor

This is the name of a mountain.

ten thousand men

"10,000 men"

Judges 4:7

I will draw out

Here "I" refers to God.

draw out Sisera

Here "Sisera" represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "draw out Sisera and his army"

draw out

to cause people to come away from a safe location

Sisera ... Jabin

See how you translated these men's names in Judges 4:2.

Kishon

This is the name of a river.

Judges 4:8

General Information:

Barak has a discussion with Deborah.

Barak

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 4:6.

Judges 4:9

the road on which you are going will not lead to your honor

The choice Barak makes is spoken of as if Barak were choosing a road on which to travel. And, "honor" is spoken of as if it were a destination to which one travels. Alternate translation: "no one will honor you for what you do"

for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman

Here "hand" refers to her power to kill him. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh will cause a woman to defeat Sisera"

Sisera

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 4:2.

Deborah

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

Judges 4:10

Ten thousand men
"10,000 men"

Judges 4:11

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the narrator tells background information about Heber the Kenite.

Heber ... Hobab

These are the names of men.

Kenite

See how you translated this in Judges 1:16

Moses' father-in-law

"the father of Moses' wife"

Zaanannim

This is the name of a city.

Judges 4:12

When they told Sisera

Here "they" does not identify anyone specifically. Alternate translation: "When someone told Sisera"

Sisera

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 4:2.

Barak ... Abinoam ... Mount Tabor

See how you translated these names in Judges 4:6.

Judges 4:13

Sisera called out all his chariots

Here "chariots" represents the soldiers who drove the chariots.

nine hundred iron chariots
"900 iron chariots"

Harosheth Haggoyim

See how you translated the name of this city in Judges 4:2.

Kishon River

See how you translated this in Judges 4:7.

Judges 4:14

Yahweh has given you victory

Because Deborah is certain of victory, she speaks as if Barak had already won the battle. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will give you victory"

Is not Yahweh leading you?

Deborah asks this question to remind Barak that they fight on the side of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Remember, Yahweh is leading you."

with ten thousand
"with 10,000"

Judges 4:15

Yahweh confused Sisera and all his chariots and all his army

"Yahweh made Sisera and all his chariots and all his army unable to think clearly" or "Yahweh made Sisera and all his chariots and all his army panic"

all his chariots

Here the word "chariots" is a metonym for the soldiers driving the chariots. Alternate translation: "all the men driving chariots"

Judges 4:16

Barak pursued

Here "Barak" represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "Barak and his soldiers chased"

Harosheth

Translate this the same way you did in Judges 4:2.

the whole army of Sisera was killed by the edge of the sword

Here "sword" represents the swords and other weapons that the soldiers used in battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Barak and his soldiers killed Sisera's whole army with their swords"

Judges 4:17

Sisera ... Jabin ... Hazor

See how you translated these names in Judges 4:2.

ran away on foot

This is an idiom that means he was walking rather than riding a horse or in a chariot.

Jael

This is the name of a woman.

Heber

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 4:11.

Kenite

See how you translated this in Judges 1:16.

Judges 4:18

Turn aside

This means to change course during a journey in order to rest. Alternate translation: "Come here"

blanket

a large covering for the body to sleep under for warmth, made of wool or animal skins

Judges 4:19

He said to her

"Sisera said to Jael"

Judges 4:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 4:21

tent peg

a pointed piece of wood or metal, like a large nail, that is hammered into the ground to hold down a corner of a tent

hammer

a heavy tool made of wood used to hit a tent peg into the ground

a deep sleep

Like a person in a deep hole cannot easily climb out, a person in a deep sleep cannot easily wake up.

Judges 4:22

Barak was pursuing

"Barak was chasing" or "Barak was following after"

Judges 4:23

God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before the people of Israel

God causing the Israelites to defeat Jabin and his army is spoken of as is God himself defeated Jabin as the people of Israel watched.

Judges 4:24

The might

"The military power"

they destroyed him

Here "him" refers to Jabin who represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "they destroyed Jabin and his army"

Chapter 5

- ¹ On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:
- ² "When the leaders take the lead in Israel,
when the people volunteer—
praise Yahweh!
- ³ Listen, you kings! Pay attention, you rulers!
I, I will sing to Yahweh;
I will sing praises to Yahweh,
the God of Israel.
- ⁴ Yahweh, when you went out from Seir,
when you marched from Edom,
the earth shook, and the skies also trembled;
also the clouds poured down water.
- ⁵ The mountains quaked before the face of Yahweh;
even Mount Sinai quaked before the face of Yahweh,
the God of Israel.
- ⁶ In the days of Shamgar (son of Anath),
in the days of Jael,
the main roads were abandoned,
and those who walked only used the winding paths.
- ⁷ There were few rural people in Israel,
until I, Deborah, arose—
arose as a mother in Israel!
- ⁸ When they chose new gods,
there was fighting at the city gates
and yet there were no shields or spears seen
among forty thousand in Israel.
- ⁹ My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel,
along with the people who gladly volunteered—
we bless Yahweh for them!
- ¹⁰ Think about this—you who ride on white donkeys
sitting on rugs for saddles,
and you who walk along the road.
- ¹¹ Hear the voices of those who sing
at the watering places.
There they tell again of Yahweh's righteous deeds,
and the righteous actions of his warriors in Israel.
Then the people of Yahweh went down to the city gates.
- ¹² Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Get up, Barak,
and capture your prisoners, you son of Abinoam.
- ¹³ Then the survivors came down to the nobles;
the people of Yahweh came down to me with the warriors.
- ¹⁴ They came from Ephraim, whose root is in Amalek;
the people of Benjamin followed you.
From Makir commanders came down,
and from Zebulun those who carry an officer's staff.
- ¹⁵ My princes in Issachar were with Deborah;
and Issachar was with Barak
rushing after him into the valley under his command.
Among the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.
- ¹⁶ Why did you sit between the fireplaces,
listening to the shepherds playing their pipes for their flocks?
As for the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.
- ¹⁷ Gilead stayed on the other side of the Jordan;

- and Dan, why did he wander about on ships?
Asher remained on the coast
and lived close to his harbors.
- 18 Zebulun was a people who despised their lives to the point of death,
and Naphtali, also, on the field of battle.
- 19 The kings came, they fought;
the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach
by the waters of Megiddo.
But they took away no silver as plunder.
- 20 From heaven the stars fought,
from their paths across the heavens they fought against Sisera.
- 21 The Kishon River swept them away,
that old river, the Kishon River.
March on my soul, be strong!
- 22 Then came the sound of horses' hooves—
galloping, the galloping of his mighty ones.
- 23 'Curse Meroz!' says the angel of Yahweh.
'Surely curse its inhabitants!—
because they did not come to help Yahweh—
to help Yahweh in the battle against the mighty warriors.'
- 24 Jael is blessed more than all other women,
Jael (the wife of Heber the Kenite),
she is more blessed than all the women who live in tents.
- 25 The man asked for water, and she gave him milk;
she brought him butter in a dish fit for princes.
- 26 She put her hand to the tent peg,
and her right hand to the laborer's hammer;
with the hammer she struck Sisera, she crushed his head.
She smashed his skull into pieces when she pierced him through the side of his head.
- 27 He collapsed between her feet, he fell and he lay there.
Between her feet he fell limp.
The place he collapsed is where he was violently killed.
- 28 Out of a window she looked—
the mother of Sisera looked through the lattice and she called out in sadness,
'Why has it taken his chariot so long to come?
Why have the hoofbeats of the horses that pull his chariots been delayed?'
- 29 Her wisest princesses replied,
and she gave herself the same answer:
- 30 'Have they not found and divided up the plunder—
a womb, two wombs for every man;
the plunder of dyed fabric for Sisera,
the plunder of dyed fabric embroidered,
two pieces of dyed fabric embroidered for the necks of those who plunder?'
- 31 So may all your enemies perish, Yahweh!
But your friends be like the sun when it rises in its might."

Then the land had peace for forty years.

Judges 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Deborah and Barak continues in this chapter.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations, prayers, and songs. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of Chapter 5, which is a song, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The flood

God caused rain and flooding to bog down Jabin's chariots making them vulnerable to soldiers on foot, even though it is not said.

Judges 5:1

On that day

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "On the day the Israelites defeated the army of King Jabin"

Deborah

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:4.

Barak ... Abinoam

See how you translated these names in Judges 4:6.

Judges 5:2

When the leaders take the lead ... the people volunteer

Possible meanings are 1) this refers to anytime this happens or 2) this refers to the specific battle that has just happened, "When the leaders took the lead ... the people volunteered."

when the people volunteer

The word "people" here probably refers to the men old enough to fight, and the word "volunteer" here implies going to war. Alternate translation: "when the men gladly agree to fight in battle"

praise Yahweh

This command is to the people of Israel and so is plural.

Judges 5:3

General Information:

Deborah and Barak's song continues using poetry.

Listen, you kings! Pay attention, you rulers

Deborah and Barak speak to the kings and rulers as if they were there listening to the song.

you kings ... you rulers

This refers to kings and rulers in general, not to specific kings or rulers.

Judges 5:4

when you went out from Seir, when you marched from Edom

This refers to the time when the Israelites left Edom to start conquering the people in Canaan. Yahweh empowering his people to defeat the people of Canaan is spoken of as if he were a warrior leading the Israelite army.

Seir

Seir is a mountain on the border of the land of Israel and Edom.

the earth shook, and the skies also trembled; also the clouds poured down water

Possible meanings are 1) this is poetic language that emphasizes Yahweh's power by describing it as causing earthquakes and storms or 2) the people of Canaan being terrified as the Israelites were about to attack them is spoken of as if the earth and sky were shaking.

Judges 5:5

General Information:

Deborah and Barak's song continues using poetry.

The mountains quaked

This probably refers to earthquakes and gives the impression that the mountains quaked because they were very afraid of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "The mountains trembled in fear"

before the face of Yahweh

Here "face" refers Yahweh's presence. Alternate translation: "in the presence of Yahweh"

even Mount Sinai quaked

When Moses and Israel were at Mount Sinai, it quaked. Alternate translation: "long ago, even Mount Sinai quaked"

Judges 5:6

In the days of

"During the lifetime of"

Shamgar ... Anath ... Jael

These are the names of people. See how you translated Shamgar and Anath in [Judges 3:31]

son of Anath

Shamgar's father is mentioned to help identify Shamgar and when he lived.

the main roads were abandoned

This can be stated in active form and you can make explicit why the roads were abandoned Alternate translation: "people stopped using the main roads; because they were afraid of Israel's enemies"

the winding paths

This refers to smaller roads that fewer people traveled on.

Judges 5:7

I, Deborah, arose—arose as a mother in Israel

Deborah speaks of becoming a leader in Israel as if she were a mother taking care of young children. Alternate translation: "I, Deborah, began to lead—I took care of the Israelites as a mother takes care of her children"

Judges 5:8

they chose new gods

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel worshiped new gods"

there was fighting at the city gates

Here "gates" represents the entire city. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "enemies attacked the people within the Israelite cities"

there were no shields or spears seen among forty thousand in Israel

This statement is probably an exaggeration about how few weapons the Israelites had. Alternate translation: "few weapons for battle remained in Israel"

forty thousand in Israel "40,000 in Israel"

Judges 5:9

My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel

The word "heart" represents a person's emotions. The phrase "My heart goes out to" is a way of saying that Deborah feels gratitude or appreciation. Alternate translation: "I appreciate the commanders of Israel"

Judges 5:10

you who ride on white donkeys ... you who walk along the road

This contrast probably refers to rich people and poor people. Alternate translation: "you rich people who ride on white donkeys ... you poor people who walk along the road"

sitting on rugs for saddles

These rugs were probably used as saddles on the donkey's back to make the rider more comfortable.

Judges 5:11

General Information:

The song of Deborah and Barak continues.

Hear the voices of those

Here "voices" represents the people singing. Alternate translation: "Listen to those"

went down to the city gates

Here "gates" represents the whole city. Alternate translation: "returned to their cities"

Judges 5:12

General Information:

Deborah and Barak's song continues using poetry.

Awake, awake

Possible speakers are 1) the people of Israel or 2) Deborah who is speaking to herself or 3) the poet who wrote the song.

Deborah

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:4.

Barak ... Abinoam

See how you translated these names in Judges 4:6.

Judges 5:13

to me with the warriors

The word "me" refers to Deborah.

Judges 5:14

from Ephraim, whose root is in Amalek

The people of Ephraim living in the land where the descendants of Amalek originally lived is spoken of as if the people of Ephraim were planted and their roots grew into the land. Alternate translation: "from Ephraim, that land where the descendants of Amalek once lived"

followed you

Here "you" refers to the people of Ephraim. It can be stated in third person. Alternate translation: "followed them"

Makir

This is the place where the descendants of Makir live. Makir was the son of Manasseh and the grandson of Joseph.

from Zebulun those who carry an officer's staff

Military leaders are described by the staff, a symbol of their authority. Alternate translation: "military leaders from Zebulun"

Judges 5:15

My princes in Issachar were with Deborah

Here "My" refers to Deborah. This whole statement can be translated in first person. Alternate translation: "My princes in Issachar were with me"

Deborah

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:4.

Issachar was with Barak

Here "Issachar" refers to the tribe of Issachar.
Alternate translation: "the tribe of Issachar was with Barak"

Barak

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:6.

rushing after him into the valley under his command
"obeying his command and rushing after him into the valley"

rushing after

"following after" or "hurrying after"

there were great searchings of heart

Here "heart" represents thoughts. The people discussing with each other but being unable to decide what they should do is spoken of as if they were searching their heart. Alternate translation: "there was a lot of discussing about what they should do"

Judges 5:16

Why did you sit between the fireplaces, listening to the shepherds playing their pipes for their flocks?

This question is asked to criticize the people of Reuben because they did not decide to come fight in the battle. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have helped us fight, instead of staying at home and listening to the shepherds playing their pipes for their flocks"

the fireplaces

Some versions of the Bible have the translation "the sheepfolds" or "the sheep pens."

there were great searchings of heart

Here "heart" represents thoughts. The people discussing with each other but being unable to decide what they should do is spoken of as if they were searching their heart. See how you translated this in [Judges 5:15]

Judges 5:17

Gilead stayed

Here "Gilead" the men from Gilead who should have gone to fight in battle. Alternate translation: "The men of Gilead stayed"

the other side of the Jordan

This refers to the east side of the Jordan.

Dan, why did he wander about on ships?

This question is asked to express anger because the people of the tribe of Dan would not fight for Israel. Alternate translation: "the men of Dan should not have remained on their ships!" or "the people of the tribe of Dan did not help us in the battle. Instead they were wandering around on the sea in ships!"

Dan, why did he

Here "Dan" represents the men from Dan who should have gone to fight in battle. Alternate translation: "the men of Dan, why did they"

wander about on ships

The tribe of Dan was located near the Mediterranean sea. They sailed on the sea to make money through trade and fishing.

Asher remained on the coast and lived close to his harbors

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "The people of the tribe of Asher also failed to help us, they just remained on the coast near their harbors"

Asher remained

Here "Asher" represents the men who should have gone to fight in battle. Alternate translation: "The men of Asher remained"

harbors

places at the seacoast with deeper water where ships were kept

Judges 5:18

Naphtali, also

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "Naphtali was a tribe who would also risk their lives to the point of death"

Judges 5:19

The kings came, they fought ... the kings of Canaan fought

The king of a people group is used to refer to himself and the army he commands. Alternate translation: "The kings and their armies came and fought ... the kings of Canaan and their armies fought"

they fought ... fought

The word "us" is understood. Alternate translation: "they fought us ... fought us"

Taanach ... Megiddo

Translate the names of these places as you did in Judges 1:27.

no silver as plunder

Here "silver" represents any treasure in general. Alternate translation: "no silver or other treasures as plunder"

plunder

things taken by force, usually in battle or by thieves

Judges 5:20

From heaven the stars fought, from their paths across the heavens they fought against Sisera

Yahweh helping the Israelite to defeat Sisera and his army is spoken of as if the stars themselves fought against Sisera and his army. This may refer to Yahweh using natural elements, specifically rain storms, to defeat Sisera.

against Sisera

Here "Sisera" represents himself and his whole army. Alternate translation: "Sisera and his army"

Sisera

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:2.

Judges 5:21

The Kishon River swept them away

Because of the heavy rain the river flooded quickly causing the chariots to be stuck in the mud and drowning many soldiers. Alternate translation: "The Kishon River flooded and swept away Sisera's soldiers"

Kishon

See how you translated this in Judges 4:6.

March on my soul, be strong

Here "soul" refers to the whole person. The word "my" refers to Deborah. Alternate translation: "I tell myself to march on and to be strong"

Judges 5:22

Then came the sound of horses' hooves—galloping, the galloping of his mighty ones

This describes the sound of many horses running away from the battle. Alternate translation: "Then I heard the sound of horses running away. Sisera's mighty horses were running away"

galloping

running quickly

Judges 5:23

Curse Meroz

Here "Meroz" represents the people who lived there. Alternate translation: "Curse the people of Meroz"

Meroz

This is the name of a city.

Judges 5:24

Jael

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:18.

Heber

See how you translated this name in Judges 4:11.

Kenite

Translate the name of this people group as you did in Judges 1:16.

Judges 5:25

brought him butter

Here "butter" refers to curdled milk. This was the best milk and a favorite drink among Jael's people. Alternate translation: "brought him yogurt" or "brought him curds"

a dish fit for princes

This phrase means the dish was of the best quality because princes were given the best things.

Judges 5:26

She put her hand to the tent peg

"Jael grabbed the tent peg with her left hand"

tent peg

This is a pointed piece of wood or metal, like a large nail, that is hammered into the ground to hold down a corner of a tent. See how you translated this in Judges 4:21.

her right hand to the laborer's hammer

This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "she grabbed a hammer with her right hand"

hammer

This is a heavy tool made of wood used to hit a tent peg into the ground. See how you translated this in Judges 4:21.

Sisera

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 4:2.

Judges 5:27

limp

without strength or movement

he was violently killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she killed him" or "he died"

Judges 5:28

the lattice

This is a frame in the window made of crossed wood.

Why has it taken his chariot so long to come? Why have the hoofbeats of the horses that pull his chariots been delayed?

Both of these questions mean the same thing. These two statements can be combined. Alternate translation: "Why is it taking Sisera so long to arrive home"

taken his chariot ... Why have the hoofbeats of the horses that pull his chariots

Both of these represent Sisera. Alternate translation: "taken Sisera ... Why has he"

Judges 5:29

wisest princesses

A "princess" is the daughter of a king, but a "princess" can also mean female advisers to the king's family. Alternate translation: "wisest ladies"

she gave herself the same answer

"she said to herself the same thing"

Judges 5:30

Have they not found and divided up the plunder—a womb ... plunder?

The women use a question to emphasize that they believe this is what certainly happened. Alternate translation: "They must have so much plunder that it is taking a long time to divide it. They have ... plunder."

a womb, two wombs for every man ... of those who plunder?

The women use a question to emphasize that they believe this is what certainly happened. Alternate translation: "There must be a womb, two wombs for every man ... of those who plunder."

a womb, two wombs for every man

Here "womb" represents a woman. Sisera's mother believes Sisera's men have captured many women. Alternate translation: "Each soldier will receive a woman or two"

dyed fabric

"colored cloth" or "colored clothes"

embroidered

having designs made of colored threads

for the necks of those who plunder

Here "necks" represents Sisera's soldiers. Alternate translation: "for the soldiers who plunder to wear"

Judges 5:31

like the sun when it rises in its might

The people of Israel wish to be like the sun that rises because no nation's army is powerful enough to stop the sunrise.

the land had peace

Here "the land" represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "and the people of Israel lived peacefully"

for forty years

"for 40 years"

Chapter 6

¹ The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and he gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. ² The power of Midian oppressed Israel. Because of Midian, the people of Israel made shelters for themselves from the dens in the hills, the caves, and the strongholds. ³ It happened that any time the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people from the east would attack the Israelites. ⁴ They would set up their camp on the land and destroy the crops, all the way to Gaza. They would leave no food in Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵ Whenever they and their livestock and tents came up, they would come as a swarm of locusts, and it was impossible to count either the people or their camels. They invaded the land in order to destroy it. ⁶ Midian weakened the people of Israel so severely that the people of Israel called out to Yahweh.

⁷ When the people of Israel called out to Yahweh because of Midian, ⁸ Yahweh sent a prophet to the people of Israel. The prophet said to them, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought you up from Egypt; I brought you out of the house of slavery. ⁹ I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who were oppressing you. I drove them out before you, and I gave you their land. ¹⁰ I said to you, 'I am Yahweh your God; I commanded you not to worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.' But you have not obeyed my voice."

¹¹ Now the angel of Yahweh came and sat under the oak in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash (the Abiezrite), while Gideon, Joash's son, was threshing wheat in the winepress—to hide it from the Midianites. ¹² The angel of Yahweh appeared to him and said to him, "Yahweh is with you, you strong warrior!" ¹³ Gideon said to him, "Oh, my master, if Yahweh is with us, why then has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers told us about, when they said, 'Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?' But now Yahweh has abandoned us and gave us into the hand of Midian." ¹⁴ Yahweh looked at him and said, "Go in the strength you already have. Deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" ¹⁵ Gideon said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? See, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least important in my father's house." ¹⁶ Yahweh said to him, "I will be with you, and you will defeat the entire Midianite army as one man." ¹⁷ Gideon said to him, "If you are pleased with me, then give me a sign that it is you who is speaking to me. ¹⁸ Please, do not leave here, until I come to you and bring out my gift and set it before you." Yahweh said, "I will wait until you return."

¹⁹ Gideon went and prepared a young goat and from an ephah of flour he made unleavened bread. He put the meat in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot and brought them to him under the oak tree, and presented them. ²⁰ The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and put them on this rock, and pour out the broth over them." That is what Gideon did. ²¹ Then the angel of Yahweh reached out with the end of the staff in his hand. With it he touched the flesh and the unleavened bread; a fire went up out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of Yahweh went away and Gideon could no longer see him. ²² Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. Gideon said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" ²³ Yahweh said to him, "Peace to you! Do not be afraid, you will not die." ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh. He called it, "Yahweh is Peace." To this day it still stands at Ophrah of the clan of Abiezer.

²⁵ That night Yahweh said to him, "Take your father's bull, and a second bull that is seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it. ²⁶ Build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this place of refuge, and construct it the correct way. Offer the second bull as a burnt offering, using the wood from the Asherah that you cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as Yahweh had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the town to do it during the day, he did it at night.

²⁸ In the morning when the men of the town got up, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the altar that had been built. ²⁹ The men of the city said to one another, "Who has done this?" When they talked with others and searched for answers, they said, "Gideon son of Joash has done this thing." ³⁰ Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son so that he may be put to death, because he broke down the altar of Baal, and because he cut down the Asherah beside it." ³¹ Joash said to all who opposed him, "Will you plead the case for Baal? Will you save him? Whoever pleads the case for him, let him be put to death while it is still

morning. If Baal is a god, let him defend himself when someone breaks his altar down." ³² Therefore on that day they called Gideon "Jerub-Baal," because he said, "Let Baal defend himself against him," because Gideon broke down Baal's altar.

³³ Now all the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the people of the east gathered together. They crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of Yahweh clothed Gideon. Gideon blew a trumpet, calling out the clan of Abiezer, so they might follow him. ³⁵ He sent messengers all throughout Manasseh, and they too, were called out to follow him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet him.

³⁶ Gideon said to God, "If you intend to use me to save Israel, as you have said— ³⁷ Look, I am putting a woolen fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that you will use me to save Israel, as you said." ³⁸ This is what happened—Gideon rose early the next morning, he pressed the fleece together, and wrung out the dew from the fleece, enough to fill a bowl with water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, I will speak one more time. Please allow me one more test using the fleece. This time make the fleece dry, and let there be dew on all the ground around it." ⁴⁰ God did what he asked for that night. The fleece was dry, and there was dew on all the ground around it.

Judges 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a section about Gideon. (Chapters 6-8)

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel's punishment

In Judges, Israel's actions are connected to their obedience to Yahweh. When Israel does evil, they are oppressed. (See: evil and oppress)

Judges 6:1

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. See how you translated this in [Judges 2:11]

the hand of Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Also, "hand" represents control. Alternate translation: "the control of the people of Midian" or "the control of the Midianites"

Judges 6:2

The power of Midian oppressed Israel

Here "the power of Midian" refers to the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "The people of Midian were more powerful than the people of Israel and they oppressed them"

dens

places in the rocky cliffs that would provide shelter

Judges 6:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 6:4

They would set up their camp

"The army would set up their tents"

Judges 6:5

Whenever they and their livestock and tents came up

The land of Midian was south of the land of Israel, near the Red Sea. It was common to use the phrase "came up" when speaking of traveling from Midian to Israel. Alternate translation: "Whenever the Midianites brought their livestock and tents to the land of Israel"

they would come as a swarm of locusts

The Midianites are compared to a swarm of locusts because they came in with a great number of people and their livestock ate everything that grew.

it was impossible to count

This is an exaggeration, a hyperbole, showing the number is very great.

Judges 6:6

Midian weakened

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian.

called out to Yahweh

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "prayed to Yahweh for help"

Judges 6:7

called out to Yahweh

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "prayed to Yahweh for help"

because of Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "because of the Midianites"

Judges 6:8

I brought you up from Egypt

"I led you out of Egypt"

the house of slavery

Moses speaks of Egypt as if it were a house where people keep slaves. Alternate translation: "the place where you were slaves"

Judges 6:9

from the hand

In this phrase "hand" represents power or control.

Judges 6:10

obeyed my voice

Here "my voice" represents what Yahweh commanded. Alternate translation: "obeyed my command" or "obeyed me"

Judges 6:11

Now

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

Ophrah

This is the name of a town.

Abiezrite

This is a people group named after their ancestor Abiezer.

was threshing wheat in the winepress

Gideon was beating the wheat against the floor to separate the wheat grain from the rest of the wheat plant.

Judges 6:12

appeared to him

"went to him"

Judges 6:13

my master

Gideon uses the word "master" as a polite way to greet a stranger. He does not realize he is speaking to Yahweh in the form of an angel or a man.

Where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers told us about, when they said, 'Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?'

Gideon uses a question to challenge the stranger's statement that Yahweh was with him. Also, the direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "We have not seen any wonderful deeds like the ones our fathers told us about when Yahweh brought them up from Egypt."

gave us into the hand of Midian

The phrase "gave us into" means Yahweh allowed the Israelites to be defeated. Alternate translation: "allowed the Midianites to defeat us"

gave us into the hand

Here "hand" represents power or control.

of Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "of the Midianites"

Judges 6:14

Yahweh looked at him

"Yahweh looked at Gideon"

from the hand

Here "hand" represents power or control.

of Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "of the Midianites"

Have I not sent you?

Yahweh uses a question to ensure Gideon that he is sending him. Here "sent" means Yahweh has appointed Gideon with a specific task. Alternate translation: "I, Yahweh, am sending you!"

Judges 6:15

Please, Lord

Gideon now calls the person "Lord" instead of "my master" as in Judges 6:13. Here it seems Gideon either knows or suspects that he is speaking with Yahweh.

how can I deliver Israel?

Gideon uses a question to emphasize that he does not think he can rescue the Israelites. Alternate translation: "I cannot possibly rescue the Israelites!"

See, my clan

"Look at my clan and me and you will see that it"

in Manasseh

"in the tribe of Manasseh"

in my father's house

Here "house" represents a family. Alternate translation: "in my father's family" or "in my family"

Judges 6:16

I will be with you

Here "be with you" is an idiom that means Yahweh will help and bless Gideon.

as one man

You can state the full meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "as easily as if you were fighting only one man"

Judges 6:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 6:18

set it before you

"place it in front of you"

Judges 6:19

from an ephah of flour

If it is necessary to use a modern measurement; here is one way of doing it. Alternate translation: "with 22 liters of flour"

broth

water that has had food, such as meat, cooked in it

them to him

"them to the angel of God"

Judges 6:20

angel of God

This is the same as the angel of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "God, who was in the form of an angel" or "God"

Judges 6:21

angel of Yahweh

In 6:11-24 Yahweh appears to Gideon in the form of an angel. See how you translated this in Judges 6:11.

went away

"disappeared"

Judges 6:22

angel of Yahweh

In 6:11-24 Yahweh appears to Gideon in the form of an angel. See how you translated this in Judges 6:11.

Ah, Lord Yahweh!

The word "Ah" here shows that Gideon was very frightened.

seen the angel of Yahweh face to face

This phrase refers to two people being close to each other. Alternate translation: "really seen the angel of Yahweh"

Judges 6:23

Yahweh said to him

Apparently Yahweh spoke to Gideon from heaven.

Judges 6:24

To this day

This means to the time when the book of Judges was written.

Ophrah

Translate the name of this town as you did in Judges 6:11.

the clan of Abiezer

Translate the name of this people group as you did in Judges 6:11.

Judges 6:25

a second bull

The word "second" is the ordinal number for "two." Alternate translation: "another bull"

that is beside it

"that is beside the altar of Baal"

Judges 6:26

on the top of this place of refuge

The city of Ophrah was on top of a hill. Israelites fled there for refuge from the Midianites.

construct it the correct way

"place the stones in an orderly manner" or "and build it properly"

Judges 6:27

did as Yahweh had told him

This refers to Yahweh's command in [Judges 6:25-26](#).

Judges 6:28

got up

"got up out of bed" or "woke up"

the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the altar that had been built

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they noticed that someone had broken down the altar of Baal, cut down the Asherah that was beside it, and built an altar and sacrificed the second bull on it"

Judges 6:29

General Information:

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Judges 6:30

he may be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we may kill him as punishment"

Judges 6:31

Will you plead the case for Baal?

Joash uses a question to emphasize that a human should not have to defend a god. Alternate translation: "You should not have to defend Baal."

plead the case

"make a defense" or "give an excuse"

Will you save him?

Joash uses a question to emphasize that a human should not have to rescue a god. Alternate translation: "You should not have to save Baal."

Judges 6:32

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. It means "let Baal defend himself."

because he said

"because Joash said"

Judges 6:33

Now

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

gathered together

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "gathered together as an army"

Judges 6:34

clothed Gideon

The topic of this metaphor is that because of what the Spirit did, Gideon had special powers. Possible images are 1) the Spirit came over or came on or covered Gideon like a garment, thus giving Gideon special powers. Alternate translation: "came over Gideon" or "took control of Gideon" Or 2) the Spirit covered himself with Gideon and so acted through him.

clan of Abiezer

Translate the name of this people group as you did in Judges 6:11.

so they might follow him

The words "to battle" are understood. Alternate translation: "so they might follow him to battle"

Judges 6:35

and they too, were called out to follow him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "calling them out to follow him"

to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali

These all represent the people of each tribe. Alternate translation: "to the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali"

Judges 6:36

General Information:

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Judges 6:37

woolen fleece

the woolly coat of a sheep

dew

water that forms on plants during the night

then I will know that you will

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "this will be a sign from you, and then I will know that you will"

Judges 6:38

Gideon rose

"Gideon got out of bed"

wrung

twist and squeeze something to remove water

Judges 6:39

General Information:

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Judges 6:40

General Information:

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Chapter 7

¹ Then Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) rose up early, and all the people who were with him, and they encamped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was to their north in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

² Yahweh said to Gideon, "There are too many soldiers for me to give you victory over the Midianites, so that Israel may not boast over me, saying, 'Our own power has saved us.' ³ Now therefore, proclaim in the ears of the people and say, 'Whoever is afraid, whoever trembles, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand people went away, and ten thousand remained.

⁴ Yahweh said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will make their number smaller for you there. If I say to you, 'This one will go with you,' he will go with you; but if I say, 'This one will not go with you,' he will not go." ⁵ So Gideon brought the people down to the water, and Yahweh said to him, "Separate everyone who laps up the water, as a dog laps, from those who kneel down to drink." ⁶ Three hundred men lapped. The rest of the men kneeled down to drink water. ⁷ Yahweh said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men who lapped, I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Let every other man go back to his own place." ⁸ So those who were chosen took their supplies and their trumpets. Gideon sent away all the men of Israel, every man to his tent, but he kept the three hundred men. Now the Midian camp was down below him in the valley.

⁹ That same night Yahweh said to him, "Get up! Attack the camp, for I am going to give you victory over it. ¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying, and your courage will be strengthened to attack the camp." So Gideon went with Purah his servant, down to the guard posts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the people of the east settled along in the valley, as thick as a cloud of locusts. Their camels were more than could be counted; they were more in number than the grains of the sand on the seashore. ¹³ When Gideon arrived there, a man was telling a dream to his companion. The man said, "Look! I had a dream, and I saw a round loaf of barley bread tumbling into the camp of Midian. It came to the tent, and hit it so hard that it fell down and turned it upside down, so that it lay flat." ¹⁴ The other man said, "This is nothing other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has given him victory over Midian and all their army."

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the retelling of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down in worship. He went back to the camp of Israel and said, "Get up! Yahweh has given you victory over the Midian army."

¹⁶ He divided the three hundred men into three groups, and he gave them all rams' horns and empty jars, with torches inside each jar. ¹⁷ He said to them, "Look at me and do what I do. Watch! When I come to the edge of the camp, you must do what I do. ¹⁸ When I blow the ram's horn, I and all who are with me, then blow your ram's horns also on every side of the entire camp and shout, 'For Yahweh and for Gideon!'"

¹⁹ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp, right at the beginning of the middle watch. Just as the Midianites were changing guard, they blew the rams' horns and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰ The three companies blew the rams' horns and broke the jars. They held the torches in their left hands and the rams' horns in their right hands to blow them. They shouted out, "The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon." ²¹ Every man stood in his place around the camp and all the Midianite army ran. They shouted and ran away. ²² When they blew the three hundred rams' horns, Yahweh set every Midianite man's sword against his comrades and against all their army. The army fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, near Tabbath. ²³ The men of Israel from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh were called out, and they went after Midian.

²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Go down against Midian and take control of the Jordan River, as far as Beth Barah, to stop them." So all the men of Ephraim were summoned and took control of the waters, as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River. ²⁵ They captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They went after the Midianites, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was on the other side of the Jordan.

Judges 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Gideon continues in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

God gets all of the credit

God said, "There are too many soldiers for me to give you victory over the Midianites. Make sure that Israel will not boast against me, saying, 'Our own power has saved us.'" By lowering the number of fighting soldiers, it emphasizes that the victory is achieved through God's power. (See: glory)

Judges 7:1

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated his name in Judges 6:32.

they encamped

"they set up their camp"

spring of Harod ... hill of Moreh

These are the names of places.

The camp of Midian was to their north

Here "Midian" represents the Midianite army. Alternate translation: "The Midianite army set up their camp to the north of the Israelite army"

Judges 7:2

for me to give you victory over the Midianites

The word "victory" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "for me to allow you to defeat the Midianites" or "for me to cause you to be victorious over the Midianites"

Our own power has saved us

Here "power" represents the people themselves. Alternate translation: "We have saved ourselves without God's help"

Judges 7:3

Now

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

proclaim in the ears of the people

Here "the ears" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "proclaim to the people"

Whoever is afraid, whoever trembles

Both of these phrases have the same meaning.

trembles

This word describes fear that causes a person to uncontrollably shake. Alternate translation: "shakes with fear"

let him return

You can make explicit where he will go. Alternate translation: "let him return to his home"

Mount Gilead

This is the name of a mountain in the region of Gilead.

twenty-two thousand

"22,000"

ten thousand remained

The word "people" or "men" is understood. Alternate translation: "10,000 people remained" or "10,000 men remained"

ten thousand

"10,000"

Judges 7:4

I will make their number smaller for you there

Here "number" represents the army. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "there, I will show you who to send home so the army will have less men"

Judges 7:5

Gideon brought

The word "brought" can be translated as "took" or "led."

laps

to drink by licking with the tongue

Judges 7:6

Three hundred men

"300 men"

Judges 7:7

three hundred men

"300 men"

I will rescue you and give you victory

Here "you" is plural and refers to Gideon and the Israelites.

Judges 7:8

So those who were chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So those whom Yahweh chose"

took their supplies and their trumpets

Here "their" refers to the Israelite soldiers who were leaving the army.

Now

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

Judges 7:9

Attack the camp, for I am going to give you victory over it

Here "camp" refers to the whole Midianite army. The word "victory" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "Attack the Midianites at their camp, for I am going to help you defeat them" or "Attack the Midianites at their camp, for I am going to cause you to be victorious over them"

Judges 7:10

afraid to go down

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "afraid to go down to attack"

Purah

This is the name of a man.

Judges 7:11

your courage will be strengthened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what you hear will be encourage you"

guard posts

places around the edge of an area where soldiers stand to watch for an enemy army

Judges 7:12

as thick as a cloud of locusts

Here "cloud" means a swarm. The author speaks of the army as if it were a swarm of locusts to emphasize how many soldiers there were.

Their camels were more ... in number than the grains of the sand on the seashore

The author uses a hyperbole, an exaggeration, to emphasize that there were very many camels.

Their camels were more than could be counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Their camels were more than anyone could count"

Judges 7:13

General Information:

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Judges 7:14

This is nothing other than the sword of Gideon

Here "the sword of Gideon" refers to Gideon's army attacking. Alternate translation: "The loaf of barley bread in your dream must be the army of Gideon"

God has given him victory over Midian

This future event is spoken of as if it were a past event. This emphasizes that it will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "God will certainly help the Israelites defeat the Midianites"

Judges 7:15

General Information:

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Judges 7:16

three hundred men

"300 men"

Judges 7:17

General Information:

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Judges 7:18

For Yahweh and for Gideon!

The words "we fight" are implied. Alternate translation: "We fight for Yahweh and for Gideon!"

Judges 7:19

hundred men

"100 men"

right at the beginning of the middle watch

The beginning of the middle watch would be around 10 o'clock at night.

Judges 7:20

The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon

Here "sword" refers to their fighting. Alternate translation: "We fight for Yahweh and for Gideon"

Judges 7:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 7:22

three hundred rams' horns
"300 rams' horns"

Yahweh set every Midianite man's sword against his comrades

Here "sword" refers to their attack with the use of the sword. Alternate translation: "Yahweh caused every Midianite man to fight against his fellow soldiers"

Beth Shittah ... Zererah ... Abel Meholah ... Tabbath
These are the names of towns and cities.

Judges 7:23

The men of Israel from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh were called out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Gideon called out the Israelites from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and all Mannasseh"

Judges 7:24

Beth Barah

This is the name of a town.

took control of the waters, as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River

"took control of the area of the Jordan River as far south as Beth Barah"

Judges 7:25

at the rock of Oreb ... at the winepress of Zeeb

The places were given these names after the Israelites killed Oreb and Zeeb there.

Oreb ... Zeeb

These are names of men.

Chapter 8

¹ The men of Ephraim said to Gideon, "What is this you have done to us? You did not call us when you went to fight against Midian." Then they had a violent argument with him. ² He said to them, "What have I done now compared to you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer?" ³ God has given you victory over the princes of Midian—Oreb and Zeeb! What have I accomplished compared to you?" Their anger toward him died down when he said this.

⁴ Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over it, he and the three hundred men who were with him. They were exhausted, yet they still kept up the pursuit. ⁵ He said to the men of Sukkoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." ⁶ Then the officials of Sukkoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand? Why should we give bread to your army?" ⁷ Gideon said, "When Yahweh has given us victory over Zebah and Zalmunna, I will thresh your skin with desert thorns and briers." ⁸ He went up from there to Peniel and spoke to the people there in the same way, but the men of Peniel answered him just as the men of Sukkoth had answered. ⁹ He spoke also to the men of Peniel and said, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower."

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about fifteen thousand men, all who remained out of the entire army of the people of the East, for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword. ¹¹ Gideon went up the road taken by tent dwellers, past Nobah and Jogbehah. He defeated the enemy army, because they were not expecting an attack. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and as Gideon pursued them, he captured the two kings of Midian—Zebah and Zalmunna—and set their whole army into a panic.

¹³ Gideon, son of Joash, returned from the battle going through the pass of Heres. ¹⁴ He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him. The young man wrote down the names of seventy-seven officials and elders of Sukkoth. ¹⁵ Gideon came to the men of Sukkoth and said, "Look at Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you mocked me and said, 'Have you already conquered Zebah and Zalmunna? We do not know that we should give bread to your army.'" ¹⁶ Gideon took the elders of the city, and he punished the men of Sukkoth with the desert thorns and briers. ¹⁷ Then he broke down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of that city.

¹⁸ Then Gideon said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?" They answered, "As you are, so were they. Every one of them looked like the son of a king." ¹⁹ Gideon said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yahweh lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you." ²⁰ He said to Jether (his firstborn), "Get up and kill them!" But the young man did not draw his sword for he was afraid, because he was still a young boy. ²¹ Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up yourself and kill us! For as the man is, so is his strength." Gideon rose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna. He also took off the crescent-shaped ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

²² Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us—you, your son, and your grandson—because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian." ²³ Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, neither will my son rule over you. Yahweh will rule over you." ²⁴ Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you, that every one of you give me the earrings from his plunder." (The Midianites had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites.) ²⁵ They answered, "We are glad to give them to you." They spread out a cloak and every man threw on it the earrings from his plunder. ²⁶ The weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold. This plunder was in addition to the crescent ornaments, the pendants, the purple clothing that was worn by the kings of Midian, and in addition to the chains that had been around their camels' necks. ²⁷ Gideon made an ephod out of the earrings and put it in his city, in Ophrah, and all Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there. It became a trap for Gideon and for those in his house. ²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel and they did not raise their heads up again. So the land had peace for forty years in the days of Gideon.

²⁹ Jerub-Baal, son of Joash, went and lived in his own house. ³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons who were his descendants, for he had many wives. ³¹ His concubine, who was in Shechem, also bore him a son, and Gideon gave him the name Abimelek. ³² Gideon, son of Joash, died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the clan of Abiezer.

³³ It came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, the people of Israel turned again and prostituted themselves by worshiping the Baals. They made Baal-Berith their god. ³⁴ The people of Israel did not remember to honor Yahweh, their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side. ³⁵ They did not keep their promises to the house of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon), in return for all the good he had done in Israel.

Judges 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Gideon concludes in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sukkoth's refusal to help Gideon

The men of Sukkoth feared the Midianites more than Gideon. This is why they refused to help Gideon. By allying themselves with the Midianites, they aligned themselves against Yahweh. Because of this, Gideon treated them like he treated the Midianites.

Gideon refuses to be king

Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, neither will my son rule over you. Yahweh will rule over you." Although the book of Deuteronomy anticipates a king in Israel, it was sinful for Israel to desire to have a king. He did though take a share of everyone's plunder as a king would have done through taxes. This may serve as a warning to Israel about their desire to have a king. (See: sin)

Judges 8:1

What is this you have done to us?

The people of the tribe of Ephraim were rebuking Gideon with this rhetorical question for not including them in his army. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have not treated us fairly."

against Midian

Here "Midian" represents the Midianite army.

they had a violent argument with him

they argued angrily with him" or "they rebuked him severely"

Judges 8:2

General Information:

Gideon replies to the men from Ephraim.

What have I done now compared to you?

Gideon uses this question to honor the people of Ephraim. Alternate translation: "I have done very little compared with what you have done!"

Are not the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer?

Gideon was calming the people of Ephraim with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "Certainly the grapes you people of Ephraim gleaned are better than what we the descendants of Abiezer gathered from the whole harvest!"

Are not the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer?

Gideon and his army defeating the Medianites is spoken of as if it were a grape harvest. The people of Ephraim killing Oreb and Zeeb at the end of the battle is spoken of as if they were gleaned grapes at the end of the harvest. Alternate translation: "What you people of Ephraim did at the end of the battle is more important than what we descendants of Abiezer did at the beginning."

Abiezer

This is the name of one of Gideon's ancestors. Gideon used his name to refer to Abiezer's descendants and their land.

Judges 8:3

Oreb and Zeeb

See how you translated these names in Judges 7:25.

What have I accomplished compared to you?

Gideon uses this question to honor the people of Ephraim. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "What you have done is more important than what I have done."

died down

"became less"

Judges 8:4

the three hundred men

"the 300 men"

kept up the pursuit

The word "pursuit," an abstract noun, can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "continued to chase their enemies"

Judges 8:5

Zebah and Zalmunna

These are the names of men.

Judges 8:6

Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand?

The leaders use a question to emphasize that the Israelites have not yet captured Zebah and Zalmunna. Alternate translation: "You have not captured Zebah and Zalmunna yet."

Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna

Here "hands" refer to the whole body.

now in your hand

Here "hand" represents power or control.

Why should we give bread to your army?

The leaders use a question to emphasize that they have no reason to give bread to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "We see no reason to give bread to your army."

Judges 8:7

I will thresh your skin with desert thorns and briers

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I will make whips out of desert thorns and briers and use them to beat you and cut you"

thorns and briers

sharp, pointed pieces on vines or tree limbs that stick out and can cut people and animals

Judges 8:8

He went up from there

Here "He" refers to Gideon. Gideon represents himself and the soldiers following him. Alternate translation: "They left there" or "Gideon and his 300 men left there"

Peniel

The name of a place.

spoke to the people there in the same way

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "asked for food there in the same way" or "he also asked them for food"

Judges 8:9

When I come again in peace

This is a polite way of referring to the defeat of his enemies. Alternate translation: "After I have completely defeated the Midian army"

I will break down this tower

Here "I" refers to Gideon and represents himself and his men. Alternate translation: "My men and I will break down this tower"

Judges 8:10

Now

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

Zebah and Zalmunna

See how you translated these names in Judges 8:5.

Karkor

This is the name of a city.

fifteen thousand men

"15,000 men"

had fallen

This is a polite way of referring to people who died in battle. Alternate translation: "had been killed" or "had died in battle"

120,000 men

"one hundred thousand men"

men who drew the sword

Here drawing the sword represents using the sword in battle. Possible meanings are 1) this phrase refers to soldiers who use swords in battle. Alternate translation: "swordsmen" or "men who fought with swords" or 2) this phrase refers to any soldiers. Alternate translation: "soldiers"

Judges 8:11

Gideon went up

Here "Gideon" represents himself and all of his soldiers. Alternate translation: "Gideon and his soldiers went up"

He defeated

Here "He" refers to Gideon and represents himself and all of his soldiers. Alternate translation: "Gideon and his soldiers defeated"

Nobah and Jogbehah

These are names of towns.

Judges 8:12

Zebah and Zalmunna

See how you translated these names in Judges 8:5.

panic

extreme fear or worry that makes someone unable to think or act normally

Judges 8:13

the pass of Heres

This is the name of a road that passes between two mountains.

Judges 8:14

questioned him

It can be stated explicitly what Gideon asked the young man. Alternate translation: "he asked him to identify all the names of the leaders in the town"

seventy-seven officials

"77 officials"

Judges 8:15

Zebah and Zalmunna

See how you translated these names in Judges 8:5.

Have you already conquered Zebah and Zalmunna?

Gideon quotes the people of Sukkoth as using a question to mock him. Alternate translation: "You have not yet conquered Zebah and Zalmunna."

Judges 8:16

Gideon took ... he punished

Here "Gideon" represents himself and his soldiers. Alternate translation: "Gideon and his soldiers took ... they punished"

thorns and briars

These are sharp, pointed pieces on vines or tree limbs that stick out and can cut people and animals. See how you translated this in Judges 8:7.

Judges 8:17

he broke

Gideon and his soldiers broke. Alternate translation: "Gideon and his soldiers broke"

Peniel

Translate the name of this city as you did in Judges 8:8.

Judges 8:18

Zebah and Zalmunna

See how you translated these names in Judges 8:5.

Tabor

Translate the name of this city as you did in Judges 4:6.

As you are, so were they

"They were just like you"

Judges 8:19

As Yahweh lives

This idiom is a religious oath used for emphasis that what he is about to say is true. Alternate translation: "I promise you that"

Judges 8:20

Jether

This is the name of Gideon's son.

Judges 8:21

For as the man is, so is his strength

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "It is a job for a man to do"

crescent

This is a curved shape with two points. This shape occurs when the moon is mostly covered in shadow.

ornaments

decorations

Judges 8:22

out of the hand of Midian

Here "hand" represents the power of Midian over Israel. Alternate translation: "from the power of Midian" or "from Midian"

of Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "of the Midianites"

Judges 8:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 8:24

Gideon said to them

"Gideon said to the men of Israel"

earrings

jewelry worn on the ear

plunder

things stolen by force or taken off of people killed in war

The Midianites had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites

Here the narrator tells background information about the Midianites.

Judges 8:25

cloak

clothing made from a large piece of fabric and worn over the shoulders as a coat

Judges 8:26

1,700 shekels of gold

"one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold." If it is necessary to use modern weight units, here are two ways of doing it. Alternate translation: "18.7 kilograms of gold" or "about 20 kilograms of gold"

crescent ornaments

See how you translated this in Judges 8:21.

pendants

pieces of jewelry that hang at the end of the chains or cords of necklaces

that was worn by the kings of Midian

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the kings of Midian wore"

Judges 8:27

Gideon made an ephod out of the earrings

"Gideon used the gold from the earrings to make an ephod"

Ophrah

Translate the name of this city as you did in Judges 6:11.

all Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there

This speaks of worshiping a false god as if it were prostitution. Alternate translation: "the Israelites sinned against Yahweh by worshiping the ephod there"

all Israel

Here "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize that very many worshiped the garment. Alternate translation: "very many people in Israel worshiped the garment"

It became a trap for Gideon and for those in his house

This speaks of Gideon and his family being tempted to worship the ephod as if the ephod were a hunter's snare that would trap them. Alternate translation: "It became a temptation for Gideon and his family" or "Gideon and his family sinned by worshiping it"

for those in his house

Here "his house" represents Gideon's family. Alternate translation: "for his family"

Judges 8:28

So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Yahweh subdued the Midianites before the people of Israel" or "So Yahweh helped the Israelites defeat the Midianites"

they did not raise their heads up again

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "they did not attack Israel again"

So the land had peace

Here "land" represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "So the Israelites lived peacefully"

forty years

"40 years"

in the days of Gideon

"during the life of Gideon"

Judges 8:29

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated his name in Judges 6:32.

Judges 8:30

seventy sons

"70 sons"

Judges 8:31

General Information:

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Judges 8:32

a good old age

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "when he was very old"

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him"

Ophrah

Translate the name of this city as you did in Judges 6:11.

the clan of Abiezer

Translate the name of this people group as you did in Judges 6:11.

Judges 8:33

It came about

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

turned again

The people rejecting Yahweh is spoken of as if they physically turned away from him. Alternate translation: "they stopped worshiping Yahweh"

prostituted themselves by worshiping the Baals

This speaks of worshiping false gods as if it were prostitution. Alternate translation: "they sinned against Yahweh by worshiping the Baals"

Baal-Berith

This is the name of a false god.

Judges 8:34

from the hand of all their enemies

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "from the power of all their enemies" or "from all their enemies"

on every side

"who surrounded them"

Judges 8:35

the house of Jerub-Baal

Here "the house of" represents a person's family. Alternate translation: "the family of Jerub-Baal"

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

Chapter 9

¹ Abimelek son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's relatives at Shechem and he said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, ² "Please say this, so that all the leaders in Shechem may hear, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy sons of Jerub-Baal rule over you, or that just one rule over you?' Remember that I am your bone and your flesh." ³ His mother's relatives spoke for him to the leaders of Shechem, and they agreed to follow Abimelek, for they said, "He is our brother." ⁴ They gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-Berith, and Abimelek used the silver to hire worthless and reckless men, who traveled with him. ⁵ Abimelek went to his father's house at Ophrah, and upon one stone he murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. Only Jotham was left, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, for he hid himself. ⁶ All the leaders of Shechem and Beth Millo came together and they went and made Abimelek king, beside the oak near the pillar which is in Shechem.

⁷ When Jotham was told about this, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim. He shouted and said to them, "Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. ⁸ The trees once went out to anoint a king over them. For they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' ⁹ But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I give up my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, to sway over the other trees?' ¹⁰ The trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and reign over us.' ¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I give up my sweetness and my good fruit, just so I could return and sway over the other trees?' ¹² The trees said to the vine, 'Come and reign over us.' ¹³ The vine said to them, 'Should I give up my new wine, which makes gods and mankind glad, and return and sway over the other trees?' ¹⁴ Then said all the trees to the thornbush, 'Come and reign over us.' ¹⁵ The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you truly want to anoint me as king over you, then come and find refuge under my shade. If not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and let it burn up the cedars of Lebanon.' ¹⁶ Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and honesty, when you made Abimelek king, and if you have done well concerning Jerub-Baal and his house, and if you have punished him as he deserves— ¹⁷ and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life, and rescued you out of the hand of Midian— ¹⁸ but today you have risen up against my father's house and have killed his sons, seventy persons, upon one stone. Then you have made Abimelek, the son of his female servant, king over the leaders of Shechem, because he is your relative. ¹⁹ If you acted with faithfulness and integrity with Jerub-Baal and his house, then you should rejoice in Abimelek, and let him also rejoice in you. ²⁰ But if not, let fire come out from Abimelek and burn up the men of Shechem and Beth Millo. Let fire come out from the men of Shechem and Beth Millo, to burn up Abimelek." ²¹ Jotham fled and ran away, and he went to Beer. He lived there because it was far away from Abimelek, his brother.

²² Abimelek ruled over Israel for three years. ²³ God sent an evil spirit between Abimelek and the leaders of Shechem. The leaders of Shechem betrayed the trust they had with Abimelek. ²⁴ God did this so the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerub-Baal might be avenged and their blood be laid on Abimelek their brother, and the men of Shechem would be held responsible because they helped him murder his brothers. ²⁵ So the leaders of Shechem positioned men to lie in wait on the hilltops that they might ambush him, and they robbed all who passed by them along that road. This was reported to Abimelek.

²⁶ Gaal son of Ebed came with his relatives and they went over to Shechem. The leaders of Shechem had confidence in him. ²⁷ They went out into the field and gathered grapes from the vineyards, and they trampled on them. They held a festival in the house of their god, where they ate and drank, and they cursed Abimelek. ²⁸ Gaal son of Ebed, said, "Who is Abimelek, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerub-Baal? Is Zebul not his overseer? Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelek? ²⁹ I wish that this people were under my command! Then would I remove Abimelek. I would say to Abimelek, 'Call out all your army.'"

³⁰ When Zebul, the official of the city, heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed his anger was kindled. ³¹ He sent messengers to Abimelek in order to deceive, saying, "See, Gaal son of Ebed and his relatives are coming to Shechem, and they are stirring up the city against you. ³² Now, get up during the night, you and the soldiers with you, and prepare an ambush in the fields. ³³ Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and make a raid on the city. When he and the people with him come out against you, do whatever you can to them."

³⁴ So Abimelek got up during the night, he and all the men who were with him, and they set an ambush against Shechem—dividing into four units. ³⁵ Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the city gate. Abimelek and the men who were with him came out of their hiding place. ³⁶ When Gaal saw the men, he said to Zebul, "See, men are coming down from the hilltops!" Zebul said to him, "You are seeing the shadows on the hills like they are men." ³⁷ Gaal spoke again and said, "Look, men are coming down in the middle of the land, and one unit is coming by way of the oak of the diviners." ³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, "Where are your proud words now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelek that we should serve him?' Are these not the men you despised? Go out now and fight against them." ³⁹ Gaal went out and he was leading the men of Shechem, and he fought Abimelek. ⁴⁰ Abimelek chased him, and Gaal fled before him. Many fell with deadly wounds before the entrance to the city gate.

⁴¹ Abimelek stayed in Arumah. Zebul forced Gaal and his relatives out of Shechem. ⁴² On the next day the people of Shechem went out into the field, and this was reported to Abimelek. ⁴³ He took his people, divided them into three units, and they set an ambush in the fields. He looked and saw the people coming out from the city and he attacked and killed them. ⁴⁴ Abimelek and the units that were with him attacked and blocked the entrance to the city gate. The other two units attacked all who were in the field and killed them. ⁴⁵ Abimelek fought against the city all that day. He captured the city, and killed the people who were in it. He broke down the city walls and sowed it with salt.

⁴⁶ When all the leaders of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-Berith. ⁴⁷ Abimelek was told that all the leaders had gathered together at the tower of Shechem. ⁴⁸ Abimelek went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the men who were with him. Abimelek took an ax and cut off branches. He put it on his shoulder and ordered the men with him, "What you have seen me do, hurry and do as I have done." ⁴⁹ So every one cut off branches and followed Abimelek. They piled them against the wall of the tower, and they set the stronghold on fire, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelek went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and captured it. ⁵¹ But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women and all the leaders of the city fled to it and shut themselves in. Then they went up to the roof of the tower. ⁵² Abimelek came to the tower and fought against it, and he came up near to the door of the tower to burn it. ⁵³ But a woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelek's head and it crushed his skull. ⁵⁴ Then he called urgently to the young man who was his armor-bearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, so no one will say about me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young man pierced him through, and he died. ⁵⁵ When the men of Israel saw that Abimelek was dead, they went home. ⁵⁶ So God avenged the evil of Abimelek that he did to his father by killing his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷ God made all the evil of the men of Shechem turn back on their own heads and on them came the curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal.

Judges 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Jotham's curse

Gideon's son, Abimelech, killed all of his brothers except Jotham in order to become king of Shechem. Jotham cursed Abimelech for having murdered Gideon's other sons. "Let fire come out from Abimelech and burn up the men of Shechem and the house of Millo. Let fire come out from the men of Shechem and Beth Millo, to burn up Abimelech." (See: curse)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Tree metaphor

This chapter contains an extended metaphor about trees. This metaphor functions as a parable instructing Israel about their sinful desire to have a king. (See: and sin)

Judges 9:1

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

Judges 9:2

Please say this, so that all the leaders in Shechem may hear, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy sons of Jerub-Baal rule over you, or that just one rule over you?'

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Please ask the leaders of Shechem if they would rather have all seventy sons of Jerub-Baal rule over them, or if they would rather have just one of his sons rule over them."

seventy
"70"

I am your bone and your flesh

Here "your bone and your flesh" represents being someone's relative. Alternate translation: "I am a member of your family"

Judges 9:3

His mother's relatives spoke for him to the leaders

This means that the relatives of the mother of Abimelek spoke to the leaders, suggesting that they make Abimelek their king.

they agreed to follow Abimelek
"they agreed to let Abimelek be their leader"

Judges 9:4

the house

Here "house" represents a temple.

seventy pieces of silver

This means seventy shekels of silver. A shekel weighs 11 grams. If it is necessary to translate this with modern measurements, you can translate it like this. Alternate translation: "almost one kilo of silver"

seventy
"70"

Baal-Berith

This is the name of a false god. See how you translated it in Judges 8:33.

worthless and reckless
"violent and foolish"

Judges 9:5

Ophrah

Translate the name of this city as you did in Judges 6:11.

one stone
"1 stone"

seventy
"70"

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

Judges 9:6

Beth Millo

This is the name of a place.

Judges 9:7

General Information:

Jotham begins telling a parable in which the trees try to find someone to rule them. The trees represent the Israelites.

When Jotham was told about this

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Jotham heard that Abimelech had murdered his brothers"

Mount Gerizim

This is a mountain.

Judges 9:8

The trees once went out to anoint a king over them. For they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.'

In this parable Jotham describes the trees doing things that humans do.

to anoint a king over them

Here, to anoint with oil is a symbolic action that represents appointing a person to be king. Alternate translation: "to appoint a king to rule over all of them"

Reign over us
"Be our king"

Judges 9:9

General Information:

Jotham continues telling the parable he begins in Judges 9:7, where the trees represent the Israelites.

Should I give up my abundance ... over the other trees?

The olive tree is asking this question to refuse to be king. This question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not give up my abundance ... over the other trees."

abundance

This word for "wealth" is a metonym for the olives that come from the tree. People ate olives as food and crushed them to make oil for lamps. Alternate translation: "oil"

by which gods and men are honored

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "by which people honor both gods and other men"

gods

It is possible to translate the same Hebrew word as "god," "God," or "gods," so possible meanings here are 1) "gods" or 2) "God."

sway over

To sway is to move back and forth. Trees sway when the wind blows them. Here this is a metaphor for ruling over people. Jotham is also using irony, saying that the work of any ruler will be useless because the "trees," the people, will not obey anyone who rules them. Alternate translation: "rule over"

Judges 9:10

General Information:

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Judges 9:11

the fig tree said to them

Jotham continues describing the trees as doing things that humans do.

Should I give up my sweetness ... over the other trees?

The fig tree is asking this question to refuse to be king. This question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not give up my sweetness ... over the other trees."

my sweetness and my good fruit

The word "sweetness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective that describes the fruit that grows on the tree. Alternate translation: "my good sweet fruit"

Judges 9:12

General Information:

Jotham continues telling the parable he begins in Judges 9:7, where the trees represent the Israelites.

The trees said to the vine

In this parable, Jotham describes the trees and the vine as doing things that humans do.

Judges 9:13

Should I give up my new wine ... over the other trees?

The vine is asking this question to refuse to be king. This question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not give up my new wine ... over the other trees."

Judges 9:14

thornbush

Thorns are sharp spikes or spurs that hurt. This bush has many sharp spikes along its branches.

Judges 9:15

General Information:

Jotham continues telling his parable, where trees represent various people groups, and makes the application.

The thornbush said to the trees

In this parable, Jotham describes the thornbush and the trees as doing things that humans do.

to anoint me as king over you

To anoint someone with oil is a symbolic action that appoints a person to be king. Alternate translation: "to appoint me as your king"

fire come out of the thornbush and let it burn up the cedars of Lebanon

This means to let the thornbush burn so that it will burn the cedars.

then let fire come out of the thornbush

The thornbush refers to itself as "the thornbush." Alternate translation: "then may fire come out from me, the thornbush"

Judges 9:16

Now

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

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

his house

Here "house" represents Gideon's family.

Judges 9:17

General Information:

Jotham makes the application to the situation at that time and place.

to think that my father fought for you ... out of the hand of Midian

Here Jotham is expressing that he cannot believe how badly the people of Shechem have treated Gideon and his family even after Gideon fought to save the people of Shechem.

out of the hand of Midian

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "from the power of the Midianites" or "from the Midianites"

Judges 9:18

you have risen up against

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "you have opposed" or "you have rebelled against"

my father's house

Here "house" represents family. Alternate translation: "my father's family"

seventy

"70"

one stone

"1 stone"

his female servant

Here "his" refers to Gideon.

Judges 9:19

If you acted with faithfulness and integrity with Jerub-Baal and his house

Jotham offered the possibility that what they did was good, but he did not actually believe what they did was good. Alternate translation: "If you treated Jerub-Baal and his family with faithfulness and sincerity"

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. It means "let Baal defend himself." See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

his house

Here "house" refers to family. Alternate translation: "his family"

Judges 9:20

But if not

The rest of this phrase can be understood from what Jotham said in verse 19. Alternate translation: "But if you did not act with honesty and integrity with Jerub Baal and his house"

let fire come out from Abimelek and burn up the men of Shechem

Jotham is speaking a curse. He speaks of Abimelek destroying the people of Shechem as if he would burn them with fire.

Let fire come out from the men of Shechem and Beth Millo, to burn up Abimelek

Jotham is speaking a curse. He speaks of the people of Shechem and Beth Millo destroying Abimelek as if they would burn him with fire.

Beth Millo

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in Judges 9:6.

Judges 9:21

Beer

This is the name of a city.

Judges 9:22

General Information:

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Judges 9:23

God sent an evil spirit between Abimelek and the leaders of Shechem

This means that God applied the curse Jotham made by sending an evil spirit to cause trouble and animosity between Abimelek and the leaders of Shechem.

Judges 9:24

God did this so the violence done ... helped him murder his brothers

The passive phrases can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did this to avenge the seventy sons whom Abimelech their brother murdered and the men of Shechem helped murder"

seventy

"70"

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

Judges 9:25

positioned men to lie in wait on the hilltops that they might ambush him

"sent men to hide on the hilltops and wait to attack Abimelek"

This was reported to Abimelek

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Abimelek about the men waiting to attack him"

Judges 9:26

Gaal ... Ebed

These are names of men.

had confidence in him

The word "confidence" is an abstract noun that can be stated with the verb "trust." Alternate translation: "trusted him"

Judges 9:27

They went out into the field

Here "They" refers to Gaal and his relatives and the men of Shechem.

they trampled on them

They did this to squeeze out the grape juice to make wine with it.

trampled

"crushed" or "stomped"

in the house

Here "house" represents a temple.

Judges 9:28

Gaal ... Ebed

See how you translated these names in Judges 9:26.

Who is Abimelek, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him?

Gaal uses a question to emphasize that the people of Shechem should not serve Abimelek. Alternate translation: "We should not serve Abimelek!"

Who is Abimelek, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him?

Both of these questions means the same thing. Gaal refers to Abimelek as "Shechem" because Abimelek's mother was from Shechem. Alternate translation: "We should not serve Abimelek, that is, Shechem!"

Is he not the son of Jerub-Baal? Is Zebul not his overseer?

Gaal uses a question to emphasize that the people of Shechem should not serve Abimelek. Alternate translation: "He is just the son of Jerub-Baal, and Zebul is just his overseer."

overseer

Zebul oversaw Abimelek's slaves, servants, and laborers.

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this in Judges 6:32.

Zebul

This is the name of a man.

Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father

Gaal means the people of Shechem should serve those who descended from Hamor, that is, those who are truly Canaanites, and not serve someone whose father was an Israelite.

Why should we serve Abimelek?

Gaal uses a question to emphasize that the people of Shechem should not serve Abimelek. Alternate translation: "We should not serve Abimelek!"

Judges 9:29

I wish that this people were under my command

"I wish that I ruled the people of Shechem"

Judges 9:30

Zebul

See how you translated this name in Judges 9:28.

heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed

"heard what Gaal son of Ebed said"

Gaal ... Ebed

See how you translated these names in Judges 9:26.

his anger was kindled

Becoming angry is spoken of as if a fire were starting. Alternate translation: "he became very angry"

the city

Here "city" represents the people of the city.

Judges 9:31

in order to deceive

Zebul is deceiving Gaal and the people of Shechem. Alternate translation: "secretly"

they are stirring up the city against you

This speaks of the people of the city becoming upset as if they were liquid in a pot moving around. Alternate translation: "they are persuading the people of the city to rebel against you"

Judges 9:32

General Information:

Zebul's messengers continue talking to Abimelech.

Now

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

an ambush

"to hide and attack them suddenly"

Judges 9:33

do whatever you can to them

This means that they can do what they want to destroy the followers of Gaal.

Judges 9:34

all the men who were with him

"all the men accompanying Abimelech" or "all the men fighting for Abimelech"

dividing into four units

"separating into 4 groups"

Judges 9:35

Gaal ... Ebed

See how you translated these names in Judges 9:26.

Judges 9:36

Gaal

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in Judges 9:26.

Zebul

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in Judges 9:28.

You are seeing the shadows on the hills like they are men

Zebul is trying to confuse Gaal and keep him from preparing for battle. Alternate translation: "That is not people, it is only shadows on the hills"

Judges 9:37

one unit

"1 group" or "1 troop"

Judges 9:38

Zebul

See how you translated this name in Judges 9:28.

Where are your proud words now, you

Zebul is scolding Gaal with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "You are not speaking proudly now, you" or "You are not proud now, you"

you who said, 'Who is Abimelek that we should serve him?'

Zebul is quoting Gaal's boast back to Gaal. This can be translated as a statement and as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "you who said that we should not serve Abimelek."

Are these not the men you despised?

Zebul is challenging Gaal with this rhetorical question. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Here are the men that you despised."

despised

strongly disliked or hated

Judges 9:39

Gaal

See how you translated this name in Judges 9:26.

Judges 9:40

Many fell with deadly wounds

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "And many men died of wounds"

Judges 9:41

Arumah

This is the name of a city.

Zebul

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in Judges 9:28.

Gaal

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in Judges 9:26.

Judges 9:42

this was reported to Abimelek

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone reported this to Abimelek"

Judges 9:43

divided them into three units

"separated them into 3 groups"

they set an ambush in the fields

"they hid in the fields to attack the people by surprise"

he attacked

Here "he" refers to Abimelech who represents himself and all of his soldiers. Alternate translation: "they attacked"

Judges 9:44

the units

"the groups of soldiers"

other two

"other 2"

Judges 9:45

Abimelek fought ... He broke down

Here "Abimelek" represents himself and his soldiers. Alternate translation: "Abimelek and his soldiers fought ... They broke down"

against the city

Here "city" represents the people. Alternate translation: "against the people of Shechem"

broke down

"demolished"

sowed it with salt

Here salt is spoken of as if it were seeds. Spreading salt over land keeps anything from growing there. Alternate translation: "spread salt over the land"

Judges 9:46

the house

Here this represents a temple.

El-Berith

The word "El" means "god." This is the same false god as "Baal-Berith" in [Judges 8:33]

Judges 9:47

Abimelek was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Abimelek"

Judges 9:48

Mount Zalmon

This is the name of a mountain.

Judges 9:49

piled

This means to stack the branches into a large heap.

about a thousand men

"about 1,000"

Judges 9:50

Thebez

This is the name of a city.

encamped against Thebez

"camped outside the city of Thebez"

Judges 9:51

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 9:52

fought against it

"attacked it"

Judges 9:53

upper millstone

Two large, flat, round stones were used to grind grain in a mill. An upper millstone was the top one that was rolled on the lower one to crush the grain in between them.

Judges 9:54

armor-bearer

This is the man who carried the weapons of Abimelech.

pierced him through

This means the young man put the sword right through the body of Abimelech.

Judges 9:55

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 9:56

seventy

"70"

Judges 9:57

made all the evil of the men of Shechem turn back on their own heads

"Evil turn back on their heads" here is an idiom. Alternate translation: "punished the men of Shechem for all the evil they had done"

on them came the curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal happened to them"

Jerub-Baal

This is another name for Gideon. See how you translated this name in Judges 6:32.

Chapter 10

¹ After Abimelek, Tola son of Puah son of Dodo, a man from Issachar who lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim, arose to deliver Israel. ² He judged Israel twenty-three years. He died and was buried in Shamir.

³ He was followed by Jair the Gileadite. He judged Israel twenty-two years. ⁴ He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth Jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. ⁵ Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

⁶ The people of Israel added to the evil they had done in the sight of Yahweh and worshiped the Baals, the Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. They abandoned Yahweh and no longer worshiped him. ⁷ Yahweh burned with anger toward Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites. ⁸ They crushed and oppressed the people of Israel that year, and for eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. ⁹ Then the Ammonites crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was greatly distressed.

¹⁰ Then the people of Israel called out to Yahweh, saying, "We have sinned against you, because we abandoned our God and worshiped the Baals." ¹¹ Yahweh said to the people of Israel, "Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹² and also from the Sidonians? The Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you; you called out to me, and I delivered you from their power. ¹³ Yet you abandoned me again and worshiped other gods. Therefore, I will not keep adding to the times I deliver you. ¹⁴ Go and call out to the gods that you have worshiped. Let them rescue you when you have trouble." ¹⁵ The people of Israel said to Yahweh, "We have sinned. Do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please, rescue us this day." ¹⁶ They got rid of the foreign gods among them and they worshiped Yahweh. Then Yahweh could bear Israel's misery no longer.

¹⁷ Then the Ammonites were summoned and set up camp in Gilead. The people of Israel came together and set up their camp at Mizpah. ¹⁸ The leaders of the people of Gilead said one to another, "Who is the man who will begin to fight the Ammonites? He will become the leader over all those who are living in Gilead."

Judges 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins the account of Jephthah ([Judges 10-12](#)).

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel's punishment

In Judges, Israel's actions are connected to their obedience to Yahweh. When Israel does evil, they are oppressed. (See: evil and oppress)

Judges 10:1

Tola ... Puah ... Dodo

These are names of men.

Shamir

This is the name of a place.

arose to deliver Israel

"came to deliver Israel" or "became the leader to deliver Israel"

deliver Israel

Here "Israel" represents the people of Israel.

Judges 10:2

He judged Israel

Here "judged" means he led the people of Israel.

twenty-three years

"23 years"

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him"

Judges 10:3

He was followed by Jair the Gileadite

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jair the Gileadite was leader after Tola"

Jair

This is the name of a man.

the Gileadite

Jair was from the tribe of Gilead.

He judged Israel

Here "judged" means he led the people of Israel.

Israel

Here "Israel" represents the people of Israel.

twenty-two years

"22 years"

Judges 10:4

thirty sons

"30 sons"

Havvoth Jair

This is the name of a region, which is named after a man.

to this day

This means to the time when the book of Judges was being written.

Judges 10:5

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him"

Kamon

This is the name of a place.

Judges 10:6

added to the evil they had done in the sight of Yahweh

This speaks of evil as if it were an object that a person could add to and make bigger. Alternate translation: "continued doing what Yahweh said was evil"

in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "according to Yahweh"

Ashtoreths

This is the plural of Ashtoroth, who was worshiped as a goddess in many different forms. See how you translated this in Judges 2:13.

They abandoned Yahweh and no longer worshiped him

The author basically said the same thing twice for emphasis. These can be combined. Alternate translation: "They completely stopped worshiping Yahweh"

They abandoned Yahweh

No longer obeying and worshiping Yahweh is spoken of as if the people left Yahweh and went somewhere else.

Judges 10:7

Yahweh burned with anger toward Israel

Yahweh becoming angry is spoken of as if anger were a burning fire. Alternate translation: "Yahweh was very angry at Israel"

he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites

Yahweh allowing the Philistines and the Ammonites to defeat the Israelites is spoken of as if he sold the Israelites to them.

into the hand

Here "hand" represents power or control.

Judges 10:8

crushed and oppressed

These two words basically mean the same and emphasize how much the Israelites suffered. Alternate translation: "terribly oppressed"

eighteen years

"18 years"

who were beyond the Jordan

This means on the east side of the Jordan River.

which is in Gilead

"this region is also called Gilead"

Judges 10:9

Judah ... Benjamin

"Judah" and "Benjamin" refer to the people belonging to those tribes. Alternate translation: "the people of the tribe of Judah ... the people of the tribe of Benjamin"

house of Ephraim

The "house" refers to the people of the tribe of Ephraim. Alternate translation: "the people of the tribe of Ephraim"

so that Israel was greatly distressed

"Israel" refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "so that the people of Israel suffered much"

Judges 10:10

the people of Israel called out to Yahweh

This means the people of Israel desperately asked Yahweh for help.

because we abandoned our God

The people no longer obeying and worshipping Yahweh is spoken of as if they left Yahweh and went somewhere else.

abandoned our God

The people are speaking to Yahweh and refer to him as "our God." This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "abandoned you, our God"

Judges 10:11

General Information:

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Judges 10:12

and also from the Sidonians?

God is rebuking the people of Israel for their worship of other gods. The rhetorical question that begins with the words "Did I not deliver you" in verse 11 ends here. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am the one who delivered you ... and also from the Sidonians."

Maonites

These are the people from the clan or family of Maon.

from their power

Here "power" represents the Amalekites and the Maonites. Alternate translation: "from them"

Judges 10:13

you abandoned me again

The people no longer obeying and worshipping Yahweh is spoken of as if they left Yahweh and went somewhere else.

I will not keep adding to the times I deliver you

The phrase "keep adding to the times" is an idiom that means to continue to do something. You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Yahweh's saying. Alternate translation: "I will not keep on delivering you again and again" or "You can be sure that I will stop delivering you"

Judges 10:14

General Information:

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Judges 10:15

General Information:

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Judges 10:16

foreign gods among them

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of this statement. Alternate translation: "foreign gods whose images they possessed"

Yahweh could bear Israel's misery no longer

Here Israel refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "And Yahweh did not want the people of Israel to suffer any longer"

Judges 10:17

the Ammonites were summoned and set

Possible meanings are 1) "the leaders of the Ammonites called them to come to fight, so they set" or 2) "the Ammonites gathered together."

Judges 10:18

Who is the man who will begin to fight the Ammonites?

"Who will lead our army to fight against the Ammonites?"

Chapter 11

¹ Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute. Gilead was his father. ² Gilead's wife also gave birth to his other sons. When his wife's sons grew up, they forced Jephthah to leave the house and said to him, "You are not going to inherit anything from our father's household. You are the son of another woman." ³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and worthless men gathered around Jephthah and they traveled with him.

⁴ Some days later, the people of Ammon made war against Israel. ⁵ When the people of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah back from the land of Tob. ⁶ They said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader that we may fight with the people of Ammon." ⁷ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "You hated me and forced me to leave my father's house. Why do you come to me now when you are in trouble?" ⁸ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we are turning to you now; come with us and fight with the people of Ammon, and you will become the leader over all who live in Gilead." ⁹ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you bring me home again to fight against the people of Ammon, and if Yahweh gives us victory over them, I will be your leader." ¹⁰ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "May Yahweh be witness between us if we do not do as we say!" ¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him leader and commander over them. When he was before Yahweh in Mizpah, Jephthah repeated all the promises he made.

¹² Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, saying, "What is this conflict between us? Why have you come with force to take our land?" ¹³ The king of the people of Ammon answered to the messengers of Jephthah, "Because when Israel came up out of Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, over to the Jordan. Now give back those lands in peace." ¹⁴ Again Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, ¹⁵ and he said, "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab and the land of the people of Ammon, ¹⁶ but they came up from Egypt, and Israel went through the wilderness to the Sea of Reeds and on to Kadesh. ¹⁷ When Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let us pass through your land,' the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent messengers to the king of Moab, but he refused. So Israel stayed at Kadesh. ¹⁸ Then they went through the wilderness and turned away from the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and they went along the east side of the land of Moab and they camped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not go into the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was Moab's border. ¹⁹ Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon; Israel said to him, 'Please, let us pass through your land to the place that is ours.' ²⁰ But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his army together and camped at Jahaz, and there he fought against Israel. ²¹ Then Yahweh, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel and they defeated them. So Israel took all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country. ²² They took over everything within the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, and from the wilderness to the Jordan. ²³ So then Yahweh, the God of Israel, has driven out the Amorites before his people Israel, and should you now take possession of their land? ²⁴ Will you not take over the land that Chemosh, your god, gives you? So whatever land Yahweh our God has given us, we will take over. ²⁵ Now are you really better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he dare to have an argument with Israel? Did he ever wage war against them? ²⁶ While Israel lived for three hundred years in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities that are along the banks of the Arnon—why then did you not take them back during that time? ²⁷ I have not done you wrong, but you are doing me wrong by attacking me. Yahweh, the judge, will decide today between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon."

²⁸ But the king of the people of Ammon rejected the warning Jephthah sent him.

²⁹ Then the Spirit of Yahweh came on Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed through to the people of Ammon. ³⁰ Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh and said, "If you give me victory over the people of Ammon, ³¹ then whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the people of Ammon will belong to Yahweh, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." ³² So Jephthah passed through to the people of Ammon to fight against them, and Yahweh gave him victory. ³³ He attacked them and caused a great slaughter from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim. So the people of Ammon were subdued before the people of Israel.

³⁴ Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah, and there his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. She was his only child, and besides her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ As soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Oh! My daughter! You have crushed me with sorrow, and you have become one who troubles me! For I have opened my mouth to Yahweh, and I cannot turn back on my promise." ³⁶ She said to him, "My father, you have made a vow to Yahweh, do to me everything you promised, because Yahweh has taken vengeance for you against your enemies, the Ammonites." ³⁷ She said to her father, "Let this promise be kept for me. Leave me alone for two months, that I may leave and go down to the hills and grieve over my virginity, I and my companions." ³⁸ He said, "Go." He sent her away for two months. She left him, she and her companions, and they grieved her virginity in the hills. ³⁹ At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to the promise of the vow he had made. Now she had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel every year, for four days, would retell the story of the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Judges 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Jephthah continues in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jephthah the leader

Jephthah was half Israelite and half Canaanite by birth. While all of the judges were called by Yahweh, it is the leaders who called Jephthah to help them, but Yahweh still used Jephthah to help them.

Judges 11:1

Gileadite

This is someone who is from the region of Gilead. It is a coincidence that his father's name is also Gilead. See how you translated this in [Judges 10:3]

Judges 11:2

When his wife's sons grew up

"When the sons of Gilead's wife became adults"

Judges 11:3

the land of Tob

Tob is the name of a region.

they traveled with him

"they followed him" or "they went everywhere together"

Judges 11:4

Some days later

"Some time later"

made war against Israel

The phrase "made war" is an idiom which means that they attacked Israel and were at war with them. Here "Israel" refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "attacked the people of Israel"

Judges 11:5

General Information:

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Judges 11:6

that we may fight with

"so that we can fight against"

Judges 11:7

my father's house

Here "house" refers to people living in the house. Alternate translation: "my family"

Judges 11:8

That is why we are turning to you now

The word "that" refers to what Jephthah said about about them being in trouble. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "We are turning to you now because we are in trouble"

fight with the people of Ammon

"fight against the people of Ammon"

Judges 11:9

General Information:

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Judges 11:10

General Information:

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Judges 11:11

leader and commander

These two words basically have the same meaning repeated to emphasize how important Jephthah had become. You can combine the two words. Alternate translation: "commander"

When he was before Yahweh in Mizpah, Jephthah repeated all the promises he made

This is an idiom. Here the phrase "before Yahweh" means that he repeated his promises as a vow before Yahweh. Alternate translation: "When Jephthah was in Mizpah he repeated all of these promises as a vow before Yahweh"

all the promises he made

This refers to the promises he made to the leaders of Gilead about becoming their leader.

Judges 11:12

What is this conflict between us

"Why is there conflict between us?" Jephthah is asking the king why they are angry with Israel.

Why have you come with force to take our land

The word "you" refers to the King of Ammon and represents himself and his soldiers. Alternate translation: "Why have your soldiers come to seize our land"

come with force to take

"come to forcefully take"

Judges 11:13

Arnon ... Jabbok

These are the names of two rivers.

over to the Jordan

"on the other side of the Jordan River"

in peace

"peacefully" or "and do not try to defend them"

Judges 11:14

General Information:

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Judges 11:15

he said

Here the word "he" refers to the messenger who was speaking to the king. This may be written with the word "they" as in the UDB, referring to the

group of messengers. Alternate translation: "Jephthah told the messengers to say" or "they said"

Judges 11:16

they came up from Egypt

Whenever people traveled to the promised land it is referred to as going "up" to the promised land. When the Israelites left Egypt they were on their way to the promised land. Alternate translation: "they left Egypt"

Judges 11:17

General Information:

Jephthah's messengers continue to speak.

When Israel sent messengers

The messengers were sent by the leaders of Israel. Alternate translation: "When the leaders of Israel sent messengers"

pass through

"go through" or "cross"

would not listen

This phrase is an idiom that means to "refuse." Alternate translation: "refused" or "denied their request"

They also sent messengers to the king of Moab

The reason that Israel sent messengers to the king of Moab can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "They also send messengers to the king of Moab with the same request"

but he refused

The king of Moab refused Israel's request to pass through Moab. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but he also refused and would not let them pass through the land of Moab"

Judges 11:18

Arnon

This is the name of a river. See how you translated this in Judges 11:13.

Judges 11:19

General Information:

Jephthah's messengers continue to speak.

Israel sent messengers to Sihon

The messengers were sent by the leaders of Israel. Alternate translation: "When the leaders of Israel sent messengers"

Sihon

This is the name of a person.

Heshbon

This is the name of a city.

Judges 11:20

Jahaz

This is the name of a city.

But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory

Sihon did not trust the people of Israel to pass through his land peacefully. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But Sihon did not trust the people of Israel to pass through his territory peacefully"

there he fought

The word "he" refers to Sihon and represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: "there they fought" or "there his army fought"

Judges 11:21

General Information:

Jephthah's messengers continue to speak.

Sihon

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 11:19.

gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel

Here "hand" refers to power to defeat in battle. Alternate translation: "gave Israel power over Sihon and all his people"

Judges 11:22

Arnon ... Jabbok

See how you translated the names of these rivers in Judges 11:13.

Judges 11:23

General Information:

Jephthah's messengers continue to speak.

should you now take possession of their land?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with this rhetorical question. The word "their" refers to the Israel. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "therefore, you should not take possession of their land."

Judges 11:24

Will you not take over the land that Chemosh, your god, gives you?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with a rhetorical question. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should only take over the land that Chemosh, your god, gives you."

take over

This is an idiom which means to take control of something. Alternate translation: "take control of" or "take possession of"

Chemosh

This is the name of a false god.

Judges 11:25

Now are you really better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with a rhetorical question. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not better than Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab."

Balak ... Zippor

These are the names of men.

Did he dare to have an argument with Israel?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with a rhetorical question. This question can be translated with a statement. Alternate translation: "Yet he did not dare to have an argument with Israel."

Did he ever wage war against them?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with a rhetorical question. This question can be translated with a statement. Alternate translation: "Nor did he ever wage war against them."

Judges 11:26

General Information:

Jephthah's messengers continue to speak.

three hundred years

"300 years"

Heshbon

Translate the name of this city the same way that you did in Judges 11:19.

Aroer

This is the name of a city.

why then did you not take them back during that time?

Jephthah is rebuking the king of the Ammonites with a rhetorical question. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you should have taken them back during that time." or "now it is too late; you should have taken them back long ago."

Judges 11:27

I have not done you wrong, but you are doing me wrong by attacking me

Jephthah is speaking to the Sihon. Here Jephthah speaks about the Israelites as though they were

himself and of the Ammonites as if they were Sihon their king. Alternate translation: "The Israelites have not done wrong to your people, but your people are doing us wrong by attacking us"

done you wrong ... doing me wrong

This is an idiom. To do someone wrong means to do something wrong to them. Alternate translation: "treated you wrongly ... treating me wrongly" or "treated you unfairly ... treating me unfairly"

Judges 11:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 11:29

the Spirit of Yahweh came on Jephthah

This is an idiom which means that the Spirit influenced Jephthah's decisions. Alternate translation: "the Spirit of Yahweh took control of Jephthah"

he passed through Gilead and Manasseh ... from Mizpah of Gilead

Jephthah passed through these places enlisting men for his army to go to war with the people of Ammon. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "he gathered men for his army as he passed through Gilead and Manasseh ... from Mizpah of Gilead"

Judges 11:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 11:31

I will offer it up

This is an idiom which means to give something as an offering. Alternate translation: "I will offer it to you" or "I will sacrifice it to you"

Judges 11:32

So Jephthah passed through ... Yahweh gave him victory

Since Jephthah was the leader of his army, he and his army are often spoken of as Jephthah himself. Alternate translation: "So Jephthah and his army passed through ... Yahweh gave them victory"

Judges 11:33

He attacked

Since Jephthah was the leader of his army, he and his army are often spoken of as Jephthah himself

Aroer

Translate the name of this city the same way you did in Judges 11:26.

Minnith ... Abel Keramim

These are the names of cities.

twenty cities

"including 20 cities"

Judges 11:34

tambourines

musical instruments with heads like drums that can be hit and with pieces of metal around their sides that sound when the instruments are shaken

Judges 11:35

he tore his clothes

This is an act that shows mourning or great sadness. Alternate translation: "he tore his clothes from grief"

You have crushed me with sorrow ... you have become one who troubles me

Jephthah said basically the same thing twice to emphasize that he was very sad.

You have crushed me with sorrow

Here Jephthah speaks of his great sorrow as something that crushes him. Alternate translation: "You have caused me great sorrow" or "You have filled me with sorrow"

you have become one who troubles me

Here Jephthah talks about his great distress and trouble as if it were pain. Alternate translation: "you have caused me great distress"

I cannot turn back on my promise

This is an idiom. To turn back on a promise means to not do what you have promised to do. Alternate translation: "I must do what I have promised" or "I cannot break my promise"

Judges 11:36

has taken vengeance for you against your enemies, the Ammonites

Yahweh has taken vengeance for him by defeating his enemies. The meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "has taken vengeance for you against your enemies, the Ammonites, by defeating them"

Judges 11:37

Let this promise be kept for me

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "Keep this promise for me" or "Keep this promise concerning me"

grieve over my virginity

"weep because I am a virgin" or "cry because I will never be married"

Judges 11:38

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 11:39

had never known a man

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "had never had sexual relations with a man"

Judges 11:40

the Gileadite

This refers to someone from Gilead. See how you translated this in Judges 10:3.

Chapter 12

¹ A call went out to the men of Ephraim; they passed through Zaphon and said to Jephthah, "Why did you pass through to fight against the people of Ammon and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down over you." ² Jephthah said to them, "I and my people were in a great conflict with the people of Ammon. When I called you, you did not rescue me from them." ³ When I saw that you did not rescue me, I put my life in my own hand and passed through against the people of Ammon, and Yahweh gave me victory. Why have you come to fight against me today?" ⁴ Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and he fought against Ephraim. The men of Gilead attacked the men of Ephraim because they said, "You Gileadites are fugitives in Ephraim—in Ephraim and Manasseh." ⁵ The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim. When any of the survivors of Ephraim said, "Let me go over the river," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," ⁶ then they would say to him, "Say: Shibboleth," and if he said "Sibboleth" (for he could not pronounce the word correctly), the Gileadites would seize him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time.

⁷ Jephthah served as a judge over Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

⁸ After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem served as a judge over Israel. ⁹ He had thirty sons. He gave away thirty daughters in marriage and he brought from the outside thirty daughters of other men for his sons. He judged Israel for seven years. ¹⁰ Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. ¹¹ After him Elon the Zebulunite served as judge over Israel. He judged Israel for ten years. ¹² Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

¹³ After him, Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite served as a judge over Israel. ¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons. They rode on seventy donkeys, and he judged Israel for eight years. ¹⁵ Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim in the hill country of the Amalekites.

Judges 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Jephthah concludes in this chapter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Shibboleth

This is a word in Hebrew. Its importance in this chapter is because of its sounds, not its meaning. The translator should not translate the meaning of this word, but should transliterate or transfer it into the target language by substituting letters that have the same sounds.

Judges 12:1

A call went out to the men of Ephraim

Here the abstract noun "call" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "The men of Ephraim were called together" or "The men ... of Ephraim called together their soldiers"

Zaphon

This is the name of a city.

passed through ... pass through

or "traveled through ... travel" or "journeyed through ... journey"

We will burn your house down over you

This idiom means to burn down a house with people inside it. Alternate translation: "We will burn your house down with you still in it"

Judges 12:2

When I called you, you

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the people of Ephraim.

did not rescue me

Jephthah uses the word "me" to refer to himself and all the people of Gilead. Alternate translation: "do not rescue us"

Judges 12:3

you did not rescue me

The word "you" is plural and refers to the men of Ephraim. Jephthah is referring to the people of Gilead, including himself, when he says "me."
Alternate translation: "you did not rescue us"

I put my life in my own hand

This is an idiom which means to risk one's life and to rely only on one's own strength. Jephthah continues to refer to the people of Gilead as himself. Alternate translation: "We risked our lives, relying on our own strength"

Yahweh gave me victory

Jephthah is referring to Yahweh giving the men of Gilead victory over the Ammonites. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave us victory over them" or "Yahweh allowed us to defeat them in battle"

Why have you come to fight against me

The word "you" is plural and refers to the men of Ephraim. Jephthah is referring to the people of Gilead, including himself, when he says "me."
Alternate translation: "Why have you come to fight against us"

passed through against the people of Ammon

This means that they fought against the Ammonites as they passed through Ammon. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "fought against the people of Ammon as we passed through their region"

Judges 12:4

he fought against Ephraim

The word "he" refers to Jephthah and all the fighting men of Gilead. Alternate translation: "they fought against Ephraim"

You Gileadites are fugitives

You can make the meaning of this insult explicit.
Alternate translation: "You Gileadites do not really belong here. You are just people who came here to live"

Gileadites

people from Gilead

in Ephraim—in Ephraim and Manasseh

"in the regions of Ephraim and Manasseh" or "in the land of Ephraim and Manasseh." Here "Ephraim" and "Manasseh" refer to regions and are named after the tribes which live there.

Judges 12:5

to Ephraim

"to the land of Ephraim"

The Gileadites captured

"The Gileadites controlled" or "The Gileadites occupied"

fords

These are places where you can cross the river on foot because the water is shallow.

Ephraimite

person from the tribe of Ephraim

Judges 12:6

Shibboleth ... Sibboleth

These words have no meaning. Copy these words into your language, and make sure that the beginning of the words, that is the letters "Sh" and "S" are translated differently.

pronounce the word

"make the sound of the word"

Forty-two thousand

"42,000"

Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They killed forty-two thousand Ephraimites"

Judges 12:7

Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jephthah the Gileadite died and they buried him"

Judges 12:8

Ibzan of Bethlehem

This is the name of a man from Bethlehem.

Judges 12:9

He gave away thirty daughters in marriage

Here "give away ... in marriage" is an idiom which means that he allowed his daughters to get married. Alternate translation: "He had thirty daughters and arranged a marriage for each of them"

he brought from the outside thirty daughters of other men for his sons

The idiom "bring them in from the outside" means that he had women from other clans marry his sons. Alternate translation: "he arranged for thirty daughters of other men from outside of his clan to marry his sons"

Judges 12:10

was buried at Bethlehem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him in Bethlehem"

Judges 12:11

Elon

This is the name of a man.

Zebulunite

someone from the tribe of Zebulun

Judges 12:12

Aijalon

Translate the name of this place the same way you did in Judges 1:35.

was buried in Aijalon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him in Aijalon"

Judges 12:13

Abdon ... Hillel

These are the names of men.

Pirathon

This is the name of a city.

Judges 12:14

They rode on seventy donkeys

These men owned seventy donkeys, which they did ride. Here the word "rode" is used instead of "owned." Alternate translation: "They owned seventy donkeys"

forty sons ... thirty grandsons ... seventy donkeys

"40 sons ... 30 grandsons ... 70 donkeys"

Judges 12:15

Pirathonite ... Pirathon

Pirathon is the name of a place, someone who is from that place is called a Pirathonite.

Chapter 13

¹ The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and he gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

² There was a man from Zorah, of the clan of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren and so she had not given birth. ³ The angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, "See now, you have been barren, and you have not given birth, but you will conceive and you will give birth to a son.

⁴ Now be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, and do not eat anything unclean.

⁵ Look, you will become pregnant and give birth to a son. No razor will be used upon his head, for the boy will be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he will begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines." ⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like that of an angel of God, very terrible. I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name. ⁷ He said to me, 'Look! You will become pregnant, and you will give birth to a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and do not eat any food that the law declares to be unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from the time he is in your womb until the day of his death.'"

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh and said, "Oh, Lord, please let the man of God you sent come again to us so that he may teach us what we are to do for the child who soon will be born." ⁹ God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came to the woman again when she was sitting in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, "Look! The man has appeared to me—the one who came to me the other day!" ¹¹ Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the man who spoke with my wife?" The man said, "I am." ¹² So Manoah said, "Now may your words come true. What will be the rules for the child, and what will be his work?" ¹³ The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "She must carefully do everything that I said to her. ¹⁴ She may not eat anything that comes from the vines, and do not let her drink wine or strong drink or eat anything unclean. She must obey everything I have commanded her to do."

¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "Please stay for a while, to give us time to prepare a young goat for you." ¹⁶ The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "Even if I stay, I will not eat your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to Yahweh." (Manoah did not know that he was the angel of Yahweh.) ¹⁷ Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "What is your name, so we may honor you when your words come true?" ¹⁸ The angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why do you ask my name? It is wonderful!" ¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered them on the rock to Yahweh. He did something marvelous while Manoah and his wife were watching. ²⁰ When the flame went up from the altar toward the sky, the angel of Yahweh went up in the flame of the altar. Manoah and his wife saw this and lay facedown on the ground.

²¹ The angel of Yahweh did not appear again to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. ²² Manoah said to his wife, "We are sure to die, because we have seen God!" ²³ But his wife said to him, "If Yahweh wanted to kill us, he would not have received the burnt offering and the grain offering we gave him. He would not have shown us all these things, nor at this time would he have let us hear such things." ²⁴ Later the woman gave birth to a son, and called his name Samson. The boy grew up and Yahweh blessed him. ²⁵ Yahweh's Spirit began to stir him in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins the account of Samson ([Judges 13-16](#)).

Special concepts in this chapter

Warning not to cut his hair

The angel of the Lord prophesied about Samson and gave instructions to Samson's mother. Samson's mother was to offer up her son under a Nazirite vow. This was a special type of vow, dedicating Samson to Yahweh. Part of this vow prohibited the cutting of the person's hair. (See: prophet and vow)

Judges 13:1

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation. See how you translated this in [Judges 2:11]

he gave them into the hand of the Philistines

Here "hand" refers to power to gain victory in battle. Alternate translation: "he allowed the Philistines to defeat them" or "he allowed them to be oppressed by the Philistines"

forty years

"40 years"

Judges 13:2

Zorah

This was the name of a town in Israel. It was in the region of Judah near the border of Dan.

Danites

people from the tribe of Dan

Manoah

This is the name of a man.

Judges 13:3

See now, you

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is an exhortation for the hearer to pay attention. "Listen carefully: you"

give birth to a son

This refers to childbirth. Alternate translation: "bear a son" or "have a baby boy"

Judges 13:4

anything unclean

Something that Yahweh has stated is unfit to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean.

Judges 13:5

Look

"Pay attention" or "Listen"

No razor will be used upon his head

Here the word "head" refers to his hair. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one should ever cut his hair"

razor

a sharp knife used to cut hair close to the skin

a Nazirite to God

This means that he will be devoted to God as a Nazirite. Alternate translation: "a Nazirite devoted to God" or "devoted to God as a Nazirite"

from the womb

Here the word "womb" refers to the time before the child is born. Alternate translation: "from before he is born"

the hand of the Philistines

Here the word "hand" means control. Alternate translation: "the control of the Philistines" or "being under the Philistine's control"

Judges 13:6

A man of God

This means that the man was sent by God. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "A man that God sent"

his appearance was like that of an angel of God, very terrible

Here "terrible" means "frightening." Alternate translation: "I was very afraid of him because he looked like an angel of God"

Judges 13:7

Look

"Pay attention" or "Listen"

give birth to a son

This refers to childbirth. Alternate translation: "bear a son" or "have a baby boy"

any food that the law declares to be unclean

Something that Yahweh has stated is unfit to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean.

a Nazirite to God

This means that he will be devoted to God as a Nazirite. See how you translated this in [Judges 3:5]

from the time he is in your womb until the day of his death

This emphasizes that it would be for his entire life. Alternate translation: "all his life"

Judges 13:8

Manoah

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 13:2.

Judges 13:9

came to the woman

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of the author's words. Alternate translation: "came to Manoah's wife"

Judges 13:10

Look

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

The man

This refers to the angel of God in [Judges 13:3]

Judges 13:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 13:12

your words

"what you have said"

Judges 13:13

General Information:

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Judges 13:14

anything that comes from the vines

Here the angel refers to any food that grow on a vine as "coming" from the vine. Alternate translation: "anything that grows on a vine"

unclean

Something that Yahweh has stated is unfit to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. See how you translated this phrase in [Judges 13:7]

Judges 13:15

prepare a young goat for you

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Manoah's statement. Alternate translation: "cook a young goat for you to eat"

Judges 13:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 13:17

your words come true

"what you have said comes true"

Judges 13:18

Why do you ask my name?

The angel asks this question as a rebuke. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not ask me what my name is."

It is wonderful

It may be helpful to explain more explicitly why they should not ask his name. Alternate translation: "It is too wonderful for you to understand"

Judges 13:19

with the grain offering

This law requires a grain offering to be offered when a burnt offering is made. Alternate translation: "with the grain offering required with it" or "with the grain offering to accompany it"

on the rock

"on the altar." The altar Manoah sacrificed the offering on was a rock.

He did something

"The angel did something"

Judges 13:20

the angel of Yahweh went up in the flame of the altar

"the angel of Yahweh went back up into heaven through the flames on the altar"

lay facedown on the ground

"lay with their faces to the ground." This is a sign of respect and honor, but it also shows their fear of Yahweh.

Judges 13:21

that he was the angel of Yahweh

The word "he" refers to the man who Manoah and his wife had seen.

Judges 13:22

We are sure to die, because we have seen God

It is implied that they think God will cause them to die. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "God will cause us to die because we have seen him"

Judges 13:23

He would not have shown us all these things, nor at this time would he have let us hear such things

Manoah's wife said basically the same thing twice for emphasis. These two statements can be combined. Alternate translation: "He would not have told us what he wanted us to do"

Judges 13:24

the woman

"Manoah's wife"

gave birth to a son

This refers to childbirth. Alternate translation: "bore a son" or "had a baby boy"

grew up

"became an adult" or "matured"

Judges 13:25

Yahweh's Spirit began to stir him

The word "stir" here refers to causing Samson to act. "Yahweh's Spirit began to cause him to act" or "Yahweh's Spirit began to control him"

Mahaneh Dan ... Eshtaol

Mahaneh Dan is the name of a temporary camp that the tribe of Dan lived in while they looked for a permanent home. Eshtaol is the name of a town.

Zorah

Translate the name of this town the same way you did in Judges 13:2.

Chapter 14

¹ Samson went down to Timnah, and there he saw a woman, one of the daughters of the Philistines. ² When he returned, he told his father and mother, "I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. Now get her for me to be my wife." ³ His father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people? Are you going to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for when I look at her, she pleases me." ⁴ But his father and his mother did not know that this matter came from Yahweh, for he desired to create a conflict with the Philistines (for at that time the Philistines were ruling Israel).

⁵ Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and his mother, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And, look, there one of the young lions came up and was roaring at him. ⁶ Yahweh's Spirit suddenly came on him, and he tore the lion apart as easily as he would have torn apart a small goat, and he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷ He went and spoke with the woman, and when he looked at her, she pleased Samson. ⁸ A few days later when he returned to marry her, he turned aside to look for the carcass of the lion. And, look, there was a swarm of bees and honey in what was left of the lion's body. ⁹ He scraped up the honey in his hands and went on, eating as he went. When he came to his father and his mother, he gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them he had taken the honey out of what was left of the lion's body.

¹⁰ Samson's father went down to where the woman was, and Samson gave a feast there, for this was the custom of the young men. ¹¹ As soon as her relatives saw him, they brought him thirty of their friends to be with him. ¹² Samson said to them, "Let me now tell you a riddle. If one of you can find it out and tell me the answer during the seven days of the feast, I will give out thirty linen robes and thirty sets of clothes. ¹³ But if you cannot tell me the answer, then you will give me thirty linen robes and thirty sets of clothes." They said to him, "Tell us your riddle, so we may hear it." ¹⁴ He said to them,

"Out of the eater was something to eat;
out of the strong was something sweet."

But his guests could not find the answer in three days.

¹⁵ On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Trick your husband so that he may tell us the answer to the riddle, or we will burn up you and your father's house. Did you invite us here in order to make us poor?" ¹⁶ Samson's wife started to weep in front of him; she said, "All you do is hate me! You do not love me. You have told a riddle to some of my people, but you have not told me the answer." Samson said to her, "Look here, if I have not told my father or my mother, should I tell you?" ¹⁷ She cried during the seven days that their feast lasted. On the seventh day he told her the answer because she pressured him very much. She told the answer to the relatives of her people. ¹⁸ Before the sun went down on the seventh day the men of the city said to him,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

Samson said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have found the answer to my riddle."

¹⁹ Then Yahweh's Spirit suddenly came on Samson with power. Samson went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men. He took their plunder, and he gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house. ²⁰ Samson's wife was given to his best friend.

Judges 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Samson continues in this 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 14:14, 18.

Special concepts in this chapter

Intermarriage

It was considered sinful for an Israel to marry a Canaanite or anyone from a different people group. This is why Samson's parents did not want him to marry a Philistine woman. They use rhetorical questions to convince him that he is sinning. This woman caused Samson many problems.

Judges 14:1

Samson went down to Timnah

The phrase "went down" is used here because Timnah is lower in elevation than where his father's house was. Timah is the name of a city in the Sorek Valley.

one of the daughters of the Philistines

The word "daughter" is a polite way to refer to a young, unmarried woman. Alternate translation: "one of the unmarried women among the Philistine people" or "a Philistine girl"

Judges 14:2

Now get her for me to be my wife

This is an idiom. Samson was demanding his parents to speak to the Philistine woman's parents about marriage. Alternate translation: "Now arrange for her to become my wife" or "Make the arrangements for me to marry her"

Judges 14:3

Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people?

They ask this question to suggest that they could find Samson a wife among their own people. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely there are women among your people whom you could marry."

the daughters of your relatives

The word "daughter" is a polite way to refer to a young, unmarried woman. Alternate translation: "one of the unmarried women among your relatives"

Are you going to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?

This question is asked to rebuke Samson. This question can be written as a statement. You can make explicit the reason his parents do not want him to marry a Philistine. Alternate translation: "You really should not marry a Philistine woman because the Philistine people do not worship Yahweh."

Get her for me

This is an idiom. Samson was demanding his parents to speak to the Philistine woman's parents

about marriage. Alternate translation: "Now arrange for her to be my wife"

she pleases me

This means that Samson thinks she is beautiful. "I am pleased by how beautiful she is" or "she is beautiful"

Judges 14:4

this matter

This refers to Samson's request to marry the Philistine woman.

for he desired to create a conflict

The word "he" refers to Yahweh.

Judges 14:5

Samson went down to Timnah

The phrase "went down" is used here because Timnah is lower in elevation than where his father's house was. Timnah was a city in the Sorek Valley. Translate the name of this city the same way you did in [Judges 14:1]

And, look, there one of the young lions came up

Here the word "look" is used to draw the readers attention to a surprising event that happens in the story. The phrase "came up" means that the lion came near him. Alternate translation: "Suddenly, a young lion came near him"

was roaring at him

"threatened him." This is the kind of noise that a lion makes when it threatens to attack something.

Judges 14:6

Yahweh's Spirit suddenly came on him

The phrase "came on" means that Yahweh's Spirit influenced Samson. In this case, he made him very strong. Alternate translation: "Yahweh's Spirit made him very strong"

tore ... apart

tore into two pieces

had nothing in his hand

Here it states that he had nothing in his hand to emphasize that he was not holding a weapon. Alternate translation: "did not have a weapon"

Judges 14:7

she pleased Samson

This means that he thought she was very beautiful.
Alternate translation: "he was pleased by how beautiful she was" or "he thought she was very beautiful"

Judges 14:8

he turned aside

This means that he left his path to do something.
Alternate translation: "he left the path"

carcass

dead body

And, look, there was a swarm of bees

Here the word "look" is used to draw the reader's attention to something surprising that happens in the story. Alternate translation: "He found a swarm of bees"

swarm

large group of insects

Judges 14:9

scraped up

"gathered up"

Judges 14:10

Samson's father went down to where the woman was

The phrase "went down" is used to describe Timnah which is lower in elevation than where Samson's father lives. Alternate translation: "Samson's father went to where the woman lived"

the custom of the young men

It may be helpful to state that this was a marriage custom. Alternate translation: "the custom of young men who were getting married"

Judges 14:11

thirty of their friends

"30 of their friends"

Judges 14:12

riddle

a game in which the players must discover the answer to a difficult question

can find it out

This means to figure out the meaning of the riddle.
Alternate translation: "can figure out its meaning"

thirty linen robes and thirty sets of clothes

"30 linen robes and 30 sets of clothes"

linen

a type of cloth

Judges 14:13

But if you cannot tell me

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the guests at the feast.

Judges 14:14

General Information:

Samson tells his riddle. Since it is supposed to be hard to understand, do not translate it in a way that people will immediately know what it means.

Out of the eater was something to eat

"Out of the eater came something to eat" or
"Something to eat came out of something that eats"

the eater

The noun "eater" can be expressed as a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "the thing that eats"

out of the strong was something sweet

"out of the strong came something sweet" or
"Something that is sweet came out of something that is strong"

the strong

This refers to something that is strong. Alternate translation: "the strong thing"

his guests

"the men at his feast"

could not find the answer

Here figuring out the answer to the riddle is spoke of as if it were something hidden that the guest had to search for and find. Alternate translation: "could not figure out the answer"

Judges 14:15

the fourth day

"day 4"

Trick

mislead or fool someone into doing something they would not want to do

your father's house

These words could refer to 1) the actual house. Alternate translation: "the house your father and his family live in" Or 2) the people who live in the father's physical house. Alternate translation: "your family"

will burn up

The phrase "burn up" means to burn something completely. If a person is "burnt up," it means that person is burned to death.

Did you invite us here in order to make us poor?

They ask her this question to accuse her of doing evil. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have brought us here to make us poor!"

to make us poor

They would become poor if they had to buy him new clothes if they could not solve the riddle. Alternate translation: "to make us poor by forcing us to buy him new clothes"

Judges 14:16

All you do is hate me! You do not love me

Samson's wife basically said the same thing twice for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You do not really love me at all"

riddle

a game in which the players must discover the answer to a difficult question

Look here

This is used to get someones attention. Here "look" means to "listen." Alternate translation: "Listen to me" or "Pay attention to what I am about to say"

if I have not told my father or my mother, should I tell you?

Samson was rebuking her for demanding that he tell her the answer. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have not even told my father or mother. I will not tell you." or "you should not demand that I tell you, since I have not even told my parents, and they are closer to me than you are."

Judges 14:17

during the seven days that their feast lasted

Possible meanings are 1) "during the seven days of their feast" or 2) "during the rest of the seven days of their feast."

the seventh day

"day 7"

she pressured him very much

Here the word "pressured" means "urged." Alternate translation: "she kept urging him to tell her"

Judges 14:18

the men of the city

This refers to Samson's wife's relatives. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the young men" or "her relatives"

the seventh day

"day 7"

What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?

This is the answer to the riddle. It may be written as a statement instead of as questions. If necessary it could be made clear how this relates to the riddle by adding more information. Alternate translation: "Honey is sweet and a lion is strong." or "Honey is sweet and it came out of a lion."

If you had not plowed with my heifer

Samson compares their using his wife to get the answer to someone using another person's heifer to plow his field. Alternate translation: "If you had not used my wife"

plowed

To plow is to use an animal to pull a blade through soil to prepare the soil for seeds.

Judges 14:19

came on Samson with power

The phrase "came on" means that Yahweh's Spirit influenced Samson. In this case, he made him very strong. Alternate translation: "made Samson very strong" or "made Samson very powerful"

killed thirty of their men

"killed 30 of their men"

their men

"the men who lived there"

plunder

things taken by force, usually after a fight or battle

their clothes

These were from the plunder he had taken from Ashkelon. Alternate translation: "the sets of clothing that he had taken"

Burning with anger

"Very angry"

went up to his father's house

The phrase "went up" is used here because Samson was at Timnah which is lower in elevation than where his father's house is located.

Judges 14:20

Samson's wife was given to his best friend

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his wife's father gave her to his best friend"

best friend

"closest friend"

Chapter 15

¹ After some days, during the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said to himself, "I will go to my wife's room." But her father would not allow him to go in. ² Her father said, "I really thought you hated her, so I gave her to your friend. Her younger sister is more beautiful than she is, is she not? Take her instead." ³ Samson said to them, "This time I will be innocent in regard to the Philistines when I hurt them." ⁴ Samson went and caught three hundred foxes and he tied together each pair, tail to tail. Then he took torches and tied them in the middle of each pair of tails. ⁵ When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and they set fire to both the stacked grain and the grain standing in the field, along with the vineyards and the olive orchards. ⁶ The Philistines asked, "Who did this?" They were told, "Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, did this because the Timnite took Samson's wife and gave her to his friend." Then the Philistines went and burned up her and her father. ⁷ Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I will get my revenge against you, and after that is done, I will stop." ⁸ Then he cut them to pieces, hip and thigh, with a great slaughter. Then he went down and lived in a cave in the cliff of Etam.

⁹ Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and spread out in Lehi. ¹⁰ The men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They said, "We have come up so we may capture Samson, and do to him as he has done to us." ¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cave in the cliff of Etam, and they said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this you have done to us?" Samson said to them, "They did to me, and so I have done to them." ¹² They said to Samson, "We have come down to tie you up and give you into the hands of the Philistines." Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves." ¹³ They said to him, "No, we will only tie you with ropes and hand you over to them. We promise we will not kill you." Then they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting as they met him. Then Yahweh's Spirit came on him with power. The ropes on his arms became like burnt flax, and they fell off his hands. ¹⁵ Samson found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and he picked it up and killed a thousand men with it. ¹⁶ Samson said,

"With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps,
with the jawbone of a donkey I have killed a thousand men."

¹⁷ When Samson finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone, and he called the place Ramath Lehi. ¹⁸ Samson was very thirsty and called on Yahweh and said, "You have given this great victory to your servant. But now will I die of thirst and fall into the hands of those who are uncircumcised?" ¹⁹ God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi and water came out. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. So he called the name of that place En Hakkore, and it is at Lehi to this day. ²⁰ Samson judged Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years.

Judges 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Samson continues in this 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 15:16.

Special concepts in this chapter

Samson's strength

The Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon Samson. This meant God gave Samson extraordinary strength. Samson's power is the power of Yahweh himself and he enacted the judgment of God on the Philistines. (See: holyspirit and judge)

Judges 15:1

He said to himself

This refers to thinking. Alternate translation: "He thought to himself"

I will go to my wife's room

Samson intended to sleep with his wife. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will go to my wife's room, so we may sleep together"

would not allow him to go in

The phrase "her room" is understood from what Samson said to himself. It can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "would not permit him to go into her room"

Judges 15:2

so I gave her to your friend

This means that he gave her to be his friend's wife. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "so I gave her to be married to your friend"

is she not?

He asks this question to imply that Samson should agree with him. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "I hope you agree."

Take her instead

He is suggesting that Samson take her as his wife. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Take her to be your wife instead"

Judges 15:3

I will be innocent in regard to the Philistines when I hurt them

Samson thinks that he will be innocent if he attacks the Philistines because they wronged him. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will be innocent if I hurt the Philistines because they have wronged me"

Judges 15:4

three hundred foxes

"300 foxes"

foxes

Foxes are animals like dogs that have long tails and that eat nesting birds and other small animals.

each pair

a pair is two of anything, such as two foxes, or two tails

tail to tail

"by their tails"

torches

A torch is a stick of wood with something flammable attached to one end; a torch is often used to light other things or to be carried for light.

Judges 15:5

standing grain

grain that is still growing on its stalk in the field

stacked grain

the stalks of grain collected in piles after it has been harvested

orchards

An orchard is a place where fruit trees are grown.

Judges 15:6

the Timnite's son-in-law

The husband of a man's daughter is a "son-in-law."

Timnite

This is a person from Timnah.

took Samson's wife and gave her to his friend

Samson's wife's father gave her in marriage to Samson's friend. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "took Samson's wife and allowed her to marry Samson's friend"

burned up

The phrase "burned up" means to burn something completely. If a person is "burned up," it means that person is burned to death.

Judges 15:7

said to them

"said to the Philistines"

If this is what you do

"Because you have done this."

Judges 15:8

he cut them to pieces, hip and thigh

Here "hip and thigh" refers to the whole body. This is a graphic description of how Samson killed the Philistines. Alternate translation: "He cut their bodies to pieces"

he went down

Here the phrase "went down" does not likely mean that he changed elevation, but rather, it is a way to describe someone going to another place. Alternate translation: "he went"

cave

an opening in a hill or mountainside

cliff

a high, rocky hill or mountainside

Etam

This is the name of the rocky hill country near Jerusalem.

Judges 15:9

the Philistines came up ... in Judah

The phrase "came up" is used here because Judah is higher in elevation than Philistia.

encamped in Judah

They set up their tents in Judah. This synecdoche means that they prepared to make war against Judah. Alternate translation: "prepared to make war against Judah"

spread out

moved apart from each other so they could control as much land as possible

Lehi

This is the name of a town in Judah.

Judges 15:10

have you come up against

Possible meanings are 1) "have you come up to attack" (see [verse 9](#)) or 2) "are you attacking."

We have come up

Possible meanings are 1) "We have come up" (see [verse 9](#)) or 2) "We are attacking you."

do to him as he has done to us

The Philistines are comparing how they want to kill Samson to how he killed many of the Philistines. Alternate translation: "kill him like he killed many of our people"

Judges 15:11

three thousand men of Judah

"3,000 men of Judah"

cave in the cliff of Etam

See how you translated this phrase in Judges 15:8.

Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this you have done to us?

The men of Judah ask Samson these questions to rebuke him. This questions may be written as a statements. Alternate translation: "You know that the Philistines are rulers over us but you act like they are not. What you have done has caused us great harm."

They did to me, and so I have done to them

Samson is referring to how they killed his wife and how he killed them in revenge. This can be stated

clearly. Alternate translation: "They killed my wife, so I killed them"

Judges 15:12

the hands of the Philistines

Here "hands" refers to power. Alternate translation: "the Philistine's control"

Judges 15:13

hand you over to them

This means to cause someone to be under someone else's control. Alternate translation: "give you to the Philistines"

up from the rock

This refers to the cave in the cliff of Etam where Samson had gone in [Judges 15:8]

Judges 15:14

When he came

Samson was not travelling alone, he was being led by the men who had tied him with ropes. Alternate translation: "When they came"

Lehi

This is the name of a town in Judah. See how you translated this in Judges 15:9.

came on him with power

The phrase "came on" means that Yahweh's Spirit influenced Samson. In this case, he made him very strong. Alternate translation: "made Samson very strong"

The ropes on his arms became like burnt flax

Samson easily broken the ropes that bound his hands. The author describes how easily he broke the ropes by saying it was as if they had become burnt flax. Alternate translation: "He snapped the ropes on his arms as easily as if they had been stalks of burned flax"

flax

fibers from the flax plant used for making threads and cloth

Judges 15:15

a fresh jawbone

This means that the donkey had died very recently and its bones had not yet begun to decay. A jawbone is the bone in which the lower rows of teeth are set.

a thousand men

"1,000 men"

Judges 15:16

the jawbone of a donkey
"a donkey's jawbone"

heaps upon heaps

This phrase describes how many people Samson killed. There were enough bodies to make large piles of bodies. Alternate translation: "I have made heaps of dead bodies"

Judges 15:17

Ramath Lehi
This is the name of a place. It's name means "Jawbone Hill"

Judges 15:18

was very thirsty
"needed water to drink"

But now will I die of thirst and fall into ... uncircumcised?

Possible meanings are 1) Samson is so thirsty he could literally die. Alternate translation: "But now I will die of thirst and my body will fall into ... uncircumcised." or 2) Samson exaggerates how thirsty he is by asking if he will die of thirst. Alternate translation: "But now will you allow me to become so weak from my thirst that I fall into ... uncircumcised?"

die of thirst

This means to die because you have not drank enough and therefore, you do not have enough water in your body.

fall into the hands of those who are uncircumcised
The phrase "fall into the hands" means to be captured. "Those who are uncircumcised" refers to

the Philistines and with the word "uncircumcised" emphasizing that they do not worship Yahweh. Alternate translation: "be captured by those godless Philistines"

Judges 15:19

split open the hollow place

"opened a hole in the ground" or "opened the low place." This refers to a low area of ground where Yahweh caused a spring of water to appear.

Lehi

See how you translated this in Judges 15:9

his strength returned and he revived

These two phrase mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Samson became strong again. These two statements can be combined. Alternate translation: "he became strong again" or "he was revived"

En Hakkore

This is the name of a spring of water. The name means "spring of him who prayed."

it is at Lehi to this day

This means that the spring did not dry up but that it remained. The phrase "to this day" refers to the "present" time. Alternate translation: "the spring can still be found at Lehi, even today"

Judges 15:20

in the days of the Philistines

This refers to the time period that the Philistines controlled the land of Israel. Alternate translation: "during the time the Philistines controlled Israel"

for twenty years
"for 20 years"

Chapter 16

¹ Samson went to Gaza and saw a prostitute there, and he went to her. ² The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." The Gazites surrounded the place and in secret, they waited for him all night at the city gate. They kept silent all night. They had said, "Let us wait until daylight, and then let us kill him." ³ Samson lay in bed until midnight. At midnight he got up and he took hold of the city gate and its two posts. He pulled them up out of the ground, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the hill, in front of Hebron.

⁴ After this, Samson came to love a woman who lived in the Valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah. ⁵ The rulers of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, "Trick Samson to see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him in order to humiliate him. Do this, and each one of us will give you 1,100 pieces of silver." ⁶ Then Delilah said to Samson, "Please, tell me how is it that you are so strong, and how could anyone bind you, so you might be controlled?" ⁷ Samson said to her, "If they tie me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any other man." ⁸ Then the rulers of the Philistines brought up to Delilah seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she tied Samson up with them. ⁹ Now she had men hiding in secret, staying in her inner room. She said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings like a thread of yarn when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "This is how you have deceived me and told me lies. Please, tell me how you can be overpowered." ¹¹ He said to her, "If they tie me up with new ropes which have never been used for work, I will become weak and like any other man." ¹² So Delilah took new ropes and tied him up with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" The men lying in wait were in the inner room. But Samson tore off the ropes from his arms like they were a piece of thread.

¹³ Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have deceived me and told me lies. Tell me how you may be overpowered." Samson said to her, "If you weave seven locks of my hair into a fabric on a loom, and then nail that to the loom, I will be like any other man." ¹⁴ While he slept, Delilah wove seven locks of his hair into the fabric on the loom and nailed it to the loom, and she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" He woke from his sleep and he pulled out the fabric and the pin from the loom.

¹⁵ She said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you do not share your secrets with me? You have mocked me these three times and have not told me how you have such great strength." ¹⁶ Every day she pressed him hard with her words, and she pressured him so much that he wished he would die. ¹⁷ So Samson told her everything and said to her, "I have never had a razor cut the hair on my head, for I have been a Nazirite for God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like every other man."

¹⁸ When Delilah saw that he had told her the truth about everything, she sent and called for the rulers of the Philistines, saying, "Come up again, for he has told me everything." Then the rulers of the Philistines went up to her, bringing the silver in their hands. ¹⁹ She had him fall asleep in her lap. She called for a man to shave off the seven locks of his head, and she began to subdue him, for his strength had left him. ²⁰ She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" He woke up out of his sleep and said, "I will get out like the other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that Yahweh had left him. ²¹ The Philistines captured him and put out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. He turned the millstone at the prison house. ²² But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

²³ The rulers of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. They said, "Our god has conquered Samson, our enemy, and put him in our hands." ²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has conquered our enemy and given him to us—the destroyer of our country, who killed many of us."

²⁵ When they were celebrating, they said, "Call for Samson, that he may make us laugh." They called for Samson out of the prison and he made them laugh. They made him stand between the pillars. ²⁶ Samson said to the boy who held his hand, "Permit me to touch the pillars on which the building rests, so that I can lean against them." ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women. All the rulers of the Philistines

were there. There were on the roof about three thousand men and women, who were looking on while Samson was entertaining them.

28 Samson called to Yahweh and said, "Lord Yahweh, call me to mind! Please strengthen me only this once, God, so that I may have revenge in one blow on the Philistines for taking my two eyes." **29** Samson held on to the two middle pillars on which the building rested, and he leaned against them, one pillar with his right hand, and the other with his left. **30** Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He stretched out with his strength and the building fell on the rulers and on all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed when he died were more than those he killed during his life. **31** Then his brothers and all the house of his father came down. They took him, brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burial place of Manoah, his father. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

Judges 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The account of Samson concludes in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Samson's mistake

Samson mistakenly thought that he was the source of his strength. He did not realize that Yahweh had left him and without Yahweh, he had no strength. This was not Samson's only mistake. His foreign wife created most of his problems.

Judges 16:1

he went to her

This is a polite way of saying that he had sexual relations with her. Alternate translation: he had sexual relations with her" or "he lay with her"

Judges 16:2

The Gazites were told

The word "Gazites" refers to people from Gaza. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told the people of Gaza"

The Gazites surrounded the place ... they waited for him all night at the city gate

This implies that some Gazites surrounded the place where Samson was staying and others waited at the city gate so that he could not leave.

They kept silent all night

Possible meanings are 1) "They did not make any noise all night" or 2) "They made no attempt to attack him all night."

Judges 16:3

until midnight

"until the middle of the night"

its two posts

These are supports for the city gate. These posts were probably made from tree trunks and were buried deep into the ground. The doors of the city gate were attached to these posts.

bar and all

The bar was probably a heavy rod of iron that connected the gate to the posts. The doors of the city gate were probably made of heavy wooden beams or iron bars.

shoulders

the part of the human body where the arms and the neck attach to the body

Hebron

This is the name of a city.

Judges 16:4

Valley of Sorek

This is the name of a valley near Samson's home.

Judges 16:5

Trick

to mislead or fool someone into doing something they would not want to do

to see

This is an idiom that means to learn something. Alternate translation: "to understand" or "to learn"

where his great strength lies

This is an idiom that refers to where his strength comes from. Alternate translation: "what causes him to be very strong"

by what means we may overpower him

"how we might overpower him"

1,100 pieces of silver

"one thousand one hundred pieces of silver."

Judges 16:6

bind you, so you might be controlled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "bind you to control you" or "bind you to restrain you"

Judges 16:7

fresh bowstrings

Bowstrings were often made from parts of an animal, often from the tendons. The words "fresh bowstrings" refer to those that come from a freshly slaughtered animal that have not yet dried.

that have not been dried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that have not yet dried" or "that are not dry yet"

Judges 16:8

that had not been dried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that had not yet dried" or "that were not dry yet"

she tied Samson up with them

"Delilah tied Samson up with the fresh bowstrings"

Judges 16:9

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the author tells background information about Philistine men that Delilah had waiting to capture Samson.

The Philistines are upon you

The phrase "upon you" means that they are ready to capture him. Alternate translation: "The Philistines are here to capture you"

he broke the bowstrings like a thread of yarn when it touches the fire

The author describes how easily he broke the bowstrings by comparing them to how yarn breaks when it is burned. Alternate translation: "he broke the bowstrings as easily as if he were breaking burned yarn" or "he broke the bowstrings as easily as if they were made of thin yarn"

Judges 16:10

This is how you have deceived me and told me lies.

Deceiving and lying mean the same thing and are stated to emphasize how angry Delilah felt. Alternate translation: "You have greatly deceived me!"

you can be overpowered

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

Judges 16:11

General Information:

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Judges 16:12

The Philistines are upon you

The phrase "upon you" means that they are there to capture him. Alternate translation: "The Philistines are here to capture you"

lying in wait

This means that they were hiding and waiting for the right moment to attack. Alternate translation: "waiting to attack him"

like they were a piece of thread

The author describes how easily Samson broke the ropes by comparing it to him breaking a piece of thread. Alternate translation: "as easily as if they were only a piece of thread"

Judges 16:13

you have deceived me and told me lies

Deceiving and lying mean the same thing and are stated to emphasize how angry Delilah felt. Alternate translation: "you have greatly deceived me"

you may be overpowered

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

weave

crossing pieces of material together so they hold each other in place

locks of my hair

small bunches of hair

fabric

cloth made from weaving material together

loom

a machine used for combining many threads of material into a cloth

then nail that to the loom

"then nail the fabric to the loom"

nail

to hammer a nail in order to hold something in one place

I will be like any other man

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I will be as weak as any other man"

Judges 16:14

The Philistines are upon you

The phrase "upon you" means that they are there to capture him. Alternate translation: "The Philistines are here to capture you"

he pulled out the fabric and the pin from the loom

Samson pulled out the fabric from the loom when he pulled his hair away from the loom. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "pulled away his hair, taking with it the pin of the loom and the fabric in the loom"

the pin

This is the wooden nail or peg used to fasten the fabric to the loom.

Judges 16:15

How can you say, 'I love you,' when you do not share your secrets with me?

Delilah asks this question to say that if Samson really loved her he would tell her his secrets. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "When you say 'I love you,' you are lying because you do not share your secrets with me."

Judges 16:16

pressed him hard ... pressured him

Here the author speaks of how Delilah tries to persuade Samson as if she were putting pressure on him to convince him to tell her what she wants to know. Alternate translation: "tried hard to persuade him ... kept trying to persuade him"

with her words

"by what she said to him"

that he wished he would die

The author used a hyperbole, an exaggeration, to emphasize how miserable Sampson felt. Alternate translation: "that he was completely miserable" or "that he was very unhappy"

Judges 16:17

told her everything

everything about the source of his strength. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "told her the source of his strength" or "told her the truth"

razor

a sharp blade used to cut hair close to a person's skin

a Nazirite for God

This means that he is devoted to God as a Nazirite. See how you translated a similar phrase in Judges 13:5. Alternate translation: "a Nazirite devoted to God" or "devoted to God as a Nazirite"

from my mother's womb

Here "from my mother's womb" refers to when he was born. This means that he has been a Nazirite since he was born. Alternate translation: "my entire life"

If my head is shaved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If someone shaves my head"

shaved

to have had the hair cut close to the skin with a razor

my strength will leave me

Samson speaks about his strength as if it were a person who could leave him. Alternate translation: "I will not be strong any more"

Judges 16:18

Delilah saw

Here the word "saw" is an idiom that means to realize something. Alternate translation: "Delilah realized" or "Delilah learned"

the truth about everything

Here the word "everything" refers to everything about why Samson was strong. Alternate translation: "the truth about why he is strong"

Come up again

Delilah is telling the rulers to come again to where she lives. Her home is likely at a higher elevation than where the rulers would be travelling from.

bringing the silver in their hands

This means that they brought to her the silver that they had promised to give her if she helped them capture Samson. Alternate translation: "bringing the silver that they had promised to give her"

Judges 16:19

She had him fall asleep

"She caused him to fall asleep"

in her lap

This means that he slept with his head on her lap. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "with his head on her lap"

lap

The lap is the level area of the upper legs when a person is sitting down.

the seven locks of his head

Samson had seven locks of hair on his head. Locks are small bunches of hair. Here his locks of hair are described as "belonging" to his head. Alternate translation: "the seven locks of hair on his head"

subdue him

"control him"

his strength had left him

Here Samson's strength is described as if it were a person who could leave him. Alternate translation: "his strength was gone" or "he was no longer strong"

Judges 16:20

The Philistines are upon you

The phrase "upon you" means that they are ready to capture him. Alternate translation: "The Philistines are here to capture you"

woke up

"awakened"

get out

"escape"

But he did not know that Yahweh had left him

It is implied that if Yahweh left Samson, he would no longer be strong. Alternate translation: "But he did not know that Yahweh had left him and that he would not be strong enough to defeat the Philistines"

Judges 16:21

put out his eyes

This means that they removed his eyes from his head. Alternate translation: "removed his eyes"

down to Gaza

The phrase "down to" is used here because they brought Samson to Gaza which is lower in elevation than his home where they captured him.

bound him with bronze shackles

"chained him with bronze shackles" or "tied him up using bronze shackles"

shackles

locks on the end of chains that hold a prisoner at his feet or hands, or both

turned the millstone

"pulled the millstone around in a circle"

millstone

This is a very large, heavy, circular stone. Normally, a large animal pulls the millstone around in a circle to crush grain. Here the Philistines humiliate Samson by making him pull it.

Judges 16:22

after it had been shaved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after the Philistines had shaved it"

Judges 16:23

Dagon

a major false god of the Philistines

has conquered

"has defeated"

put him in our hands

Here the word "hands" is a metaphor for the rulers' power. Alternate translation: "put him under our control"

Judges 16:24

the destroyer of our country

This refers to Samson. The word "destroyer" can be expressed with the verb "destroy." Alternate translation: "the man who has destroyed our country"

who killed many of us

Here the word "us" refers to the Philistine people. Those who are talking are not counting themselves among the people whom Samson killed. Alternate translation: "who killed many of our people"

Judges 16:25

Call for Samson ... They called for Samson

Since Samson was a prisoner, he would not be called directly, but rather the people were asking for the men in charge of the prison to bring him to them. Alternate translation: "Call for them to bring out Samson ... They brought Samson"

Judges 16:26

the boy

"the young man" This was not a young child, but rather a youth.

Permit me to touch the pillars on which the building rests

"Allow me to touch the pillars which hold up the building"

Judges 16:27

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story while the writer tells background information.

three thousand men and women

"3,000 men and women"

looking on
"watching"

while Samson was entertaining them
It is unclear what Samson did to entertain them. It seems the Philistines were making him do things that would humiliate him so that they could make fun of him.

Judges 16:28

called to Yahweh
"prayed to Yahweh"

call me to mind
This means to remember him and his situation.
Alternate translation: "remember me"

only this once
"one more time"

in one blow on the Philistines
This idiom means that he wants to have one more powerful act against the Philistines to get full revenge for what they did to him. Alternate translation: "with one strike against the Philistine" or "in one powerful act against the Philistines"

Judges 16:29

on which the building rested
"which held up the building"

Judges 16:30

He stretched out with his strength
When Samson stretched out his arms he pushed down the pillars of the building. Alternate

translation: "He used his strength to push down the pillars" or "He used his strength to push over the pillars"

the dead
This refers to people who are dead. Alternate translation: "the dead people"

were more
"were a greater amount"

Judges 16:31

all the house of his father
Here the word "house" refers to his family.
Alternate translation: "all of his father's family"

came down
The phrase "came down" is used here because the place that Samson's family traveled from was higher in elevation than Gaza.

Zorah ... Eshtaol
See how you translated the names of these places in Judges 13:2 and Judges 13:25.

in the burial place of Manoah, his father
"where his father, Manoah, is buried"

Manoah
See how you translated this man's name in [Judges 13:2]

Samson had judged Israel for twenty years
This same sentence is also in [Judges 15:20]

twenty years
"20 years"

Chapter 17

¹ There was a man in the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Micah. ² He said to his mother, "The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you spoke a curse, and which I heard—look here! I have the silver with me. I stole it." His mother said, "May Yahweh bless you, my son!" ³ He restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother and his mother said, "I set apart this silver to Yahweh, for my son to make a carved image and a cast metal figure. So now, I restore it to you." ⁴ When he restored the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to a metal worker who made them into a carved image and a cast metal figure, and they were placed in the house of Micah. ⁵ The man Micah had a house of idols and he made an ephod and household gods, and he hired one of his sons to become his priest. ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

⁷ Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the clan of Judah, who was a Levite. He stayed there to fulfill his duties. ⁸ The man left Bethlehem in Judah to go and find a place to live. As he journeyed, he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. ⁹ Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?" The man said to him, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am traveling to find a place where I might live." ¹⁰ Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest. I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your food." So the Levite went into his house. ¹¹ The Levite was content to live with the man, and the young man became to Micah like one of his sons. ¹² Micah set apart the Levite for sacred duties, and the young man became his priest, and was in Micah's house. ¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that Yahweh will do good for me, because this Levite has become my priest."

Judges 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a section explaining how Israel came to have a king.

Special concepts in this chapter

Idols and figures

According to the law of Moses, the Israelites were prohibited from making wooden figures or cast metal idols. This was a form of idolatry. This practice was common in Canaan and it shows the influence the Israelites allowed these people to have on them. (See: lawofmoses)

Judges 17:1

There was a man

This is a way to introduce a new person to the story.

Micah

This is the name of a man. It is not the same man who wrote the book of Micah.

Judges 17:2

1,100 pieces

"one thousand one hundred pieces"

that were taken from you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone stole from you"

I stole it

"I was the one who took it"

Judges 17:3

1,100 pieces

"one thousand one hundred"

set apart

This means to dedicate something to a specific purpose. Alternate translation: "dedicate"

cast metal

metal that has been melted and poured into a mold to form a special shape

I restore it to you

"I give it back to you"

Judges 17:4

two hundred pieces of silver

"200 pieces of silver"

they were placed in the house of Micah

The word "they" refers to the metal figures. This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Micah placed them in his house"

Judges 17:5

a house of idols

This refers to a house used specifically for worshiping idols. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "a house for worshiping idols"

Judges 17:6

everyone did what was right in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "each person did what he decided was right" or "each person did what he judged to be right"

Judges 17:7

of Bethlehem

"from Bethlehem"

of the clan of Judah

This means that he was living among the family of Judah, that is, the tribe of Judah. Alternate translation: "who was living among the tribe of Judah"

He stayed there to fulfill his duties

"He lived and worked there"

Judges 17:8

find a place to live

"find a different place to live"

Judges 17:9

where I might live

It is implied that he is looking for a place to live and work. Alternate translation: "where I might live and have a job"

Judges 17:10

a father and a priest

The word "father" is here used in the sense of an advisor, and not to a literal father. Alternate translation: "an advisor and a priest"

I will give you ten pieces of silver a year

"I will give you ten pieces of silver each year"

a suit of clothes

"a set of clothes"

So the Levite went into his house

It is implied that the Levite accepted Micah's offer, and therefore, entered Micah's house. Alternate translation: "So the Levite accepted his offer and went into his house"

Judges 17:11

the young man became to Micah like one of his sons

The relationship between the Levite and Micah became like the close relationship between a father and son. Alternate translation: "the young man became close to Micah and was like one of his sons"

Judges 17:12

Micah set apart the Levite

Here "set apart" means that Micah "dedicated" or "ordained" him. Alternate translation: "Micah dedicated the Levite"

was in Micah's house

Here living in Micah's house is spoken of as "being" in his house. Alternate translation: "lived in Micah's house"

Judges 17:13

General Information:

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Chapter 18

¹ In those days there was no king in Israel. The tribe of the descendants of Dan was looking for a territory to live in, for up to that day they had not received any inheritance from among the tribes of Israel. ² The people of Dan sent five men from the whole number of their tribe, men who were experienced warriors from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to scout the land on foot, and to look it over. They said to them, "Go and look over the land." They came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and they spent the night there. ³ When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the speech of the young Levite. So they stopped and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?" ⁴ He said to them, "This is what Micah has done for me: He has hired me to become his priest." ⁵ They said to him, "Please seek the advice of God, so we may know whether the journey we are going on will be successful." ⁶ The priest said to them, "Go in peace. Yahweh will lead you in the way you should go."

⁷ Then the five men left and came to Laish, and they saw that the people were living in safety, in the same way the Sidonians lived, undisturbed and secure. There was no one who conquered them or who oppressed them in any way in the land. They lived far away from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone. ⁸ They returned to their tribe in Zorah and Eshtaol. Their relatives asked them, "What is your report?" ⁹ They said, "Come! Let us attack them! We have seen the land and it is very good. Are you doing nothing? Do not be slow to attack and conquer the land." ¹⁰ When you go, you will come to a secure people, and the land is wide! God has given it to you—a place that does not lack anything in the land."

¹¹ Six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. ¹² They went up and camped at Kiriath Jearim, in Judah. This is why people called that place Mahaneh Dan to this day; it is west of Kiriath Jearim. ¹³ They went away from there to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to scout the country of Laish said to their relatives, "Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod, household gods, a carved image, and a cast metal figure? Decide now what you will do." ¹⁵ So they turned in there and came to the house of the young man, the Levite, at the house of Micah, and they greeted him. ¹⁶ Now the six hundred Danites, armed with weapons of war, stood at the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷ The five men who had gone to scout out the land went there and they took the carved figure, the ephod, the household gods, and the cast metal figure, while the priest stood by the opening of the gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war. ¹⁸ When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the cast metal figure, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" ¹⁹ They said to him, "Be quiet! Put your hand on your mouth and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest for the house of one man, or to be priest for a tribe and a clan in Israel?" ²⁰ The priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod, the household gods, and the carved figure, and went along with the people.

²¹ So they turned and went away, putting the little children, their livestock and their valuable possessions in front of them. ²² When they were a good distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called together, and they caught up with the Danites. ²³ They shouted to the Danites, and they turned and said to Micah, "Why have you been called together?" ²⁴ He said, "You stole the gods that I made, you have taken my priest, and you are leaving. What else do I have left? How can you ask me, 'What is bothering you?'" ²⁵ The people of Dan said to him, "You should not let us hear you say anything, or some very angry men will attack you, and you and your family will be killed." ²⁶ Then the people of Dan went their way. When Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

²⁷ The people of Dan took what Micah had made, as well as his priest, and they came to Laish, to a people who were undisturbed and secure and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city.

²⁸ There was no one to rescue them because it was a long way from Sidon, and they had no dealings with anyone. It was in the valley that is near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and lived there. ²⁹ They named the city Dan, the name of Dan their ancestor, who was one of Israel's sons. But the name of the city used to be Laish. ³⁰ The people of Dan set up the carved figure for themselves. Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses, he and his sons were priests for the tribe of the Danites until the day of the land's

captivity.³¹ So they worshiped Micah's carved figure that he made as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.

Judges 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tribe of Dan

The tribe of Dan lacked faith in Yahweh and had yet to conquer its inheritance. In this chapter, they begin to conquer their land, but they also started to worship an idol. Their conquering of the land is much different than the other tribes' victories. (See: faith and inherit)

Judges 18:1

In those days

This phrase introduces the beginning of another event in the story.

In those days ... from among the tribes of Israel

This is background information about Israel and the people of the tribe of Dan.

not received any inheritance from

This refers specifically to land inherited where they would live. Alternate translation: "not received a land inheritance from"

Judges 18:2

from the whole number of their tribe

The phrase "the whole number" refers to all of the men in the tribe. Alternate translation: "from among all of the men in their tribe"

experienced warriors

"experienced fighters"

Zorah

See how you translated the name of this town in Judges 13:2.

Eshtaol

See how you translated the name of this town in Judges 13:25.

to scout the land on foot

The phrase "on foot" means to walk. Alternate translation: "to scout the land by walking through it"

Micah

See how you translated this man's name in Judges 17:1.

Judges 18:3

they recognized the speech of the young Levite

They recognized the man by the sound of his voice. Here "speech" refers to his "voice." Alternate

translation: "they heard the young Levite talking, and they recognized his voice"

Judges 18:4

General Information:

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Judges 18:5

General Information:

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Judges 18:6

General Information:

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Judges 18:7

Laish

This is the name of a city.

There was no one who conquered

"There were no enemies living in their land who had conquered them"

had no dealings with anyone

"had no contact with any outsiders." This means they lived far enough away from any other city that they lived secluded from other people.

Judges 18:8

Zorah

Translate the name of this city the same as you did in Judges 13:2.

Eshtaol

Translate the name of this city the same as you did in Judges 13:25.

Judges 18:9

Are you doing nothing?

This rhetorical question is asked sarcastically and means that they should be doing the opposite. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should be acting now!"

Do not be slow to attack
"Hurry! Attack"

Judges 18:10

a secure people
"a people who think they are secure" "people who are not afraid that anyone will attack them"

the land is wide
"the land is large." This is a description of the size of the land.

that does not lack anything in the land
The men use a hyperbole, an exaggeration, to emphasize that it is a very desirable place to live. Alternate translation: "where we will have everything there that we need"

that does not lack anything
"that has everything"

Judges 18:11

Six hundred men
"600 men"

Judges 18:12

Kiriath Jearim
This is the name of a town.

Mahaneh Dan
Translate the name of this place the same as you did in Judges 13:25.

to this day
This means that something remains the same. It refers to the "present" time. Alternate translation: "and that is still its name"

Judges 18:13

General Information:
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Judges 18:14

Laish
Translate the name of this town the same as you did in Judges 18:7.

in these houses there are an ephod, ... metal figure?
Decide ... will do
The five men asked this question to suggest and encourage the men that they should steal the idols. This can be written as a statement, and the implied information may be given in a parenthetical phrase. Alternate translation: "these houses contain an ephod, ... metal figure."

in these houses there are
"in one of these house there is" or "among these houses is"

Judges 18:15

they turned in there
"they turned"

they greeted him
The word "him" refers to the Levite.

Judges 18:16

six hundred Danites
"600 Danites"

Judges 18:17

six hundred men
"600 men"

Judges 18:18

General Information:
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Judges 18:19

Is it better for you to be priest for the house of one man ... a clan in Israel?

They ask this as a rhetorical question to imply that it is true. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is better for you to be priest for a tribe and a clan in Israel than for just the house of one man."

Judges 18:20

The priest's heart was glad
Here the priest is referred to by his "heart" to emphasize his emotions. Alternate translation: "The priest was glad"

Judges 18:21

putting the little children, their livestock and their valuable possessions in front of them
They traveled this way to protect the children. If Micah and his people attacked them they would reach the warriors first and not the children. Alternate translation: "putting the little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them to protect them"

they turned
"the Danites turned around"

Judges 18:22

a good distance

"some distance." This refers a short distance but one that is long enough to be considered as measurable progress.

the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he called together the men who were in the houses near his house"

they caught up with the Danites

This implies that they ran after them. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "running after the Danites, they caught up with them"

Judges 18:23

Why have you been called together?

This question is a rebuke. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have called your men together to chase us."

been called together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "called these men together"

Judges 18:24

the gods that I made

Micah did not make his gods; rather, the craftsman made them. Alternate translation: "the gods which I had made for me" or "the gods which a craftsman made for me"

What else do I have left?

Micah asks this question to emphasize that he no longer has the things that are important to him. Alternate translation: "I have nothing left." or "You have taken everything that is important to me."

How can you ask me, 'What is bothering you?'

Micah asks this question to emphasize that the Danites definitely know what is bothering him. Alternate translation: "You know that I am greatly distressed!" or "You know how much I am bothered by what you have done to me!"

Judges 18:25

let us hear you say anything

The phrase "us hear you say" refers to the Danites hearing Micah speaking about what had happened, but it also includes if they are told by others that Micah had spoken about what had happened. Alternate translation: "let us find out that you have said anything" or "say anything about this"

hear you say anything

The word "anything" refers to any information about the Danites coming to Micah's house and

stealing his idols. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "hear you say anything about this matter" or "hear you say anything about what has happened"

you and your family will be killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "kill you and your family"

Judges 18:26

went their way

This means that they continued on their journey. Alternate translation: "continued on their journey" or "continued travelling"

they were too strong for him

This refers to the Danites being too strong for Micah and his men to fight against. Alternate translation: "they were too strong for him and his men to fight"

Judges 18:27

what Micah had made

Micah did not make his gods, rather a craftsman made them for him. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that had been made for Micah" or "Micah's things"

Laish

See how you translated this in Judges 18:7.

with the edge of the sword

"with their swords." Here "the sword" represents the swords and other weapons that the soldiers used in battle.

Judges 18:28

they had no dealings with anyone

this means they lived far enough away from any other city, that they lived secluded from other people. See how you translated this phrase in Judges 18:7.

Beth Rehob

This is a name of a town.

Judges 18:29

General Information:

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Judges 18:30

Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses

This is the name of the young Levite who used to serve as priest for Micah. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "The young Levite's name was Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses"

until the day of the land's captivity

This refers to a time later on when the people of Dan would be captured by their enemies. Here the land being conquered is spoken of as if it were a prisoner taken captive by an enemy. Alternate translation: "until the day that their enemies conquered their land" or "until the day that their enemies took them captive"

Judges 18:31

that he made

Micah did not make his gods, rather the craftsman made them for him. Alternate translation: "that had been made for him" or "that his craftsman made for him"

Chapter 19

¹ In those days, when there was no king in Israel, there was a man, a Levite, living for a while in the most remote area of the hill country of Ephraim. He took for himself a woman, a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. ² But his concubine acted like a prostitute against him; she left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem of Judah. She stayed there for four months. ³ Then her husband got up and went after her in order to persuade her to come back. His servant was with him, and a yoke of donkeys. She brought him into her father's house. When the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him. ⁴ His father-in-law, the girl's father, persuaded him to stay for three days. They ate and drank, and they spent the night there. ⁵ On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to go, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Strengthen yourself with a bit of bread, then you may go." ⁶ So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Then the girl's father said, "Please be willing to spend the night and have a good time." ⁷ When the Levite got up to leave, the father of the young woman urged him to stay, so he changed his plan and spent the night there again. ⁸ On the fifth day he woke up early to leave, but the girl's father said, "Strengthen yourself, and wait until the afternoon." So the two of them had a meal. ⁹ When the Levite and his concubine and his servant rose up to depart, his father-in-law, the girl's father said to him, "See now, the day is advancing toward evening. Please stay another night, and have a good time. You can get up early tomorrow and go back home."

¹⁰ But the Levite was not willing to spend the night. He got up and left. He went toward Jebus (that is Jerusalem). He had a pair of saddled donkeys—and his concubine was with him. ¹¹ When they were near Jebus, the day was nearly over, and the servant said to his master, "Come, let us turn aside to the city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it." ¹² His master said to him, "We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners who do not belong to the people of Israel. We will go on to Gibeah." ¹³ The Levite said to his young man, "Come, let us go to one of those other places, and spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah." ¹⁴ So they went on, and the sun set as they came near to Gibeah, in the territory of Benjamin. ¹⁵ They turned aside there to spend the night in Gibeah. They went and sat down in the city square, but no one took them into his house for the night.

¹⁶ But then an old man was coming from his work in the field that evening. He was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was staying for a while in Gibeah. But the men living in that place were Benjamites. ¹⁷ He raised his eyes and saw the traveler in the city square. The old man said, "Where are you going? Where are you coming from?" ¹⁸ The Levite said to him, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to the most remote part of the hill country of Ephraim, which is where I come from. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to the house of Yahweh, but there is no one who will take me into his house. ¹⁹ We have straw and feed for our donkeys, and there is bread and wine for me and your female servant here, and for this young man with your servants. We lack nothing." ²⁰ The old man greeted them, "Peace be with you! I will take care of all your needs. Only do not spend the night in the square." ²¹ So the man brought the Levite into his house and gave feed to the donkeys. They washed their feet and ate and drank.

²² While they were making their hearts glad, some men of the city, worthless men, surrounded the house, beating on the door. They spoke to the old man, the master of the house, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house, so we can know him." ²³ The man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brothers, please do not do this evil thing! Since this man is a guest in my house, do not do this act of disgraceful folly! ²⁴ See, my virgin daughter and his concubine are here. Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them whatever you like. But do not do such an act of disgraceful folly to this man!" ²⁵ But the men would not listen to him, so the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them. They raped her and abused her all throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. ²⁶ At dawn the woman came and she fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, and she lay there until it was light.

²⁷ Her master rose up in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way. He could see his concubine lying there at the door, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ The Levite said to her, "Get up. Let us go." But there was no answer. He put her on the donkey, and the man set out for home. ²⁹ When the Levite came to his house, he took a knife, and he took hold of his concubine, and cut her up, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent the pieces everywhere throughout Israel. ³⁰ All who saw

this said, "Such a thing has never been done or seen from the day the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt to this present day. Think about it! Give us advice! Tell us what to do!"

Judges 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The sin of Benjamin

People from a village of the tribe of Benjamin raped a visitor's wife to death. This was very evil, especially in the ancient Near East. The people of Israel considered mistreatment of a guest one of the worst crimes. (See: and evil)

Judges 19:1

In those days

This phrase introduces the beginning of another event in the story.

remote

far from where most people live

Judges 19:2

acted like a prostitute against him

This means that she was unfaithful in their relationship and that she began to have sexual relations with other men. This can be stated explicitly if necessary. Alternate translation: "began to have sexual relations with other men"

Judges 19:3

His servant was with him, and a yoke of donkeys

"He took with him his servant and two donkeys"

Judges 19:4

His father-in-law, the girl's father, persuaded

"His father-in-law, that is, the girl's father, persuaded" or "The girl's father persuaded"

persuaded him to stay

"spoke to him so he decided to stay"

Judges 19:5

he prepared

the Levite prepared

Strengthen yourself with a bit of bread

Here "bread" refers to "food." Alternate translation: "Eat some food so you will be strong enough to travel"

Judges 19:6

Please be willing to spend the night

"Please stay another night"

Judges 19:7

General Information:

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Judges 19:8

Strengthen yourself, and wait until the afternoon

The father-in-law is suggesting that he strengthen himself by eating. He is also asking him to wait until the afternoon to leave. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Eat some food so you will be strong enough to travel, and wait until afternoon to leave"

Judges 19:9

See now, the day

The phrase "See now" indicates that what follows is a polite request for the hearer to pay attention. "Please listen carefully: the day"

the day is advancing toward evening

"the day is almost over" or "it is almost evening"

Judges 19:10

that is Jerusalem

"which was later called Jerusalem"

Judges 19:11

Come, let us

This is an idiom used to make a suggestion. Alternate translation: "I suggest that we"

turn aside to

This means to take a break from their journey and stop somewhere along the route. Alternate translation: "stop at"

Judges 19:12

turn aside into

This means to take a break from their journey and stop at a place along the route. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Judges 19:11]

Judges 19:13

Come, let us

This is an idiom used to make a suggestion.
Alternate translation: "I suggest that we"

Judges 19:14

General Information:

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Judges 19:15

turned aside

This means to take a break from their journey and stop at a place along the route. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Judges 19:11]

the city square

the marketplace where people gathered during the day

took them into his house

This phrase means for someone to invite them to spend the night in their home. Alternate translation: "invited them to stay in their house for that night"

Judges 19:16

Benjamites

A Benjamite was a descendant of Benjamin. See how you translated the name of this people group in Judges 3:15.

Judges 19:17

He raised his eyes

Here the man looked up and paid attention to what was around him. Alternate translation: "He looked up"

the city square

the marketplace where people gathered during the day. See how you translated this in Judges 19:14.

Judges 19:18

who will take me into his house

This phrase refers to someone inviting other people into his house to spend the night there. Alternate translation: "who has invited me to stay in his house"

will take me

Here the Levite says "me," but he is actually referring to himself along with his servant and his concubine. Alternate translation: "will take us"

Judges 19:19

there is bread and wine

Change to active voice. Alternate translation: "we have plenty of bread and wine"

me and your female servant here, and for this young man with your servants

The Levite speaks of himself and the others as servants and in the third person to show respect. Alternate translation: "me, my concubine, and my servant"

We lack nothing

This can be written as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "We have everything we need"

Judges 19:20

Only do not

"Do not." The word "only" is used here to emphasize what he did not want the Levite to do.

square

This refers to the city square. See how you translated this Judges 19:17.

Judges 19:21

brought the Levite into his house

This means that he invited the Levite to spend the night in his house. Also, by inviting the Levite he was inviting the man's concubine and servant as well. Alternate translation: "invited the Levite and his servants to stay in his house"

Judges 19:22

they were making their hearts glad

The phrase "making their hearts glad" is an idiom that means to have a good time with someone else. Alternate translation: "they were have a good time together" or "they were enjoying themselves"

some men of ... surrounded the house

Some men stood on all sides of the house.

so we can know him

The phrase "know him" is a polite way of saying "have sexual relations with him." The men probably were not trying to be polite.

Judges 19:23

act of disgraceful folly

a senseless, disgraceful act

Judges 19:24

See

This word is used to get the peoples' attention.
Alternate translation: "Listen"

act of disgraceful folly

a senseless, disgraceful act. See how you translated this in Judges 19:23

Judges 19:25

the men would not listen to him

Here the author speaks of "agreeing" as if it were "listening." Alternate translation: "the men would not accept his offer"

the man seized his concubine

there could be confusion as to the identity of the man. Alternate translation: "the Levite seized his concubine"

at dawn

"when the sun was coming up" or "at first light"
This refers to when the sun begins to rise.

Judges 19:26

it was light

This refers to morning when it is bright outside.
Alternate translation: "the sun was fully risen"

Judges 19:27

General Information:

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Judges 19:28

But there was no answer

The woman did not answer because she was dead.
This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But she did not answer because she was dead"

Judges 19:29

limb by limb

"section by section." The author uses this graphic description of how the Levite cut up her body into specific pieces to emphasize what he did. "Limbs" refers to a person's arms and legs. If there is not a similar phrase in your language, this description may be left out of the translation.

twelve pieces

"12 pieces"

sent the pieces everywhere throughout Israel

This means that he sent the different pieces to twelve different areas of Israel. Alternate translation: "sent each piece to a different place throughout Israel"

Judges 19:30

General Information:

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Chapter 20

¹ Then all the people of Israel—from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead also—came out, and the congregation assembled together as one man before Yahweh at Mizpah. ² The leaders of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, took their places in the assembly of the people of God—400,000 footmen ready to fight with the sword. ³ Now the people of Benjamin heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah. The people of Israel said, "Tell us how this wicked thing happened." ⁴ The Levite, the husband of the woman who had been murdered, answered, "I came to Gibeah in the territory that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. ⁵ During the night, the leaders of Gibeah attacked me, surrounding the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. ⁶ I took my concubine and cut her body into pieces, and sent them into each region of Israel's inheritance, because they have committed wickedness and an act of disgraceful folly in Israel. ⁷ Now, all you people of Israel, give your advice and counsel here."

⁸ All the people arose together as one man, and they said, "None of us will go to his tent, and none of us will return to his house! ⁹ But now this is what we must do to Gibeah: We will attack it as the lot directs us. ¹⁰ We will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and one hundred of a thousand, and one thousand of ten thousand, to get provisions for these people, so that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may punish them for the act of disgraceful folly they committed in Israel." ¹¹ So all the men of Israel assembled against the city, united as one man.

¹² The tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this wickedness that was done among you? ¹³ Therefore, give us those wicked men of Gibeah, so we may put them to death, and so we will completely remove this evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to the voice of their brothers, the people of Israel. ¹⁴ Then the sons of Benjamin came together out of the cities to Gibeah to get ready to fight against the sons of Israel. ¹⁵ The people of Benjamin brought together from their cities to fight on that day twenty-six thousand soldiers who were trained to fight with the sword. In addition, there were seven hundred of their chosen men from the inhabitants of Gibeah. ¹⁶ Among all these soldiers were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed. Each of them could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

¹⁷ The people of Israel, not counting the number from Benjamin, numbered 400,000 men, who were trained to fight with the sword. All of these were men of war. ¹⁸ The people of Israel arose, went up to Bethel, and asked for advice from God. They asked, "Who first will attack the people of Benjamin for us?" Yahweh said, "Judah will attack first."

¹⁹ The sons of Israel got up in the morning and they moved their camp near Gibeah. ²⁰ The men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin. They set up their battle positions against them at Gibeah. ²¹ The people of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and they killed twenty-two thousand men from among Israel on that day. ²² But the men of Israel strengthened themselves and they formed the battle line in the same place where they had taken positions on the first day. ²³ Then the people of Israel went up and they wept before Yahweh until evening, and they sought direction from Yahweh. They said, "Should we go again to fight against our brothers, the people of Benjamin?" Yahweh said, "Attack them!"

²⁴ So the people of Israel went against the soldiers of Benjamin the second day. ²⁵ On the second day, Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah and they killed eighteen thousand men from the people of Israel. All were men who trained to fight with the sword. ²⁶ Then all the people of Israel, all the people, went up to Bethel and wept, and there they sat before Yahweh and they fasted that day until the evening and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Yahweh. ²⁷ The people of Israel asked Yahweh—for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸ and Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron, was serving before the ark in those days—"Should we go out to battle once more against the people of Benjamin, our brothers, or stop?" Yahweh said, "Attack, for tomorrow I will help you defeat them."

²⁹ So Israel set men in secret places around Gibeah. ³⁰ The people of Israel fought against the people of Benjamin for the third day, and they formed their battle lines against Gibeah as they had done before. ³¹ The people of Benjamin went and fought against the people, and they were drawn away from the city. They began to kill some of the people. There were about thirty men of Israel who died in the fields and on the roads. One of the roads went up to Bethel, and the other went to Gibeah. ³² Then the people of

Benjamin said, "They are defeated and they are running away from us, just as at first." But the people Israel said, "Let us run back and draw them away from the city to the roads." ³³ All the men of Israel rose up out of their places and formed themselves into lines for battle at Baal Tamar. Then the people of Israel who had been hiding in secret places ran out from their places from Maareh Gibeah. ³⁴ Ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel came out against Gibeah, and the fighting was fierce, but the Benjamites did not know that disaster was close to them. ³⁵ Yahweh defeated Benjamin before Israel. On that day, the people of Israel destroyed 25,100 men of Benjamin. All these who died were those who had been trained to fight with the sword.

³⁶ So the people of Benjamin saw they were defeated. The men of Israel had given ground to Benjamin, because they were trusting in the men they had placed in hidden positions outside Gibeah. ³⁷ Then the men who were hiding got up and hurried, and they rushed into Gibeah, and they struck all the city with the edge of the sword. ³⁸ The arranged signal between the men of Israel and the men hiding in secret would be that a great cloud of smoke would rise up out of the city. ³⁹ When the signal was sent the men of Israel would turn from the battle. Now Benjamin began to attack and they killed about thirty men of Israel, and they said, "It is sure that they are defeated before us, as in the first battle." ⁴⁰ But when a pillar of smoke began to rise up out of the city, the Benjamites turned and saw the smoke rising to the sky from the whole city. ⁴¹ Then the men of Israel turned against them. The men of Benjamin were terrified, for they saw that disaster had come on them. ⁴² So they ran away from the men of Israel, escaping on the way to the wilderness. But the fighting overtook them. The men of Israel came out of the cities and destroyed them where they stood. ⁴³ They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and trampled them down at Nohah, all the way to the east side of Gibeah. ⁴⁴ From the tribe of Benjamin, eighteen thousand people died, all of them men who were distinguished in battle. ⁴⁵ They turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon. The Israelites killed five thousand more of them along the roads. They kept going after them, following them closely all the way to Gidom, and there they killed two thousand more. ⁴⁶ All the soldiers of Benjamin who fell that day were twenty-five thousand—men who were trained to fight with the sword; all of them were distinguished in battle. ⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness, toward the rock of Rimmon. For four months they stayed at the rock of Rimmon. ⁴⁸ And the men of Israel turned back against the descendants of Benjamin and struck down with the edge of the sword the entire city, the animals and everything that they found. They also burned down every town in their path.

Judges 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Benjamin destroyed

The army of Israel destroys all the tribe of Benjamin except 600 men. After this point in time, the tribe of Benjamin becomes mostly insignificant.

Judges 20:1

as one man

This simile speaks of the group as acting as a single person. It refers to a group of who people do everything together in the same way. Alternate translation: "as if they were a single man"

from Dan to Beersheba

This refers to the land as a whole. Alternate translation: "from all the eleven tribes"

Judges 20:2

God—400,000 footmen

"God, and also 400,000 regular soldiers came"

ready to fight

"capable of going to war." They were not going to fight each other.

Judges 20:3

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here the author of the book tells background information about what the people of Benjamin knew.

had gone up to Mizpah

Mizpah was located high in the mountains.

Judges 20:4

to spend the night
"for the night" or "to stay for a night"

Judges 20:5

General Information:
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Judges 20:6

wickedness and an act of disgraceful folly
The phrase "act of disgraceful folly" describes the "wickedness." Alternate translation: "outrageous wickedness"

act of disgraceful folly
a senseless, disgraceful act. See how you translated this in Judges 19:23

Judges 20:7

Now
This word is used to introduce the conclusion of the speech of the Levite.

give your advice and counsel here
The words "advice" and "counsel" refer to the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "decide what we need to do about this"

Judges 20:8

as one
This simile speaks of the group as acting as a single person. They all acted together in exactly the same way. Alternate translation: "as if they were a single man"

None of us will go to his tent ... none of us will return to his house
These two clauses say basically the same thing twice for emphasis. They can be combined. The words "none ... go" and "none ... return" emphasizes how the people will continue to stay there. They can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "We will all stay here"

Judges 20:9

But now
These words introduce the main portion of what the people say after the initial exclamation.

as the lot directs
This involved tossing or rolling small marked stones to determine what God wants.

Judges 20:10

ten men of a hundred ... one hundred of a thousand ... one thousand of ten thousand
"10 men out of 100 ... 100 out of 1,000 ... 1,000 out of 10,000"

provisions
food and other things the people need

act of disgraceful folly
a senseless, disgraceful act. See how you translated this in Judges 19:23

Judges 20:11

assembled against the city
"came together to attack the city"

Judges 20:12

General Information:
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Judges 20:13

put them to death
This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "kill them" or "execute them"

the voice of their brothers
Here "voice" refers to the message that they spoke. Alternate translation: "what their brother said"

Judges 20:14

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 20:15

twenty-six thousand
"26,000"

seven hundred
"700"

Judges 20:16

left-handed
A left-handed person is someone who is more skilled with their left hand than with their right hand.

could sling a stone at a hair and not miss
This show how amazingly well they could aim and hit their target. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "could throw a stone at even a hair and hit it" or "could throw a stone at something as small as a hair and hit it"

Judges 20:17

not counting
"not including"

400,000
"four hundred thousand men"

Judges 20:18

asked for advice from God
"asked God what to do" or "asked God how to continue"

Judges 20:19

moved their camp near Gibeah
There is some question about the meaning of the Hebrew text. Instead of meaning that they set up their camp near Gibeah, it could mean that the army went out and stood across from Gibeah ready to fight.

Judges 20:20

General Information:
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Judges 20:21

twenty-two thousand
"22,000"

Judges 20:22

strengthened themselves
Here "strengthened" is an idiom that means they encouraged each other.

they formed the battle line
This probably means that the Israelites prepared their battle lines for the next day's fighting.
Alternate translation: "they got ready to fight the next day"

Judges 20:23

they sought direction from Yahweh
The method they used is not stated. The priest may have cast lots to determine God's will.

Judges 20:24

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 20:25

eighteen thousand
"18,000"

Judges 20:26

before Yahweh
"in Yahweh's presence" or "to Yahweh"

Judges 20:27

for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days
This is background information that the author inserted to help the reader understand how the people asked Yahweh for an answer.

was there in those days
"was at Bethel in those days"

Judges 20:28

and Phinehas ... was serving before the ark in those days
This is background information that the author inserted to help the reader understand how the people asked Yahweh for an answer.

was serving before the ark
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "was serving as priest before the ark"

Attack
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Attack the army of Benjamin"

Judges 20:29

Israel set men
Here "Israel" refers to the people of Israel.
Alternate translation: "the Israelites"

secret places
"in ambush"

Judges 20:30

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 20:31

fought against the people
The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "fought against the people of Israel"

they were drawn away from the city
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel drew them away from the city"

They began to kill some of the people

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "The people of Benjamin began to kill some of the men of Israel"

Judges 20:32

just as at first

"just as before" or "just like the first two times"

Judges 20:33

Baal Tamar

This is the name of a city.

Maareh Gibeah

This is the name of a place. Other translations may read "fields of Gibeah" or "west of Gibeah" or "Maareh Geba."

Judges 20:34

Ten thousand

"10,000"

chosen men

This is an idiom that means these were particularly good soldiers. Alternate translation: "well-trained soldier"

disaster was close to them

Here immanent disaster is spoken of as if it was standing very close by them. Alternate translation: "they would soon be completely defeated"

Judges 20:35

25,100 men

"twenty-five thousand one hundred men"

men of Benjamin

"soldiers of Benjamin"

Judges 20:36

The men of Israel had given ground to Benjamin, because they were trusting in the men ... outside Gibeah

From this sentence until the end of verse 41 is background information that the writer inserted to explain to the readers how the ambush defeated the Benjamites.

had given ground to Benjamin

This is an idiom that means they intentionally retreated. Alternate translation: "had allowed Benjamin to move forward"

Judges 20:37

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 20:38

General Information:

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Judges 20:39

General Information:

This verse continues to give background information that the writer inserted to explain to the readers how the ambush defeated the Benjamites.

would turn from the battle

"would retreat from the fight"

they are defeated before us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we have defeated them"

Judges 20:40

General Information:

This verse continues to give background information that the writer inserted to explain to the readers how the ambush defeated the Benjamites.

Judges 20:41

disaster

great harm, trouble, misery

come on them

This idiom means it happened to them. Alternate translation: "happened to them"

Judges 20:42

But the fighting overtook them

This speaks about fighting as if it were a person who could overtake someone. Alternate translation: "But the soldiers of Israel caught up to them" or "But they were not able to escape the fighting"

Judges 20:43

Nohah

This is the name of a place.

trampled them down

The completed destruction of the Benjamites is spoken of as if the Israelites stomped on their bodies. Alternate translation: "they completely destroyed them"

Judges 20:44

eighteen thousand

"18,000"

were distinguished in battle
"had fought bravely in the battle"

Judges 20:45

They turned and fled
"The remaining Benjamites turned and fled"

five thousand ... two thousand
"5,000 ... 2,000"

Gidom
This is the name of a place.

Judges 20:46

twenty-five thousand
"25,000"

Judges 20:47

six hundred
"600"

Judges 20:48

turned back against the descendants of Benjamin
These people of Benjamin are not the soldiers who fled to the rock of Rimmon, but the ones who were still in the city.

the entire city
Here "the entire city" refers to all the people in that city. Alternate translation: "everyone who was in the city"

in their path
"along the way"

Chapter 21

¹ Now the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, "None of us will give his daughter to marry a Benjamite." ² Then the people went to Bethel and sat there before God until the evening, and with loud voices they wept bitterly. ³ They called out, "Why, Yahweh, God of Israel, has this happened to Israel, that one of our tribes should be missing today?" ⁴ The next day the people got up early and built an altar there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁵ The people of Israel said, "Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to Yahweh?" For they had made an important oath concerning anyone who did not come up to Yahweh at Mizpah. They said, "He would certainly be put to death." ⁶ The people of Israel had compassion for their brother Benjamin. They said, "Today one tribe has been cut off from Israel. ⁷ Who will provide wives for those who are left, since we have made an oath to Yahweh that we will not let any of them marry our daughters?"

⁸ They said, "Which of the tribes of Israel did not come up to Yahweh at Mizpah?" It was found that no one had come to the assembly from Jabesh Gilead. ⁹ For when the people were set out in an orderly manner, behold, none of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were there. ¹⁰ The assembly sent twelve thousand of their bravest men with instructions to go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. ¹¹ "Do this: Every male and every woman who has known a man by lying with him you will devote to destruction." ¹² The men found among those living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

¹³ The entire assembly sent a message and told the people of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon that they were offering them peace. ¹⁴ The Benjamites returned at that time and they were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been kept alive, but there were not enough women for all of them. ¹⁵ The people had compassion on Benjamin, because Yahweh had made a division between the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶ Then the elders of the assembly said, "How will we arrange wives for the Benjamites who are left, since the women of Benjamin have been killed?" ¹⁷ They said, "There must be an inheritance for the escaped remnant of Benjamin, so that a tribe is not destroyed from Israel. ¹⁸ We cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the people of Israel had sworn, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to Benjamin.'" ¹⁹ So they said, "You know there is a feast for Yahweh every year at Shiloh (which is north of Bethel, east of the road that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah)." ²⁰ They instructed the men of Benjamin, saying, "Go and hide in secret and wait in the vineyards. ²¹ Watch for the time when the girls from Shiloh come out to dance, then rush out of the vineyards and each one of you should grab a wife from the girls of Shiloh, then go back to the land of Benjamin. ²² When their fathers or their brothers come to protest to us, we will say to them, 'Show us favor! Let them remain because we did not get wives for each man during the war. You are innocent, since you did not give your daughters to them.'" ²³ The people of Benjamin did so. They took the number of wives that they needed from the girls who were dancing and they carried them off to be their wives. They went and returned to the place of their inheritance. They rebuilt the towns and lived in them. ²⁴ Then the people of Israel left that place and went home, each one to his own tribe and clan, and each one to his own inheritance.

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes the account of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sin and immorality

At the end of Judges, there is much sin and immorality. The people are doing wrong and fixing their wrongs by doing more evil things. This period of Judges is typified by this final account and summarized by the statement, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (See: sin and evil and righteous)

Judges 21:1

Now the men of Israel had sworn ... marry a Benjamite.
This background information tells the reader about the promise that the Israelites made before the battle with the Benjamites.

Benjamite

This is the name of the descendants of Benjamin. See how you translated this in Judges 3:15.

Judges 21:2

General Information:

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Judges 21:3

Why, Yahweh, God of Israel, has this happened to Israel, that one of our tribes should be missing today?

The people of Israel used this rhetorical question to express their deep sadness. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Oh Yahweh, we are so sad that one of the tribes of Israel has been completely destroyed."

Judges 21:4

General Information:

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Judges 21:5

The people of Israel said, "Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come up in the assembly to Yahweh?"

The people are referring back to the assembly of the Israelites at Mizpah before they attacked the Benjamites.

For they had made an important oath concerning anyone who did not come up to Yahweh at Mizpah. They said, "He would certainly be put to death."

This is background information to explain to the reader the promise that the Israelites had made at Mizpah before they attacked the Benjamites.

He would certainly be put to death

Here "He" refers to anyone who did not go to Mizpah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We will certainly kill that person"

Judges 21:6

their brother Benjamin

This speaks of the tribe of Benjamin as if it were Israel's brother to show their closeness to the tribe. Alternate translation: "the surviving Benjamites"

one tribe has been cut off from Israel

The destruction of the tribe of Benjamin is spoken of as if it had been cut off from Israel by a knife. This was an exaggeration because 600 men were still left. However, the women of Benjamin had been killed, so the future of the tribe was in question. Alternate translation: "one tribe has been removed"

Judges 21:7

Who will provide wives for those who are left, since we have made an oath to Yahweh that we will not let any of them marry our daughters?

The Israelites wanted to provide wives for the few surviving Benjamites, but their promise at Mizpah prevented them from doing that.

Judges 21:8

Jabesh Gilead

This is the name of a city.

Judges 21:9

people were set out in an orderly manner

"people that were assembled at Mizpah were accounted for"

none of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were there

This refers back to the earlier assembly at Mizpah. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "none of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had been present at Mizpah"

Judges 21:10

twelve thousand

"12,000"

strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children

The next verse will add an exception to this general instruction.

strike ... with the edge of the sword

"kill ... with their swords"

Judges 21:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Judges 21:12

Jabesh Gilead

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in Judges 21:8.

four hundred young virgins
"400 young virgins"

who had not known a man by lying with him

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "who had not had sexual relations with a man"

Judges 21:13

they were offering them peace

The abstract noun "peace" can be translated with a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "they wanted to stop fighting with them"

Judges 21:14

Jabesh Gilead

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in Judges 21:8.

there were not enough women for all of them

There were six hundred Benjamite men, and only four hundred women from Jabesh Gilead.

Judges 21:15

made a division between the tribes of Israel

"had caused the tribes of Israel not to be unified"

Judges 21:16

Benjamites

This refers to the descendants of Benjamin. See how you translated this in Judges 3:15.

the women of Benjamin have been killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we killed all the Benjamite women"

Judges 21:17

There must be an inheritance ... is not destroyed from Israel

The Israelites are exaggerating. They had already given wives to four hundred of the Benjamites, so the tribe would not be completely destroyed.

Judges 21:18

a wife to Benjamin

Here Benjamin refers to the male descendants of Benjamin. Alternate translation: "a wife to the men of Benjamin"

Judges 21:19

which is north of Bethel, east of the road that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah

This is background information to explain to the reader where the city of Shiloh is located.

Lebonah

This is the name of a city.

Judges 21:20

General Information:

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Judges 21:21

each one of you should grab a wife ... go back to the land of Benjamin

It is understood that the Benjamites would take these women back to their own land with them. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "each one of you should seize one of the girls of Shiloh, and then take her back with you to the land of Benjamin to become your wife"

Judges 21:22

Show us favor

The abstract noun "favor" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "Act kindly toward us"

because we did not get wives for each man during the war

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "because we did not get wives for each of them during the war with Jabesh Gilead"

You are innocent ... not give your daughters to them

This refers to the men of Shiloh. They did not voluntarily give their daughters to the Benjamites, and therefore did not break their promise not to do that.

Judges 21:23

the number of wives that they needed

This refers to one wife for each of the two hundred Benjamite men who did not receive wives from Jabesh Gilead (Judges 21:14).

Judges 21:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

what was right in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "what he judged to be right" or "what he considered to be right"

Judges 21:25

there was no king in Israel

"Israel did not yet have a king"
