

Language: English

Book: Zechariah

Zechariah

Chapter 1

¹ In the eighth month of the second year of Darius' reign, the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah son of Berekiah son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, ² "Yahweh was exceedingly angry with your fathers! ³ Say to them, 'Yahweh of hosts says this: Turn to me!—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts— and I will return to you, says Yahweh of hosts. ⁴ Do not be like your fathers to whom the prophets cried out previously, saying, "Yahweh of hosts says this: Turn from your evil ways and wicked practices!" But they would not hear and did not pay attention to me—this is Yahweh's declaration.' ⁵ Your fathers—where are they? And the prophets—do they live forever? ⁶ But my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets, have they not overtaken your fathers? So they repented and said, 'Just as Yahweh of hosts planned to do to us what our ways and actions deserved, so he has dealt with us.'"

⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius' reign, the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah son of Berekiah son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, ⁸ I saw in the night, and, look! A man was riding on a red horse, and he was among the myrtle trees that are in the valley; and behind him there were red, reddish-brown, and white horses. ⁹ I said, "What are these things, Lord?" Then the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what these things are." ¹⁰ Then the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are those Yahweh has sent out to roam throughout the earth." ¹¹ They answered the angel of Yahweh who stood among the myrtle trees; they said to him, "We have been roaming throughout the earth; see, all the earth sits still and is at rest."

¹² Then the angel of Yahweh answered and said, "Yahweh of hosts, how long will you show no compassion to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?" ¹³ Yahweh answered the angel who had talked with me, with good words, words of comfort.

¹⁴ So the angel who had talked with me said to me, "Call out and say, 'Yahweh of hosts says this: I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy! ¹⁵ I am very angry with the nations that are at ease. When I was only a little angry with them, they made the disaster worse. ¹⁶ Therefore Yahweh of hosts says this: I have returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My house will be built within her— this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—and the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem!' ¹⁷ Again call out, saying, 'Yahweh of hosts says this: My cities will once again overflow with goodness, and Yahweh will again comfort Zion, and he will once again choose Jerusalem.'"

¹⁸ Then I lifted up my eyes and saw four horns! ¹⁹ I spoke to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" He answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." ²⁰ Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. ²¹ I said, "What are these people coming to do?" He answered, and said, "These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no man would lift up his head. But the blacksmiths have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up a horn against the land of Judah to scatter her."

Zechariah 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written in prose mainly with imagery used throughout to portray Zechariah's vision given by the Lord.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULB and many other English translations set lines 1:3-6, 14-17, which are extended quotations, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This book contains a number of visions given to Zechariah, so the images are not ones Zechariah actually saw but were given to him in a vision or dream. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Date

Zechariah uses two separate dates in this first chapter. When compared to the book of Haggai, Zechariah's prophecy was proclaimed just a few weeks after Haggai. However, they prophesied in two different places: Haggai was in Jerusalem and Zechariah was somewhere outside of Jerusalem. (See: prophet)

Zechariah 1:1

In the eighth month

This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

the second year of Darius' reign

"the second year of the reign of Darius the king" or "the second year since Darius became king"

the word of Yahweh came

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message" or "Yahweh spoke this message"

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.

Berekiah ... Iddo

These are the names of men.

Zechariah 1:2

exceedingly angry with your fathers

"very angry with your forefathers"

Zechariah 1:3

Turn to me ... and I will return to you

Yahweh speaks of having a change of attitude toward another person as if it were turning or returning. The people turning to Yahweh means that they will again be devoted to him and worship him, while Yahweh returning to the people means that he will again bless them and help them.

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

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

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

Zechariah 1:4

Turn from your evil ways and wicked practices

No longer doing certain actions is spoken of as if it were turning away from those actions. The phrases "evil ways" and "wicked practices" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Stop doing all of your wicked actions"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Zechariah 1:3]

Zechariah 1:5

Your fathers—where are they? And the prophets—do they live forever?

If your language has a way of showing that this verse challenges the readers to think about what happened to the "fathers" ([Zechariah 1:4](#)). Alternate translation: "Think about your fathers—where are they now? And as for the prophets, do they live forever?"

Your fathers—where are they?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Your fathers—you know where they are." or "As for your fathers, you know that they have all died."

And the prophets—do they live forever?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "And the prophets will not live forever."

do they live forever?

Zechariah is probably implying that the prophets will not always be around to tell his readers that God wants them to repent. You may need to make this explicit. Alternate translation: "will they always

be around to speak for God to you?" or "they will not always be around to call you to repent."

Zechariah 1:6

But my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets, have they not overtaken your fathers?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer that it anticipates. Yahweh speaks of the people's ancestors experiencing the consequences of not obeying Yahweh's commands as if his words and decrees were a person who had chased after and overtaken them. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets have overtaken your fathers." or "But your fathers have suffered the consequences for disobeying my words and my decrees that I commanded my servants the prophets to tell them."

my words and my decrees

These phrases are both ways to refer to Yahweh's message that the prophets had declared to their ancestors.

our ways and actions

The words "ways" and "actions" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "our behavior"

Zechariah 1:7

the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat

"Shebat" is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. The twenty-fourth day is near the middle of February on Western calendars.

in the second year of Darius' reign

"in the second year of the reign of Darius the king" or "in the second year since Darius became king." See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:1]

the word of Yahweh came

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:1]

Berekiah ... Iddo

These are the names of men.

the prophet, saying,

Here the word "saying" introduces what Zechariah was about to say. The word "saying" can be removed if it may make your readers think that Yahweh is about to speak. Alternate translation: "the prophet."

Zechariah 1:8

I saw in the night

Here the word "I" refers to Zechariah. Alternate translation: "I, Zechariah, saw in the night"

look

The word "look" here shows that Zechariah was surprised by what he saw.

myrtle trees

a kind of small tree with colorful flowers

Zechariah 1:9

I said, "What are these things, Lord?" Then the angel who talked with me

Here Zechariah speaks to an unidentified angel. This is not the same as the "man" who was "riding on a red horse."

What are these things, Lord?

"What are these things, sir?" Here the word "Lord" is a form of polite address.

Zechariah 1:10

the man who stood among the myrtle trees

These phrases refer to the man who "was riding on a red horse" in [Zechariah 1:8]

These are those

The word "these" refers to the red, reddish-brown, and white horses that were behind the man who was among the myrtle trees. Possible meanings are 1) it is implicit that there were other men who were riding the horses, and that these phrases refer to the riders or 2) the horses are personified as being able to speak like people.

to roam throughout the earth

It is implicit that Yahweh sent these out to walk about in order to patrol the earth. This does not suggest that they were wandering or lost.

Zechariah 1:11

the angel of Yahweh who stood among the myrtle trees

This phrase refers to the man who "was riding on a red horse" in [Zechariah 1:8]

They answered ... they said

The word "they" refers to the red, reddish-brown, and white horses that were behind the man who was among the myrtle trees. Possible meanings are 1) it is implicit that there were other men who were riding the horses, and that these phrases refer to the riders or 2) the horses are personified as being able to speak like people.

all the earth sits still and is at rest

There being peace and quiet in the world is spoken of as if the earth were a person who is still and resting. Possible meanings are 1) this is a good thing that means that there is peace between nations or 2) this is a bad thing that means that there is no war because nations are helpless to fight against a stronger nation that has subdued them.

Zechariah 1:12

to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah

Here the words "Jerusalem" and "cities" refer to the people who live in those cities. Alternate translation: "to the people of Jerusalem and to the people of the cities of Judah"

Zechariah 1:13

with good words, words of comfort

"with good, comforting words"

Zechariah 1:14

I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy

"I have been extremely jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion." Yahweh does not want anyone to harm Jerusalem or try to have Jerusalem love anything more than Yahweh.

jealous

Here this word refers to Yahweh's strong desire to protect his people.

Jerusalem ... Zion

These are a metonyms for the people who live in Jerusalem and Zion. Alternate translation: "the people of Jerusalem ... the people of Zion"

Zechariah 1:15

I am very angry with the nations that are at ease

The phrase "at ease" means that the people thought that they lived in peace and security. Alternate translation: "I am very angry with the nations that enjoy peace and security"

I was only a little angry with them

"I was only a little angry with the people of Jerusalem"

they made the disaster worse

"the nations that are at ease made the disaster worse." This means that although Yahweh used these nations to punish Jerusalem, they did more harm to Jerusalem than what Yahweh had intended for them to do.

Zechariah 1:16

I have returned to Jerusalem with mercies

Possible meanings are 1) although Yahweh had left Jerusalem when the people had gone into exile, he will now return to Jerusalem when they have come back from exile or 2) Yahweh speaks of having a change of attitude towards the people of Jerusalem and again blessing them and helping them as if he were returning to the city. Alternate translation: "I will once again show mercy towards Jerusalem"

My house will be built within her

The word "her" refers to Jerusalem, and the word "house" is a metonym for the temple. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people will build my temple in Jerusalem"

the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem

This refers to builders using their instruments to rebuild the city. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "builders will stretch out their measuring lines over Jerusalem" or "the people will rebuild Jerusalem"

Zechariah 1:17

Again call out, saying

The angel who was speaking to Zechariah says these words.

My cities will once again overflow with goodness

The phrase "my cities" refers to the cities of Judah and represents the people who live in those cities. Yahweh speaks of the inhabitants of those cities again being prosperous as if goodness were a liquid that overflowed the cities, which are its containers. Alternate translation: "My cities will once again be prosperous" or "The people in the cities of Judah will once again be prosperous"

Yahweh will again comfort Zion

Here the word "Zion" refers to the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will again comfort the people in Zion"

Zechariah 1:18

I lifted up my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "I looked up"

Zechariah 1:19

These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem

Horns were often used as a symbol for military power. Here they symbolize the powerful nations that had conquered the kingdoms of Israel. The words "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" represent the people who lived in those places. Alternate translation: "These horns represent the nations that have scattered the people of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem"

Zechariah 1:20

four craftsmen

"blacksmiths" or "metalworkers"

Zechariah 1:21

these people

This refers to the four craftsmen.

These are the horns that scattered Judah

The horns symbolize the powerful nations that had conquered the kingdoms of Israel. The word "Judah" represents the people who lived in Judah. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Zechariah 1:19]

so that no man would lift up his head

The nations oppressing the people of Judah severely is spoken of as if no person in Judah was able to raise his head. Alternate translation: "and caused them to suffer greatly"

to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up a horn against the land of Judah

Yahweh speaks of the nations using their military power to conquer Judah as if the nations had lifted up their horns. He speaks of these four craftsmen destroying the military power of these nations as if the craftsmen threw those horns to the ground. Alternate translation: "to destroy the power of the nations who used their military might against the land of Judah"

to cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up a horn

"to cast down the horns that the nations had lifted up"

Chapter 2

¹ Next I lifted up my eyes and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² I said, "Where are you going?" So he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to determine its width and length." ³ Then the angel who had talked with me went away and another angel went out to meet him. ⁴ The second angel said to him, "Run and speak to that young man; say, 'Jerusalem will sit in the open country because of the multitudes of men and livestock within her.'"

⁵ For I—this is Yahweh's declaration—will become for her a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.

⁶ Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north—this is Yahweh's declaration—for I have scattered you like the four winds of the skies!—This is Yahweh's declaration.

⁷ Up! Escape to Zion, you who live with the daughter of Babylon!"

⁸ For after Yahweh of hosts honored me and sent me against the nations that plundered you—for whoever touches you, touches the apple of God's eye!—after Yahweh did this, he said, ⁹ "I myself will shake my hand over them, and they will be plunder for their slaves." Then you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me.

¹⁰ "Sing for joy and be glad, daughter of Zion, for I myself am about to come and dwell among you!—this is Yahweh's declaration." ¹¹ Then great nations will join themselves to Yahweh in that day. He says, "Then you will become my people; for I will dwell in the midst of you," and you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you.

¹² For Yahweh will inherit Judah as his rightful possession in the holy land and will once again choose Jerusalem for himself. ¹³ Be silent, all flesh, before Yahweh, for he has been roused from out of his holy place!

Zechariah 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is introduced in prose with imagery used in the rest of the chapter to portray Zechariah's third vision about measuring lines given by the Lord.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of 2:4-13, which are extended quotations, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This book contains a number of visions given to Zechariah so the images are not ones Zechariah actually saw but were given to him in a vision or dream. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing. Please be careful to translate each of the terms in your language.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"This is Yahweh's declaration"

This phrase is used several times in this chapter. The UDB often translates this as "Yahweh says."

Zechariah 2:1

I lifted up my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks.
Alternate translation: "I looked up"

measuring line

a rope with a certain length that a person would use to measure buildings or large sections of land

Zechariah 2:2

So he said to me

"So the man with the measuring line said to me"

Zechariah 2:3

another angel went out to meet him

This angel is a new participant who has not appeared before this verse.

Zechariah 2:4

The second angel said to him

"The second angel said to the angel who had talked with me"

Jerusalem will sit in the open country ... livestock within her

The phrase "will sit in the open country" translates a word that refers to a city that has no walls. There will be so many inhabitants in the city that it will be too large to have walls around it. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem will not have walls around it ... livestock within the city"

Zechariah 2:5

I ... will become for her a wall of fire around her

People built walls around their cities for protection. Here Yahweh speaks of protecting Jerusalem as if he himself were a wall of fire around the city. Alternate translation: "I ... will protect the city, like a wall of fire around it"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

Zechariah 2:6

Up! Up!

These two words express urgency and add emphasis to the following command. The words can be translated with an expression that communicates urgency in your language. Alternate translation: "Run! Run!" or "Hurry! Hurry!"

Zechariah 2:7

you who live with the daughter of Babylon

The phrase "daughter of Babylon" refers to the city of Babylon. Yahweh speaks of the city as if it were a daughter. Alternate translation: "you who live in Babylon"

Zechariah 2:8

General Information:

Zechariah begins to speak and tells how Yahweh is sending him to judge the nations who have plundered Jerusalem.

for whoever touches you

The word "touches" refers to a touch meant to harm. Alternate translation: "for whoever harms you"

Zechariah 2:9

I myself will shake my hand over them

Raising one's hand against another person is a gesture of hostility. Here it is a symbolic action that means that God will attack those who harm Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "I myself will fight against them" or "I myself will attack them"

they will be plunder for their slaves

The word "plunder" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "their slaves will plunder them"

Zechariah 2:10

Sing for joy and be glad, daughter of Zion

"Zion" is the same as "Jerusalem." The prophet speaks of the city as if it is a daughter. Possible meanings are 1) Zechariah personifies the city as a person who can sing. Alternate translation: "Sing for joy and be glad, Zion" or 2) the phrase "daughter of Zion" is a metonym for the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "Sing for joy and be glad, people of Zion"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

Zechariah 2:11

great nations will join themselves to Yahweh

Zechariah speaks of the people of great nations becoming Yahweh's people and worshiping him as if they were joining themselves to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the people of great nations will become the people of Yahweh"

in that day

"at that time"

Zechariah 2:12

Yahweh will inherit Judah as his rightful possession

Zechariah speaks of Yahweh claiming Judah as his own land as if Judah were something that Yahweh inherits as a permanent possession. Alternate

translation: "Yahweh will claim Judah as his rightful possession"

Zechariah 2:13

all flesh

Here the word "flesh" represents all humanity.
Alternate translation: "all people"

he has been roused

Zechariah speaks of Yahweh beginning to act as if someone had roused Yahweh from inactivity. It is implied that this action refers to his returning to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "he is coming"

from out of his holy place

Here "his holy place" refers to heaven, and not to the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "from his holy place in heaven"

Chapter 3

¹ Then Yahweh showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Yahweh and Satan was standing at his right hand to accuse him of sin. ² The angel of Yahweh said to Satan, "May Yahweh rebuke you, Satan; may Yahweh, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is this not a brand pulled from the fire?" ³ Joshua was dressed in filthy garments as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel spoke and said to those who stood before him, "Remove the filthy garments from upon him." Then he said to Joshua, "Look! I have caused your iniquity to pass from you and I will dress you in official robes." ⁵ Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head!" So they set a clean turban on Joshua's head and clothed him with clean garments, while the angel of Yahweh was standing by.

⁶ Next the angel of Yahweh solemnly commanded Joshua and said, ⁷ "Yahweh of hosts says this: If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my commandments, then you will govern my house and guard my courts, for I will allow you to go and come among these who stand before me. ⁸ Listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your companions who live with you! For these men are a sign, for I myself will bring up my servant the Branch. ⁹ Now look at the stone that I have set before Joshua. There are seven eyes on this single stone, and I will engrave an inscription—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts— and I will remove the iniquity from this land in one day. ¹⁰ In that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts— each man will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree."

Zechariah 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is introduced in prose and shares the fourth vision, which is the priest in dirty clothes. (See: priest)

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of 3:7-9, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Difficult concepts in this chapter

Visions

It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The high priest

This chapter seems to refer to a particular person, Joshua the high priest. However, little is known about him. (See: highpriest)

Zechariah 3:1

General Information:

Yahweh shows Zechariah a vision of Joshua the priest.

Satan was standing at his right hand to accuse him of sin

"Satan was standing at Joshua's right side, ready to accuse Joshua of sin"

Zechariah 3:2

Is this not a brand pulled from the fire?

The angel of Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to emphasize the positive answer that it anticipates.

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Joshua is a brand pulled from the fire."

a brand pulled from the fire

A brand is a burning piece of wood. The angel of Yahweh speaks of Joshua being rescued from captivity in Babylon as if he were a piece of wood that someone pulls from a fire before the wood is completely burned.

Zechariah 3:3

Joshua was dressed in filthy garments

In this vision "filthy garments" are symbolic of sinfulness.

Zechariah 3:4

those who stood before him

The word "him" refers to the angel. The phrase refers to other angels who were present.

Look

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important"

I have caused your iniquity to pass from you

Since Joshua's garments were symbolic of his sinfulness, by removing his garments, the angel removed Joshua's iniquity. Causing iniquity to pass from him is an idiom that means that he had removed Joshua's iniquity. Alternate translation: "I have removed your iniquity from you"

dress you in official robes

Here the phrase "official robes" is a metaphor for righteousness. If your language has a word for clothes that people wear only for special occasions, you might want to use it here.

Zechariah 3:5

Let them put

Here the word "them" refers to the other angels who were present.

turban

a long piece of cloth wrapped around the head

Zechariah 3:6

solemnly commanded Joshua

"commanded Joshua in a very serious manner"

Zechariah 3:7

If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my commandments

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of obeying him as if the person were walking along Yahweh's paths. Alternate translation: "If you will obey me and keep my commandments"

you will govern my house and guard my courts

Here the word "house" is a metonym for the temple, while the word "courts" refers to the courtyards around the temple. Together the phrases mean that Joshua will have authority over the whole temple complex. Alternate translation: "you will have authority over my temple and its courtyards"

to go and come among these who stand before me

The phrase "to go and come among" is an idiom that means that Joshua will be a part of this group and have the same privilege as they do of access to

Yahweh. Alternate translation: "to come before me as these who stand here do"

Zechariah 3:8

General Information:

The angel of Yahweh continues to speak to Joshua.

your companions who live with you

This phrase refers to other priests who would serve in the temple under the leadership of Joshua. Alternate translation: "the other priests who live with you"

For these men are a sign

Here the word "sign" refers to something that communicates a special meaning to those who see it. Yahweh speaks of the priests serving in the temple as being this sign that shows that Yahweh will bring his servant.

my servant the Branch

The word "Branch" refers to a messianic figure that would serve as king over Yahweh's people. Yahweh speaks of this person as if he were a branch that grows out from a tree. Since the word "Branch" is a title, it should be translated with an equivalent word in your language.

Zechariah 3:9

the stone that I have set before Joshua

Here the word "stone" likely refers to a precious stone or jewel.

There are seven eyes on this single stone

The sides or facets of the stone that reflect light are spoken of as if they are eyes. Alternate translation: "There are seven sides on this single stone"

engrave

"carve"

I will remove the iniquity from this land in one day

Here the word "land" is a metonym for the people who live in the land. The word "remove" is a metaphor that means to forgive. Alternate translation: "I will forgive the iniquity of the people who live in this land in one day"

Zechariah 3:10

each man will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree

Both the "vine" and the "fig tree" are symbols of prosperity. This phrase describes actions in which people live prosperously and in peace. Alternate translation: "because they will be at peace, each person will invite his neighbor to come and sit under his vine and his fig tree"

Chapter 4

¹ Then the angel who was talking with me turned and roused me like a man roused from his sleep. ² He said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see a lampstand made entirely of gold, with a bowl on its top. It has seven lamps on it and seven lamp wicks at the top of each lamp. ³ Two olive trees are by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on the left side." ⁴ So I spoke again to the angel who was talking with me. I said, "What do these things mean, my master?" ⁵ The angel who was talking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these things mean?" I said, "No, my master." ⁶ So he said to me, "This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts. ⁷ What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain, and he will bring out the top stone to shouts of 'Grace! Grace to it!'"

⁸ The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ⁹ "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house and his hands will bring it to completion. Then you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you.

¹⁰ Who has despised the day of small things? These people will rejoice and will see the plumb stone in the hand of Zerubbabel. These seven lamps are the eyes of Yahweh that roam over the whole earth."

¹¹ Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees that stand on the left and the right of the lampstand?"

¹² Once more I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that have golden oil pouring out of them?" ¹³ Then he said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my master."

¹⁴ So he said, "These are the sons of fresh olive oil who stand before the Lord of all the earth."

Zechariah 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose about the fifth vision, which is about the golden lampstand olive trees.

Special concepts in this chapter

Visions

This chapter shows a conversation between Zechariah and the angel of Yahweh. It is important for each of these visions to keep their meanings and not be interpreted to mean any specific thing.

Zechariah 4:1

roused me like a man roused from his sleep

Zechariah compares the way in which the angel interrupted his being in deep thought with the way someone would awaken another person from sleep. Alternate translation: "caused me to become more alert like a man awakened from his sleep"

Zechariah 4:2

lamp wicks

the parts of a lamp that are lit on fire

Zechariah 4:3

the left side

The ellipsis in this phrase may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "the left side of the bowl"

Zechariah 4:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 4:5

Do you not know what these things mean?

The angel asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that Zechariah should have known what

these things mean. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what these things mean."

Zechariah 4:6

Connecting Statement:

The angel who speaks with Zechariah continues to explain the vision.

Not by might nor by power

Since there is no verb in this phrase, it may be necessary in your language to supply one. Alternate translation: "You will not succeed by might nor by power"

Not by might nor by power

Possible meanings are 1) that the words "might" and "power" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the greatness of Zerubbabel's strength or 2) that the word "might" refers to military strength and the word "power" refers to Zerubbabel's physical ability. Alternate translation: "Certainly not by your own strength" or "Not by military strength nor by your own power"

Zechariah 4:7

What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain

This is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of the obstacles that Zerubbabel will face as if they were a large mountain. He asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that these obstacles pose no threat to Zerubbabel's success. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are nothing, great mountain! Zerubbabel will cause you to become a plain" or "Although obstacles may appear as large as mountains, Zerubbabel will overcome them as easily as one walks upon level ground"

he will bring out the top stone

The top stone is the last stone placed when building something. This refers to the top stone of the temple. Alternate translation: "he will bring out the top stone of the temple" or "he will complete the construction of the temple"

to shouts of 'Grace! Grace to it!'

Possible meanings are 1) the word "grace" refers to God's grace and the people are requesting that God bless the completed temple. Alternate translation: "while people shout, 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'" or 2) the word "grace" refers to beauty and the people are declaring how beautiful the completed temple is. Alternate translation: "while people shout, 'Beautiful! It is beautiful!'"

Zechariah 4:8

Connecting Statement:

The angel who speaks with Zechariah continues to explain the vision.

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to me. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to me"

Zechariah 4:9

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid ... his hands will bring it to completion

Here the word "hands" represents Zerubbabel. Alternate translation: "Zerubbabel has laid ... he will bring it to completion"

the foundation of this house

The word "house" represents the temple. Alternate translation: "the foundation of this temple"

Zechariah 4:10

Who has despised the day of small things? These people will rejoice

The angel uses this rhetorical question to speak specifically about those who have "despised the day of small things." It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Those who have despised the day of small things will rejoice"

the day of small things

"the time of small things." This phrase refers to the time when the people were building the temple and appeared to be making little progress. Alternate translation: "the time when progress was slow"

plumb stone

This refers to an instrument made with a heavy object attached to the end of a string that builders used to ensure that the walls of buildings were straight.

These seven lamps

This phrase refers to the lamps that Zechariah saw in [Zechariah 4:2-3](#).

These seven lamps are the eyes of Yahweh that roam over the whole earth

The seven lamps symbolize the eyes of Yahweh, but they are not literally the eyes of Yahweh. The angel speaks of Yahweh seeing everything that happens on the earth as if his eyes roamed over the whole earth. Alternate translation: "These seven lamps represent the eyes of Yahweh, who sees everything that happens on the earth"

Zechariah 4:11

these two olive trees

This refers to the olive trees that Zechariah saw in [Zechariah 4:2-3](#).

Zechariah 4:12

What are these two olive branches

Here Zechariah changes his question and asks about branches that are connected to the two olive trees.

the two gold pipes

These pipes were not mentioned in the previous description of Zechariah's vision. It is possible that they are connected to the bowl on top of the lampstand and provide the oil with which the lampstand burns.

golden oil

Here "golden" refers to the color of the oil and does not mean that the oil was made of gold.

Zechariah 4:13

Do you not know what these are?

The angel asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that Zechariah should have known what

these things mean. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what these are."

Zechariah 4:14

These are the sons of fresh olive oil

The branches symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation: "These two branches represent the sons of fresh olive oil"

the sons of fresh olive oil

This idiom means that these men have been anointed with fresh olive oil. A person who is anointed is one whom Yahweh has chosen or appointed for a special duty. Alternate translation: "the anointed men" or "the men whom Yahweh has appointed"

who stand before the Lord

The idiom "stand before" means to be in a person's presence and to serve him. Alternate translation: "who serve the Lord"

Chapter 5

¹ Then I turned and lifted my eyes, and I saw, behold, a flying scroll! ² The angel said to me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide." ³ Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the surface of the whole land. For every thief will be cut off according to what it says on the one side, and everyone who swears a false oath will be cut off according to what it says on the other side." ⁴ "I will send it out—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—so it will enter into the house of the thief and into the house of the one that swears falsely by my name. It will remain in his house and consume its timber and stones."

⁵ Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, "Raise your eyes and see what is coming!" ⁶ I said, "What is it?" He said, "This is a basket containing an ephah that is coming. This is their iniquity in the whole land." ^[1]⁷ Then a lead covering was lifted off the basket and there was a woman under it sitting in it! ⁸ The angel said, "This is Wickedness!" He threw her back inside the basket, and he threw the lead cover over its opening. ⁹ I lifted my eyes and saw two women coming toward me, and wind was in their wings—for they had wings like a stork's wings. They lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. ¹⁰ So I said to the angel who was talking to me, "Where are they taking the basket?" ¹¹ He said to me, "To build a temple in the land of Shinar for it, so that when the temple is ready, the basket will be set there on its prepared base."

Footnotes

5:6 ^[1]Some ancient translations of the copies of the Hebrew text and most modern translations have

Zechariah 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter contains the next two visions. One is about a flying scroll and one is about the basket filled with iniquity. (See: iniquity)

Zechariah 5:1

Then I turned

The word "I" refers to Zechariah.

lifted my eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "looked up"

behold

The word "behold" here shows that Zechariah was surprised by what he saw.

Zechariah 5:2

twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide

A cubit is 46 centimeters. Alternate translation: "9.2 meters long and 4.6 meters wide"

Zechariah 5:3

General Information:

The angel continues to speak with Zechariah.

This is the curse

The word "this" refers to the scroll. The scroll is a metonym for what is written on the scroll. Alternate translation: "On this scroll is the curse"

that goes out over the surface of the whole land

The phrase "the surface of the whole land" refers to every place within the land. It is implied that the curse will apply to every person who lives in the land. Alternate translation: "that is upon every person within the whole land"

every thief will be cut off ... everyone who swears a false oath will be cut off

Yahweh removing these people from the land is spoken of as if he were cutting them off, like a person would cut a branch from a tree. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cut off every thief ... Yahweh will cut off everyone who swears a false oath" or "Yahweh will remove every thief from the land ... Yahweh will remove from the land everyone who swears a false oath"

what it says on the one side ... what it says on the other side

"what the scroll says on one side ... what the scroll says on the other side"

Zechariah 5:4

I will send it out

"I will send out the curse"

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:3]

consume its timber and stones

The curse destroying the houses of the thief and of the one who swears falsely is spoken of as if the curse would consume the building materials that people had used to build the houses. Alternate translation: "destroy its wood and stones" or "completely destroy it"

Zechariah 5:5

Raise your eyes

The word "eyes" represents the person who looks. Alternate translation: "Look up"

Zechariah 5:6

This is a basket containing an ephah that is coming

An "ephah" is a unit of measurement for dry materials and is equal to 22 liters. Here the word is a metonym for the container that would hold an ephah of dry material. Alternate translation: "This is a measuring basket that is coming" or "This is a large container that is coming"

This is their iniquity in the whole land

The basket symbolizes the people's iniquity, but it is not literally their iniquity. Alternate translation: "This basket represents the iniquity of the people throughout the whole land"

Zechariah 5:7

a lead covering was lifted off the basket

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: someone lifted a lead covering off the basket"

there was a woman under it sitting in it

"there was a woman under the lead covering sitting in the basket"

Zechariah 5:8

This is Wickedness

The woman represents wickedness. Alternate translation: "This woman represents wickedness"

He threw her ... he threw the lead cover

"He thrust her ... he forced the lead cover." The word "threw" indicates the force with which the angel did these things. He did not literally throw the woman or the cover.

Zechariah 5:9

I lifted my eyes

Here the word "eyes" represents the person who sees. Alternate translation: "I looked up"

wind was in their wings

This idiom means that they were flying. Alternate translation: "they were flying"

they had wings like a stork's wings

A stork is a type of large bird that has a wingspan of two to four meters. Zechariah compares the size of the women's wings with the size of the stork's wings.

They lifted up the basket between earth and heaven

The words "earth" and "heaven" form a merism that refer to the sky. It is implicit that the two women flew away with the basket. Alternate translation: "They lifted the basket up into the sky and flew away"

Zechariah 5:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 5:11

To build a temple in the land of Shinar for it

The ellipsis can be supplied from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "They are taking the basket to the land of Shinar to build a temple for it"

the basket will be set there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will set the basket there"

on its prepared base

The words "prepared base" refer to a pedestal or other kind of fixture upon which they will place the basket.

Chapter 6

¹ Then I turned and lifted my eyes and I saw four chariots coming out from between two mountains; and the two mountains were made of bronze. ² The first chariot had red horses, the second chariot had black horses, ³ the third chariot had white horses, and the fourth chariot had spotted gray horses. ⁴ So I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my master?" ⁵ The angel answered and said to me, "These are the four winds of heaven that go out from the place where they were standing before the Lord of all the earth. ⁶ The one with the black horses is going out to the north country; the white horses are going out to the west country; and the spotted gray horses are going out to the south country." ⁷ These strong horses went out and sought to go and roam over the earth, so the angel said, "Go and roam over the earth!" and they left for all the earth. ⁸ Then he called out to me and spoke to me and said, "Look at the ones that are going out to the north country; they will appease my spirit concerning the north country."

⁹ So the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ¹⁰ "Take an offering from the exiles—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah—and go this same day and take it into the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah, who has come from Babylon. ¹¹ Then take the silver and gold, make a crown and set it upon the head of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. ¹² Speak to him and say, 'Yahweh of hosts says this: This man, his name is Branch! He will grow up where he is and will then build the temple of Yahweh! ¹³ It is he who builds the temple of Yahweh, and he will be clothed with royal splendor, and will sit and rule on his throne. He will be a priest on his throne, and he will bear a counsel of peace between the two. ¹⁴ The crown will given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and for Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of Yahweh. ¹⁵ Then those who are far off will come and build the temple of Yahweh, so you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you; for this will happen if you truly listen to the voice of Yahweh your God!'"

Zechariah 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose and tells the last vision of the four chariots in the first part of the 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 poetic song in 6:12-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crown

The second part of the chapter is about a crown made for the high priest. This is an actual person, but the meaning of the word "branch" should be translated as his name. (See: highpriest)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Meaning of the visions

The visions are stated and even when the prophet asked for an explanation, their true meaning is often obscure. This uncertainty should remain in your translation. (See: prophet)

Zechariah 6:1

lifted my eyes

Here the word "eyes" represents the person who sees. Alternate translation: "looked up"

between two mountains; and the two mountains were made of bronze

Since the second phrase describes the mountains in the first phrase, the two phrases may be combined.

Alternate translation: "between two bronze mountains"

Zechariah 6:2

The first chariot had red horses

It is implicit that the horses were pulling the chariots. Alternate translation: "The first chariot had red horses pulling it" or "Red horses were pulling the first chariot"

Zechariah 6:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 6:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 6:5

These are the four winds of heaven

The chariots symbolize the four winds of heaven, but they are not literally the four winds. Alternate translation: "These chariots represent the four winds of heaven"

the four winds of heaven

This phrase refers to the four directions from which the wind blows: north, east, south, and west. However, some modern versions interpret this Hebrew expression to mean "four spirits."

standing before the Lord of all the earth

The idiom to "stand before" means to be in a person's presence and to serve him. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 4:14]

Zechariah 6:6

the white horses are going out to the west country

Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew phrase to mean "the white horses are going out after them," that is, following the black horses to the north country.

the white horses are ... the spotted gray horses are

Here the horses represent the chariots that they pull. Alternate translation: "the chariot with the white horses is ... the chariot with the spotted gray horses is"

Zechariah 6:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 6:8

he called out to me

"the angel called out to me"

Look at the ones

"Look at the black horses"

they will appease my spirit concerning the north country

The words "my spirit" refer to Yahweh, so many translations change this to read "Yahweh's spirit." Possible meanings are 1) the word "spirit" represents Yahweh's emotions and appeasing his spirit means that the chariots will cause Yahweh no

longer to be angry with the north country Alternate translation: "they will calm my anger concerning the north country" or 2) the word "spirit" represents Yahweh's presence and the chariots will cause the Jews who live in the north land to experience Yahweh's blessings. Alternate translation: "they will cause my spirit to rest in the north country"

Zechariah 6:9

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to me. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to me"

Zechariah 6:10

Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah

These are the names of men.

this same day

"today"

Zechariah 6:11

Jozadak

This is the name of a man.

take the silver and gold, make a crown

"make a crown with the silver and gold"

Zechariah 6:12

Speak to him and say

"Speak to Joshua and say"

his name is Branch

The word "Branch" refers to a messianic figure that would serve as king over Yahweh's people. Yahweh speaks of this person as if he were a branch that grows out from a tree. Since the word "Branch" is a title, it should be translated with an equivalent word in your language. See how you translated this name in [Zechariah 3:8]

He will grow up where he is

The phrase "grow up" refers to the growth of a plant, and so continues the metaphor of this person as a "Branch." This likely refers to this person appearing or coming into power as the one who would supervise the rebuilding of the temple.

Zechariah 6:13

He will be a priest on his throne

Possible meanings are 1) the "Branch" will be both priest and king or 2) the "Branch" will be king, and another person will be a priest who will share the royal power. Alternate translation: "There will be a priest upon his throne"

he will bear a counsel of peace between the two

The words "the two" refer to the roles of king and priest. The meaning of this phrase depends upon the meaning of the previous phrase. Possible meanings are 1) the "Branch" will faithfully carry out his duties as both priest and king and not forsake one in order to fulfill the other or 2) the "Branch" who serves as king and the other person who serves as a priest will each carry out their duties faithfully and they will work together in peace.

Zechariah 6:14

The crown will given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You will give the crown"

Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah ... Hen

These are the names of men. See how you translated these in [Zechariah 6:10]

for Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial

Some modern versions interpret this phrase as "as a memorial to the generosity of the son of Zephaniah" or "as a memorial to the one who is gracious, the son of Zephaniah." Also, some modern versions interpret the name "Hen" as meaning the name "Josiah."

Zechariah 6:15

those who are far off

This refers to the Israelites who remain in Babylon.

so you will know

The word "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.

truly listen to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here to "listen" means to obey and the word "voice" represents the words that Yahweh speaks. Alternate translation: "truly obey what Yahweh your God says"

Chapter 7

¹ When King Darius had been ruler for four years, on the fourth day of Kislev (which was the ninth month), the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah. ² The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melek and their men to beg before the face of Yahweh. ³ They spoke to the priests who were at the house of Yahweh of hosts and to the prophets; they said, "Should I mourn in the fifth month by means of a fast, as I have done these many years?"

⁴ So the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying, ⁵ "Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests and say, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month for these seventy years, were you truly fasting for me?' ⁶ When you ate and drank, did you not eat and drink for yourselves?"

⁷ Were these not the same words that Yahweh proclaimed by the hand of the former prophets, when Jerusalem and the surrounding cities were inhabited and prosperous, and the Negev and the lowlands to the west were inhabited?" ⁸ The word of Yahweh came to Zechariah, saying, ⁹ "Yahweh of hosts says this, 'Judge with true justice, covenant faithfulness, and mercy. Let each man do this for his brother. ¹⁰ About the widow and orphan, the foreigner, and the poor person—do not oppress them, and let none of you plot any harm against another in your heart.' ¹¹ But they refused to pay attention and set their shoulders stubbornly. They stopped up their ears so they would not hear. ¹² They made their hearts as hard as rock so they would not hear the law or the words of Yahweh of hosts. He had sent these messages to the people by his Spirit in earlier times, by the mouth of the prophets. But the people refused to listen, so Yahweh of hosts was very angry with them. ¹³ It happened that when he called, they did not listen. In the same way," said Yahweh of hosts, "they will call out to me, but I will not listen. ¹⁴ For I will scatter them with a whirlwind to all the nations that they have not known, and the land will be desolate after them. For no one will pass through the land or return to it since the people have made their delightful land into a wasteland."

Zechariah 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter starts about two years after the previous chapter and is written in prose.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of 7:4-14, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Fasting

This chapter discusses fasting. People were asking the same questions as those from previous generations. The Israelites were asking these same questions before they were exiled from their land.

Zechariah 7:1

on the fourth day
"on day 4"

Kislev (which was the ninth month)
"Kislev" is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. The fourth day of Kislev is near the end of November on Western calendars.

the word of Yahweh came to Zechariah
This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to Zechariah" or "Yahweh spoke this message to Zechariah"

Zechariah 7:2

Sharezer and Regem-Melek
These are the names of men.

beg
Here the word "beg" means to plead or ask urgently.

before the face of Yahweh
Here "face" is a metonym for Yahweh's presence. Alternate translation: "in the presence of Yahweh"

Zechariah 7:3

They spoke ... they said

The word "they" refers to Sharezer and Regem Melek.

Should I mourn in the fifth month

"Should I mourn in month 5." The assumed knowledge is that the Jewish people fasted during a part of the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. The fifth month is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

by means of a fast
"by fasting"

Zechariah 7:4

the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts gave me a message. He said" or "Yahweh of hosts spoke this message to me"

Zechariah 7:5

in the fifth and in the seventh month
"in months 5 and 7"

in the fifth
The word "month" can be supplied in translation. Alternate translation: "in the fifth month"

in the seventh month
The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar because in this month the remaining Jews in Jerusalem fled to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed as governor over Judah. The seventh month is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars.

for these seventy years
The assumed knowledge is that the people of Israel had been slaves in Babylon for 70 years.

were you truly fasting for me?
This question is asked to make the people think about what their real reason for fasting had been. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you were not really fasting for me."

Zechariah 7:6

When you ate and drank
Possible meanings are 1) when they feasted and drank when celebrating religious festivals or 2) when they ate and drank whenever they were not fasting.

did you not eat and drink for yourselves?

This question is used to make the people think about whether they were honoring Yahweh when they ate and drank. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "it was for yourselves that you ate and drank."

Zechariah 7:7

Were these not the same words ... were inhabited?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "These are the same words ... were inhabited."

by the hand of the former prophets

Here "hand" is a metonym for the words spoken by the mouth. Alternate translation: "by the words of the former prophets" or "through the former prophets"

when Jerusalem and the surrounding cities were inhabited and prosperous

"you still lived in Jerusalem and everyone who lived in the surrounding cities was prosperous"

Zechariah 7:8

The word of Yahweh came to Zechariah, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message to Zechariah. He said" or "Yahweh spoke this message to Zechariah"

Zechariah 7:9

Judge with true justice, covenant faithfulness, and mercy

The abstract nouns "justice," "faithfulness," and "mercy" can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "When you judge, be just, faithful to the covenant, and merciful"

Let each man do this

The word "this" refers to how a person should judge.

Zechariah 7:10

widow

a woman whose husband has died

orphan

a child whose parents have died

foreigner

someone who travels from his own land to a different land

let none of you plot any harm against another in your heart

Here "heart" represents the thoughts of a person. Alternate translation: "you must not make plans to do evil"

Zechariah 7:11

set their shoulders stubbornly

This is an image of an ox refusing to allow its owner to put a yoke on its shoulders. This metaphor represents the people being stubborn. Alternate translation: "became stubborn"

They stopped up their ears so they would not hear

This is an image of people putting something into their ears so they would not hear the message from Yahweh. This metaphor represents the people not being willing to hear and obey. Alternate translation: "They refused to listen"

Zechariah 7:12

They made their hearts as hard as rock so they would not hear the law or the words of Yahweh of hosts

The people refusing to hear and obey Yahweh are compared to their being as unyielding as rock. Here the heart represents the will of a person. Alternate translation: "They stubbornly refused to hear the law or the words of Yahweh of hosts"

in earlier times
"in the past"

by the mouth of the prophets

Here the "mouth of the prophets" is a metonym for the words that the prophets speak. Alternate translation: "through the words of the prophets"

Zechariah 7:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 7:14

I will scatter them with a whirlwind

Yahweh speaks of how he will scatter the people as if a whirlwind were scattering everything in its path. Alternate translation: "I will scatter them as a whirlwind scatters things"

whirlwind

a strong wind that spins very quickly as it moves and can cause damage

delightful land

"pleasant land" or "fruitful land"

Chapter 8

¹ The word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying, ² "Yahweh of hosts says this: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am passionate for her with great anger! ³ Yahweh of hosts says this: I will return to Zion and will live in the midst of Jerusalem, for Jerusalem will be called The City of Truth and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts will be called The Holy Mountain! ⁴ Yahweh of hosts says this: Old men and old women will once again be in the streets of Jerusalem, and every person will need a staff in his hand because he has grown so old. ⁵ The streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in them.

⁶ Yahweh of hosts says this: If something seems impossible in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also seem impossible in my eyes?—this is Yahweh's declaration.

⁷ Yahweh of hosts says this: Behold, I am about to rescue my people from the land of the sunrise and from the land of the setting sun! ⁸ For I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, so they will again be my people, and I will be their God in truth and in righteousness!

⁹ Yahweh of hosts says this: You who now continue to hear the same words that came from the prophets' mouths when the foundation of my house was laid—this house of mine, Yahweh of hosts: Strengthen your hands so that the temple can be built. ¹⁰ For before those days no crops were gathered in by anyone, there was no profit for either man or animal, and there was no peace from enemies for anyone going or coming. I had set every person each against his neighbor. ¹¹ But now it will not be as in former days, I will be with the remnant of this people— this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts. ¹² For seeds of peace will be sown; the climbing vine will give its fruit and the earth will give its produce; the skies will give their dew, for I will make the remnant of this people inherit all these things. ¹³ You were an example to the other nations of a curse, house of Judah and house of Israel. So I will rescue you and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid; let your hands be strong!

¹⁴ For Yahweh of hosts says this: Just as I planned to do harm to you when your ancestors provoked my anger— says Yahweh of hosts—and did not relent, ¹⁵ so also I will plan in these days to do good again to Jerusalem and the house of Judah! Do not fear! ¹⁶ These are the things that you must do: Speak truth, every person with his neighbor. Judge with truth, justice, and peace in your gates. ¹⁷ Do not plan to do evil within your heart against one another, and do not love deceptive oaths—for these are the things I hate!—this is Yahweh's declaration."

¹⁸ Then the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying, ¹⁹ "Yahweh of hosts says this: The fasts of the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month will become times of joy, gladness, and happy festivals for the house of Judah! Therefore love truth and peace!

²⁰ Yahweh of hosts says this: People will come again, even those who are living in many different cities. ²¹ The inhabitants of one city will go to another city and say, 'Let us quickly go to beg before the face of Yahweh and to seek Yahweh of hosts! We ourselves are also going.' ²² Many people and mighty nations will come to seek Yahweh of hosts in Jerusalem and beg for the favor of Yahweh!

²³ Yahweh of hosts says this: In those days ten men from every language and nation will grasp the hem of the robe of a Jew and say, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you!'"

Zechariah 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a series of sayings from Yahweh of hosts. Each saying is an encouraging note for those returning from the exile to the land of Judah and Jerusalem. (See: yahwehofhosts)

Zechariah 8:1

The word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 7:4]

Zechariah 8:2

I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy

"I am extremely jealous for Zion." Yahweh does not want anyone to harm Zion or try to have Zion love anything more than Yahweh.

for Zion

Here "Zion" represents the people of Zion. Alternate translation: "for the people of Zion" or "for the people of Jerusalem"

with great anger

You may need to make explicit that this anger is against the enemies of Zion. Alternate translation: "with great anger against her enemies"

Zechariah 8:3

the mountain of Yahweh of hosts

The implied information is that this refers to Mount Zion, the location upon which the city of Jerusalem was built.

Zechariah 8:4

be in the streets of Jerusalem

"be living in Jerusalem"

in his hand because he has grown so old

People having the opportunity to grow old implies the city will be peaceful and prosperous for a long time.

Zechariah 8:5

The streets of the city will be full

The public areas of the city will be full of people in their normal activities.

Zechariah 8:6

If something seems impossible in the eyes of

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "If something does not appear to be possible to"

the remnant of this people

"the people of Judah who survive"

in my eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "to me"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

Zechariah 8:7

I am about to rescue my people

The implied information is that the people are in exile. "I am about to rescue my people of Judah who went into exile"

from the land of the sunrise and from the land of the setting sun

Possible meanings are 1) this is a poetic way of expressing specific countries to which the people were exiled. Alternate translation: "From the land to the east and from the land to the west" or 2) this is a merism that means from all directions. Alternate translation: "from all lands in every direction"

Zechariah 8:8

I will be their God in truth and in righteousness

This can be rewritten to remove the abstract nouns "truth" and "righteousness." Alternate translation: "I will be their God. I will be faithful to them and act toward them in a just manner"

Zechariah 8:9

Strengthen your hands

This is an idiom that means to be courageous for the work. Alternate translation: "Be strong and courageous"

Zechariah 8:10

For before those days

Here "those days" refers to the time the people of Judah started to rebuild the temple.

no crops were gathered in

"there were no crops to harvest"

there was no profit for either man or animal

It was useless for people and their animals to farm the land because they got no food from it.

for anyone going or coming

This merism refers to all of life's activities everywhere that anyone went.

I had set every person each against his neighbor

"I had turned everyone against each other"

Zechariah 8:11

But now it will not be as in former days, I will be with the remnant of this people

"But I will not treat the remnant of this people now as I did in former days"

in former days

"in the past." The implied information is that this refers to the time when the people started rebuilding the temple.

the remnant of this people

The implied information is that this is the remnant of the people who returned from exile. Alternate translation: "the people who returned from exile"

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:3]

Zechariah 8:12

seeds of peace will be sown

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "the people will safely sow seed"

the earth will give its produce; the skies will give their dew

The earth and skies are spoken of as if they were persons giving what is needed.

inherit all these things

"to have all these things"

Zechariah 8:13

You were an example to the other nations of a curse

The implied information is that the way Yahweh had allowed the temple to be destroyed and his people to be exiled had been used by other nations as an example of what it meant to be cursed by Yahweh. Alternate translation: "When I punished you, the other nations learned what happens when I curse a people"

house of Judah and house of Israel

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

you will be a blessing

Possible meanings are 1) the implied information is that the people of Judah and Israel would be a blessing to the nations around them. Alternate translation: "you will be a blessing to the surrounding nations" or 2) the implied information is that the nations around them would see what it meant to be blessed by Yahweh. Alternate translation: when I bless you, the other nations will learn what happens when I bless a people" or 3) Yahweh will bless the people of Judah and Israel. Alternate translation: "I will give you many good things"

let your hands be strong

This is an idiom that means to be courageous for the work. Alternate translation: "be strong and courageous"

house of Judah and house of Israel

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

Zechariah 8:14

do harm to you

"punish you"

provoked my anger

"angered me"

did not relent

"did not decide to punish them less"

Zechariah 8:15

Jerusalem

This is a metonym for the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the people of Jerusalem"

Zechariah 8:16

that you must do

"You" refers to the people of Judah.

Speak truth, every person with his neighbor

The abstract noun "truth" can be translated using the adjective "true." Alternate translation: "Everyone must say only true things to his neighbor"

his neighbor

Here "neighbor" means any person, not just someone who lives nearby.

Judge with truth, justice, and peace in your gates

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "truth," "justice," and "peace." Alternate translation: "When you are making decisions in your gates, judge in a way that is true and just and causes people to live peacefully with each other"

in your gates

The assumed knowledge is that this refers to the places where judgment took place. Alternate translation: "in your places of judgment"

Zechariah 8:17

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

Zechariah 8:18

the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 7:4]

came to me

Here "me" refers to Zechariah.

Zechariah 8:19

The fasts of the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month

"The fasts of months 4, 5, 7, and 10"

The fasts of the fourth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians broke through the walls of Jerusalem. The fourth month is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

the fifth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jewish people fasted during a part of the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. The fifth month is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:3.

the seventh month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar because in this month the remaining Jews in Jerusalem fled to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon appointed as governor over Judah. The seventh month is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:5.

the tenth month

The assumed knowledge is that the Jews mourned during a part of the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar because this is when the Babylonians began their siege against Jerusalem. The tenth month is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

times of joy, gladness, and happy festivals

The abstract nouns "joy" and "gladness" can be translated using adjectives. Alternate translation: "joyful and glad times, with happy festivals"

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people in the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah"

love truth and peace

The abstract nouns "truth" and "peace" can be translated using adjectives. Alternate translation: "love what is truthful and peaceful"

Zechariah 8:20

People will come again

The implied information is that Jerusalem is where the people will come. Alternate translation: "People will come again to Jerusalem"

Zechariah 8:21

will go to another city

This is a metonym for the people in the other city. Alternate translation: "will go to the people of another city"

beg

Here the word "beg" means to plead or ask urgently.

before the face of Yahweh

Here "face" is a metonym for Yahweh's presence. See how you translated this in Zechariah 7:2. Alternate translation: "in the presence of Yahweh"

seek Yahweh of hosts

Those who want to know Yahweh and please him are spoken of as if they are literally seeking to find Yahweh.

Zechariah 8:22

mighty nations

This is a metonym for the people in the mighty nations. Alternate translation: "people of mighty nations"

Zechariah 8:23

will grasp the hem of the robe of a Jew

The implied information is that the foreigners will grab their robe to get their attention. Alternate translation: "will grasp the hem of the robe of a Jew to get his attention"

Let us go with you

The implied information is that people of God are going to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Let us go to Jerusalem with you"

God is with you

"God is with you people"

Chapter 9

- ¹ "This is a declaration of Yahweh's word concerning the land of Hadrak
and Damascus, its resting place;
for the eyes of all humanity and all the tribes of Israel
are toward Yahweh.
- ² This declaration also concerns Hamath, which borders on Damascus,
and it concerns Tyre and Sidon, for they are very wise.
- ³ Tyre has built herself a stronghold
and heaped up silver like dust
and refined gold like mud in the streets.
- ⁴ Look! The Lord will dispossess her
and destroy her strength on the sea,
so she will be devoured by fire.
- ⁵ Ashkelon will see and be afraid!
Gaza also will tremble greatly!
Ekron, her hopes will be disappointed!
The king will perish from Gaza,
and Ashkelon will not remain.
- ⁶ Strangers will make their homes in Ashdod,
and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.
- ⁷ For I will remove their blood from their mouths
and their abominations from between their teeth.
Then they will become a remnant for our God
like a clan in Judah,
and Ekron will become like the Jebusites.
- ⁸ I will camp around my land against enemy armies, ^[1]
so no one can pass through or return,
for no oppressor will overrun them,
for now I see with my own eyes!
- ⁹ Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion!
Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold! Your king is coming to you.
He is righteous and victorious.
He is humble and is riding on a donkey,
on the colt of a donkey.
- ¹⁰ Then I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the horse from Jerusalem,
and the bow will be cut off from battle;
for he will speak peace to the nations,
and his dominion will be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth!
- ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the pit where there is no water.
- ¹² Return to the stronghold, prisoners of hope!
Even today I am declaring that I will return double to you,
- ¹³ for I have bent Judah as my bow.
I have filled my quiver with Ephraim.
I have roused your sons, Zion,
against your sons, Greece,
and have made you, Zion, like a warrior's sword!"
- ¹⁴ Yahweh will appear to them,
and his arrows will shoot out like lightning!
For my Lord Yahweh will blow the ram's horn
and will advance with the storms from Teman.
- ¹⁵ Yahweh of hosts will defend them,
and they will devour them and defeat the stones of the slings.
Then they will drink and shout like men drunk on wine,

- and they will be filled with wine like bowls,
like the corners of the altar.
- 16 So Yahweh their God will rescue them on that day,
as the flock of his people.
They are the jewels of a crown
that will shine on his land.
- 17 How good and how beautiful they will be!
The young men will flourish on grain
and the virgins on sweet wine!"

Footnotes

9:8 ^[1]Most interpreters translate the Hebrew words as

Zechariah 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose about the cities and peoples around where Israel stood as a country until the exile.

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 poetic song in 9:9-10.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecies against other nations

The first two verses show that the prophecy concerns neighboring countries. Hamath, Damscus, Tyre and Sidon are cities in areas that were near Israel. (See: prophet)

Zechariah 9:1

This is a declaration of Yahweh's word concerning
"This is Yahweh's message about"

the land of Hadrak and Damascus

Here "Hadrak" and "Damascus" refer to the people who live in those places. Alternate translation: "the people of the land of Hadrak and the city Damascus"

Hadrak

The location of Hadrak is unknown today.

its resting place

"the resting place of the people of Hadrak"

for the eyes of all humanity and all the tribes of Israel are toward Yahweh

Some versions translate this as "for Yahweh's eye is on all mankind and on the tribes of Israel."

the eyes of all humanity and all the tribes of Israel are toward Yahweh

Here "eyes" refers to what they look at. Alternate translation: "all humanity and all the tribes of Israel look toward Yahweh"

Zechariah 9:2

Hamath

This refers to the people who live in that land.
Alternate translation: "the people of the land of Hamath"

Tyre and Sidon

This refers to the people who live in those cities.
Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon"

for they are very wise

Possible meanings are 1) the people are wise for looking at Yahweh for help or 2) Zechariah did not really mean that the people of Hamath were wise and was using irony. Alternate translation: "though they think they are very wise"

Zechariah 9:3

built herself a stronghold

Here the city of Tyre is pictured as a woman.
Alternate translation: "built a strong fortress" or "built a high wall"

heaped up silver like dust and refined gold like mud in the streets

Yahweh exaggerates to emphasize how rich Tyre was. Alternate translation: "accumulated silver and gold as much as soil in the streets"

Zechariah 9:4

Look! The Lord will dispossess her

Here "Look!" tells the reader to pay attention to the important statement that follows. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The Lord will take away Tyre's possessions"

destroy her strength on the sea

Tyre's "strength on the sea" refers to the ships that were used for commerce and conquest. Alternate translation: "destroy Tyre's ships in which men fight on the sea"

so she will be devoured by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and enemies will burn the city to the ground"

Zechariah 9:5

Ashkelon ... Gaza ... Ekron, her hopes

These cities each refer to the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "The people of Ashkelon ... the people of Gaza ... the hopes of the people of Ekron"

will see

"will see Tyre be destroyed"

Zechariah 9:6

Strangers will make their homes in Ashdod

"Foreigners will take over Ashdod and live there"

I will cut off the pride of the Philistines

Here "cut off" is an idiom that means to stop their pride. Alternate translation: "I will make the Philistines to be proud of themselves no longer"

Zechariah 9:7

I will remove their blood from their mouths and their abominations from between their teeth

Here "blood" is a metonym for meat with blood in it, and "abominations" is a metonym for meat offered to idols. Alternate translation: "I will no longer allow them to eat meat that still has blood in it, and I will forbid them to eat food that they offered to idols"

Zechariah 9:8

I will camp around my land

God is speaking about himself as if he were an army that was protecting his land. Alternate translation: "I will protect my land"

for now

"For at that time"

I see with my own eyes

Here "my own eyes" represent Yahweh's personal attention. Alternate translation: "I will personally watch over my land"

Zechariah 9:9

General Information:

Yahweh appears to be the speaker in verses 9-13.

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

These two sentences mean the same thing and intensify the command to rejoice. Yahweh is speaking to the people of Jerusalem as if they were present, but they were not there.

Shout

If your language has a word for a shout of victory that is different from a shout to begin a battle, you might want to use it here.

daughter of Zion ... daughter of Jerusalem

"Zion" is the same as "Jerusalem." The prophet speaks of the city as if it is a daughter. See how you translated "daughter of Zion" in Zechariah 2:10.

Behold!

This alerts the reader to pay special attention to the surprising statement that follows. Alternate translation: "Pay attention!" or "Here is a surprising fact!"

He is righteous and victorious

Some modern translations read, "He is righteous and is coming to save you."

on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and refer to one animal. The second phrase clarifies that this is a young donkey. Alternate translation: "on a young donkey"

Zechariah 9:10

cut off the chariot from Ephraim

Here "cut off" is an idiom that means to destroy. Alternate translation: "destroy the chariots in Israel that are used for battle"

the horse from Jerusalem

The references to "chariot" and "bow" means that this refers to horses used in battle. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the warhorses in Jerusalem"

the bow will be cut off from battle

Here the bow represents all weapons used in warfare. Alternate translation: "all weapons of war will be destroyed"

for he will speak peace to the nations

Here the action of announcing peace represents the action of making peace. Alternate translation: "for your king will bring peace to the nations"

his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

The phrases "sea to sea" and "from the River to the ends of the earth" mean the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: "his kingdom will be over all the earth!"

the River

This probably refers to the Euphrates River.

Zechariah 9:11

General Information:

Yahweh appears to be the speaker in verses 9-13.

As for you

Here "you" is singular, and continues to refer to the city of Jerusalem, also called "Zion."

the pit where there is no water

This dry pit represents the exile in Babylon.

Zechariah 9:12

Return to the stronghold

Jerusalem is spoken of as a place of safety. Alternate translation: "Come back to your nation where you will be safe"

prisoners of hope

This expression refers to the Israelites in exile who were still trusting in God to rescue them. Alternate translation: "prisoners who still hope in Yahweh"

return double to you

"return to you twice as much as was taken from you"

Zechariah 9:13

Zion

This refers to the city of Jerusalem, also called "Zion."

I have bent Judah as my bow

The people of Judah are referred to as if they were a bow carried by God into battle. Here "Judah" refers to the people of that nation. Alternate translation: "I will cause the people of Judah to be like my bow"

filled my quiver with Ephraim

Yahweh speaks of the people of Israel, the northern kingdom, as if they were arrows that he would shoot at his enemies. A quiver is a bag that holds a soldier's arrows.

I have roused your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece

God is speaking to the people of two different nations at the same time.

Zechariah 9:14

General Information:

In verses 14-16, Zechariah describes how Yahweh will rescue Israel from their enemies.

will appear to them

The word "them" refers to God's people. Alternate translation: "will be seen in the sky by his people" or "will come to his people"

his arrows will shoot out like lightning!

The Israelites sometimes thought of lightning bolts as arrows that God shot.

blow the ram's horn

People blew into rams' horns to give signals in battle and on other occasions. Here the ram's horn is blown as a military signal.

will advance with the storms from Teman

Teman was located to the south of Judah. The Israelites sometimes thought of God as traveling on violent storms coming from the south. Alternate translation: "will march from Teman with the storm winds"

Zechariah 9:15

they will devour them

"the people of Judah will devour their enemies"

will devour

To completely defeat enemies is spoken of as devouring them as a wild animal eats its prey. Alternate translation: "will completely defeat"

defeat the stones of the slings

Slings to throw stones were a common weapon in the days of Zechariah. Here the "stones of the slings" represent the soldiers who were using them to attack Israel. Alternate translation: "defeat the enemies who attack them with slings and stones"

Then they will drink and shout like men drunk on wine

The people of Judah will shout and celebrate their victory over their enemies as if they were noisy drunks. Alternate translation: "Then they will shout and celebrate their victory as loudly as if they were drunk"

they will be filled with wine like bowls

This probably refers to the bowls that the priests used to carry animal's blood to the altar. Alternate translation: "they will be as full of wine as the basins with which priests carry blood to the altar"

like the corners of the altar

Altars had projecting corners that were drenched in animal blood. Alternate translation: "they will be drenched as the corners of the altar are covered in blood"

Zechariah 9:16

General Information:

In verses 14-16, Zechariah describes how Yahweh will rescue Israel from their enemies.

God will rescue them ... as the flock of his people

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they are God's sheep that he cares for and protects.

They are the jewels of a crown

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were the expensive jewels in the crown of a king that show how glorious he is. Alternate translation: "They will be like beautiful stones in a crown"

Zechariah 9:17

How good and how beautiful they will be!

This is an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "They will be very good and beautiful!"

The young men will flourish on grain and the virgins on sweet wine!

This sentence uses a parallel structure to express that everyone will have plenty to eat and drink. If your readers might think that only the men ate and only the women drank, you may want to adjust the wording. Alternate translation: "All of the people, both men and women, will have plenty of grain to eat and sweet wine to drink!"

The young men ... the virgins

These two phrases are parallel and together represent the entire population of Israel.

grain ... sweet wine

These two phrases are parallel and together represent all of the different kinds of the food and drink.

Chapter 10

- ¹ Ask for rain from Yahweh in the season of the spring rain—
Yahweh who makes thunderstorms—
and he gives rain showers to everyone
and vegetation in the field.
- ² For household idols speak wickedness;
the diviners envision a lie;
they tell deceitful dreams
and give empty comfort,
so they wander like sheep and suffer
because there is no shepherd.
- ³ "My wrath burns against the shepherds;
it is the male goats—the leaders—that I will punish.
Yahweh of hosts will also attend to his flock, the house of Judah,
and make them like his warhorse in battle!
- ⁴ From Judah will come the cornerstone;
from him will come the tent peg;
from him will come the war bow;
from him will come every ruler together. ^[1]
- ⁵ They will be like warriors
who trample their enemies into the mud of the streets in battle;
they will make war, for Yahweh is with them,
and they will shame those who ride warhorses.
- ⁶ I will strengthen the house of Judah
and save the house of Joseph,
for I will restore them
and have mercy on them.
They will be as though
I had not rejected them,
for I am Yahweh their God,
and I will respond to them.
- ⁷ Then Ephraim will be like a warrior,
and their hearts will rejoice as with wine;
their children will see and rejoice.
Their hearts will rejoice in me!
- ⁸ I will whistle for them
and gather them,
for I will rescue them,
and they will become as great as they previously were!
- ⁹ I sowed them among the peoples,
but they will remember me in distant countries,
so they and their children will live and return.
- ¹⁰ For I will restore them from the land of Egypt
and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to the land of Gilead and Lebanon
until there is no more room for them.
- ¹¹ I will pass through the sea of their affliction;
I will strike the waves of that sea and will dry up all the depths of the Nile.
The majesty of Assyria will be brought down,
and the scepter of Egypt will go away from the Egyptians.
- ¹² I will strengthen them in myself,
and they will walk in my name—
this is Yahweh's declaration."

Footnotes

10:4 ^[1]Many modern translations arrange the text by adding

Zechariah 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written mainly in prose but still uses figurative language as the writer shares a message of redemption and hope for the exiles. (See: redeem)

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 poetic song in 10:1-2.

Special concepts in this chapter

Redemption

This book, and especially this chapter, uses the concepts of redemption and remnant to share the relationship that the people of Judah have with their God. So many of the people of Israel perished as their kingdom went into exile. Now they are returning to the land, but the land is no longer theirs. They are living under foreign rule. (See: redeem and remnant)

Zechariah 10:1

General Information:

Zechariah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

vegetation in the field

"causes plants to grow in the field"

Zechariah 10:2

household idols speak wickedness

"household idols say evil things." Zechariah is not suggesting that idols actually speak. He is referring to the messages people say they hear from idols. The UDB makes this explicit.

diviners envision a lie

"diviners see false visions"

they tell deceitful dreams

It is implied that they know these dreams are false. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "diviners lie about their dreams in order to deceive people"

empty comfort

This refers to words that sooth temporarily, but do not provide any longterm help.

they wander like sheep

The people who do not have true prophets who tell the truth are spoken of as sheep who do not have a shepherd to tell them where to go. Alternate translation: "the people who listen to the false prophets are like sheep who do not know which way to go"

they ... suffer because there is no shepherd

The people who do not have true prophets are spoken of as sheep who suffer because they do not have a shepherd to tell them where to go. Alternate translation: "the people who listen to the false prophets ... are suffering like sheep who do not have a shepherd to guide them"

Zechariah 10:3

General Information:

It is unclear whether Yahweh is speaking, or if Zechariah is speaking for Yahweh in verses 3-5.

My wrath burns against the shepherds

Here "the shepherds" represent the leaders of God's people. The intensity of Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it was a blazing fire. Alternate translation: "My anger toward the shepherds of my people is as intense as a fire" or "I am very angry with the leaders of my people"

it is the male goats—the leaders—that I will punish

Male goats are typically more dominant than female goats. Here "male goats" represents the oppressive leaders of God's people.

Yahweh of hosts will also attend to his flock, the house of Judah

Here Yahweh's care for his people is spoken of as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Alternate translation: "Yahweh of hosts will take care of the house of Judah as a shepherd cares for his sheep"

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the people of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "Judah" or "the people of Judah"

make them like his warhorse in battle

Yahweh changes the metaphor for his people from defenseless sheep to a mighty war horse. He speaks of his people as if they were a strong horse in battle. Alternate translation: "will cause them to be strong like war horses in battle"

Zechariah 10:4

General Information:

It is unclear whether Yahweh is speaking, or if Zechariah is speaking for Yahweh in verses 3-5.

From Judah will come the cornerstone

"The cornerstone will come from Judah." The most important ruler is spoken of as if he were the main foundation stone of a building. Alternate translation: "One of the descendants of Judah will become the most important ruler"

the cornerstone ... the tent peg ... the war bow

Possible meanings for these three things are 1) they may be symbolic language that refers to the Messiah who will come from the tribe of Judah or 2) they may refer to different leaders who will come from Judah.

from him will come the tent peg

"the tent peg will come from him." The tent pegs held the ropes that supported tents in which people lived. Here the most important ruler is spoken of as if he were the main peg that holds a tent in place. Alternate translation: "the leader who will hold the nation together will come from Judah"

from him will come the war bow

"the war bow will come from him." Here the most important ruler is spoken of as if he were the a war bow that was used in battle. Alternate translation: "the military leader will come from Judah"

from him will come every ruler together

"every ruler will come from Judah"

Zechariah 10:5

They will be like warriors ... streets in battle

The rulers from Judah are spoken of as if they were victorious warriors. Alternate translation: "They will be mighty in battle, trampling their enemies into the mud of the streets"

who trample their enemies into the mud of the streets in battle

To trample them into the mud is an idiom that means to completely defeat them. Alternate translation: "who defeat their enemies completely"

Yahweh is with them

Here "with them" is an idiom that means he is present to help them. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will help them"

they will shame those who ride warhorses

Here shame accompanies and represents defeat. Alternate translation: "they will defeat their enemies who ride warhorses"

Zechariah 10:6

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

the house of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: "Judah" or "the kingdom of Judah" or "the people of Judah"

the house of Joseph

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

Zechariah 10:7

Ephraim will be like a warrior

"Ephraim" refers here to the northern kingdom of Israel. Warriors are strong. Alternate translation: "Ephraim will be very strong"

their hearts will rejoice as with wine

Here "hearts" refers to the whole person. They will have the same joy as a person who is enjoying drinking wine. Alternate translation: "and they will be very happy"

their children will see and rejoice. Their hearts will rejoice in me!

"their children will see what has taken place and will be happy because of what Yahweh has done for them!"

Zechariah 10:8

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

I will whistle

To whistle is to produce a high, shrill sound with air through narrowed lips. It is often done to give a signal to other people, as here.

Zechariah 10:9

I sowed them among the peoples

The exile of the people is spoken of as if they were seed that Yahweh had planted in a distant land.

Zechariah 10:10

until there is no more room for them

The people will continue to go back to Judah and it will become crowded with no room for any more people to live there. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "and they will completely fill the land"

Zechariah 10:11

General Information:

In verses 6-12, Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

I will pass through the sea of their affliction

Scripture often refers to the sea as an image of many troubles and hardships. Here Yahweh speaks of himself accompanying the people to help them go through these afflictions. Alternate translation: "I will go with them and help them as they go through their many afflictions"

I will strike the waves of that sea

Here to "strike" the waves is an idiom that means he will stop the waves from forming. Stopping the

afflictions of his people is spoken of as calming the waves of that sea. Alternate translation: "I will cause the waves of that sea of affliction to stop"

will dry up all the depths of the Nile

"I will cause the Nile River to lose all its water"

The majesty of Assyria will be brought down

Here "the majesty of Assyria" probably refers to the Assyrian army. Alternate translation: "I will destroy Assyria's proud army"

the scepter of Egypt will go away from the Egyptians

Here "the scepter of Egypt" refers to the political power of Egypt. Alternate translation: "the power of Egypt to rule other nations will end"

Zechariah 10:12

I will strengthen them in myself

"I will cause them to be strong and to believe in me"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

Chapter 11

- ¹ Open your doors, Lebanon,
that fire may devour your cedars!
- ² Wail, cypress trees, for the cedar trees have fallen!
What was glorious has been devastated!
Wail, you oaks of Bashan,
for the impenetrable forest has gone down.
- ³ There is the sound of the shepherds' howl,
for their glory has been destroyed!
There is the voice of the young lions' roar,
for the pride of the Jordan River has been devastated!

⁴ This is what Yahweh my God says, "Like a shepherd, watch over the flock set aside for slaughter! ⁵ (Those who buy them slaughter them and are not guilty, and those who sell them say, 'Blessed be Yahweh! I have become rich!' for the shepherds working for the flocks' owners have no pity on them.) ⁶ For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land!—this is Yahweh's declaration. See! I myself am about to turn over every person into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king, and they will destroy the land and none of them will I deliver them from their hand."

⁷ So I became the shepherd of the flock marked for slaughter for those who dealt in sheep. I took two staffs; one staff I called "Favor" and the other I called "Unity." In this way I shepherded the flock. ⁸ In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. I became impatient with them, and they also hated me. ⁹ Then I said to the owners, "I will not work as a shepherd for you any longer. The sheep that are dying—let them die; the sheep that are being destroyed—let them be destroyed. Let the sheep that remain each eat the flesh of its neighbor." ¹⁰ So I took my staff "Favor" and broke it to break the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. ¹¹ On that day the covenant was broken, and those who dealt in sheep and who were watching me knew that Yahweh had spoken. ¹² I said to them, "If it seems good to you, pay me my wages. But if not, do not do it." So they weighed out my wages—thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ Then Yahweh said to me, "Deposit the silver in the treasury, the excellent price at which they valued you!" So I took the thirty pieces of silver and deposited them in the treasury in the house of Yahweh. ¹⁴ Then I broke my second staff, "Unity," to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

¹⁵ Yahweh said to me, "Again, take the equipment of a foolish shepherd for yourself, ¹⁶ for see, I am about to set in place a shepherd in the land. He will not care for the perishing sheep. He will not seek out the sheep gone missing, nor heal the crippled sheep. He will not feed the sheep that are healthy, but will eat the flesh of the fattened sheep and will tear off their hooves.

- ¹⁷ Woe to the worthless shepherd
who abandons the flock!
May the sword come against his arm and his right eye!
May his arm wither away
and may his right eye become blind!"

Zechariah 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter unlike the previous one is a warning against the leaders amongst the exiles.

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 poetic song in 11:1-3, 17.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

This chapter uses an extended metaphor of sheep and shepherds to represent Yahweh's dismay at the leaders during the exiles.

Symbolism

The writer uses symbolism. Zechariah is told to become a shepherd. He uses two staffs and names them "Unity" and "Favor." He does this very purposefully. In order to preserve this symbolism, it is important to pay attention to the specific words used. (See: favor)

Zechariah 11:1

Open your doors, Lebanon, that fire may devour

Not resisting what is about to happen is spoken of as if Lebanon were opening its doors. Here "Lebanon" is a metonym that represents the people of Lebanon. Alternate translation: "People of Lebanon, get ready, because fire will devour" or "People of Lebanon, do not try to stop the fire that will devour"

fire may devour your cedars

Fire completely burning up the cedars is spoken of as if the fire would devour the cedars. Alternate translation: "fire may completely destroy your cedars" or "fire may completely burn up your cedars"

Zechariah 11:2

Wail, cypress trees, for the cedar trees have fallen

Cypress trees are spoken of as if they could grieve like a human. Alternate translation: "If the trees were people, they would cry out in sorrow. The cypress trees stand alone because the cedars have burned and fallen"

What was glorious has been devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The glorious cedar trees are no more" or "The cedar trees were once glorious, but now they are ruined"

Wail, you oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has gone down.

The oaks of Bash are spoken of as if they could grieve like a human. Alternate translation: "If the oak trees in Bashan were people, they would wail, for their impenetrable forests are gone"

impenetrable forest

a forest in which plants grow so close together that people cannot pass between them

Zechariah 11:3

the shepherds' howl

"The loud cry of the shepherds"

for their glory has been destroyed

Here "their glory" probably represents the rich pastures that the shepherds led their sheep to. Alternate translation: "for their rich pastures are ruined"

for the pride of the Jordan River has been devastated

Here "the pride" probably represents the forests that grew near the Jordan River. Alternate translation: "because the trees and shrubbery where they lived by the Jordan River are ruined"

Zechariah 11:4

General Information:

In 11:4-17 is a story about two shepherds. Possible meanings are 1) Zechariah actually became a shepherd over a flock as a symbolic act showing how Yahweh will treat his people or 2) Zechariah tells a parable that teaches how Yahweh will treat his people. Since it is uncertain which of these meanings is correct, it would be best not to specify either option in the translation.

watch over the flock set aside for slaughter

"take care of a flock of sheep that the owners plan to slaughter"

Zechariah 11:5

Those who buy them ... them and are not guilty

The inhabitants of the land do not consider "those who buy them" guilty, but Yahweh does and uses irony to say so. Alternate translation: "Those who buy them ... them, but no one believes they are guilty for doing so"

guilty

You may need to make explicit that Yahweh considers them guilty of murder.

Zechariah 11:6

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:4]

See!

"Listen!" or "Pay attention!"

I myself

The word "myself" is used to emphasize that it is Yahweh who will do these things.

turn over every person into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "allow the people to harm each other and the king will oppress them"

none of them will I deliver them from their hand

Here "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "I will not save them from those who are harming them" or "I will not rescue them"

Zechariah 11:7

for those who dealt in sheep

"for those who bought and sold sheep"

Favor

Other versions of the Bible translate this word as "grace," "beauty," or "pleasant."

Zechariah 11:8

I became impatient with them,

Possible meanings are 1) "them" refers to the three shepherds or 2) "them" refers to the sheep owners.

Zechariah 11:9

the sheep that are being destroyed—let them be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sheep that are perishing—let them perish" or "the sheep that are to wander and get lost—let them get lost"

Zechariah 11:10

all the peoples

"all the nations." Some modern translations read "all the people," referring to the people of Israel.

Zechariah 11:11

the covenant was broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the covenant ended"

knew that Yahweh had spoken

It is implied that those watching knew Yahweh was giving them a message through the breaking of the staff. Alternate translation: "knew that Yahweh had given them a message"

Zechariah 11:12

thirty pieces of silver

It is implied that this was very little pay for the shepherd. Alternate translation: "only thirty pieces of silver"

thirty pieces

"30 pieces"

Zechariah 11:13

General Information:

The parable about shepherds and sheep continues.

treasury

This is the place in the temple of Yahweh where the priests kept the money. Many versions of the Bible translate this as "potter." This is the person who would melt metal to make vessels out of it. Here Yahweh would mean that the payment is so small that the shepherd should have the silver melted to show how insulted he was.

the excellent price

Yahweh uses irony to say that this price was very small for a shepherd doing Yahweh's work. Alternate translation: "the ridiculously small amount of money"

Zechariah 11:14

between Judah and Israel

Here "Judah" represents the people of the southern kingdom and "Israel" represents the people of the northern kingdom. Alternate translation: "between the people of Judah and the people of Israel"

Zechariah 11:15

General Information:

This continues the story about two shepherds that began in [Zechariah 11:4]

Zechariah 11:16

I am about to set in place a shepherd in the land

Here "set in place" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I am about to appoint a shepherd in the land" or "I am about to put a shepherd in charge in the land"

the fattened sheep

"the fattest sheep" or "the best sheep"

will tear off their hooves

This was probably done as an act of cruelty.

Zechariah 11:17

May the sword

Here "sword" represents enemies who will attack the shepherd. Alternate translation: "May enemies"

come against his arm and his right eye

Here "come against" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "strike and wound his right arm and pierce his right eye"

his arm

Here "arm" represents the power to fight.

his right eye

A soldier would use his right eye to look around the shield that he held with his left hand. If his right eye was wounded, he would not be able to see to fight in war.

his arm wither away

"his arm waste away" or "his arm become completely useless"

Chapter 12

¹ This is a declaration of Yahweh's word concerning Israel—a declaration of Yahweh, who stretched out the skies and laid the foundation of the earth, who fashions the spirit of mankind within man, ² "See, I am about to make Jerusalem into a cup causing all the peoples surrounding her to stagger about. It will also be like that for Judah during the siege against Jerusalem. ³ On that day, I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples. Anyone trying to carry that stone will hurt himself very much, and all the nations of the earth will gather against that city. ⁴ On that day—this is Yahweh's declaration—I will strike every horse with confusion and its rider with madness. Over the house of Judah I will open my eyes, but every horse of the peoples I will strike with blindness. ⁵ Then the chiefs of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength because of Yahweh of hosts, their God.' ⁶ On that day I will make the chiefs of Judah like firepots among wood and like a flaming torch among standing grain, for they will consume all the surrounding peoples on their right and on their left. Jerusalem will again live in her own place.

⁷ Yahweh will save the tents of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and the honor of those who live in Jerusalem may not be greater than the rest of Judah. ⁸ On that day Yahweh will be the defender of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on that day those who are weak among them will be like David, while the house of David will be like God, like the angel of Yahweh in front of them. ⁹ "On that day I will begin to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁰ "But I will pour out a spirit of compassion and pleading on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so they will look on me, the one they have pierced. They will mourn for me, as one mourns for an only son; they will bitterly lament for him like those who lament the death of a firstborn son. ¹¹ On that day the wailing in Jerusalem will be like the wailing at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹² The land will mourn, each clan separate from other clans. The clan of the house of David will be separate and their wives will be separate from the men. The clan of the house of Nathan will be separate and their wives will be separate from the men. ¹³ The clan of the house of Levi will be separate and their wives will be separate from the men. The clan of the Shimeites will be separate and their wives will be separate from the men. ¹⁴ Every clan of the remaining clans—each clan will be separate and the wives will be separate from the men."

Zechariah 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Similar to chapter 11, this chapter is written mainly in prose and is talking about Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecy

Verses 10-11 are quoted in the New Testament and apply to Jesus's death on the cross. (See: cross)

Zechariah 12:1

General Information:

These verses begin a section that tells about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

who stretched out the skies

This is a metaphor that speaks of the sky as if it were like a scroll that is rolled up and needs to be stretched out. Alternate translation: "the one who created the sky"

laid the foundation of the earth

This is a metaphor that speaks of the earth as if it were a building with a foundation. Alternate translation: "put all the earth into place"

fashions the spirit of mankind within man

This is a metaphor that speaks of the spirit as if it were like clay that a potter shapes. Alternate translation: "creates the human spirit"

Zechariah 12:2

I am about to make Jerusalem into a cup ... to stagger about

Yahweh using Jerusalem to punish the surrounding peoples is spoken of as if Yahweh would make Jerusalem a cup full of an alcoholic drink that will cause the surrounding peoples to get drunk and stagger. Alternate translation: "Soon it will be like I make Jerusalem into a cup ... to stagger about"

into a cup

Here "cup" represents the cup and the contents within the cup. Alternate translation: "into a cup full of wine" or "into a cup full of an alcoholic drink"

surrounding her

Here "her" refers to the city of Jerusalem. It was common in Hebrew to speak of a city or country as if it were a woman.

Zechariah 12:3

I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples

Yahweh using Jerusalem to punish the surrounding peoples is spoken of as if he would make Jerusalem a very heavy stone. Alternate translation: "It will be like I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all the peoples"

burdensome stone ... carry

Some modern translations read, "stone that cannot be moved ... move."

Zechariah 12:4

General Information:

These verses continue telling about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

Over the house of Judah I will open my eyes

Opening eyes over someone here is a metaphor for wanting to do good things for that person. Alternate translation: "I will do good things for the house of Judah" or "I will protect the house of Judah"

the house of Judah

Here "house" represents people. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah"

Zechariah 12:5

say in their hearts

Here "hearts" represents a person's mind. Alternate translation: "think to themselves" or "say to themselves"

are our strength

The abstract noun "strength" can be stated as "strong" or "encourage." Alternate translation: "make us strong" or "encourage us"

Yahweh of hosts, their God

"Yahweh of hosts, the God they worship"

Zechariah 12:6

General Information:

This verse continues telling about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

like firepots among wood ... standing grain

This simile means Yahweh will enable the leaders of Judah to be strong and able to lead the people to defeat their enemies. Alternate translation: "like firepots among stacked firewood ... unharvested stalks of grain standing in a field"

firepots

clay pots in which ancient people often carried burning coals

flaming torch

a wooden stick that is burning at one end which gives light as one travels or carries fire somewhere

will consume all the surrounding peoples

Completely destroying the peoples is spoken of as if the people of Judah will "devour" them. Alternate translation: "will destroy the surrounding peoples"

on their right and on their left

Here "right" and "left" represent every direction. Alternate translation: "in every direction"

Jerusalem will again live in her own place

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: "The people of Jerusalem will again live in their own city"

Zechariah 12:7

General Information:

These verses continue telling about the coming attack against Jerusalem and how God will rescue the city.

the tents of Judah

Here "tents" represents homes, and homes represent the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah"

the house of David

Possible meanings are 1) the descendants of David or 2) the ruling class of people.

Zechariah 12:8

those who are weak among them will be like David

This simile means those who are weak will be strong. Alternate translation: "those who are weak will be strong like David"

the angel of Yahweh

This is an angel sent by Yahweh to protect the people.

Zechariah 12:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 12:10

I will pour out a spirit of compassion and pleading on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem

Causing the people to be compassionate and to plead is spoken of as if the spirit were a liquid that Yahweh would pour on them. Alternate translation: "I will cause the house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem to have mercy on others and to pray to me for mercy"

a spirit of compassion and pleading

Here this means to have a characteristic of compassion and pleading.

the house of David

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "the descendants of David"

the one they have pierced

"the one whom they stabbed to death"

for an only son

It is understood that the "son" has died. Alternate translation: "for an only son who has died"

Zechariah 12:11

the wailing in Jerusalem will be like the wailing at Hadad Rimmon

Hadad Rimmon may have been the place where the good King Josiah died of battle wounds after the Battle of Megiddo. It appears that the custom arose to hold periodic mourning there for his death. Some people, however, think that Hadad Rimmon was the name of a false god who was believed to die every year, an event for which his worshipers would go into mourning.

Megiddo

This is the name of a plain in Israel.

Zechariah 12:12

The land will mourn

This represents all the people living in the land of Judah. Alternate translation: "All the people in the land of Judah will mourn"

The clan of the house of David ... The clan of the house of Nathan

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of David ... The descendants of Nathan"

Zechariah 12:13

The clan of the house of Levi

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Levi"

Zechariah 12:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 13

¹ "On that day a spring will be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for their sin and impurity. ² On that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—I will cut off the names of the idols from the land and they will no longer be remembered. I will remove the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness from the land. ³ If any man continues to prophesy, his father and mother who bore him will tell him, 'You will not live, for you speak lies in the name of Yahweh!' Then the father and mother who bore him will pierce him when he prophesies. ⁴ On that day each prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he is about to prophesy. These prophets will no longer wear a hairy cloak, in order to deceive the people. ⁵ For each will say, 'I am not a prophet! I am a man who works the soil, for the land became my work while I was still a young man!' ⁶ But someone will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' and he will answer, 'I was wounded with those in my friends' house.'

⁷ "Sword! Rouse yourself against my shepherd,
the man who stands close to me—
this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.
Strike the shepherd,
and the flock will scatter!
For I will turn my hand against the lowly ones.
⁸ Then it will come about that throughout all the land—this is Yahweh's declaration—
that two-thirds of it will be cut off! Those people will perish;
only one-third will remain there.
⁹ I will bring that third through the fire
and refine them as silver is refined;
I will test them as gold is tested.
They will call on my name,
and I will answer them and say,
'This is my people!'
and they will say, 'Yahweh is my God!'"

Zechariah 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written partly in prose and partly in poetry.

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 poetic song in 13:7-9.

Special concepts in this chapter

Zechariah often speaks of the last days by using the phrase "that day" or "in that day." When referencing a future "day," the translator should be aware that it is possible that the author is speaking about the last days. (See: lastday)

Zechariah 13:1

a spring will be opened ... for their sin and impurity
Forgiving the people's sins is spoken of as if a spring of water will wash away their sins. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will be like a spring opens ... to cleanse their sin and impurity"

a spring
a place where water flows naturally out of the ground

the house of David

Here "house" represents descendants. Alternate translation: "the descendants of David"

Zechariah 13:2

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts
Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:3]

I will cut off the names of the idols from the land

Causing the people to no longer mention the names of idols is spoken of as if Yahweh would "cut off the names of the idols from the land." Alternate translation: "I will cause the people to no longer mention the names of the idols"

they will no longer be remembered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they no longer think about the idols"

I will remove the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness from the land

The prophets may refer to "false prophets." The spirit of impurity is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. Alternate translation: "I will also remove from the land the false prophets and their evil spirits"

spirit of uncleanness

Some modern translations read, "unclean spirit," taking the phrase "of uncleanness" as a description of the word "spirit."

Zechariah 13:3

to prophesy

It is implied that these are false prophecies. Alternate translation: "to prophesy falsely"

his father and mother who bore him

The phrase "who bore him" describes "his father and mother" in order to express surprise that someone's own parents would treat him in this way. Alternate translation: "his own father and mother"

You will not live

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You must die"

you speak lies in the name of Yahweh

Speaking in the name of someone means speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative. Alternate translation: "you claim to speak for Yahweh but you speak lies"

will pierce

"will stab and kill him"

Zechariah 13:4

each prophet

This implies false prophets. Alternate translation: "every false prophet"

no longer wear a hairy cloak

Prophets often wore heavy outer garments made of animal hair.

Zechariah 13:5

I am a man who works the soil

"I am a farmer"

the land became my work while I was still a young man

"I became a farmer when I was young." Some versions of the Bible translate this as "a man sold me as a slave when I was young."

Zechariah 13:6

What are these wounds between your arms?

"How did you get those cuts on your chest?" This refers to the apparent custom of false prophets wounding themselves in their ceremonies.

he will answer

It is implied that his answer is a lie. Alternate translation: "he will lie to him saying"

Zechariah 13:7

General Information:

Zechariah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. Here Yahweh begins speaking.

Sword! Rouse yourself against my shepherd

"You, sword! Go and attack my shepherd." Here Yahweh speaks to a sword as if it were a person. Here it represents enemies. Alternate translation: "You, enemies! Go and attack my shepherd"

my shepherd

This speaks of a servant of Yahweh as if he were a shepherd. Alternate translation: "my servant who is like a shepherd"

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Zechariah 1:3]

the flock will scatter

The people of God are spoken of as if they were sheep. Alternate translation: "my people will run away like sheep"

I will turn my hand against the lowly ones

The idiom "turn my hand against" means to act hostile towards someone. Alternate translation: "I will attack the lowly ones"

the lowly ones

This probably refers to all the Israelites who are weak and defenseless.

Zechariah 13:8

that two-thirds of it will be cut off! Those people will perish; only one-third will remain there

People being killed is spoken of as if they are cut off like cloth is cut from a garment or a branch is cut from a plant. Alternate translation: "that two out of every three people will die! Only one person out of three will remain in the land"

Zechariah 13:9

I will bring that third through the fire

Metal is passed through fire in order to purify or harden it. This expression serves here as a

metaphor for exposing the people to suffering in order that they may become more faithful to God.

refine them as silver is refined; I will test them as gold is tested

Refining refers to making precious metals such as silver more pure. Metals such as silver and gold are tested in order to discover how pure or strong they are. Both refining and testing are here metaphors for making the people more faithful to God.

They will call on my name

Here "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "They will call out to me"

Chapter 14

¹ Behold! A day for Yahweh is coming when your plunder will be divided in your midst. ² For I will gather every nation against Jerusalem for battle and the city will be captured. The houses will be plundered and the women raped. Half of the city will go out into captivity, but the remainder of the people will not be cut off from the city. ³ But Yahweh will go out and make war against those nations as when he makes war on the day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is beside Jerusalem to the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half between the east and the west by a very great valley and half of the mountain will go back toward the north and half toward the south. ⁵ Then you will flee down the valley between Yahweh's mountains, for the valley between those mountains will reach to Azel. You will flee just as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then Yahweh my God will come and all the holy ones will be with him. ⁶ On that day there will be no light, but no cold or frost either. ⁷ On that day, a day known only to Yahweh, there will no longer be day or night, for the evening will be a time of light. ⁸ On that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem. Half of them will flow to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.

⁹ Yahweh will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be Yahweh, the one God, and his name alone. ¹⁰ All the land will be like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will continue to be raised up and remain in its own place, from the Benjamin Gate to the place where the first gate was, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹¹ The people will live in Jerusalem and there will be no more complete destruction from God against them. Jerusalem will live in safety.

¹² This will be the plague with which Yahweh will attack all the peoples that waged war against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot away even as they are standing on their feet. Their eyes will rot in their sockets and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day that great panic from Yahweh will come among them. Each one will seize the hand of another, and the hand of one will be raised up against the hand of another. ¹⁴ Judah will also make war against Jerusalem. They will gather the wealth of all the surrounding nations—gold, silver, and fine clothes in great abundance. ¹⁵ A plague will also be on the horses and the mules, the camels and the donkeys, and on every animal in those camps will also suffer that same plague.

¹⁶ Then it will happen that all who remain in those nations that came against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the Festival of Shelters. ¹⁷ It will happen that if anyone from all the nations of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, then Yahweh will not bring rain on them. ¹⁸ If the nation of Egypt does not go up, then they will not receive rain. A plague from Yahweh will attack the nations that do not go up to keep the Festival of Shelters. ¹⁹ This will be the punishment for Egypt and the punishment for every nation that does not go up to keep the Festival of Shelters. ²⁰ But on that day, the bells of the horses will say, "Set apart to Yahweh," and the basins in the house of Yahweh will be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ For every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart to Yahweh of hosts and everyone who brings a sacrifice will eat from them and boil in them. On that day traders will no longer be in the house of Yahweh of hosts.

Zechariah 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written in prose about Jerusalem during the last days. (See: lastday)

Special concepts in this chapter

Last days

Zechariah often speaks of the last days by using the phrase "that day" or "in that day." When referencing a future "day," the translator should be aware that it is possible that the author is speaking about the last days.

Zechariah 14:1

General Information:

This chapter describes the final war for the city of Jerusalem and how God will save it.

A day for Yahweh is coming when your plunder will be divided in your midst

A future time is spoken of as if "a day is coming." The phrase "will be divided" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Soon Yahweh will judge you, and he will allow your enemies to take all of your possessions and divide it for themselves while you watch"

Zechariah 14:2

I will gather every nation against Jerusalem for battle

Here "every nation" is a generalization that means "many nations." Alternate translation: "I will cause many nations to attack Jerusalem"

the city will be captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your enemies will capture the city"

The houses will be plundered and the women raped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Enemies will plunder the houses and rape the women"

the remainder of the people will not be cut off from the city

Not removing people from the city is spoken of as if the people will not be "cut off." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your enemies will allow the remaining people to stay in the city"

Zechariah 14:3

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save it. In this prophecy, Yahweh is described as a warrior who will come and fight in battle.

as when he makes war on the day of battle

"just as he fought battles in the past"

Zechariah 14:4

On that day

"At that time"

his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives

Here "feet" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "he will stand on the Mount of Olives"

The Mount of Olives will be split ... by a very great valley

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The presences of Yahweh will split the Mount of Olives ... causing there to be a very great valley"

Zechariah 14:5

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

you will flee

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

between Yahweh's mountains

This refers to the mountains created after the Mount of Olives split in half.

Azel

This is the name of a town or village east of Jerusalem.

You will flee just as you fled

Here "You will" refers to the people of Jerusalem. But, "you fled" refers to their ancestors since this describes an event that happened many years earlier. Alternate translation: "You will flee just as your ancestors fled"

in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah

Here "in the days" is an idiom that refers to the time when Uzziah was king. Alternate translation: "when Uzziah was king of Judah"

the holy ones

This probably refers to God's angels.

Zechariah 14:6

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

On that day

"At that time"

there will be no light

It is implied that there will be no light from the sun. Alternate translation: "there will be no light from the sun"

Zechariah 14:7

a day known only to Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "only Yahweh knows when that day will begin" or "only Yahweh knows when that time will begin"

Zechariah 14:8

living waters

This normally means running or flowing water, rather than still or stagnant water.

the eastern sea

This refers to the Dead Sea, which is east of Jerusalem.

the western sea

This refers to the Mediterranean Sea.

Zechariah 14:9

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

there will be Yahweh, the one God, and his name alone

Here "name" represents Yahweh's reputation or character. Alternate translation: "people will know that Yahweh is the only true God" or "people will only worship Yahweh, the one true God"

Zechariah 14:10

All the land

It is implied that this is the land of Judah. Alternate translation: "All the land of Judah"

Arabah

This is the name of a plain in the Jordan River Valley.

Geba

This is the name of a town on the northern border of Judah.

Rimmon

This is the name of a town south of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem will continue to be raised up

This contrasts Jerusalem, which will remain at a higher elevation, to the surrounding area, which is lower in elevation. The contrast can be indicated by adding the word "but." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But, Jerusalem will remain high up"

the Benjamin Gate ... the first gate ... the Corner Gate

These are names of gates in the northeast part of city wall of Jerusalem. Possible meanings are 1) "the first gate" and "the Corner Gate" refer to the same gate or 2) "the first gate" and "the Corner gate" are separate gates.

the Tower of Hananel

This refers to a strong point in the city defenses on the northern wall. It was probably built by a man named Hananel.

the king's winepresses

This probably refers to the place where wine was made for the royal family. It was located in the southwest part of Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:11

Jerusalem will live in safety

Here "Jerusalem" represents the people. Alternate translation: "The people will live safely in Jerusalem"

Zechariah 14:12

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

even as they are standing on their feet

"while they are still standing up." This emphasizes how quickly their flesh will rot away. They will not even have time to lie down.

Zechariah 14:13

that great panic from Yahweh will come among them

The abstract noun "panic" can be stated as "terrified." Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause the people to be very terrified"

Each one will seize the hand of another, and the hand of one will be raised up against the hand of another

These are idioms that refer to being hostile towards another person. Alternate translation: "Each person will grab someone, and they will fight each other"

Zechariah 14:14

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

Judah will also make war against Jerusalem

Here "Judah" and "Jerusalem" represent the people that live there. Alternate translation: "Even the other people in Judah will make war against the people of Jerusalem"

Judah will also make war against Jerusalem

Some versions of the Bible read, "Judah will also make war at Jerusalem."

They will gather the wealth

"They will capture all the valuable possessions"

in great abundance

"in great quantities"

Zechariah 14:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 14:16

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

that came against Jerusalem

Here "came against" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "that attacked Jerusalem"

will go up from year to year

"will go to Jerusalem every year"

the Festival of Shelters

"the Festival of Tabernacles" or "the Festival of Booths" or "the Festival of Tents"

Zechariah 14:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Zechariah 14:18

A plague from Yahweh will attack the nations

Causing people to suffer from a plague is spoken of as if the plague would attack the people like an army. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause a plague among the people of the nations"

Zechariah 14:19

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

Zechariah 14:20

General Information:

These verses continue the description of the final war for the city of Jerusalem and of how God will save her.

the bells of the horses will say

"the inscription on the bells of the horses will say"

the basins in the house of Yahweh

These basins were used for boiling meat in the courtyard of the temple. Alternate translation: "the cooking pots in the courtyard of the temple"

will be like the bowls before the altar

It is implied that the basins will be sacred like the bowls used for catching the blood of the sacrifices. Alternate translation: "will be as sacred as the bowls used at the altar"

Zechariah 14:21

every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart to Yahweh of hosts

Various types of pots and utensils were made especially to be used in the temple for the worship of Yahweh and for the sacrifices. These were considered special, not to be used for anything else.

traders will no longer be in the house of Yahweh

It was the custom for traders to sell the people things they needed in order to make proper sacrifices to Yahweh in the temple. Alternate translation: "people will no longer buy or sell things in the courtyard of the temple of Yahweh"

traders

Some versions of the Bible translate "traders" as "Canaanites."

Book: Romans

Romans

Chapter 1

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ concerning his Son who was a descendant of David according to the flesh. ⁴ Through the Spirit of holiness he was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations, for the sake of his name. ⁶ Among these nations, you also have been called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all in Rome who are beloved of God and called to be his holy people: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. ⁹ For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, of how continually I make mention of you. ¹⁰ I always request in my prayers that by any means I may at last be successful now by the will of God in coming to you. ¹¹ For I desire to see you, that I may give you some spiritual gift, in order to strengthen you. ¹² That is, I long to be mutually encouraged among you, through each other's faith, yours and mine. ¹³ Now I do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, that I often intended to come to you (but I was hindered until now), in order to have some fruit among you also, just as I have had among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴ I am a debtor both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵ So, as for me, I am ready to proclaim the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, as it has been written, "The righteous will live by faith."

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who through unrighteousness hold back the truth. ¹⁹ This is because that which is known about God is visible to them. For God has enlightened them. ²⁰ For ever since the creation of the world, his invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, having been discerned in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ This is because, although they knew about God, they did not glorify him as God, nor did they give him thanks. Instead, they became foolish in their thoughts, and their senseless hearts were darkened. ²² They claimed to be wise, but they became foolish. ²³ They exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of perishable man, of birds, of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God delivered them over to the lusts of their hearts for uncleanness, for their bodies to be dishonored among themselves. ²⁵ It is they who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and who worshiped and served the creation instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God delivered them over to dishonorable lusts, for their women exchanged natural relations for those that were unnatural. ²⁷ In the same way, the men also left their natural relations with women and burned in their lust for one another. These were men who committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the penalty they deserved for their error.

²⁸ And just as they did not approve of having God in their awareness, he gave them up to a corrupted mind, for them to do those things that are not proper. ²⁹ They have been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, and malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and evil intentions. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventing ways of doing evil; they are disobedient to parents. ³¹ They are senseless, faithless, heartless, and unmerciful. ³² They

understand the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death. But not only do they do these things, they also approve of others who do them.

Romans 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse is a type of introduction. People in the ancient Mediterranean region often started their letters this way. Sometimes this is called a "salutation."

Special concepts in this chapter

The gospel

When Paul writes of "the gospel" in this chapter (verses 1, 2, 9, 15, 16, 17), he is referring to the message about God's salvation for people through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.

Harvest

This chapter uses the image of a harvest ([1:13](#)) to speak of the Roman Christians doing good works because they believe what Paul has told them about Jesus. (See: fruit and faith and righteous)

Universal Condemnation and the Wrath of God

This chapter explains that everyone is without excuse. We all know about the true God, Yahweh, from his creation all around us. Because of our sin and our sinful nature, every person justly deserves the wrath of God. This wrath was satisfied by Jesus dying on a cross for those who believe in him. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"God gave them over"

Many scholars view the phrases "God gave them over" and "God gave them up" as theologically significant. In both cases, it means that God had stopped trying to teach the people the right way and had allowed them to do whatever they want, even though everything they wanted to do was evil.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult phrases and concepts

This chapter has many difficult ideas in it. The way Paul writes makes many of the phrases in this chapter difficult to translate. The translator may need to use the UDB to understand the meaning of the phrases and then translate them in a way that is easy for people to understand. Some of the difficult phrases include: "obedience of faith," "whom I serve in my spirit," "from faith to faith" and "exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of perishable man."

Romans 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. You may also need to tell in this same verse who the people are to whom Paul wrote the letter

Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ. God called me to be an apostle and chose me to tell people about the gospel"

called

appointed or chosen by God to be his child, to be his servant and proclaimer of his message of salvation through Jesus

Romans 1:2

which he promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures

God promised his people that he would set up his kingdom. He told the prophets to write these promises in the Scriptures.

Romans 1:3

concerning his Son

This refers to "the gospel of God," the good news that God promised to send his Son into the world.

Son

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

who was a descendant of David according to the flesh

Here the word "flesh" refers to the physical body. Alternate translation: "who is a descendant of David according to the physical nature" or "who was born into the family of David"

Romans 1:4

he was declared with power to be the Son of God

The word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God declared him with power to be the Son of God"

by the resurrection from the dead

"by raising him from among the people who are dead." This expression speaks of all dead people together in the underworld, and coming alive again is spoken of as resurrection from among them.

Spirit of holiness

This refers to the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks here about his obligation to preach.

we have received grace and apostleship

God has given Paul the gift of being an apostle. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God caused me to be an apostle. This is a special privilege"

for obedience of faith among all the nations, for the sake of his name

Paul uses the word "name" as a metonym to refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order to teach all nations to obey because of their faith in him"

Romans 1:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 1:7

To all in Rome who are beloved of God and called to be his holy people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I am writing this letter to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has chosen to become his people"

Grace to you and peace

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "May God give you grace and peace" or "May God bless you and give you inner peace"

God our Father

The word "Father" is an important title for God.

Romans 1:8

the whole world

the world Paul and his readers knew and could travel in, which was the Roman Empire

Romans 1:9

For God is my witness

Paul emphasizes that he earnestly prays for them and that God has seen him praying. The word "for" is often left untranslated.

in my spirit

A person's spirit is the part of him that can know God and believe in him.

the gospel of his Son

The good news (gospel) of the Bible is that the Son of God has given himself as the Savior of the world.

Son

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

I make mention of you

"I talk to God about you"

Romans 1:10

I always request in my prayers that ... I may at last be successful ... in coming to you

"Every time I pray, I ask God that ... I may succeed ... in coming to visit you"

by any means

"in whatever way God allows"

at last

"eventually" or "finally"

now by the will of God

"now, because God desires it,"

Romans 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his opening statements to the people in Rome by stating his desire to see them in person.

For I desire to see you

"Because I really want to see you"

some spiritual gift, in order to strengthen you

Paul wants to strengthen the Roman Christians spiritually. Alternate translation: "some gift that will help you to grow spiritually"

Romans 1:12

That is, I long to be mutually encouraged among you, through each other's faith, yours and mine

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I mean that I want us to encourage

each other by sharing our experiences of faith in Jesus"

Romans 1:13

I do not want you to be uninformed

Paul is emphasizing that he wanted them to have this information. You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I want you to know"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

I was hindered until now

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "something has always prevented me"

in order to have some fruit among you

The word "fruit" is a metaphor that represents people in Rome whom Paul wants to believe the gospel. Alternate translation: "that more people among you might trust in Jesus"

the rest of the Gentiles

the Gentiles in the other regions where he had gone

Romans 1:14

I am a debtor both to

Using the metaphor "debtor," Paul speaks of his duty to serve God as if he owed God a financial debt. Alternate translation: "I must take the gospel to"

Romans 1:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 1:16

I am not ashamed of the gospel

You can translate this in a positive form. Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is not ashamed of believing the gospel because he knows it is true. Alternate translation: "I am confident in the gospel" 2) Paul is not ashamed of preaching the gospel because he knows that is true. Alternate translation: "I confidently preach the gospel"

it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes

Here "believes" means that one puts his trust in Christ. Alternate translation: "it is through the gospel that God powerfully saves those who put their trust in Christ"

for the Jew first and for the Greek

"for Jewish people and also for Greek people"

first

Here "first" means coming before all others in order of time.

Romans 1:17

For in it

Here "it" refers to the gospel. Paul explains why he completely trusts in the gospel.

God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith

Paul speaks about the gospel message as if it were an object that God could physically show to people. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has told us that it is by faith from beginning to end that people become righteous"

as it has been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"

The righteous will live by faith

Possible meanings are 1) the words "by faith" describe "righteous," and those who by faith are righteous will live, or 2) the words "by faith" describe "will live," and those who are righteous will live by faith.

The righteous

The word "righteous" can be written as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Righteous people" or "A person who is righteous"

Romans 1:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul reveals God's great anger against sinful man.

For the wrath of God is revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For God shows how angry he is"

For

Paul uses the word "for" to show he is about to tell why people know that what he has said in Romans 1:17 is true.

the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people

The words "ungodliness" and "unrighteousness" are abstract nouns that can be expressed using the adjectives "ungodly," which describes the people, and "unrighteous," which describes their deeds. These nouns are metonyms for the people with whom God is angry. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals from heaven how angry he is with people because they are ungodly and do unrighteous deeds"

hold back the truth

Here "truth" refers to true information about God. Alternate translation: "hide the true information about God"

Romans 1:19

that which is known about God is visible to them

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they can know about God because of what they can plainly see"

For God has enlightened them

Here "enlightened them" means God has shown them the truth about him. Alternate translation: "Because God has shown everyone what he is like"

Romans 1:20

world

This refers to the heavens and the earth, as well as everything in them.

his invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen

Paul speaks of people understanding God's invisible qualities as if people have seen those qualities. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people have clearly understood God's invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature"

divine nature

"all the qualities and characteristics of God" or "the things about God that make him God"

having been discerned

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "because people have discerned them" or "because people have understood them"

in the things that have been made

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "in the things that God has made"

they are without excuse

"people do not have an excuse" or "these people can never say that they did not know"

Romans 1:21

became foolish in their thoughts

"began to think foolish things"

their senseless hearts were darkened

Here "darkness" is a metaphor that represents the people's lack of understanding. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "they became unable to understand what God wanted them to know"

Romans 1:22

They claimed to be wise, but they became foolish

"While they were claiming that they were wise, they became foolish"

They ... they

the people in Romans 1:18

Romans 1:23

exchanged the glory of the imperishable God

"traded the truth that God is glorious and will never die"

exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of

"stopped loving the glory of the God who never dies and instead chose to worship idols that looked like"

perishable man

"human beings, who will die"

of birds, of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things

"or that looked like birds, four-footed beasts, or creeping things"

Romans 1:24

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

God delivered them over to

"God allowed them to indulge in"

them ... their ... themselves

These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

the lusts of their hearts for uncleanness

Here "lusts of their hearts" is a synecdoche that represents the evil things they wanted to do. Alternate translation: "the morally impure things they desired greatly"

for their bodies to be dishonored among themselves

This is a euphemism that means they committed immoral sexual acts. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and they committed sexually immoral and degrading acts"

Romans 1:25

they

This word refers to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

who worshiped and served the creation

Here "creation" refers to what God created. Alternate translation: "They worshiped things that God created"

instead of

"rather than"

Romans 1:26

Because of this

"Because of idolatry and sexual sin"

God delivered them over to dishonorable lusts

"God allowed them to do all the dishonorable things they very much wanted to do"

dishonorable lusts

"shameful sexual desires"

lusts, for their women

"lusts. For example, their women"

exchanged natural relations for those that were unnatural

The idea of relations "that were unnatural" is a euphemism for immoral sexuality. Alternate translation: "started practicing sexuality in a way God did not design"

Romans 1:27

men also left their natural relations with women

Here "natural relations" is a euphemism for sexual relationships. Alternate translation: "many men stopped having natural sexual desire for women"

burned in their lust for one another

"experienced strong sexual desire for other men"

committed shameless acts with men and

"committed acts with men for which they should have been ashamed. But they were not ashamed, and they"

men and received in themselves the penalty they deserved for their error

"men, and God has punished them justly for the error they committed"

error

moral wrong, not a mistake about facts

Romans 1:28

And just as they did not approve of having God in their awareness

"They did not think it was necessary to know God"

And just as

Possible meanings are 1) God "gave them up to a corrupted mind ... proper" (see the words in this verse) because they not only "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and ... worshiped and served the creation" (Romans 1:25), but they also "did not approve ... awareness," or 2) God "gave them up ... proper" because "they did not approve ... awareness," in which case "And just as" should be translated "Because."

they ... their ... them

These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

he gave them up to a corrupted mind

Here "a corrupted mind" means a mind that thinks only about immoral things. Alternate translation: "God allowed their minds, which they had filled with worthless and immoral thoughts, to completely control them"

not proper

"disgraceful" or "sinful"

Romans 1:29

They have been filled with all

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "They have in them a strong desire for all" or "They strongly desire to do deeds of"

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and evil intentions

"Many are constantly envying other people ... Many constantly desire to murder people ... to cause arguments and quarrels among people ... to deceive others ... to speak hatefully about others"

Romans 1:30

slanderers

A slanderer says false things about another person in order to damage that person's reputation.

inventing ways of doing evil

"thinking of new ways to do evil things to others"

Romans 1:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 1:32

They understand the ordinance of God, that

"They know how God wants them to live and that"

that those who practice such things

Here "practice" refers to continually or habitually doing things that are evil. Alternate translation: "that those who keep on doing wicked things"

are deserving of death

"deserve to die"

these things

"these kinds of evil things"

who do them

Here the verb "do" refers to continuing to do things that are evil. Alternate translation: "who keep on doing evil things"

Chapter 2

¹ Therefore you are without excuse, you person, you who judge, for in things for which you judge the other person, you condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same things. ² But we know that God's judgment is according to truth when it falls on those who practice such things. ³ But consider this, you person, you who judge those who practice such things although you do the same things. Will you escape from the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you think so little of the riches of his kindness, his delayed punishment, and his patience? Do you not know that his kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? ⁵ But it is to the extent of your hardness and unrepentant heart that you are storing up for yourself wrath on the day of wrath, that is, the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment. ⁶ He will pay back to every person according to his actions: ⁷ to those who according to the perseverance of good deeds have sought glory, honor, and incorruptibility, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But to those who are self-seeking, who disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness, wrath and fierce anger will come. ⁹ God will bring tribulation and distress on every human soul that has practiced evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁰ But glory, honor, and peace will come to everyone who practices good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. ¹² For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned with respect to the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but it is the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, they are a law to themselves, although they do not have the law. ¹⁵ By this they show that the actions required by the law are written in their hearts. Their conscience also bears witness to them, and their own thoughts either accuse or defend them ¹⁶ on the day when God will judge the secrets of all people, according to my gospel, through Jesus Christ.

¹⁷ But if you say that you are a Jew and rest upon the law and boast in God, ¹⁸ and know his will and approve of what is excellent because you have been instructed from the law; ¹⁹ and if you are convinced that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, and that you have in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth, then how does this affect the way you live your life? ²¹ You who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who hate idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by transgressing the law? ²⁴ For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it has been written. ²⁵ For circumcision is profitable to you if you obey the law, but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ If, then, the uncircumcised person keeps the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision? ²⁷ And will not the one who is naturally uncircumcised condemn you if he fulfills the law? This is because you have the written law and circumcision, yet you are a transgressor of the law! ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is merely one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is merely outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter. The praise of such a person comes not from people but from God.

Romans 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter shifts its audience from Roman Christians to those who "judge" other people and do not believe in Jesus. (See: judge and believe)

"Therefore you are without excuse"

This phrase looks back at Chapter 1. In some ways, it actually concludes what Chapter 1 teaches. This phrase explains why everyone in the world must worship the true God.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Doers of the Law"

Those who try to obey the law will not be justified by trying to obey it. Those who are justified by believing in Jesus show that their faith is real by obeying God's commands. (See: justice and law of Moses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: guilt and sin and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You who judge"

At times, this could be translated in a simpler way. But it is translated in this relatively awkward way because when Paul refers to "people who judge" he is also saying that everyone judges. It is possible to translate this as "those who judge (and everyone judges)."

Romans 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul has stated that all people are sinners and continues to remind his readers that all people are wicked.

Therefore you are without excuse

The word "therefore" marks a new section of the letter. It also makes a concluding statement based on what Paul has said in [Romans 1:1-32]

you are

Paul is writing here as if he were addressing a Jewish person who is arguing with him. Paul is doing this to teach his audience that God will punish everyone who continually sins, whether Jew or Gentile.

you

Here the pronoun "you" is singular.

excuse, you person, you who judge, for in things for which you judge the other person, you condemn yourself
"excuse. You are just a human being, yet you judge others and say they deserve God's punishment. But you are only judging yourself because you do the same wicked deeds that they do"

you person

Another possible meaning is "whoever you are."

Romans 2:2

But we know

Here the pronoun "we" may include Christian believers and also Jews who are not Christians.

God's judgment is according to truth when it falls on those

Here Paul speaks of "God's judgment" as if it were alive and could "fall" on people. Alternate

translation: "God will judge those people truly and fairly"

those who practice such things

"the people who do those wicked deeds"

Romans 2:3

But consider this

"So consider this" or "Therefore, consider this"

consider this

"think about what I am going to tell you"

you person

Use the phrase "you, whoever you are" or use "you," (with the comma), followed by a general word for a human being.

you who judge those who practice such things although you do the same things

"you who say someone deserves God's punishment while you do the same wicked deeds"

Will you escape from the judgment of God?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this question as a strong negative statement. Alternate translation: "You will certainly not escape God's judgment!"

Romans 2:4

Or do you think so little of the riches of his kindness, his delayed punishment, and his patience ... repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not act like it does not matter that God is good and that he patiently waits a long time before he punishes people so that his goodness will cause them to repent!"

think so little of the riches ... patience

"consider the riches ... patience unimportant" or
"consider ... patience not good"

Do you not know that his kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You must know that God shows you he is good so that you might repent!"

Romans 2:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the people that all people are wicked.

But it is to the extent of your hardness and unrepentant heart

Paul uses a metaphor to compare a person who refuses to obey God to something hard, like a stone. He also uses the metonym "heart" to represent the person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "It is because you refuse to listen and repent"

hardness and unrepentant heart

This is a doublet that you can combine as
"unrepentant heart."

you are storing up for yourself wrath

The phrase "storing up" implies a metaphor that usually refers to a person gathering his treasures and putting them in a safe place. Paul says, instead of treasures, that the person is gathering God's punishment. The longer they go without repenting, the more severe the punishment. Alternate translation: "you are making your punishment worse"

on the day of wrath ... the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment

Both of these phrases refer to the same day. Alternate translation: "when God will show everyone that he is angry and that he judges all people fairly"

Romans 2:6

pay back

"give a fair reward or punishment"

to every person according to his actions

"each person according to what that person has done"

Romans 2:7

who according to the perseverance of good deeds have
who, by persevering and doing good deeds, have

have sought

have tried to get

glory, honor, and incorruptibility

They want God to praise and honor them, and they want to never die.

incorruptibility

This refers to physical, not moral, decay.

Romans 2:8

self-seeking

"selfish" or "only concerned with what makes themselves happy"

disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second intensifies the first.

wrath and fierce anger will come

The words "wrath" and "fierce anger" mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's anger. Alternate translation: "God will show his terrible anger"

wrath

Here the word "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's severe punishment of wicked people.

Romans 2:9

Connecting Statement:

Though this section is speaking to the non-religious wicked person, Paul sums it up by stating both non-Jews and Jews are wicked before God.

tribulation and distress on

The words "tribulation" and "distress" mean basically the same thing here and emphasize how bad God's punishment will be. Alternate translation: "awful punishments to"

on every human soul

Here, Paul uses the word "soul" as a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "upon every person"

has practiced evil

"has continually done evil things"

evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

"evil. He will judge the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"

first

Possible meanings are 1) "first in order of time" or 2) "most certainly"

Romans 2:10

But glory, honor, and peace will come

"But God will praise, honor, and give peace"

practices good

"continually does what is good"

good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek
"good. God will reward the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"

first

You should translate this the same way you did in Romans 2:9.

Romans 2:11

For there is no partiality with God

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "For God treats all people the same"

Romans 2:12

For as many as have sinned

"For all those who have sinned"

without the law will also perish without the law

Paul repeats "without the law" to emphasize that it does not matter if people do not know the law of Moses. If they sin, God will judge them. Alternate translation: "without knowing the law of Moses will certainly still die spiritually"

as many as have sinned

"all those who have sinned"

with respect to the law will be judged by the law

God will judge sinful people according to his law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and who do know the law of Moses, God will judge them according to that law"

Romans 2:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to let the reader know that perfect obedience to God's law is required even for those who never had God's law.

it is not the hearers of the law

Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "it is not those who only hear the law of Moses"

who are righteous before God

"whom God considers righteous"

but it is the doers of the law

"but it is those who obey the law of Moses"

who will be justified

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom God will accept"

Romans 2:14

For

This verse is the beginning of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader

extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.

a law to themselves ... do not have the law

This is an idiom that means that these people naturally obey God's laws. Alternate translation: "have God's laws already inside them ... actually do not have the law"

they do not have the law

Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses."

Alternate translation: "they do not actually have the laws that God gave to Moses"

Romans 2:15

General Information:

This verse is the end of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.

By this they show

"By naturally obeying the law they show"

that the actions required by the law are written in their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the person's thoughts or inner person. The phrase "written in their hearts" is a metaphor for knowing something in their mind. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that God has written on their hearts what the law requires them to do" or "that they know the actions that God wants them to do according to his law"

bears witness to them

Here "bears witness" refers to the knowledge they gain from the law that God has written in their hearts. Alternate translation: "tells them if they are disobeying or obeying God's law"

Romans 2:16

when God will judge

This finishes Paul's thought from Romans 2:13. You can put a period at the end of 2:15 and start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "This will happen when God judges"

Romans 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Here begins Paul's discussion that the law the Jews possess actually condemns them because they do not obey it.

if you say that you are a Jew

"since you call yourself a Jew" or "if you want people to think of you as a Jew"

rest upon the law

The phrase "rest upon the law" represents believing that they can become righteous by obeying the law. Alternate translation: "rely on the law of Moses"

Romans 2:18

know his will

"and know God's will"

because you have been instructed from the law

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because people have taught you what is right from the law" or "because you have learned from the law"

Romans 2:19

that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness

Here "the blind" and "those who walk in darkness" represent people who do not understand the law. Alternate translation: "that because you teach the law, you yourself are like a guide to blind people, and you are like a light to people who are lost in the dark"

Romans 2:20

an instructor of the foolish

"you correct those who do wrong"

a teacher of little children

Here Paul compares those who do not know anything about the law to very small children. Alternate translation: "you teach those who do not know the law"

and that you have in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth

The knowledge of the truth that is in the law comes from God. Alternate translation: "and you are sure you understand the truth that God has given in the law"

Romans 2:21

You who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You teach others, but you do not teach yourself!" or "You teach others, but you do not do what you teach!"

You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to steal, but you steal!"

Romans 2:22

You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to commit adultery, but you commit adultery!"

You who hate idols, do you rob temples?

Paul is using a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You say you hate idols, but you rob temples!"

do you rob temples

Possible meanings are 1) "do you steal items from local pagan temples to sell and make a profit" or 2) "do you keep back from the Jerusalem temple all the money that is due to God"

Romans 2:23

You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by transgressing the law?

Paul uses a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "It is wicked that you claim to be proud of the law while at the same time you disobey it and bring shame to God!"

Romans 2:24

the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "many Gentiles blaspheme the name of God"

name of God

The word "name" is a metonym that refers to the entirety of God, not just his name.

Romans 2:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to show that God, by his law, condemns even the Jews who have God's law.

For circumcision is profitable to you

"I say all of this because it is good for you to be circumcised"

if you are a transgressor of the law

"if you do not obey the commandments found in the law"

your circumcision becomes uncircumcision

"it is as though you were no longer circumcised"

Romans 2:26

the uncircumcised person

"the person who is not circumcised"

keeps the requirements of the law
"obeys what God commands in the law"

will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision?

This is the first of two questions Paul asks here to emphasize that circumcision is not what makes one right before God. You can translate this question as a statement in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider him as circumcised."

Romans 2:27

And will not the one who is naturally uncircumcised condemn you ... the law?
This is the second of two questions that Paul asks here

Romans 2:28

outwardly
This refers to Jewish rituals, such as circumcision, which people can see.

merely outward in the flesh
This refers to the physical change to a man's body when someone circumcises him.

flesh
This is a synecdoche for the whole body. Alternate translation: "body"

Romans 2:29

he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart
These two phrases have similar meanings. The first phrase, "he is a Jew who is one inwardly," explains the second phrase, "circumcision is that of the heart."

inwardly
This refers to the values and motivations of the person whom God has transformed.

of the heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for the inner person.

in the Spirit, not in the letter
Here "letter" is a synecdoche that refers to written Scripture. Alternate translation: "through the work of the Holy Spirit, not because you know the Scriptures"

in the Spirit
This refers to the internal, spiritual part of a person that the Holy Spirit changes.

Chapter 3

¹ Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision? ² It is great in every way. First of all, the Jews were entrusted with revelation from God.

³ For what if some Jews were without faith? Will their unbelief nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴ May it never be. Instead, let God be found to be true, even though every man is a liar. As it has been written,

"That you might be shown to be righteous in your words,
and that you might prevail when you come into judgment."

⁵ But if our unrighteousness shows the righteousness of God, what can we say? Can we say that God is unrighteous to bring his wrath upon us? (I am using a human argument.) ⁶ May it never be! For then how would God judge the world? ⁷ But if through my lie the truth of God increases his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner? ⁸ Why not say, as we are slandered as saying, and as some affirm that we say, "Let us do evil, so that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

⁹ What then? Are we excusing ourselves? Not at all. For we have already accused both Jews and Greeks, all of them, of being under sin. ¹⁰ This is as it is written:

"No one is righteous, not one;
¹¹ there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.
¹² They have all turned away;
together they have become useless.
There is no one who does good, no,
not even one."
¹³ "Their throat is an open grave.
Their tongues have deceived.
The poison of snakes is under their lips."
¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."
¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to pour out blood.
¹⁶ Destruction and suffering are in their paths.
¹⁷ These people have not known a way of peace."
¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to the ones who are under the law, so that every mouth may be shut, and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ For no flesh will be justified by the works of the law in his sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been revealed, to which the Law and the Prophets bear witness— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and they are freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ For God provided Christ Jesus as an atoning sacrifice through faith in his blood. He offered Christ as proof of his justice, because of his disregard of previous sins ²⁶ in his patience. This was to show his righteousness at this present time, so he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith. ²⁸ We conclude then that a person is justified by faith without works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not also the God of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also. ³⁰ If, indeed, God is one, he will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.

³¹ Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be! Instead, we uphold the law.

Romans 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 4 and 10-18 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Chapter 3 answers the question, "What advantage does being a Jew have over being a Gentile?" (See: lawofmoses and save)

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"

Because God is holy, anyone with him in heaven must be perfect. Any sin at all will condemn a person. (See: heaven and condemn)

The purpose of the law of Moses

Obedying the law cannot make a person right with God. Obeying God's law is a way a person shows they believe in God. People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul frequently uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt)

Romans 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul proclaims the advantage that Jews have because God gave them his law.

Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?

Paul presents ideas that people might have after they hear what he wrote in chapter 2. He does this in order to respond to them in verse 2. Alternate translation: "Some people might say, 'Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?'" or "Some people might say, 'If that is true, then the Jews do not have any advantage, and there is no benefit in being circumcised.'"

Romans 3:2

It is great in every way

Paul now responds to the concerns brought up in verse 1. Here "It" refers to being a member of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "But there is great advantage to being a Jew"

First of all

Possible meanings are 1) "First in order of time" or 2) "Most certainly" or 3) "Most importantly."

the Jews were entrusted with revelation from God

Here "revelation" refers to God's words and promises. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God gave his words that contain his promises to the Jews"

Romans 3:3

For what if some Jews were without faith? Will their unbelief nullify God's faithfulness?

Paul uses these questions to make people think. Alternate translation: "Some Jews have not been faithful to God. We should not conclude from this that God will not fulfill his promise."

Romans 3:4

May it never be

This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have an expression in your language that you could use here. "That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!"

Instead, let

"We should say this instead, let"

let God be found to be true

God will always be true and will keep his promises. Alternate translation: "God always does what he has promised"

even though every man is a liar

The words "every" and "liar" are exaggerations here to add emphasis that God alone is always true to his promises. Alternate translation: "even if every man were a liar"

As it has been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Scriptures themselves agree with what I am saying"

That you might be shown to be righteous in your words, and that you might prevail when you come into judgment

These two phrases have very similar meanings. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone must acknowledge that what you say is true, and you will always win your case when anyone accuses you"

Romans 3:5

But if our unrighteousness shows the righteousness of God, what can we say? Can we say that God is unrighteous to bring his wrath upon us?

Paul uses these questions to present what some people were arguing and to get his readers to think about whether or not this argument is true. Alternate translation: "Some people say that since our unrighteousness shows God's righteousness, then God is unrighteous when he punishes us."

to bring his wrath upon us

Here "wrath" is a metonym for punishment. Alternate translation: "to bring his punishment upon us" or "to punish us"

I am using a human argument

"I am saying here what some people say" or "This is what some people say"

Romans 3:6

May it never be

"We must never say that God is unrighteous"

For then how would God judge the world?

Paul uses this question to show that the arguments against the gospel are not valid, since the Jews believe that God will judge all people. Alternate translation: "We all know that God will in fact judge the world!"

the world

The "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people who live in the world"

Romans 3:7

But if through my lie the truth of God increases his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner?

Here Paul imagines someone continuing to reject the Christian gospel. That adversary argues that his sin shows that God is righteous, so God should not declare that person guilty of sin on judgment day.

increases his glory

"causes people to praise God for his glory"

Romans 3:8

Why not say ... come?"

Here Paul raises a question of his own, to show how ridiculous the argument of his imaginary adversary is. Alternate translation: "I might as well be saying ... come!"

as we are slandered as saying

"as some lie to others, claiming that this what we are saying"

evil ... good

These Greek words are plural: "evil deeds ... good things"

good may come

You may need to make explicit that the speakers expect to receive good things. Alternate translation: "good things may come to us" or "we may receive good things"

Their condemnation is just

God will be acting justly when he condemns these enemies of Paul for telling lies about what Paul has been teaching.

Romans 3:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul sums up that all are guilty of sin, none are righteous, and no one seeks God.

What then? Are we excusing ourselves?

Paul asks these questions to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "We Jews should not try to imagine we are going to escape God's judgment, just because we are Jewish!"

Not at all

These words are stronger than a simple "no," but not as strong as "absolutely not!"

Romans 3:10

This is as it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This is as the prophets have written in the Scriptures"

Romans 3:11

there is no one who understands

There is no one who understands what is right. Alternate translation: "no one really understands what is right"

there is no one who seeks God

Here the phrase "seeks after God" means tries to have a relationship with God. Alternate translation: "no one sincerely tries to have a right relationship with God"

Romans 3:12

They have all turned away

This is an idiom that means the people do not even want to think about God. They want to avoid him. Alternate translation: "They have all turned away from God"

together they have become useless

Since no one does what is good, they are useless to God. Alternate translation: "Everyone has become useless to God"

Romans 3:13

Their ... Their

The word "their" refers to the "Jews and Greeks" of Romans 3:9.

Their throat is an open grave

The word "throat" is a metonym for everything that people say. Here "open grave" is a metaphor that refers to the stench of dead bodies, a metaphor for the evil words of the people.

Their tongues have deceived

The word "tongues" is a metonym for the false words that people speak. Alternate translation: "People speak lies"

The poison of snakes is under their lips

Here "poison of snakes" is a metaphor that is used to represent the great harm of the evil words that the people speak. The word "lips" refers to the words of the people. Alternate translation: "Their evil words injure people just like the poison of a venomous snake"

Romans 3:14

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness

Here "mouths" is a metonym that represents the evil words of the people. The word "full" exaggerates how often people speak bitterly and curse. Alternate translation: "They often speak curses and cruel words"

Romans 3:15

Their feet are swift to pour out blood

Here "feet" is a synecdoche that represents the people themselves. The word "blood" is a metaphor that refers to killing people. Alternate translation: "They are in a hurry to harm and murder people"

Their feet

The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

Romans 3:16

their paths

The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

Destruction and suffering are in their paths

Here "destruction and suffering" are metonyms that represent the harm that these people cause others to suffer. Alternate translation: "They try to destroy others and cause them to suffer"

Romans 3:17

These people

These words refer to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

a way of peace

"how to live at peace with others." A "way" is a road or path.

Romans 3:18

their

This word refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

There is no fear of God before their eyes

Here "fear" is a metonym that represents respect for God and willingness to honor him. Alternate translation: "They refuse to give God the respect he deserves"

Romans 3:19

whatever the law says, it speaks to

Paul speaks of the law here as if it were alive and had its own voice. Alternate translation: "everything that the law says people should do is for" or "all the commands that Moses wrote in the law are for"

the ones who are under the law

"those who must obey the law"

so that every mouth may be shut

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that means the words people speak. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that no people will be able to say anything valid to defend themselves"

the whole world held accountable to God

Here "world" is a synecdoche that represents all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "that God can declare everyone in the world guilty"

Romans 3:20

flesh

Here "flesh" refers to all human beings.

For through the law

Possible meanings are 1) "Therefore, through the law" or 2) "This is because through the law"

through the law comes the knowledge of sin

"when someone knows God's law, he realizes that he has sinned"

Romans 3:21

Connecting Statement:

The word "but" here shows Paul has completed his introduction and is now beginning to make his main point.

now

The word "now" refers to the time since Jesus came to the earth.

apart from the law the righteousness of God has been revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has made known a way to be right with him without obeying the law"

to which the Law and the Prophets bear witness

The words "the Law and the Prophets" refer to the parts of scripture that Moses and the prophets wrote. Paul describes them here as if they were people testifying in court. Alternate translation: "What Moses and the prophets wrote confirms this"

Romans 3:22

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ

Here "righteousness" means being right with God. Alternate translation: "being right with God through trusting Jesus Christ"

For there is no distinction

Paul implies that God accepts all people in the same way. Alternate translation: "There is no difference at all between the Jews and the Gentiles"

Romans 3:23

come short of the glory of God

Here the "glory of God" is a metonym that refers to the image of God and his nature. Alternate translation: "have failed to be like God"

Romans 3:24

they are freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Here "justified" refers to being made right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God makes them right with

himself as a free gift, because Christ Jesus sets them free"

they are freely justified

This means that they are justified without having to earn or merit being justified. God freely justifies them. Alternate translation: "they are made right with God without earning it"

Romans 3:25

in his blood

This is a metonym for the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sins. Alternate translation: "in his death as a sacrifice for sins"

his disregard

Possible meanings are 1) his ignoring or 2) his forgiving.

Romans 3:26

This was to show his righteousness at this present time

"God did this to show at this present time that he is righteous"

so he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"By this he shows that he is both just and the the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus"

the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"the one who declares everyone righteous who has faith in Jesus"

Romans 3:27

Where then is boasting? It is excluded

Paul asks this question to show that there is no reason for people to boast about obeying the law. Alternate translation: "So there is no way that we can boast that God favors us because we obeyed those laws. Boasting is excluded"

It is excluded

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "God does not allow it"

Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith

You may need to fill in the words omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "Through what kind of law is boasting excluded? Is it excluded through a law of works? No, it is excluded through a law of faith" You can also translate using active forms. Alternate translation: "On what grounds does God exclude boasting? Does he exclude it through a law of works? No, he excludes it through a law of faith" or "Why does God exclude boasting? Is it because of something that we have done? No, it is because we have believed"

Through what kind of law? ... through a law of

"On what grounds? ... on the grounds of"

Through what kind of law? Of works?

Paul asks these questions to get his readers ready to receive the point he is making. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you what kind of law he excludes it through. It is not through a law of works."

Romans 3:28

a person is justified by faith

This can be translated in active form. Here the words "by faith" refers to either 1) the means by which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person through that person's faith" Or 2) the reason for which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person because he has faith" Faith is not the actor that justifies a person.

without works of the law

"even if he has done no works of the law"

Romans 3:29

Or is God the God of Jews only?

Paul asks this question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You who are Jews certainly should not think that you are the only ones whom God will accept!"

Is he not also the God of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also

Paul asks this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "He will also accept non-Jews, that is, Gentiles"

Romans 3:30

he will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith

Here "circumcision" is a metonym that refers to Jews and "uncircumcision" is a metonym that refers to non-Jews. Alternate translation: "God will make both Jews and non-Jews right with himself through their faith in Christ"

Romans 3:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul confirms the law through faith.

Do we then nullify the law through faith?

Paul asks a question that one of his readers might have. Alternate translation: "Someone might say that we can ignore the law because we have faith."

May it never be

This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "This is certainly not true" or "Certainly not"

we uphold the law

"we obey the law"

we

This pronoun refers to Paul, other believers, and the readers.

Chapter 4

¹ What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found? ² For if Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had a reason to boast, but not before God. ³ For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

⁴ Now for him who labors, his wage is not counted as a gift, but as what is owed. ⁵ But for him who does not work but instead believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. ⁶ David also pronounces blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness without works.

⁷ He says,

"Blessed are those
whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the man
against whom the Lord will not count sin."

⁹ Then is this blessing pronounced only on those of the circumcision, or also on those of the uncircumcision? For we say, "Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness." ¹⁰ How was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before! ¹¹ Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them. ¹² He is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ For the promise to Abraham and to his descendants that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who live by the law are to be the heirs, faith is made empty, and the promise does nothing. ¹⁵ For the law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there is no transgression. ¹⁶ For this reason it is by faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all of Abraham's descendants—not only to those who are under the law, but also to those who share the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have appointed you the father of many nations." Abraham was in the presence of him whom he trusted, that is, God, who gives life to the dead and calls the things that do not exist into existence. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he would become the father of many nations, according to what he had been told, "So will your descendants be." ¹⁹ Without becoming weak in faith, he considered his own body as dead (because he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ But because of God's promise, Abraham did not hesitate in unbelief. Instead, he was strengthened in faith and gave glory to God. ²¹ He was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to accomplish. ²² Therefore this was also "counted to him as righteousness." ²³ But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone. ²⁴ They were written also for us, and it will be counted to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ This is the one who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Romans 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 7-8 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The purpose of the law of Moses

Paul builds upon material from chapter 3. He explains how Abraham, the father of Israel, was justified. Even Abraham could not be justified by what he did. Obeying the law of Moses does not make a person right with God. Obeying God's commands is a way a person shows they believe in God. People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and lawofmoses and faith)

Circumcision

Circumcision was important to the Israelites. It identified a male as a descendant of Abraham. It was also a sign of the covenant between Abraham and Yahweh. However, no person was justified only by being circumcised. (See: circumcise and covenant)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Romans 4:1

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found?

Paul uses the question to catch the attention of the reader and to start talking about something new. Alternate translation: "This is what Abraham our physical ancestor found."

Romans 4:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 4:3

For what does the scripture say?

Paul uses this question to call attention to what he is about to say, not to receive an answer. He speaks of the Scriptures as if they were alive and could talk. Alternate translation: "For this is what is in the scripture:"

it was counted to him as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considered Abraham to be a righteous person because he believed"

Romans 4:4

his wage is not counted as a gift

"no one counts what his employer pays him as a gift from his employer"

but as what is owed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but as what his employer owes him"

Romans 4:5

in the one who justifies

"in God, who justifies"

his faith is counted as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considers that person's faith as righteousness" or "God considers that person righteous because of his faith"

Romans 4:6

David also pronounces blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness without works

"David also wrote about how God blesses the man whom God makes righteous without works"

Romans 4:7

whose lawless deeds are forgiven ... whose sins are covered

The same concept is stated in two different ways. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "who have broken the law, but the Lord has forgiven ... whose sins the Lord has covered"

Romans 4:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 4:9

Then is this blessing pronounced only on those of the circumcision, or also on those of the uncircumcision?

This remark appears in the form of a question to show that Paul is beginning a discussion about the relationship between blessing and circumcision. Alternate translation: "I want to show you how it is that God blesses not only those who are circumcised, but also those who are not circumcised"

those of the circumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "the Jews"

those of the uncircumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the people who are not Jews. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

For we say

Paul is going to show that because God counted Abraham as righteous by faith, we can infer that it is people who have faith that God counts righteous.

Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considered the faith of Abraham as righteousness"

Romans 4:10

How was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before!

Paul asks two questions to introduce the third sentence. If your language does not allow speakers to use questions to introduce what they are talking about, you may need to translate these all as statements. Alternate translation: "This is when righteousness was counted to him: it was not after he had been circumcised, but before!"

How was it counted to him?

Paul is asking in a general way about the circumstances in which God considered Abraham righteous. He is not asking what procedure God followed to consider Abraham righteous. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "How did God consider Abraham to be righteous?"

It was not after, but before

This can be stated with the words that have been omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "It happened before he was circumcised, not after he was circumcised"

Romans 4:11

a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised

Here "righteousness that he had by faith" means that God considered him to be righteous because he had faith. Alternate translation: "a visible sign that God considered him righteous because he had believed in God before he was circumcised"

so that righteousness would be counted to them

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would consider them righteous"

Romans 4:12

General Information:

Paul is saying that circumcision alone does not make a man a descendant of Abraham, that is, a true Jew. A true Jew is one who has been circumcised and who lives by faith the way Abraham did.

He is also the father of the circumcised

Here "the circumcision" refers to Jews.

who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had

Here "walk in the footsteps of the faith" is an idiom that means to follow someone's example. Alternate translation: "who follow our father Abraham's example in the faith that he had" or "who have faith as our father Abraham did"

Romans 4:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul confirms that even in the past believers were made right with God by faith and not by the law.

law but through the righteousness of faith

The words "the promise came" are understood from the first phrase. You can translate this by adding these implied words. Alternate translation: "law, but the promise came through faith, which God considers as righteousness"

Romans 4:14

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

if those who live by the law are to be the heirs

Here "live by the law" refers to obeying the law. Alternate translation: "if those who obey the law are the ones who will inherit the earth"

faith is made empty, and the promise does nothing

"faith has no value, and the promise is meaningless"

Romans 4:15

there is no transgression

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "transgression." Alternate translation: "no one has disobeyed the law" or "it is impossible to disobey the law"

Romans 4:16

For this reason

"So"

it is by faith

The word "it" refers to receiving what God had promised. Alternate translation: "it is by faith that we receive the promise" or "we receive the promise by faith"

in order that the promise may rest on grace

Here "the promise may rest on grace" represents God giving what he promised because of his grace. Alternate translation: "so that what he promised"

might be a free gift" or "so that his promise would be because of his grace"

those who are under the law

This refers to the Jewish people, who were obligated to obey the law of Moses.

those who share the faith of Abraham

This refers to those who have faith as Abraham did before he was circumcised. Alternate translation: "those who believe as Abraham did"

father of us all

Here the word "us" refers to Paul and includes all Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Christ. Abraham is the physical ancestor of the Jewish people, but he is also the spiritual father of those who have faith.

Romans 4:17

as it is written

Where it is written can be made explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"

I have appointed you

Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Abraham.

Abraham was in the presence of him whom he trusted, that is, God, who gives life to the dead

Here "of him whom he trusted" refers to God. Alternate translation: "Abraham was in the presence of God whom he trusted, who gives life to those who have died"

calls the things that do not exist into existence
"creates everything from nothing"

Romans 4:18

In hope he believed against hope

This idiom means that Abraham hoped and believed even though what he hoped for seemed to be impossible. That is, Abraham trusted God to give him many descendants, even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have children. Alternate translation: "Even though it seemed that there was no reason to hope, Abraham hoped and believed" or "Even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have descendants, Abraham believed God and confidently expected"

according to what he had been told

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as God said to Abraham"

So will your descendants be

The full promise God gave to Abraham can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "You will have more descendants than you can count"

Romans 4:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 4:20

did not hesitate in unbelief. Instead, he

You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "kept on acting in faith. He"

he was strengthened in faith

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he became stronger in his faith"

Romans 4:21

He was fully convinced

"Abraham was completely sure"

he was also able to accomplish

"God was able to do"

Romans 4:22

Therefore this was also "counted to him as righteousness."

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore God counted Abraham's belief as righteousness" or "Therefore God considered Abraham righteous because Abraham believed him"

also "counted to him as righteousness."

"also, as the scripture says, 'counted to him as righteousness.'"

Romans 4:23

for his sake alone

"for Abraham only"

it was counted to him

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God counted righteousness to him" or "God considered him righteous"

Romans 4:24

for us

The word "us" refers to Paul and includes all believers in Christ.

They were written also for us

You can translate this without the passive form "written." Alternate translation: "Those words were also for us"

it will be counted to us who believe in him

The word "it" refers to righteousness. You can translate this with an active form. Alternate

translation: "God will count righteousness to us who believe in him" or "God will consider us righteous if we believe in him"

him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead

"Raised ... from the dead" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." Alternate translation: "him who caused Jesus our Lord to live again"

Romans 4:25

who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom God gave over to enemies for our trespasses and whom God brought back to life so he could make us right with him"

Chapter 5

¹ Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only this, but we also boast in our tribulations. We know that tribulation brings about perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not make ashamed because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who was given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous person, though perhaps someone would dare to die for a good person. ⁸ But God proves his own love toward us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more, then, now that we are justified by his blood, we will be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, after having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ Not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now have received this reconciliation.

¹² So then, as through one man sin entered into the world, in this way death entered through sin. And death spread to all people, because all sinned. ¹³ For until the law, sin was in the world, but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam's disobedience, who is a pattern of him who was to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the trespass of one the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound for the many! ¹⁶ For the gift is not like the outcome of that one man's sin. The judgment followed one trespass and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one, death ruled through the one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ So then, as one trespass led to condemnation for all people, so also through the one act of righteousness came justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one will the many be made righteous. ²⁰ But the law came in to increase the trespass. But where sin abounded, grace abounded even more. ²¹ This happened so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness for everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many scholars view verses 12-17 as some of the most important, but difficult, verses in Scripture to understand. Some of their richness and meaning has likely been lost while being translated from how the original Greek was constructed.

Special concepts in this chapter

Results of justification

How Paul explains the results of our being justified is an important part of this chapter. These results include having peace with God, having access to God, being confident about our future, being able to rejoice when suffering, being eternally saved, and being reconciled with God. (See: justice)

"All sinned"

Scholars are divided over what Paul meant in verse 12: "And death spread to all people, because all sinned." Some believe that all of mankind was present in the "seed of Adam." So, as Adam is the father of all mankind, all of mankind was present when Adam sinned. Others believe that Adam served as a representative head for mankind. So when he sinned, all of mankind "fell" as a result. Whether people today played an active or passive role in Adam's original sin is one way these views differ. Other passages will help one decide.

The second Adam

Adam was the first man and the first "son" of God. He was created by God. He brought sin and death into the world by eating the forbidden fruit. Paul describes Jesus as the "second Adam" in this chapter and the

true son of God. He brings life and overcame sin and death by dying on the cross. (See: sonofgod and death)

Romans 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell many different things that happen when God makes believers right with him.

Since we are justified

"Because we are justified"

we ... our

All occurrences of "we" and "our" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

through our Lord Jesus Christ

"because of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Lord

Here "Lord" means that Jesus is God.

Romans 5:2

Through him we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand

Here "by faith" refers to our trust in Jesus, which allows us to stand before God. Alternate translation: "Because we trust in Jesus, God allows us to come into his presence"

we boast in the hope of the glory of God

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "we rejoice because we confidently expect to share in the glory of God"

Romans 5:3

Not only this

The word "this" refers to the ideas described in [Romans 5:1-2](#).

we ... our ... We

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

tribulation brings about perseverance

"suffering helps us learn to endure"

Romans 5:4

Perseverance produces character

Perseverance is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Here it is a metonym for the person who endures. You may need to make explicit what it is that a person endures. Alternate translation: "We develop character when we endure hardship"

character

the desire and ability to do what is right

character produces hope

"having character helps us to hope." Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen, and it refers to the confident expectation that God will fulfill all his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "wait confidently" or "trust". Alternate translation: "character helps us to wait confidently" or "character helps us to trust God"

Romans 5:5

our ... us

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

hope does not make ashamed

Paul uses personification here as he speaks of "hope" as if it were alive. "Hope" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "we are very confident that we will receive the things that we wait for"

make ashamed

"make us ashamed"

because the love of God has been poured into our hearts

Here "hearts" represents a person's thoughts, feelings, or inner person. The phrase "the love of God has been poured into our hearts" is a metaphor for God showing love to his people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because he has loved us greatly" or "because God has shown us how much he loves us"

Romans 5:6

we

The word "we" here refers to all believers and so should be inclusive.

Romans 5:7

For one will hardly die for a righteous person

"It is hard to find someone who is willing to die, even for a righteous person"

though perhaps someone would dare to die for a good person

"but you might find someone who is willing to die for such a good person"

Romans 5:8

proves

You can translate this verb in past tense using "demonstrated" or "showed."

us ... we

All occurrences of "us" and "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

Romans 5:9

Much more, then, now that we are justified by his blood, we will be saved

Paul is saying that because we are justified by Christ's blood, we can be much more certain that Christ will save us. Alternate translation: "Now that we are justified by his blood, we will more certainly be saved"

now that we are justified by his blood

Here "justified" means that God puts us in a right relationship with himself. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us right with himself because of Christ's death"

blood

This is a metonym for the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

saved

God forgives us and rescues us from being punished in hell for our sin.

the wrath of God

Here "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's punishment of those who have sinned against him. Alternate translation: "God's punishment"

Romans 5:10

we were

All occurrences of "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

his Son ... his life

"God's Son ... the life of God's Son"

we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son

The death of the Son of the God has provided eternal forgiveness and made all who believe in Jesus friends with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed us to have a peaceful relationship with him because his Son died for us"

Son

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

after having been reconciled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us his friends again"

Romans 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 5:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains why death happened even before God gave the law to Moses.

through one man sin entered ... death entered through sin

Paul describes sin as a dangerous thing that came into the world through the actions of "one man," Adam. This sin then became an opening through which death, pictured here as another dangerous thing, also came into the world.

Romans 5:13

For until the law, sin was in the world

This means that the people sinned before God gave the law. Alternate translation: "People in the world sinned before God gave his law to Moses"

but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law

This means that God did not charge the people with sinning before he gave the law. Alternate translation: "but God recorded no sin against the law before he gave the law"

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless, death

"Even though what I have just said is true, death" or "There was no written law from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, but death" (Romans 5:13).

death reigned from Adam until Moses

Paul is speaking of death as if it were a king who ruled. Alternate translation: "people continued to die from the time of Adam until the time of Moses as a consequence of their sin"

Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam's disobedience, who is

"Moses. Even people whose sins were different from Adam's continued to die, Adam being"

who is a pattern of him who was to come

Adam was a pattern of Christ, who appeared much later. He had much in common with him.

Romans 5:15

how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound for the many
Here "grace" refers to God's free gift that he made available to everyone through Jesus Christ.
Alternate translation: "even more through the man Jesus Christ, who died for us all, did God kindly offer us this gift of everlasting life, although we do not deserve it"

Romans 5:16

For the gift is not like the outcome of that one man's sin
Here "the gift" refers to God's freely erasing the record of our sins. Alternate translation: "The gift is not like the result of Adam's sin"

The judgment followed one trespass and brought condemnation

The abstract nouns "judgment," "trespass," and "condemnation," can be expressed with verbs.
Alternate translation: "After one man trespassed, God judged all people and condemned them to be punished" or "God declared that all people deserved to have him punish them because one man committed one sin"

but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification

The abstract nouns "gift," "trespass," and "justification" can be expressed as verbs. It is implied that God's gift of justification is greater than his judgement. Alternate translation: "but after people trespassed many times, God gave the gift and justified them" or "but the gift is greater because he gave it after many people had committed many sins, and by giving the gift he justified them"

Romans 5:17

trespass of the one
This refers to the sin of Adam.

death ruled
Here Paul speaks of "death" as a king who ruled. The "rule" of death causes everyone to die.
Alternate translation: "everyone died"

Romans 5:18

as one trespass led to condemnation for all people
The abstract nouns "trespass" and "condemnation" can be expressed with the verbs "sin" and "condemn." Alternate translation: "as one trespass caused all people to be condemned" or "as all people are condemned because one person sinned against God"

one trespass
This refers to Adam's sin.

condemnation for all people
Here "condemnation" refers to God's punishment. Alternate translation: "all people deserve God's punishment for sin"

through the one act of righteousness came justification and life for all people

The abstract nouns "justification" and "life" can be expressed with the verbs "justify" and "live."
Alternate translation: "one act of righteousness allows all people to be justified and live" or "all people can be justified and live because one person did that one righteous act"

the one act of righteousness
This refers to Jesus's obedience to God in dying for our sins.

Romans 5:19

one man's disobedience
the disobedience of Adam

the many were made sinners
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "many people sinned"

the obedience of the one
the obedience of Jesus

of the one will the many be made righteous
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "of the one, God will make many people right with him"

Romans 5:20

the law came in
Here Paul speaks of the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "God gave his law to Moses"

sin abounded
"sin increased"

grace abounded even more
Here "grace" refers to God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "God continued to act even more kindly toward them, in a way that they did not deserve"

Romans 5:21

sin reigned in death ... grace might reign through righteousness for everlasting life
Here Paul speaks of sin as if it were a king who ruled over people and made them unable to obey God and ultimately killing them, and he speaks of grace as if it were a king who might rule over people and enable them to be right with God. Alternate translation: "as people obeyed their desire to sin and therefore had to die ... God might show grace to people and allow them to be right with him, resulting in everlasting life"

our Lord

Paul includes himself, his readers, and all believers.

Chapter 6

¹ What then will we say? Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound? ² May it never be. We who died to sin, how can we still live in it? ³ Do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried, then, with him through baptism into death. This happened in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be united with his resurrection. ⁶ We know this, that our old man was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed. This happened so that we should no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ He who has died is declared righteous with respect to sin. ⁸ But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live together with him. ⁹ We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer rules over him. ¹⁰ For in regard to the death that he died to sin, he died once for all. However, the life that he lives, he lives for God. ¹¹ In the same way, you also must consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin rule in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts. ¹³ Do not present the members of your bodies to sin, to be tools used for unrighteousness. But present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present the members of your bodies to God as tools to be used for righteousness. ¹⁴ Do not allow sin to rule over you. For you are not under law, but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be. ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey? You are either slaves to sin, which leads to death, or slaves to obedience, which leads to righteousness. ¹⁷ But thanks be to God! For you were slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart the pattern of teaching that you were given. ¹⁸ You have been made free from sin, and you have been made slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I speak like a man because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented the members of your bodies as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness, resulting in more lawlessness, in the same way, now present the members of your bodies as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. ²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. ²¹ At that time, what fruit then did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been made free from sin and are enslaved to God, you have your fruit for sanctification. The result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins this chapter by answering how someone might object to what he taught in Chapter 5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Against the Law

In this chapter, Paul refutes the teaching that Christians can live however they want after they are saved. Scholars call this "antinomianism" or being "against the law." To motivate godly living, Paul recalls the great price Jesus paid for a Christian to be saved. (See: save and godly)

Servants of sin

Before they believe in Jesus, people are servants of sin, that is, they are unable to resist their desire to sin. God frees Christians from serving sin. They are able to choose to serve Christ in their lives. Paul explains that when Christians choose to sin, they willingly choose to sin. (See: faith and sin)

Fruit

This chapter uses the imagery of fruit. The image of fruit usually refers to a person's faith producing good works in their life. (See: fruit and righteous)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Death

Paul uses "death" to refer to many different things in this chapter: physical death, spiritual death, sin reigning in the heart of man, and the end of something. He contrasts sin and death with the new life provided by Christ and the new way Christians are supposed to live after they are saved. (See: death)

Romans 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Under grace, Paul tells those who believe in Jesus to live a new life as though dead to sin and alive to God.

What then will we say? Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?

Paul asks these rhetorical questions to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "So, what should we say about all of this? We certainly should not keep on sinning so that God will give us more and more grace!"

we say

The pronoun "we" refers to Paul, his readers, and other people.

Romans 6:2

We who died to sin, how can we still live in it?

Here "We who died to sin" refers to those who follow Jesus, who are now like dead people who cannot be affected by sin. Paul uses this rhetorical question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "We are now like dead people on whom sin has no effect! So we certainly should not keep on sinning!"

Romans 6:3

Do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Paul uses this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Remember, when someone baptized us to show that we have a relationship with Christ, this also shows that we died with Christ on the cross!"

Romans 6:4

We were buried, then, with him through baptism into death

Here Paul speaks of a believer's baptism in water as if it were a death and burial. Alternate translation: "When someone baptized us, it is just like that person buried us with Christ in the tomb"

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life

To raise from the dead is an idiom for causing a person to live again. This compares a believer's new spiritual life to Jesus coming back to life physically. The believer's new spiritual life enables that person to obey God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the Father brought Jesus back to life after he died, we might have new spiritual life and obey God"

the dead

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

Romans 6:5

become united with him in the likeness of his death ... be united with his resurrection

Paul compares our union with Christ to death. Those who are joined with Christ in death will share in his resurrection. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "died with him ... come back to life with him"

Romans 6:6

our old man was crucified with him

The "old man" is a metaphor that refers to the person before he believes in Jesus. Paul describes our old sinful person as dying on the cross with Jesus when we believe in Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "our sinful person died on the cross with Jesus"

old man

This means the person who once was, but who does not exist now.

the body of sin

This is a metonym that refers to the whole sinful person. Alternate translation: "our sinful nature"

might be destroyed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "might die"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "sin should no longer enslave us" or "we should no longer be slaves to sin"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

Slavery to sin is a metaphor meaning having such a strong desire to sin that one is unable to stop himself from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "we should no longer be controlled by sin"

Romans 6:7

He who has died is declared righteous with respect to sin

Here "righteous" refers to being right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "When God declares a person right with him, that person is no longer controlled by sin"

Romans 6:8

we have died with Christ

Here "died" refers to the fact that believers are no longer controlled by sin.

Romans 6:9

We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "We know since God brought Christ back to life after he died"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them is to become alive again.

death no longer rules over him

Here "death" is described as if it were a king or ruler that has power over people. Alternate translation: "He cannot ever die again"

Romans 6:10

he died once for all

Possible meanings are 1) he died once, and he will not die again, nor will anyone else need to die, or 2) it is true now and will be true for all time that he died.

Romans 6:11

In the same way, you also must consider

"For this reason consider"

consider yourselves to be

"think of yourselves as" or "see yourselves as"

dead to sin

Just as one cannot force a corpse to do anything, sin has no power to force believers to dishonor God. Alternate translation: "as if you were dead to the power of sin"

dead to sin, but alive to God

"dead to the power of sin, but living to honor God"

alive to God in Christ Jesus

"living to honor God through the power Christ Jesus gives you"

Romans 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that grace rules over us, not the law; we are not sin's slaves, but God's slaves.

do not let sin rule in your mortal body

Paul speaks of people sinning as if sin were their master or king that controlled them. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control you"

your mortal body

This phrase refers to the physical part of a person, which will die. Alternate translation: "you"

so that you obey its lusts

Obedying the mortal body's lusts would be the result of letting sin rule in the body. That is why Paul commands people not to let sin rule in their mortal body—so they they do not obey its lusts. Paul speaks of people doing the evil things they desire as if the body had evil desires and commanded people to do what it desires.

Romans 6:13

Do not present the members of your bodies to sin, to be tools used for unrighteousness

The picture is of the sinner offering his "members," the parts of his body to his master or king. One's "members" are a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "Do not offer yourselves to sin so that you do what is not right"

But present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life

Here the words "brought ... to life" refer to the believer's new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "But offer yourselves to God because he has given you new spiritual life" or "But offer yourselves to God as those who had died and are now alive"

present the members of your bodies to God as tools to be used for righteousness

Here "members" is a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "let God use you for what is pleasing to him"

Romans 6:14

Do not allow sin to rule over you

Paul speaks of "sin" here as if it were a king who rules over people. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control what you do" or "Do not allow yourselves to do the sinful things you want to do"

For you are not under law

To be "under law" means to be subject to its limitations and weaknesses. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "For you are no longer bound to the law of Moses, which could not give you the power to stop sinning"

but under grace

To be "under grace" means that God's free gift provides the power to keep from sinning. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "but you are bound to God's grace, which does give you the power to stop sinning"

Romans 6:15

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be

Paul is using a question to emphasize that living under grace is not a reason to sin. Alternate translation: "However, just because we are bound to grace instead of the law of Moses certainly does not mean we are allowed to sin"

May it never be

"We would never want that to happen!" or "May God help me not to do that!" This expression shows an extremely strong desire that this does not take place. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated it in Romans 3:31.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that if you present yourselves as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey?

Paul uses a question to scold anyone who may think God's grace is a reason to keep sinning. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that if you present yourselves as slaves to anyone, you are slaves to whomever you obey!"

which leads to death ... which leads to righteousness

"which results in death ... which results in righteousness"

Romans 6:17

But thanks be to God!

"But I thank God!"

For you were slaves of sin

Being "slaves of sin" is a metaphor meaning they have such a strong desire to sin that they are unable to keep from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "you were like slaves of sin" or "you were unable to keep from sinning"

but you have obeyed from the heart

Here the word "heart" refers to having sincere or honest motives for doing something. Alternate translation: "but you truly obeyed"

the pattern of teaching that you were given

Here "pattern" refers to the way of living that leads to righteousness. The believers change their old way of living to match this new way of living that Christian leaders teach to them. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching that Christian leaders gave you"

Romans 6:18

You have been made free from sin

Here "free from sin" is a metaphor for them no longer having a strong desire to sin and therefore being able to stop themselves from sinning. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has freed you from sin" or "Your strong desire to sin has been taken away" or "You have been made free from sin's control over you" (See: and)

you have been made slaves of righteousness

Slavery of righteousness is a metaphor meaning having a strong desire to do what is right. It is as if righteousness controls the person. Alternate translation: "you have been made like slaves of righteousness" or "you are now controlled by righteousness"

you have been made slaves of righteousness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has made you slaves of righteousness" or "Christ has changed you so that now you are controlled by righteousness"

Romans 6:19

I speak like a man

Paul may have expected his readers to wonder why he was speaking of slavery and freedom. Here he is saying that he is using these ideas from their everyday experience to help them understand that people are controlled either by sin or by righteousness. Alternate translation: "I am speaking about this in human terms" or "I am using examples from everyday life"

because of the weakness of your flesh

Often Paul uses the word "flesh" as the opposite of "spirit." Alternate translation: "because you do not fully understand spiritual things"

presented the members of your bodies as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness

Here, the word "members" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "offered yourselves as slaves to everything that is evil and not pleasing to God"

present the members of your bodies as slaves to righteousness for sanctification

Here the word "members" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "offer yourselves as slaves to what is right before God so that he might set you apart and give you the power to serve him"

Romans 6:20

you were free from righteousness

Here "free from righteousness" is a metaphor for not having to do what is righteous. The people were living as though they thought that they did not have to do what was right. Alternate translation: "it was as though you were free from righteousness" or "you behaved as though you did not have to do what was right" or

Romans 6:21

At that time, what fruit then did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed?

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Paul is using a question to emphasize that sinning results in nothing good. Alternate translation: "Nothing good came from those things that now cause you shame." or "You gained nothing by doing those things that now cause you shame."

Romans 6:22

But now that you have been made free from sin and are enslaved to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now that you have become free

from sin and have become God's slaves" or "But now that God has freed you from sin and made you his slaves"

But now that you have been made free from sin

Being "free from sin" is a metaphor for being able not to sin. Alternate translation: "But now that God has made you able not to sin"

and are enslaved to God

Being "enslaved" to God is a metaphor for being able to serve and obey God. Alternate translation: "and God has made you able to serve him"

you have your fruit for sanctification

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "benefit." Alternate translation: "the benefit is your sanctification" or "the benefit is that you live in a holy way"

The result is eternal life

"The result of all of this is that you will live forever with God"

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin are death

The word "wages" refers to a payment given to someone for their work. "For if you serve sin, you will receive spiritual death as payment" or "For if you continue sinning, God will punish you with spiritual death"

but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

"but God gives eternal life to those who belong to Christ Jesus our Lord"

Chapter 7

¹ Or do you not know, brothers (for I am speaking to people who know about law), that the law rules over a person for whatever time he lives? ² For the married woman is bound by law to the husband while he lives, but if the husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³ So then, while her husband is living, if she lives with another man, she will be called an adulteress. But if the husband dies, she is free from the law, so she is not an adulteress if she lives with another man. ⁴ Therefore, my brothers, you were also made dead to the law through the body of Christ. This is so that you could be joined to another, that is, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might produce fruit for God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in the members of our bodies to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the law. We have died to that by which we were bound. This is so that we might serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

⁷ What will we say then? Is the law itself sin? May it never be. However, I would never have known sin, if it were not through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law said, "You must not covet." ⁸ But sin took the opportunity through the commandment and produced every kind of coveting in me. For apart from the law, sin was dead. ⁹ At one time I was alive without the law, but when the commandment came, sin regained life ¹⁰ and I died. The commandment that was to bring life turned out to be death for me. ¹¹ For sin took the opportunity through the commandment and deceived me. Through the commandment it killed me. ¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good.

¹³ So did what is good become death to me? May it never be. But sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin, brought about death in me through what was good, and through the commandment sin might become sinful beyond measure. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh. I have been sold under slavery to sin. ¹⁵ For what I do, I do not really understand. For what I want to do, I do not do, and what I hate, I do. ¹⁶ But if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that the law is good. ¹⁷ But now it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that lives in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, lives no good thing. For the desire for good is with me, but I cannot do it. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but the evil that I do not want, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, then it is no longer I who am acting, but rather sin that lives in me. ²¹ So, I find this law: When I want to do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I rejoice in the law of God with my inner person. ²³ But I see a different law in the members of my body. It fights against that new law in my mind. It takes me captive by the law of sin that is in the members of my body. ²⁴ I am a miserable man! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind. However, with the flesh I serve the law of sin.

Romans 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"Or do you not know"

Paul uses this phrase to discuss a new topic and connects what follows with the previous teaching.

Special concepts in this chapter

"We have been released from the law"

Paul explains that the law of Moses is no longer in effect. While this is true, the timeless principles behind the law reflect the character of God. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Marriage

Scripture commonly uses marriage as a metaphor. Here Paul uses it to describe how the church relates to the law of Moses and now to Christ.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Romans 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the law controls those who want to live under the law.

Or do you not know, brothers ... that the law rules over a person for whatever time he lives?

Paul asks this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "So you certainly know brothers ... that people have to obey laws only while they are alive"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

Romans 7:2

Connecting Statement:

This verse begins a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" ([Romans 7:1](#)).

the married woman is bound by law to the husband

Here "bound by law to the husband" is a metaphor for a woman being united to her husband according to the law of marriage. Alternate translation: "according to the law, the married woman is united to the husband"

the married woman

This refers to any woman who is married.

Romans 7:3

Connecting Statement:

This verse ends a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" ([Romans 7:1](#)).

she will be called an adulteress

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider her an adulteress" or "people will call her an adulteress"

she is free from the law

Here being free from the law means not having to obey the law. In this case, the woman does not have to obey the law that says that a married woman cannot marry another man. Alternate translation: "she does not have to obey that law"

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brothers

This relates back to Romans 7:1.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

you were also made dead to the law through the body of Christ

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "you also died to the law when through Christ you died on the cross"

to him who was raised from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "to him who was caused to live again" or "to him whom God raised from the dead" or "to him whom God caused to live again"

we might produce fruit for God

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for actions that please God. Alternate translation: "we might be able to do things pleasing to God"

Romans 7:5

to bear fruit for death

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for a "result of one's actions" or "outcome of one's actions." Alternate translation: "which resulted in spiritual death" or "the outcome of which was our own spiritual death"

Romans 7:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that God does not make us holy by the law.

we have been released from the law

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has released us from the law"

we

This pronoun refers to Paul and the believers.

to that by which we were bound

This refers to the law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to the law, which bound us"

the letter

This refers to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "the law of Moses"

Romans 7:7

What will we say then?

Paul is introducing a new topic.

May it never be

"Of course that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

I would never have known sin, if it were not through the law

Paul is speaking of sin as if it were a person who can act.

sin

"my desire to sin"

Romans 7:8

But sin took the opportunity ... produced every kind of coveting

Paul continues comparing sin to a person who can act.

coveting

This word includes both the desire to have what belongs to other people and wrong sexual desire.

apart from the law, sin was dead

"if there were no law, there would be no breaking of the law, so there would be no sin"

Romans 7:9

sin regained life

This can mean 1) "I realized that I was sinning" or 2) "I strongly desired to sin"

Romans 7:10

The commandment that was to bring life turned out to be death for me

Paul speaks of God's condemnation as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "God gave me the commandment so I would live, but it killed me instead"

Romans 7:11

For sin took the opportunity through the commandment and deceived me. Through the commandment it killed me

As in [Romans 7:7-8]

sin

"my desire to sin"

took the opportunity through the commandment

Paul is comparing sin to a person who can act. See how you translated this in [Romans 7:8]

it killed me

Paul speaks of God's condemnation on sinners as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "it separated me from God"

Romans 7:12

the law is holy

Possible meanings are that it is holy because 1) it comes from God or 2) it reveals God's true nature.

Romans 7:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between sin in his inner man and his mind with the law of God—between sin and good.

So

Paul is introducing a new topic.

did what is good become death to me?

Paul uses this question to add emphasis.

what is good

This refers to God's law.

become death to me

"cause me to die"

May it never be

This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "Of course that is not true"

sin ... brought about death in me

Paul speaks of sin as though it were a person who could act.

brought about death in me

Paul speaks of being separated from God as if he were literally dead. Alternate translation: "separated me from God"

through the commandment

"because I disobeyed the commandment"

Romans 7:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 7:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between his flesh and the law of God—between sin and good.

For what I do, I do not really understand

"I am not sure why I do some of the things that I do"

For what I do

"Because what I do"

what I want to do, I do not do

The words "I do not do" are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does not do what he wants to do as often as he would like or that he does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "I do not always do what I want to do"

what I hate, I do

The words "I do," which implies that he always does what he hates to do, are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "the things that I know are not good are the things that I sometimes do"

Romans 7:16

But if I do

"However, if I do"

I agree with the law that the law is good

To agree with the law here is to agree with God about the law. Alternate translation: "I agree with God that the law is good"

Romans 7:17

the sin that lives in me

Paul describes sin as a living being that has the power to influence him.

Romans 7:18

my flesh

Here "flesh" is a metonym for the sinful nature. Alternate translation: "my sinful nature"

Romans 7:19

the good

"the good deeds" or "the good actions"

the evil

"the evil deeds" or "the evil actions"

Romans 7:20

rather sin that lives in me

Paul speaks of "sin" as if it were alive and living inside him.

Romans 7:21

this law: When I want to do good, evil is present with me

The words "this law" refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

evil is present with me

Paul speaks of evil here as if it were alive and living with him.

Romans 7:22

with my inner person

Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "with my heart" or "with my soul"

Romans 7:23

a different law in the members of my body ... fights against that new law in my mind

Paul has a desire to obey God, but at times he also has a desire to do things that God hates. He writes of the two desires he has as if they were two men fighting each other.

a different law

These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

in the members of my body

The phrase "the members of my body" is another way of saying "my flesh"

that new law in my mind

These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form ([Romans 7:22](#)).

the law of sin that is in the members of my body

This "law of sin" is the same as the "different law," the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

Romans 7:24

Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Paul uses this question to express great emotion. If your language has a way of showing great emotion

through an exclamation or a question, use it here.
Alternate translation: "I want someone to set me free from the control of what my body desires!"

deliver me
"rescue me"

this body of death
This is a metaphor that means a body that will experience physical death.

Romans 7:25

But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord
This is the answer to the question in [7:24](#).

So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind.
However, with the flesh I serve the law of sin
The law of God and the law of sin are spoken of as if they were masters whom Paul serves as a slave.

With the mind or intellect Paul chooses to please and obey God, and with the flesh or physical nature he chooses to disobey God and to sin. Alternate translation: "My mind chooses to please God by obeying the law of Moses, but my flesh chooses to disobey God and sin"

the law of God
These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form.

the law of sin
These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

Chapter 8

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was unable to do because it was weak through the flesh, God did. He sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be an offering for sin, and he condemned sin in the flesh. ⁴ He did this in order that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, we who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ⁵ Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not submit to God's law, nor is it able to do so. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, the body is dead with respect to sin, but the spirit is alive with respect to righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, but not to the flesh to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you are about to die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the body's actions, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ You did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you live in fear again; but you received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba, Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. ¹⁷ If we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God. And we are joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the eager expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be delivered from slavery to decay, and that it will be brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together even now. ²³ Not only that, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly, as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he can see? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit also helps in our weakness. For we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groans. ²⁷ He who searches out the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes on behalf of God's holy people according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that for those who love God, he works all things together for good, ^[1] for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ Because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ Those whom he predestined, these he also called. Those whom he called, these he also justified. Those whom he justified, these he also glorified.

³¹ What, therefore, can we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but delivered him up on behalf of us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies. ³⁴ Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written,

"For your benefit we are killed all day long.
We were considered as sheep for the slaughter."

³⁷ In all these things we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us. ³⁸ For I have been convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor governments, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Footnotes

8:28 ^[1]Instead of

Romans 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse of this chapter is a transitional sentence. Paul concludes his teaching of Chapter 7 and leads into the words of Chapter 8.

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 verse 36. Paul quotes these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Indwelling of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is said to live inside a person or inside their heart. If the Spirit is present, this signifies that a person is saved. (See: save)

"These are sons of God"

Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way. God also adopts Christians to be his children. (See: sonofgod and adoption)

Predestination

Twice in verses 29-30 Paul uses the word "predestined." Some take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen his own people to be eternally saved. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter, especially with regards to elements of causation. (See: predestine and save)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul poetically presents his teaching in verses 38 and 39 in the form of an extended metaphor. He explains that nothing can separate a person from the love of God in Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

No condemnation

This phrase must be translated carefully to avoid doctrinal confusion. People are still guilty of their sin. God disapproves of sinful acts, even those that believers in Jesus commit. God still punishes the sins of believers, but Jesus has paid the punishment for their sin. This is what Paul expresses here. The word "condemn" has several possible meanings. Here Paul emphasizes that people who believe in Jesus are no longer punished eternally for their sin by being "condemned to hell." (See: guilt and faith and condemn)

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Romans 8:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the answer to the struggle he has with sin and good.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Here "condemnation" refers to the punishment of people. Alternate translation: "God will not condemn and punish those who are joined to Christ Jesus"

There is therefore now

"For that reason, there is now" or "Because what I have just told you is true, there is now"

Romans 8:2

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

This refers to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "God's Spirit in Christ Jesus"

has set you free from the law of sin and death

Being free from the law of sin and death is a metaphor for not being controlled by the law of sin and death. Alternate translation: "has caused the law of sin and death to no longer control you"

the law of sin and death

Possible meanings are that this refers to 1) the written law, which provokes people to sin, which in turn causes them to die. Alternate translation: "the law which causes sin and death" or 2) the "different law" (see Romans 7:23) that people sin and die.

Romans 8:3

For what the law was unable to do because it was weak through the flesh, God did

Here the law is described as a person who could not break the power of sin. Alternate translation: "For the law did not have the power to stop us from sinning, because the power of sin within us was too strong. But God did stop us from sinning"

through the flesh

"because of people's sinful nature"

He ... sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ... an offering for sin ... he condemned sin

The Son of God forever satisfied God's holy anger against our sin by giving his own body and human life as the eternal sacrifice for sin.

Son

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

in the likeness of sinful flesh

"who looked like a sinful human being"

to be an offering for sin

"so that he could die as a sacrifice for our sins"

he condemned sin in the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to our human nature or lives. Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin in our human nature" or 2) "flesh" refers to Christ's body, and "in the flesh" refers to Christ's death. Alternate translation: "in Christ's flesh God condemned sin" or "by Christ's death God condemned sin."

he condemned sin

In this verse, "condemned" is a metonym for "destroyed." Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin" or "he broke the power of the sin"

Romans 8:4

the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "we might fulfill what the law requires"

we who walk not according to the flesh

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. The flesh is an idiom for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "we who do not obey our sinful desires"

but according to the Spirit

"but who obey the Holy Spirit"

Romans 8:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 8:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to contrast the flesh with the Spirit we now have.

the mind set on the flesh ... the mind set on the Spirit

Here Paul speaks of both the "flesh" and the "spirit" as if they were living persons. Alternate translation: "the way sinful people think ... the way people who listen to the Holy Spirit think"

death

Here this means the separation of a person from God.

Romans 8:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 8:8

Those who are in the flesh

This refers to people who do what their sinful nature tells them to do.

Romans 8:9

in the flesh

"acting according to your sinful natures." See how "the flesh" was translated in Romans 8:5.

in the Spirit

"acting according to the Holy Spirit"

Spirit ... God's Spirit ... Spirit of Christ

These all refer to the Holy Spirit.

if indeed

This phrase does not mean Paul doubts that some of them have God's Spirit. Paul wants them to realize that they all have God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "since" or "because"

Romans 8:10

If Christ is in you

How Christ lives in a person could be made explicit. Alternate translation: "If Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit"

the body is dead with respect to sin

Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually dead to the power of sin or 2) the physical body will still die because of sin.

the spirit is alive with respect to righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually alive because God has given him power to do what is right or 2) God will bring the person back to life after he dies because God is righteous and gives believers eternal life.

Romans 8:11

If the Spirit ... lives in you

Paul assumes that the Holy Spirit lives in his readers. Alternate translation: "Since the Spirit ... lives in you"

of him who raised ... from the dead lives

"of God, who raised ... from the dead, lives"

raised Jesus

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

mortal bodies through his Spirit

"physical bodies through his Spirit" or "bodies, which will die someday, through his Spirit"

Romans 8:12

So then

"Because what I have just told you is true"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

we are debtors, but not to

Paul is speaking of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. Alternate translation: "we need to obey, but not"

but not to the flesh to live according to the flesh

Again Paul speaks of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. You can include the implied word "debtors." Alternate translation: "but we are not debtors to the flesh, and we do not have to obey our sinful desires"

Romans 8:13

For if you live according to the flesh

"Because if you live only to please your sinful desires"

you are about to die

"you will certainly be separated from God"

but if by the Spirit you put to death the body's actions

Paul speaks of the "old man," crucified with Christ, as the person who is responsible for his sinful desires. Alternate translation: "but if by the power of the Holy Spirit you stop obeying your sinful desires"

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For all the people whom the Spirit of God leads"

sons of God

Here this means all believers in Jesus and is often translated as "children of God."

Romans 8:15

by which we cry

"who causes us to cry out"

Abba, Father

"Abba" is "Father" in the Aramaic language.

Romans 8:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 8:17

heirs of God

Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Alternate translation: "and we also will one day receive what God has promised us"

we are joint heirs with Christ

Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member. God will give to us what he gives to Christ. Alternate translation: "we will also receive what God has promised us and Christ together"

that we may also be glorified with him

God will honor Christian believers when he honors Christ. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that God may glorify us along with him"

Romans 8:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For

This emphasizes "I consider." It does not mean "because."

I consider that ... are not worthy to be compared with
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I cannot compare ... with"

will be revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal" or "God will make known"

Romans 8:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

the eager expectation of the creation waits for
Paul describes everything that God created as a person who eagerly waits for something.

for the revealing of the sons of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for the time when God will reveal his children"

sons of God

Here this means all believers in Jesus. You can also translate this as "children of God."

Romans 8:20

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For the creation was subjected to futility

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For God caused what he had created to be unable to achieve what he intended"

not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it
Here Paul describes "creation" as a person who can desire. Alternate translation: "not because this is what the created things wanted, but because it is what God wanted"

in hope

Here the word "hope" is confident expectation that what one desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait." God could be absolutely sure that what he intended would happen. Alternate translation: "confidently expecting" or "confidently waiting"

Romans 8:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

the creation itself will be delivered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save creation"

from slavery to decay

Here being in slavery to decay is a metaphor for being certain to decay. Alternate translation: "from being like a slave to decay"

that it will be brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God

"Freedom" here is in contrast with slavery to decay. It is a metaphor meaning that the creation will not decay. Alternate translation: "that it will become gloriously free from decay like the children of God"

Romans 8:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together even now

The creation is compared to a woman groaning while giving birth to a baby. Alternate translation: "For we know that everything that God created wants to be free and groans for it the way a woman giving birth groans for her baby to be born"

Romans 8:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our body

The abstract nouns "adoption" and "redemption" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "as we wait eagerly for God to adopt us and redeem our bodies"

Romans 8:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For in this hope we were saved

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "For God saved us so that we might have this hope" 2) "For God saved us because we have this hope"

in this hope we were saved

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "it was so that we might confidently wait for this that we were saved" or "we were saved that we might trust God to do this"

this hope

The phrase "this hope" refers to the hope of our adoption, the redemption of our bodies (8:23).

Now hope that is seen is not hope

"Hope that is seen" is hope that has already been fulfilled. Alternate translation: "If we already have what we hope for, that is not hope" or "If we have what we want, we would not say that we hope for it"

For who hopes for what he can see?

Paul uses a question to help his audience understand what "hope" is. Alternate translation: "No one hopes for what he already has." or "No one waits for what has already happened."

Romans 8:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes reminding the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

if we hope for what we do not see

Here the word "hope" means confidently expect that what one desires will happen. The person who hopes in this way believes that what he desires will happen. Alternate translation: "If we confidently expect to receive what we do not see" or "if we trust God for what we do not see"

what we do not see

Not seeing what we hope for represents not yet having it or experiencing it. Alternate translation: "what we do not yet have" or "what has not yet happened"

we wait for it with patience

"we wait for it patiently"

Romans 8:26

Connecting Statement:

Though Paul has been emphasizing that there is a struggle in believers between the flesh and the Spirit, he affirms that the Spirit is aiding us.

inexpressible groans

"groanings that we cannot express in words"

Romans 8:27

He who searches out the hearts knows

Here "He" refers to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's thoughts and emotions. The phrase "searches out the hearts" is a metaphor for examining thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "God, who knows what all our thoughts and feelings are, knows"

Romans 8:28

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers that nothing can separate them from God's love.

for those who are called

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for those whom God chose"

Romans 8:29

those whom he foreknew

"those whom he knew before he even created them"

he also predestined to be conformed

"he also planned in advance that they would be conformed"

to be conformed to the image of his Son

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that he would change them to be like his Son"

Son

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

that he might be the firstborn

"so that his Son would be the firstborn"

among many brothers

Here "brothers" refers to all believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "among many brothers and sisters who belong to the family of God"

Romans 8:30

Those whom he predestined

"Those whom God made plans for in advance"

these he also justified

Here "justified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he also put right with himself"

these he also glorified

The word "glorified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he will also glorify"

Romans 8:31

What, therefore, can we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Paul uses questions to emphasize the main point of what he said previously. Alternate translation: "This is what we should know from all of this: since God is helping us, no one can defeat us."

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son

God the Father sent the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to the cross as the holy, infinite sacrifice necessary to satisfy God's infinite, holy nature against the sin of humanity. Here "Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

but delivered him up

"but put him under the control of his enemies"

how will he not also with him freely give us all things?

Paul is using a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "he will certainly and freely give us all things!"

freely give us all things

"kindly give us all things"

Romans 8:33

Who will bring any accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies

Paul uses a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "No one can accuse us before God because he is the one who makes us right with him"

Romans 8:34

Who is the one who condemns?

Paul uses a question for emphasis. He does not expect an answer. Alternate translation: "No one will condemn us!"

who is at the right hand of God

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

Romans 8:35

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Paul uses this question to teach that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "No one will ever separate us from the love of Christ!" or "Nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ!"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The words "shall separate us from the love of Christ" are understood from the previous question. Alternate translation: "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword separate us from the love of Christ?"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that even these things cannot separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "Even tribulation, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The abstract nouns can be expressed with verb phrases. Here "sword" is a metonym that represents being killed violently. Alternate translation: "Even if people cause us trouble, hurt us, take away our clothes and food, or kill us, they cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress

These words both mean the same thing.

Romans 8:36

For your benefit

Here "your" is singular and refers to God. Alternate translation: "For you"

we are killed all day long

Here "we" refers to the writer and to other people, but not his audience, who was God. The phrase "all day long" is an exaggeration to emphasize how much danger they are in. Paul uses this part of Scripture to show that all who belong to God should

expect difficult times. This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "our enemies continually seek to kill us"

We were considered as sheep for the slaughter

Here Paul compares to livestock those whom people kill because they are loyal to God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Our lives have no more value to them than the sheep they kill"

Romans 8:37

we are more than conquerors

"we have complete victory"

through the one who loved us

You can make explicit the kind of love that Jesus showed. Alternate translation: "because of Jesus, who loved us so much he was willing to die for us"

Romans 8:38

I have been convinced

"I am convinced" or "I am confident"

governments

Possible meanings are 1) demons or 2) human kings and rulers.

nor powers

Possible meanings are 1) spiritual beings with power or 2) human beings with power.

Romans 8:39

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 9

¹ I tell the truth in Christ. I do not lie, and my conscience bears witness with me in the Holy Spirit ² that for me there is great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself would be cursed and set apart from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites. They have adoption, the glory, the covenants, the gift of the law, the ministry in the temple, and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs from whom Christ has come with respect to the flesh—he who is God over all. May he be praised forever. Amen.

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For it is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel. ⁷ Neither are all Abraham's descendants truly his children. But, "It is through Isaac that your descendants will be called." ⁸ That is, the children of the flesh are not the children of God. But the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. ⁹ For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and a son will be given to Sarah." ¹⁰ Not only this, but after Rebekah also had conceived by one man, our father Isaac— ¹¹ for the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad, so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand, ¹² not because of actions, but because of him who calls—it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ It is just as had been written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

¹⁴ What then will we say? Is there unrighteousness with God? May it never be. ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

¹⁶ So then, it is not because of him who wills, nor because of him who runs, but because of God, who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, so that I might demonstrate my power in you, and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ So then, God has mercy on whom he wishes, and whom he wishes, he makes stubborn.

¹⁹ You will say then to me, "Why does he still find fault? For who has ever withstood his will?" ²⁰ On the contrary, man, who are you who answers against God? Will what has been molded say to the one who molds it, "Why did you make me this way?" ²¹ Does the potter not have the right over the clay to make from the same lump a container for honorable use, and another container for dishonorable use? ²² What if God, who is willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience containers of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon containers of mercy, which he had previously prepared for glory? ²⁴ What if he did this also for us, whom he also called, not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he says also in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who were not my people,
and her 'beloved' who was not beloved.

²⁶ Then it will be that where it was said to them,
'You are not my people,'
there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,

"Though the number of the sons of Israel were as the sand of the sea,
it will be a remnant that will be saved,

²⁸ for the Lord will execute his word
on the earth completely and without delay."

²⁹ As Isaiah had said previously,

"If the Lord of hosts
had not left us descendants,
we would be like Sodom,
and we would have become like Gomorrah."

³⁰ What will we say then? That the Gentiles, who were not pursuing righteousness, laid hold of righteousness, the righteousness by faith. ³¹ But Israel, who did pursue a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. ³² Why not? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if by works. They stumbled over the stone of stumbling, ³³ as it has been written,

"Look, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling
and a rock of offense.
He who believes in it will not be ashamed."

Romans 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul changes what he is teaching about. In Chapters 9-11, he focuses on the nation of Israel.

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 verses 25-29 and 33 of this chapter. Paul quotes all of these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Flesh

Paul uses the word "flesh" in this chapter only to refer to Israelites, people physically descending from Abraham through Jacob, whom God named Israel. (See: flesh)

In other chapters, Paul uses the word "brother" to mean fellow Christians. However, in this chapter, he uses "my brothers" to mean his kinsmen the Israelites.

Paul refers to those who believe in Jesus as "children of God" and "children of the promise."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Stone of stumbling

Paul explains that while some Gentiles accepted Jesus as their savior by believing in him, most Jews were trying to earn their salvation and so rejected Jesus. Paul, quoting the Old Testament, describes Jesus as a stone that the Jews stumble over when walking. This "stone of stumbling" causes them to "fall."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel"

Paul uses the word "Israel" in this verse with two different meanings. The first "Israel" means the physical descendants of Abraham through Jacob. The second "Israel" means those who are God's people through faith. The UDB reflects this.

Romans 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells of his personal desire that the people of the nation of Israel will be saved. Then he emphasizes the different ways in which God has prepared them to believe.

I tell the truth in Christ. I do not lie

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize that he is telling the truth.

my conscience bears witness with me in the Holy Spirit

"the Holy Spirit controls my conscience and confirms what I say"

Romans 9:2

that for me there is great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart

Here "unceasing pain in my heart" is an idiom that Paul uses to share his emotional distress. Alternate translation: "that I grieve very greatly and deeply"

great sorrow and unceasing pain

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how great his emotions are.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself would be cursed and set apart from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I personally would be willing to let God curse me and keep me apart from Christ forever if that would help my fellow Israelites, my own people group, to believe in Christ"

Romans 9:4

They are Israelites

"They, like me, are Israelites. God chose them to be Jacob's descendants"

They have adoption, the glory

Here Paul uses the metaphor of "adoption" to indicate that the Israelites are like God's children. Alternate translation: "They have God as their father, and they have the glory"

Romans 9:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 9:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes that those who are born in the family of Israel can really only be a true part of Israel through faith.

But it is not as though the word of God has failed

The word "word" is a metonym for the promise that God used the words to make. Alternate translation: "But we should not think that God has failed to keep his promises" or "We should know that God has kept his promises"

For it is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel

God did not make his promises to all the physical descendants of Israel (or Jacob), but to his spiritual descendants, that is, those who trust in Jesus.

Romans 9:7

Neither are all Abraham's descendants truly his children
"Nor are they all children of God just because they are Abraham's descendants"

Romans 9:8

the children of the flesh are not

Here "children of the flesh" is a metonym that refers to the physical descendants of Abraham. Alternate translation: "not all of Abraham's descendants are"

children of God

This is a metaphor that refers to people who are spiritual descendants, those who have faith in Jesus.

children of the promise

This refers to people who will inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham.

Romans 9:9

this is the word of promise

"these are the words God used when he made the promise"

a son will be given to Sarah

You can translate this in an active form to express that God will give a son to Sarah. Alternate translation: "I will give Sarah a son"

Romans 9:10

our father

Paul refers to Isaac as "our father" because Isaac was the ancestor of Paul and of the Jewish believers in Rome.

had conceived

"had become pregnant"

Romans 9:11

for the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad

"before the children were born and before they had done anything, whether good or bad"

so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand

"so that what God wants to happen according to His choice will happen"

for the children were not yet born

"before the children were born"

Romans 9:12

Connecting Statement:

It may be necessary in your language to place this verse between verse 10 and verse 11: "... our father Isaac, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' For the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad, but so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand—not because of actions, but because of him who calls. It is just...."

because of him
because of God

it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."
"God said to Rebekah, 'The older son will serve the younger son'"

Romans 9:13

Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated

The word "hated" is an exaggeration. God loved Jacob much more than he loved Esau. He did not literally hate Esau.

Romans 9:14

What then will we say?

Paul is using the question to get the attention of his readers.

Is there unrighteousness with God?

"Is God unrighteous?" or "Is God unjust?"

May it never be

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.

Romans 9:15

For he says to Moses

Paul speaks about God's talking with Moses as if it is being done in the present time. Alternate translation: "For God said to Moses"

Romans 9:16

it is not because of him who wills, nor because of him who runs

"it is not because of what people want or because they try hard"

nor because of him who runs

Paul speaks of a person who does good things in order to gain God's favor as if that person were running a race.

Romans 9:17

For the scripture says

Here the scripture is personified as if God were talking to Pharaoh. Alternate translation: "The scripture records that God said"

I ... my

God is referring to himself.

you

The word "you" in this verse is singular.

I raised you up

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused something to be what it is." Alternate translation: "I made you the powerful man that you are"

so that my name might be proclaimed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that people might proclaim my name"

my name

This metonym refers either 1) to God in all of his being. Alternate translation: "who I am" or 2) To his reputation. Alternate translation: "how great I am"

in all the earth

"wherever there are people"

Romans 9:18

whom he wishes, he makes stubborn

God makes stubborn whomever he wishes to make stubborn.

Romans 9:19

You will say then to me

Paul is talking to the critics of his teaching as though he were only talking to one person. You may need to use the plural here.

Why does he still find fault? For who has ever withstood his will?

These rhetorical questions are complaints against God. You can translate them as strong statements. Alternate translation: "He should not find fault with us. No one has ever been able to withstand his will."

he ... his

The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.

has ... withstood his will

"has ... stopped him from doing what he wanted to do"

Romans 9:20

Will what has been molded say to the one who molds it, "Why ... way?"

Paul uses the potter's right to make any kind of container he wants from the clay as a metaphor for the creator's right to do whatever he wants with his creation. Paul asks questions to emphasize his point. This can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "What a person has molded should never say to the one who molds it, 'Why ... way?'"

Why did you make me this way?

This question is a rebuke and can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have made me this way!"

Romans 9:21

Does the potter not have the right ... for dishonorable use?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke. Alternate translation: "The potter certainly has the right ... for dishonorable use."

honorable use ... dishonorable use

Some modern translations read, "special use ... daily use."

Romans 9:22

containers of wrath prepared for destruction

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people to whom he would show wrath and whom he will certainly destroy"

Romans 9:23

he ... his

The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.

containers of mercy, which

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. Alternate translation: "those to whom he would show mercy, whom"

the riches of his glory upon

Paul compares God's wonderful actions here to great "riches." Alternate translation: "his glory, which is of great value, upon"

which he had previously prepared for glory

Here "glory" refers to life in heaven with God. Alternate translation: "whom he prepared ahead of time in order that they might live with him"

Romans 9:24

also for us

The word "us" here refers to Paul and fellow believers.

called

Here "called" means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.

Romans 9:25

Connecting Statement:

In this section Paul explains how Israel's unbelief as a nation was told ahead of time by the prophet Hosea.

As he says also in Hosea

Here "he" refers to God. Alternate translation: "As God says also in the book that Hosea wrote"

Hosea

Hosea was a prophet.

I will call them 'my people' who were not my people

"I will choose those who were not my people to be my people"

her 'beloved' who was not beloved

Here "her" refers to Hosea's wife, Gomer, who represents the nation of Israel. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I will choose her whom I did not love to be one whom I love"

Romans 9:26

sons of the living God

The word "living" may refer to the fact that God is the only true God, and not like the false idols. Alternate translation: "children of the true God"

Romans 9:27

cries out

"calls out"

as the sand of the sea

Here Paul compares the number of the people of Israel to the number of grains of sand in the sea. Alternate translation: "too many to count"

will be saved

Paul uses the word "saved" in a spiritual sense. If God saves a person, it means that through believing in Jesus's death on the cross, God has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished for his sin. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save"

Romans 9:28

the Lord will execute his word on the earth

"the Lord will punish people on the earth as he has said he will"

Romans 9:29

us ... we

Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Isaiah and those to whom he spoke.

we would be like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah

God killed all of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. Alternate translation: "we all would have been destroyed like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" or "God would have destroyed all of us as he destroyed the people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"

Romans 9:30

What will we say then?

Paul uses this question to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "So this is what we must say."

That the Gentiles

"We will say that the Gentiles"

who were not pursuing righteousness

"who were not trying to get righteousness" or "who were not trying to be righteous"

righteousness, the righteousness by faith

Here "by faith" refers to placing one's trust in Christ. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "righteousness because God made them right with him when they trusted in Christ"

Romans 9:31

who did pursue a law of righteousness

"who tried to obey a law in order to get righteousness" or "who tried to be righteous by obeying a law"

did not arrive at that law

"could not keep that law" or "did not succeed at keeping that law"

Romans 9:32

Why not? Because they

You can translate this rhetorical question as a statement and include the words from the ellipsis in your translation. Paul asks this question to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "Why could they not attain righteousness? Because they" or "This is why they could not attain righteousness: they"

by works

This refers to things that people do to try to please God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "by trying to do things that would please God" or "by keeping the Law"

Romans 9:33

as it has been written

You can indicate that Isaiah wrote this. You can also translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "as Isaiah the prophet wrote"

in Zion

Here Zion is a metonym that represents Israel. Alternate translation: "in Israel"

stone of stumbling and a rock of offense

These phrases mean basically the same thing and are metaphors that refer to Jesus and his death on the cross. It was as if the people stumbled over a stone because they were disgusted when they considered Jesus's death on the cross.

believes in it

Because the words "stone" and "rock" are a metaphors for a person, you may need to translate this as "believes in him."

Chapter 10

¹ Brothers, my heart's desire and my plea to God is for them, for their salvation. ² For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For, failing to understand the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. ⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." ⁶ But the righteousness that comes from faith says this: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down); ⁷ and do not say, 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." That is the word of faith, which we proclaim. ⁹ For if with your mouth you confess Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and has righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For scripture says, "Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, and he is rich to all who call upon him. ¹³ For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. ¹⁴ How then can they call on him in whom they have not believed? How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ Then how can they preach, unless they are sent?—As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news!"

¹⁶ But not all of them obeyed the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. ¹⁸ But I say, "Did they not hear?" Yes, most certainly.

"Their sound has gone out into all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world."

¹⁹ Moreover, I say, "Did Israel not know?" First Moses says,

"I will provoke you to jealousy by what is not a nation.
By means of a nation without understanding, I will stir you up to anger."

²⁰ Then Isaiah was very bold when he says,

"I was found by those who did not seek me.
I appeared to those who did not ask for me."

²¹ But to Israel he says,

"All the day long I reached out my hands
to a disobedient and stubborn people."

Romans 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 18-20 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.

Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's righteousness

Paul teaches here that while many Jews earnestly tried to be righteous, they did not succeed. We cannot earn God's righteousness. God gives us Jesus's righteousness when we believe in him. (See: righteous and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He does this to convince his readers that God does not save only the Hebrew people, so Christians must be ready to go and share the gospel with the whole world. (See: and save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"I will provoke you to jealousy by what is not a nation"

Paul uses this prophecy to explain that God will use the church to make the Hebrew people jealous. This is so they will seek God and believe the gospel.

Romans 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues stating his desire for Israel to believe but emphasizes that both those who are Jews and those who are not can only be saved by faith in Jesus.

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

my heart's desire

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions or inner being. Alternate translation: "my greatest desire"

is for them, for their salvation

"is that God will save the Jews"

Romans 10:2

I testify about them

"I declare truthfully about them"

Romans 10:3

For, failing to understand the righteousness that comes from God

Here "righteousness" refers to the way God puts people right with himself. You can make this explicit in the translation. Alternate translation: "For because they did not know how God puts people right with himself"

they did not submit to God's righteousness.

"they did not accept God's way of putting people right with himself"

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the fulfillment of the law

"For Christ completely fulfilled the law"

law for righteousness for everyone who believes

Here "believes" means "trusts." Alternate translation: "law, and he makes everyone who trusts in him right before God"

Romans 10:5

the righteousness that comes from the law

Paul speaks of "righteousness" as if it were alive and able to move. Alternate translation: "how the law makes a person right before God"

"The man who does these things will live by them."

In order to be made right with God through the law, a person would have to keep the law perfectly, which is not possible. Alternate translation: "The person who perfectly obeys the law will live because the law will make him right before God"

will live

The words "will live" can refer to 1) eternal life or 2) mortal life in fellowship with God.

Romans 10:6

But the righteousness that comes from faith says this

Here "righteousness" is described as a person who can speak. Alternate translation: "But Moses writes this about how faith makes a person right before God"

Do not say in your heart

Moses was addressing the people as if he were speaking to only one person. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "Do not say to yourself"

Who will ascend into heaven?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one is able to go up to heaven"

that is, to bring Christ down

"in order that they might have Christ come down to earth"

Romans 10:7

Who will descend into the abyss?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "No person can go down and enter the place where the spirits of dead persons are."

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be brought up from among them is to become alive again.

dead

This word speaks of physical death.

Romans 10:8

But what does it say?

The word "it" refers to the scripture. Alternate translation: "But this is what Moses says"

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart

Paul speaks of God's message as if it were a person who can move. The word "mouth" is a metonym that refers to what a person says. The phrase "in your heart" is metonym that refers to what a person thinks and believes. Alternate translation: "You have heard the message. You know how to speak it, and you know what it means"

the word of faith

"God's message that tells us that we must believe in him"

Romans 10:9

if with your mouth you confess Jesus as Lord

"if you confess that Jesus is Lord"

believe in your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner person. Alternate translation: "believe in your mind" or "truly believe"

raised him from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

you will be saved

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you"

Romans 10:10

For with the heart one believes and has righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents the mind or will. Alternate translation: "For it is with the mind that a person trusts and is right before God, and it is with the mouth that a person confesses so that God saves him"

with the mouth

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that represents a person's capacity to speak.

Romans 10:11

For scripture says

Paul speaks of the scripture as if it were alive and had a voice. You can make explicit who wrote the scripture that Paul uses here. Alternate translation: "For Isaiah wrote in the scripture"

Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame

This is equivalent to: "If a person believes, then that person will not be shamed." The negative is used here for emphasis. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will honor everyone who believes in him" or "God will shame only those who do not believe in Jesus"

Romans 10:12

For there is no difference between Jew and Greek

Paul implies that God will treat all people the same. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "In this way, God treats the Jews and the non-Jews the same"

he is rich to all who call upon him

Here "he is rich" means that God blesses richly. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "he richly blesses all who trust in him"

Romans 10:13

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

Here the word "name" is a metonym for Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord will save everyone who trusts in him"

Romans 10:14

How then can they call on him in whom they have not believed?

Paul uses a question to emphasize the importance of taking the good news of Christ to those who have not heard. The word "they" refers to those who do

not yet belong to God. Alternate translation: "Those who do not believe in God cannot call on him!"

How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate translation: "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard his message!" or "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard the message about him!"

believe in

trust and desire to obey

How can they hear without a preacher?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate translation: "And they cannot hear the message if someone does not tell them!"

Romans 10:15

How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news

Paul uses "feet" to represent those who travel and take the message to those who have not heard it. The feet were considered a dirty and ugly part of the body, so the idea of beautiful feet would have seemed odd to Paul's readers. Alternate translation: "How beautiful are even the feet of those who proclaim good news" or "It is wonderful when messengers go and tell others the good news"

Romans 10:16

not all of them obeyed

Here "they" refers to the Jews. "not all of the Jews obeyed"

Lord, who has believed our report?

Paul is using this question, which Isaiah prophesied in the Scriptures, to emphasize that many Jews would not believe in Jesus. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "Lord, so many of them do not believe our message!"

our report

Here, "our" refers to God and Isaiah and so is inclusive.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing

The abstract noun "faith" can be stated as the verb "believes." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood. Alternate translation: "So a person believes in Christ by hearing the message about Christ"

and hearing by the word of Christ

Here "word" is a metonym that means "message." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood. Alternate translation: "and a person hears the message by someone preaching the message about Christ"

Romans 10:18

But I say, "Did they not hear?" Yes, most certainly Paul uses a question for emphasis. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "But, I say the Jews certainly have heard the message about Christ"

Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Both of these statements mean basically the same thing and Paul uses them for emphasis. The word "their" refers to the sun, moon, and stars. Here they are described as human messengers that tell people about God. This refers to how their existence shows God's power and glory. You can make explicit that Paul is quoting Scripture here. Alternate translation: "As the Scriptures record, 'The sun, moon, and the stars are proof of God's power and glory, and everyone in the world sees them and knows the truth about God.'"

Romans 10:19

Moreover, I say, "Did Israel not know?"

Paul uses a question for emphasis. The word "Israel" is a metonym for the people who lived in the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "Again I tell you the people of Israel did know the message."

First Moses says, "I will provoke you ... I will stir you up

This means that Moses wrote down what God said. "I" refers to God, and "you" refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "First Moses says that God will provoke you ... God will stir you up"

by what is not a nation

"by those you do not consider to be a real nation" or "by people who do not belong to any nation"

By means of a nation without understanding

Here "without understanding" means that the people do not know God. Alternate translation: "By a nation with people who do not know me or my commands"

I will stir you up to anger

"I will make you angry" or "I will cause you to become angry"

you

This refers to the nation of Israel.

Romans 10:20

General Information:

Here the words "I" and "me" refer to God.

Then Isaiah was very bold when he says

This means the prophet Isaiah wrote what God had said.

I was found by those who did not seek me

Prophets often speak of things in the future as if they have already happened. This emphasizes that the prophecy will certainly come true. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Even though the Gentile people will not look for me, they will find me"

I appeared

"I made myself known"

he says

"He" refers to God, who is speaking through Isaiah.

Romans 10:21

General Information:

Here the word "my" refers to God.

All the day long I

This phrase is used to emphasize God's continual effort. "I continually"

I reached out my hands to a disobedient and stubborn people

"I tried to welcome you and to help you, but you refused my help and continued to disobey"

Chapter 11

¹ I say then, did God reject his people? May it never be. For I also am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel? ³ "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have broken down your altars. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." ⁴ But what does God's answer say to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand men who have not bent the knee to Baal." ⁵ Even so then, at this present time also there is a remnant because of the choice of grace. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer based on works. Otherwise grace would no longer be grace. ¹⁷ What then? The thing that Israel was seeking, it did not obtain, but the chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened. ⁸ It is just as it is written:

"God has given them a spirit of dullness,
eyes so that they should not see,
and ears so that they should not hear,
to this very day."

⁹ Then David says,

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.

¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see,
and bend their backs continually."

¹¹ I say then, "Did they stumble so as to fall?" May it never be. Instead, by their trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if their trespass is the riches of the world, and if their loss is the riches of the Gentiles, how much greater will their fulfillment be? ¹³ But now I am speaking to you Gentiles, and as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry. ¹⁴ Perhaps I will provoke to jealousy those who are of my own flesh. Perhaps we will save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the firstfruits are holy, so is the lump of dough. If the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, if you, a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them, and if you shared with them in the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast over the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you who supports the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. Because of their unbelief they were broken off, but you stand firm because of your faith. Do not be arrogant in your thoughts, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Look at, then, the kind actions and the severity of God: severity came on the Jews who fell, but God's kindness comes on you, if you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

²⁵ For I do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, of this mystery, so that you may not be wise in your own thinking: A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the full number of the Gentiles comes in. ²⁶ Thus all Israel will be saved, just as it is written:

"Out of Zion will come the Deliverer.
He will remove ungodliness from Jacob,

²⁷ and this will be my covenant with them,
when I will take away their sins."

²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake. But as far as election is concerned, they are beloved because of the patriarchs. ²⁹ For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were formerly disobedient to God, now you have received mercy because of their disobedience. ³¹ In the same way, now these Jews have been disobedient. The result was that by the mercy shown to you

they may also now receive mercy. ³² For God has shut up all into disobedience in order that he might show mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments,
and his ways beyond discovering!

³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord
or who has become his advisor?

³⁵ Or who has first given anything to God,
that God must repay him?"

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Footnotes

11:6 ^[1]Some old copies read

Romans 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-10, 26-27, and 34-35, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Grafting

Paul uses the image of "grafting" to refer to the place of the Gentiles and Jews in the plans of God. Making one plant to be permanently part of another plant is called "grafting." Paul uses the picture of God grafting the Gentiles as a wild branch into his saving plans. But God has not forgotten about the Jews, who are spoken of as the natural plant. God will also save Jews who believe in Jesus.

Romans 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Though Israel as a nation has rejected God, God wants them to understand salvation comes by grace without works.

I say then

"I, Paul, say then"

did God reject his people?

Paul asks this question so that he can answer the questions of other Jews who are upset that God has included the Gentiles among his people, while the hearts of the Jewish people have been hardened.

May it never be.

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

tribe of Benjamin

This refers to the tribe descended from Benjamin, one of the 12 tribes into which God divided the people of Israel.

Romans 11:2

whom he foreknew

"whom he knew ahead of time"

Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel?

You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know what the Scriptures record about when Elijah pleaded with God against Israel."

what the scripture says

Paul is referring to the scripture as if they were able to speak.

Romans 11:3

they have killed

"They" refers to the people of Israel.

I alone am left

The pronoun "I" here refers to Elijah.

seeking my life

"desiring to kill me"

Romans 11:4

But what does God's answer say to him?

Paul is using this question to bring the reader to his next point. Alternate translation: "But this is God's answer to him:"

him

The pronoun "him" refers to Elijah.

seven thousand men

"7,000 men"

Romans 11:5

remnant

Here this means a small part of people whom God chose to receive his grace.

Romans 11:6

But if it is by grace

Paul continues to explain how God's mercy works. Alternate translation: "But since God's mercy works by grace"

Romans 11:7

What then?

"What should we conclude?" Paul asks this question to move his reader to his next point. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is what we need to remember" or "So"

Romans 11:8

God has given them a spirit of dullness, eyes so that they should not see, and ears so that they should not hear

This is a metaphor about the fact that the people are spiritually dull. They are not able to hear or receive spiritual truth.

spirit of

Here this means "having the characteristics of," such as the "spirit of wisdom."

eyes so that they should not see

The concept of seeing with one's eyes was considered to be equivalent to gaining understanding.

ears so that they should not hear

The concept of hearing with the ears was considered to be equivalent to obedience.

Romans 11:9

Let their table become a snare and a trap

"Table" here is a metonym that represents feasting, and "snare" and "trap" are metaphors that represent punishment. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Please, God, make their feasts like a trap that catches them"

a stumbling block

A "stumbling block" is anything that causes a person to trip so that he falls down. Here it represents something that tempts a person to sin. Alternate translation: "something that tempts them to sin"

a retribution for them

"something that allows you to take revenge on them"

Romans 11:10

bend their backs continually

Here "bend their backs" is a metonym for forcing slaves to carry heavy loads on their backs. This is a metaphor for making them suffer. Alternate translation: "make them suffer like people carrying heavy loads"

Romans 11:11

Connecting Statement:

With Israel as a nation rejecting God, Paul warns the Gentiles to be careful they do not make the same mistake.

Did they stumble so as to fall?

Paul uses this question to add introduce the next thing he wants to say. If your language uses a different way to introduce new topics, you can use it here. Here the words "stumble" and "fall" are metaphors for sinning and having God reject the sinner. Alternate translation: "Has God rejected them forever because they sinned?"

May it never be.

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

provoke ... to jealousy

See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.

Romans 11:12

if their trespass is the riches of the world, and if their loss is the riches of the Gentiles

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. If you need to, you can combine them in your translation. Alternate translation: "when the Jews trespassed, the result was that God abundantly blessed the non-Jews"

the riches of the world

Because the Jews rejected Christ, God richly blessed the Gentiles by giving them the opportunity to receive Christ.

the world

Here the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who live in the world, especially the Gentiles.

how much greater will their fulfillment be?

This can be translated as a statement. The words "their fulfillment" refer to either 1) the time when God blesses the Jews 2) when the Jews believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "their fulfillment will be much greater." or "how much better will it be for the non-Jews when all the Jews believe in Jesus?" or "how much better will it be for the non-Jews when God fully blesses the Jews?"

Romans 11:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 11:14

provoke to jealousy

See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.

those who are of my own flesh

This refers to "my fellow Jews."

Perhaps we will save some of them

God will save those who believe. Alternate translation: "Perhaps some will believe and therefore God will save them"

Romans 11:15

For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world

"For if because God rejected them, he will reconcile the rest of the world to himself"

their rejection

The pronoun "their" refers to Jewish unbelievers.

the world

Here "the world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people in the world"

what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Paul asks this question to emphasize that when God accepts the Jews, it will be a wonderful thing. The abstract noun "acceptance" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "how will it be when God accepts them? It will be like they have come back to life from among the dead!" or "then when God accepts them, it will be like they have died and become alive again!"

the dead

These words speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

Romans 11:16

If the firstfruits are holy, so is the lump of dough

Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the first grain or "firstfruits" to be harvested. He is also speaking of the Israelites who are descendants of those men as if they were a "lump of dough" made from the grain. Alternate translation: "If Abraham is counted as the first of what has been offered to God, all of our ancestors who followed should also be counted as God's possession"

firstfruits

The people always dedicated to God the first crops that they harvested. Here "firstfruits" stands for the first people to believe in Christ.

If the root is holy, so are the branches

Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the root of a tree, and the Israelites, who are descendants of those men, as if they were the tree's "branches."

Romans 11:17

But if some of the branches were broken off

Here Paul refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus as "broken branches." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "But if someone broke off some of the branches"

if you, a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them

Here Paul speaks of the Gentile Christians as if they were "grafted branches." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "if God grafted you, a wild olive branch, among them"

if you, a wild olive branch

The pronoun "you" is singular. Here "you" and the phrase "a wild olive branch," refer to a Gentile person, in general, who has accepted salvation through Jesus.

the rich root of the olive tree

Here "the rich root" is a metaphor that refers to the promises of God.

Romans 11:18

do not boast over the branches

Here "the branches" is a metaphor that stands for the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "do not say you are better than the Jewish people God has rejected"

it is not you who supports the root, but the root that supports you

Again Paul implies that the Gentile believers are branches. God saves them only because of the covenant promises that he made to the Jews.

Romans 11:19

Branches were broken off

Here "branches" refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus and whom God has now rejected. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God broke branches off"

I might be grafted in

Paul uses this phrase to refer to the Gentile believers whom God has accepted. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he might attach me in"

Romans 11:20

their ... they

The pronouns "their" and "they" refer to the Jewish people who did not believe.

but you stand firm because of your faith

Paul speaks of the Gentile believers remaining faithful as if they were standing firm and no one could move them. Alternate translation: "but you remain because of your faith"

be arrogant in your thoughts

"think that you are better than you are" or "be proud"

Romans 11:21

For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you

Here the "natural branches" refers to the Jewish people who rejected Jesus. Alternate translation: "Since God did not spare those unbelieving Jews, who grew up like a tree's natural branches that came from the root, then know that if you do not believe, he will not spare you either"

Romans 11:22

the kind actions and the severity of God

Paul is reminding the Gentile believers that although God may act very kindly toward them, he will not hesitate to judge and punish them.

severity came on the Jews who fell ... God's kindness comes on you

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "severity" and "kindness." Alternate translation: "God dealt harshly with the Jews who fell ... God acts kindly toward you"

the Jews who fell

Here "fell" is a metaphor that means to have done something wrong. Alternate translation: "the Jews who have done wrong" or "the Jews who have refused to trust in Christ"

if you continue in his kindness

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "kindness." Alternate translation: "if you continue doing what is right so that he continues being kind to you"

Otherwise you also will be cut off

Paul again uses the metaphor of a branch, which God can "cut off" if he needs to. Here "cut off" is a metaphor for rejecting someone. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise God will also cut you off" or "Otherwise God will also reject you"

Romans 11:23

if they do not continue in their unbelief

The phrase "do not continue in their unbelief" is a double negative. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "if they start believing"

will be grafted in

Paul speaks of the Jews as if they were branches that could be grafted back into a tree if they start to believe in Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will graft back in"

graft

This is a common process in which the end of a live branch of one tree is inserted into another tree so that the new branch will continue to grow in that tree.

they ... them

All occurrences of "they" or "them" refer to the Jews.

Romans 11:24

For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

Paul continues speaking of the Gentile believers and Jews as if they were branches of a tree. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For if God had cut you out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature had grafted you into a good olive tree, how much

more will he graft these Jews, who are the natural branches, into their own olive tree?"

how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "then these Jews, who are the natural branches, will certainly be grafted back into their own olive tree."

branches

Paul is speaking of the Jews and Gentiles as if they were branches. The "natural branches" represent the Jews, and the "grafted branches" represent the Gentile believers.

Romans 11:25

I do not want you to be uninformed

Here Paul uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I very much want you to be informed"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

I

The pronoun "I" refers to Paul.

you ... you ... your

The pronouns "you" and "your" refer to the Gentile believers.

so that you may not be wise in your own thinking

Paul does not want the Gentile believers to think they are wiser than the Jewish unbelievers. Alternate translation: "so that you will not think you are wiser than you are"

A partial hardening has come upon Israel

This is the mystery that Paul referred to earlier in the sentence. This can be made a explicit. "A partial hardening" is a metaphor for many of the people remaining stubborn. Paul said this because some of the Jews stubbornly refused to trust Jesus. Alternate translation: "This mystery is that a partial hardening has come upon Israel" or "Many people of Israel remain stubborn"

until the full number of the Gentiles

Here "full number" means the amount determined by God. It does not mean all Gentiles. Alternate translation: "until the number of Gentiles determined by God"

comes in

This is a metaphor meaning to be saved or to become a Christian. Alternate translation: "is saved" or "believes in Christ"

Romans 11:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul says that, to the glory of God, a deliverer will come out of Israel.

Thus all Israel will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Thus God will save all Israel"

just as it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the scriptures record"

Out of Zion

Here "Zion" is used as a metonym for the place where God dwells. Alternate translation: "From where God is among the Jews"

the Deliverer

"the one who brings his people to safety"

He will remove ungodliness

Paul speaks of ungodliness as if it were an object that someone could remove, such as a garment..

from Jacob

Here "Jacob" is used as a metonym for Israel. Alternate translation: "from the Israelite people"

Romans 11:27

I will take away their sins

Here Paul speaks of sins as if they were objects that someone could take away. Alternate translation: "I will remove the burden of their sins"

Romans 11:28

As far as the gospel is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions the gospel. Alternate translation: "Because the Jews rejected the gospel"

they are enemies for your sake

You can make explicit whose enemies they are, and how this was for the Gentiles' sake. Alternate translation: "they are God's enemies for your sake" or "God has treated them as enemies in order that you also might hear the gospel"

as far as election is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions election. Alternate translation: "because God has elected the Jews" or "because God has chosen the Jews"

they are beloved because of the patriarchs

You can make explicit who loves the Jews and why Paul mentions their forefathers. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God still loves them because of what he promised to do for their ancestors"

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable

Paul speaks of the spiritual and material blessings that God promised to give his people as if they were gifts. The call of God refers to the fact that God called the Jews to be his people. Alternate translation: "For God will never change his mind about what he has promised to give them, and about how he has called them to be his people" or "God will never take back his gifts or his call"

are irrevocable

"can never be taken back"

Romans 11:30

you were formerly disobedient to God

"you did not obey God in the past"

you have received mercy because of their disobedience

Here mercy means God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "because the Jews have rejected Jesus, you have received blessings that you did not deserve"

you

This refers to Gentile believers, and is plural.

Romans 11:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 11:32

God has shut up all into disobedience

God has treated people who disobey him like prisoners who are unable to escape from prison. Alternate translation: "God has made prisoners of those who disobey him. Now they cannot stop disobeying God"

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God

Here "wisdom" and "knowledge" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "How amazing

are the many benefits of both God's wisdom and knowledge"

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering

"We are completely unable to understand the things that he has decided and to find out the ways in which he acts toward us"

Romans 11:34

For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his advisor?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one is as wise as the Lord. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one has ever known the mind of the Lord, and no one has become his advisor."

the mind of the Lord

Here "mind" is a metonym for knowing things or thinking about things. Alternate translation: "all that the Lord knows" or "what the Lord thinks about"

Romans 11:35

Or who has first given anything to God, that God must repay him?"

Paul uses this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "No one has ever given anything to God that he did not first receive from God"

Romans 11:36

For from him ... through him ... to him

Here, all occurrences of "him" refers to God.

To him be the glory forever

This expresses Paul's desire for all people to honor God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "May all people honor him forever"

Chapter 12

¹ I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This is your reasonable service. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Do this so that you can test and approve what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

³ For by the grace that was given to me I say to everyone among you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather, think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has given you. ⁴ For we have many members in one body, but not all the members have the same function. ⁵ In the same way, we who are many are one body in Christ, and are individually members of each other. ⁶ We have different gifts according to the grace that was given to us. If one's gift is prophecy, let it be done according to the proportion of his faith. ⁷ If one's gift is service, let him serve. If one has the gift of teaching, let him teach. ⁸ If one's gift is encouragement, let him encourage. If one's gift is giving, let him do it generously. If one's gift is leading, let it be done with diligence. If one's gift is in showing mercy, let it be done with cheerfulness.

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; hold on to that which is good. ¹⁰ Concerning love of the brothers, be affectionate to one another. Concerning honor, respect one another. ¹¹ Concerning diligence, do not be hesitant. Concerning the spirit, be eager. Concerning the Lord, serve him. ¹² Rejoice in hope, endure tribulation, be faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share in the needs of God's holy people. Find many ways to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not think in proud ways, but accept lowly people. Do not be wise in your own thoughts. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Do good things in the sight of all people. ¹⁸ If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people. ¹⁹ Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give way to the wrath of God. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay," says the Lord."

²⁰ But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him.
If he is thirsty, give him a drink.
For if you do this, you will heap coals of fire on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 20, which is from the Old Testament.

Many scholars believe Paul uses the word "therefore" in [Romans 12:1](#) to refer back to all of Chapters 1-11. Having carefully explained the Christian gospel, Paul now explains how Christians should live in light of these great truths. Chapters 12-16 focus on living out one's Christian faith. Paul uses many different commands in these chapters to give these practical instructions. (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

Christian living

Under the law of Moses, people were required to offer temple sacrifices of animals or grain. Now Christians are required to live their lives as a type of sacrifice to God. Physical sacrifices are no longer required. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Body of Christ

The body of Christ is an important metaphor or image used in Scripture to refer to the church. Each church member has a unique and important function. Christians need each other.

Romans 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells what the life of a believer should be and how believers should serve.

I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "Fellow believers, because of the great mercy that God has given you I very much want you to present"

to present your bodies a living sacrifice

Here Paul uses the word "bodies" to refer to the entire beings of all those he is addressing. Paul is comparing a believer in Christ who completely obeys God to the animals that the Jews killed and then offered to God. Alternate translation: "to offer yourselves completely to God while you are alive as if you were a dead sacrifice on a temple altar"

holy, acceptable to God

Possible meanings are 1) "a sacrifice that you give to God alone and that pleases him" or 2) "acceptable to God because it is morally pure"

This is your reasonable service

"This is the right way to worship God"

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not behave as this world behaves" or "Do not do what this world does"

this world

This refers to unbelievers who live in the world.

but be transformed by the renewal of your mind

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but let God change the way you think and behave"

Romans 12:3

by the grace that was given to me I say

Here "grace" refers to God's choosing Paul to be an apostle and leader of the church. You can make this explicit in your translation. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God freely chose me to be an apostle, I can say"

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought

"Do not think you are better than other people"

rather, think with sober judgment

"instead, you should be wise in how you think about yourselves"

each according to the measure of faith that God has given you

Paul implies here that believers have different abilities that correspond to their faith in God. Alternate translation: "since God has given each of you different abilities because of your trust in him"

Romans 12:4

For

Paul uses this word to show that he will now explain why some Christians should not think they are better than others.

we have many members in one body

Paul refers to all the believers in Christ as if they were different parts of the human body. He does this to illustrate that although believers may serve Christ in different ways, each person belongs to Christ and serves in an important way.

members

Such parts of the body as eyes, ears, and hands.

Romans 12:5

are individually members of each other

Paul speaks of the believers as if God had physically joined them together like the parts of the human body. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has joined each believer together with all other believers"

Romans 12:6

We have different gifts according to the grace that was given to us

Paul speaks of believers' different abilities as being free gifts from God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has freely given each of us different abilities to do things for him"

let it be done according to the proportion of his faith

Possible meanings are 1) "let him speak prophecies that do not go beyond the amount of faith God has given us" or 2) "let him speak prophecies that agree with the teachings of our faith."

Romans 12:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 12:8

If one's gift is giving, let him do it

Here "giving" refers to giving money and other things to people. You can make this meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "If one has the gift of giving money or other goods to people in need, let him give"

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "You must love people sincerely and truly"

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Romans 12:10

Concerning love of the brothers, be affectionate

Here Paul begins a list of nine items, each of the form "Concerning ... be" to tell the believers what kind of people they should be. You may need to translate some of the items as "Concerning ... do." The list continues to Romans 12:13.

Concerning love of the brothers

"As for how you love your fellow believers"

love

In the original language a different word is used for "love" here than is used in 12:9. This word means brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

be affectionate

"show affection"

Concerning honor, respect one another

"Honor and respect one another" or "Honor your fellow believers by respecting them"

Romans 12:11

Concerning diligence, do not be hesitant. Concerning the spirit, be eager. Concerning the Lord, serve him
"Do not be lazy in your duty, but be eager to follow the Spirit and to serve the Lord"

Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope

"Rejoice because of your hope" or "Rejoice as you hope." Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Rejoice because of what you confidently wait for" or "Rejoice as you confidently wait"

endure tribulation

"be patient when you suffer" or "wait patiently whenever you have troubles"

be faithful in prayer
"pray faithfully"

Romans 12:13

General Information:

This is the last item in the list that began in [Romans 12:9](#).

Share in the needs of God's holy people

"When fellow Christians are in trouble, help them with what they need"

Find many ways to show hospitality

"Always welcome Christians into your home when they need a place to stay"

Romans 12:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 12:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another

This is an idiom that means to live in unity. Alternate translation: "Agree with one another" or "Live in unity with each other"

Do not think in proud ways

"Do not think that you are more important than others"

accept lowly people

"welcome people who do not seem important"

Do not be wise in your own thoughts

"Do not think of yourselves as having more wisdom than everyone else"

Romans 12:17

Repay no one evil for evil

"Do not do evil things to anyone who has done evil things to you"

Do good things in the sight of all people

"Do things that everyone considers to be good"

Romans 12:18

as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people

"do whatever you can to live in peace with everyone"

Romans 12:19

give way to the wrath of God

Here "wrath" is a metonym for God's punishment. Alternate translation: "allow God to punish those who harm you"

For it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For someone has written"

Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that God will avenge his people. Alternate translation: "I will certainly avenge you"

Romans 12:20

your enemy ... feed him ... give him a drink ... if you do this, you will heap

All forms of "you" and "your" are addressed as to one person.

But "if your enemy is hungry ... his head."

Paul quotes another part of scripture. Alternate translation: "But the scripture also says, 'If your enemy is hungry ... his head.'"

feed him

"give him some food"

you will heap coals of fire on his head

Paul speaks of the blessings that the enemies will receive as if someone were pouring hot coals on their heads. Possible meanings are 1) "you will make the person who harmed you feel ashamed about how he has mistreated you" or 2) "you will give God a reason to judge your enemy more harshly"

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good

Paul describes "evil" as though it were a person. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let those who are evil defeat you, but defeat those who are evil by doing what is good"

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil

These verbs are addressed as to one person and so are singular.

Chapter 13

¹ Let every soul be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority unless it comes from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God. ² Therefore he who rebels against that authority opposes the command of God; and those who oppose it will receive judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to those who do good deeds, but to those who do evil deeds. Do you desire to have no fear of the one in authority? Do what is good, and you will receive his praise. ⁴ For he is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for he does not carry the sword for no reason. For he is a servant of God, an avenger for wrath on the one who does evil. ⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of the wrath, but also because of conscience. ⁶ Because of this you pay taxes also. For authorities are servants of God, who attend to this very thing continually. ⁷ Pay to everyone what is owed to them: tax to whom tax is due, toll to whom toll is due, fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due.

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet," and if there is any other commandment it is summed up in this, "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹ Because of this, you know the time, that it is already the hour for you to awake out of sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night has advanced, and the day is near. Let us therefore put aside the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk appropriately, as in the day, not in drunken celebrations or drunkenness; and let us not walk in sexual immorality or in uncontrolled lust, and not in strife or jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its lusts.

Romans 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In the first part of this chapter, Paul teaches Christians to obey rulers who govern them. At that time, ungodly Roman rulers governed the land. (See: godly)

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungodly rulers

Some readers will find it difficult to understand what Paul teaches about obeying rulers, especially if they are in places where rulers persecute the church. Christians must obey their rulers as well as obey God, unless the rulers do not allow Christians to do something God explicitly commands them to do. There are times when a believer must submit to these rulers and suffer at their hands. Christians understand that this world is temporary and they will ultimately be with God forever. (See: eternity)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Romans 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers how to live under their rulers.

Let every soul be subject to

Here "soul" is a synecdoche for the whole person. "Every Christian should obey" or "Everyone should obey"

higher authorities

"government officials"

for
because

there is no authority unless it comes from God
"all authority comes from God"

The authorities that exist have been appointed by God
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "And the people who are in authority are there because God put them there"

Romans 13:2

that authority
"that government authority" or "the authority that God placed in power"

those who oppose it will receive judgment on themselves
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will judge those who oppose government authority"

Romans 13:3

For
Paul uses this word to begin his explanation of Romans 13:2 and to tell about what will result if the government condemns a person.

rulers are not a terror to those who do good deeds, but to those who do evil deeds
"rulers do not cause terror for those who do good deeds, but for those who do evil deeds"

Do you desire to have no fear of the one in authority?
Paul uses this question to get people to think about what they need to do in order not to be afraid of rulers. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you how you can be unafraid of the ruler."

you will receive his praise
"the one in authority will say good things about you"

Romans 13:4

he does not carry the sword for no reason
You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "he carries the sword for a very good reason" or "he has the power to punish people, and he will punish people"

carry the sword
Roman governors carried a short sword as a symbol of their authority.

an avenger for wrath on the one who does evil
Here "wrath" represents the punishment people receive when they do evil deeds. Alternate translation: "a person who punishes, on God's behalf, those who do evil"

Romans 13:5

not only because of the wrath, but also because of conscience
"not only so the government will not punish you, but also so you will have a clear conscience before God"

Romans 13:6

Because of this
"Because the government punishes evildoers"

you pay
Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.

For authorities
"This is why you should pay taxes: authorities"

attend to
"administer" or "work on"

Romans 13:7

Pay to everyone
Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.

tax to whom tax is due, toll to whom toll is due, fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due
The word "pay" is understood from the previous phrase in the general sense of "give." Alternate translation: "pay tax to whom tax is due, pay toll to whom toll is due, pay fear to whom fear is due, and pay honor to him to whom honor is due"

fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due
Here paying fear and honor is a metaphor for fearing and honoring those who deserve to be feared and honored. Alternate translation: "fear those who deserve to be feared, and honor those who deserved to be honored" or "respect those whom you ought to respect, and honor those whom you ought to honor"

toll
This is a kind of tax.

Romans 13:8

Connecting Statement:
Paul tells believers how to act toward neighbors.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another
This is a double negative. You can translate it in a positive form. Alternate translation: "Pay all you owe to everyone, and love one another"

Owe
This verb is plural and applies to all the Roman Christians.

anything, except to love one another

This elliptical command includes the idea of "owe" from earlier in the sentence. Owing things or service to other people is a metaphor for the duty Christians have, in this case to love one another. Alternate translation: "anything, but remember that God has given you the duty to love one another"

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Romans 13:9

covet

To covet is to desire to have or possess something that another person possesses.

Romans 13:10

Love does no harm to a neighbor

This phrase portrays love as a person who is being kind to other people. Alternate translation: "People who love their neighbors do not harm them"

Romans 13:11

you know the time, that it is already the hour for you to awake out of sleep

Paul speaks of the need for the Roman believers to change their behavior as if they needed to wake up from being asleep.

hour

"time"

Romans 13:12

The night has advanced

Paul speaks of the time when people do evil deeds as night. Alternate translation: "The sinful time is almost over" or "It is as though the night is almost finished"

the day is near

Paul speaks of the time when people do what is right as the day. Alternate translation: "the time of righteousness will begin soon" or "it is as though it will soon be day"

Let us therefore put aside the works of darkness

Paul speaks of "works of darkness" as if they are clothing that a person puts aside. Here to "put

aside" means to stop doing something. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for evil. Alternate translation: "Let us therefore stop doing the evil things that people do in the dark"

let us put on the armor of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for what is good and right. Paul speaks of people who are doing what is right as if they were putting on armor to protect themselves. Alternate translation: "let us start doing what is right. Doing this will protect us from what is evil, like armor protects a soldier"

Romans 13:13

Let us

Paul includes his readers and other believers with himself.

Let us walk appropriately, as in the day

Paul speaks of people living as true believers as if they were walking while it is day. Alternate translation: "Let us walk in a visible way knowing, that everyone can see us"

sexual immorality or in uncontrolled lust

These concepts mean basically the same thing. You can combine them in your translation. Alternate translation: "sexually immoral acts"

strife

This refers to plotting against and arguing with other people.

jealousy

This refers to negative feelings against another person's success or advantage over others.

Romans 13:14

put on the Lord Jesus Christ

Paul speaks of accepting the moral nature of Christ as if he were our outer clothing that people can see.

put on

If your language has a plural form for commands, use it here.

make no provision for the flesh

Here the "flesh" refers to the self-directed nature of people who oppose God. This is the sinful nature of human beings. Alternate translation: "do not allow your old evil heart any opportunity at all for doing wicked things"

Chapter 14

¹ Receive anyone who is weak in faith, without giving judgment about arguments. ² One person has faith to eat anything, another who is weak eats only vegetables. ³ May the one who eats everything not despise the one who does not; and may the one who does not eat everything not judge the other who eats everything. For God has accepted him. ⁴ Who are you, you who judge a servant belonging to someone else? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. But he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵ One person values one day above another. Another has concluded that every day is equal. Let each person be convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord; and he who eats, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God. He who does not eat, refrains from eating for the Lord; he also gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for himself, and none dies for himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Then whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this purpose Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and those who are living. ¹⁰ But you, why do you judge your brother? And you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

"As I live," says the Lord, "
to me every knee will bend,
and every tongue will confess to God."

¹² So then, each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

¹³ Therefore, let us no longer judge one another, but instead decide this, that no one will place a stumbling block or a snare for his brother. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean by itself. Only for him who considers anything to be unclean, for him it is unclean. ¹⁵ If because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not allow what you consider to be good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not about food and drink, but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ For the one who serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and approved by people. ¹⁹ So then, let us pursue the things of peace and the things that build up one another. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God on account of food. All things are clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone to stumble. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything over which your brother stumbles. ²² The faith you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ He who doubts is condemned if he eats, because it is not from faith. And whatever is not from faith is sin.

Romans 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 11 of this chapter, which Paul quotes from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Weak in faith

Paul teaches that Christians can have real faith and at the same time be "weak in faith" in a given situation. This describes Christians whose faith is immature, not strong, or misunderstood. (See: faith)

Dietary restrictions

Many religions in the ancient Near East restricted what was eaten. Christians have freedom to eat what they want. But they need to use this freedom wisely, in a way that honors the Lord and does not cause others to sin. (See: sin)

The judgment seat of God

The judgment seat of God or Christ represents a time when all people, including Christians, will be held accountable for the way they lived their lives.

Romans 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages believers to remember that they are answerable to God.

weak in faith

This refers to those who felt guilty over eating and drinking certain things.

without giving judgment about arguments

"and do not condemn them for their opinions"

Romans 14:2

One person has faith to eat anything

Here "faith" refers to doing what a person believes God is telling him to do.

another who is weak eats only vegetables

This describes a person who believes God does not want him to eat meat.

Romans 14:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 14:4

Who are you, you who judge a servant belonging to someone else?

Paul is using a question to scold those who are judging others. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not God, and you are not allowed to judge one of his servants!"

you, you

The form of "you" here is singular.

It is before his own master that he stands or falls

Paul speaks of God as if he were a master who owned servants. Alternate translation: "Only the master can decide if he will accept the servant or not"

But he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand

Paul speaks of the servant who is acceptable to God as if he were being "made to stand" instead of falling. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "But the Lord will accept him because he is able to make the servant acceptable"

Romans 14:5

One person values one day above another. Another has concluded that every day is equal

"One person thinks one day is more important than some of the others, but another person thinks that all days are the same"

Let each person be convinced in his own mind

You can make the full meaning explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Let each person be sure what he is doing is to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:6

He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord

Here "observes the day" refers to considering a day as a special day on which to worship the Lord. Alternate translation: "Whoever treats a day as special does so to honor the Lord" or "The person who worships on a certain day does it to honor the Lord"

he who eats

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3]

eats for the Lord

"eats to honor the Lord" or "eats that way in order to honor the Lord"

He who does not eat

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3]

refrains from eating for the Lord

His purpose in refraining from eating certain foods is to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "refrains from eating certain foods in order to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:7

For none of us lives for himself

Here "lives for himself" means to live only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should live merely to please himself"

none of us

Paul is including his readers, so this is inclusive.

none dies for himself

Here "dies for himself" means to die only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should die merely to please himself"

Romans 14:8

General Information:

Paul is speaking of both himself and his readers, so all instances of "we" are inclusive.

Romans 14:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 14:10

why do you judge your brother? And you, why do you despise your brother?

By using these questions, Paul is demonstrating how he might need to scold individuals among his readers. Alternate translation: "it is wrong for you to judge your brother, and it is wrong for you to despise your brother!" or "stop judging and despising your brother!"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God

The "judgment seat" refers to God's authority to judge. Alternate translation: "For God will judge us all"

Romans 14:11

For it is written, "As

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For someone has written in the Scriptures: 'As"

As I live

This phrase is used to start an oath or solemn promise. Alternate translation: "You can be certain that this is true"

to me every knee will bend, and every tongue will confess to God

Paul uses the words "knee" and "tongue" to refer to the whole person. Also, the Lord uses the word "God" to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "every person will bow and give praise to me"

Romans 14:12

will give an account of himself to God

"will have to explain his actions to God"

Romans 14:13

but instead decide this, that no one will place a stumbling block or a snare for his brother

Here "stumbling block" and "snare" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "but instead make it your goal not to do or say anything that might cause a fellow believer to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

Romans 14:14

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus

Here the words "know" and "am persuaded" mean basically the same thing; Paul uses them to emphasize his certainty. Alternate translation: "I am certain because of my relationship with the Lord Jesus"

nothing is unclean by itself

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "everything by itself is clean"

by itself

"by its nature" or "because of what it is"

Only for him who considers anything to be unclean, for him it is unclean

Paul implies here that a person should stay away from anything that he thinks is unclean. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "But if a person thinks something is unclean, then for that person it is unclean and he should stay away from it"

Romans 14:15

If because of food your brother is hurt

"If you hurt your fellow believer's faith over the matter of food." Here the word "your" refers to those who are strong in faith and "brother" refers to one who is weak in faith.

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

you are no longer walking in love

Paul speaks of the behavior of believers as if it were a walk. Alternate translation: "then you are no longer showing love"

Romans 14:16

So do not allow what you consider to be good to be spoken of as evil

"If someone thinks that something is evil, do not do it, even if you consider it to be good"

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not about food and drink, but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit

Paul argues that God set up his kingdom so he could give us a right relationship with himself, and could provide peace and joy. Alternate translation: "For God did not set up his kingdom so that he could rule over what we eat and drink. He set up his kingdom so we could have a right relationship with him, and so he could give us peace and joy"

Romans 14:18

approved by people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "people will approve of him" or "people will respect him"

Romans 14:19

let us pursue the things of peace and the things that build up one another

Here "build up one another" refers to helping each other grow in faith. Alternate translation: "let us seek to live peacefully together and help one another grow stronger in faith"

Romans 14:20

Do not destroy the work of God on account of food

You can make explicit the full meaning of this sentence. Alternate translation: "Do not undo what God has done for a fellow believer just because you want to eat a certain kind of food"

but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone to stumble

Here anything that "causes someone to stumble" means it causes a weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience. Alternate translation: "but it would be a sin for someone to eat food that another brother thinks is wrong to eat, if by eating this causes the weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience"

Romans 14:21

It is good not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything over which your brother stumbles

"It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that might cause your brother to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

your

This refers to the strong in faith and "brother" refers to the weak in faith.

Romans 14:22

The faith you have

This refers back to the beliefs about food and drink.

you ... yourself

singular. Because Paul is addressing the believers, you may have to translate this using plural.

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves

"Blessed are those who do not feel guilty for what they decide to do"

Romans 14:23

He who doubts is condemned if he eats

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will say that a person does wrong if he is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but he eats it anyway" or "A person who is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but then eats it anyway, will have a troubled conscience"

because it is not from faith

Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "and God will say that he is wrong because he is eating something he believes God does not want him to eat"

whatever is not from faith is sin

Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "you are sinning if you do something that you do not believe God wants you to do"

Chapter 15

¹ Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and ought not to please ourselves. ² Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, in order to build him up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself. Instead, it was just as it is written, "The insults of those who insulted you fell on me." ⁴ For whatever was previously written was written for our instruction in order that through patience and through encouragement of the scriptures we would have hope. ⁵ Now may the God of patience and of encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with each other according to Christ Jesus. ⁶ May he do this in order that with one mind you may glorify with one mouth the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Therefore receive one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God. ⁸ For I say that Christ has been made a servant of the circumcision on behalf of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will give praise to you among the Gentiles
and sing praise to your name."

¹⁰ Again it says,

"Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

¹¹ And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples praise him."

¹² Again, Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse will come,
the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles will have hope."

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

¹⁴ I myself am also convinced about you, my brothers. I am convinced that also you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge. I am convinced that you are also able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But I am writing more boldly to you about some things in order to remind you again, because of the grace given me by God. ¹⁶ This grace was that I should be a servant of Christ Jesus sent to the Gentiles, to offer as a priest the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus I have reason to boast of my service for God. ¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me for the obedience of the Gentiles. These are things done by word and action, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of the Spirit of God. This was so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum, I might fully carry out the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ In this way, my desire has been to proclaim the gospel, but not where Christ is known by name, in order that I might not build upon another man's foundation. ²¹ It is as it is written:

"Those to whom no report of him came will see him,
and those who have not heard will understand."

²² Therefore I was also hindered many times from coming to you. ²³ But now, I no longer have any place in these regions, and I have been longing for many years to come to you. ²⁴ I hope to see you when I pass through there on my way to Spain, and to be helped by you on my journey there, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵ But now I am going to Jerusalem, serving God's holy people. ²⁶ For it was the

good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution to the poor among God's holy people who are in Jerusalem. ²⁷ Yes, it was their good pleasure, and they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they owe it to the Jews to minister to them with their material things. ²⁸ Therefore, when I have completed this task and have made sure that they receive all that was collected, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰ Now I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. ³¹ Pray that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's holy people. ³² Pray that I may come to you in joy through the will of God, and that I may, together with you, find rest. ³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Romans 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-11 and 21 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.

Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 12.

In [Romans 15:14](#), Paul begins to speak more personally. He shifts from teaching to telling of his personal plans.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Strong/Weak

These terms are used to refer to people who are mature and immature in their faith. Paul teaches that those who are strong in faith need to help those who are weak in faith. (See: faith)

Romans 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul concludes this section about believers' living for others by reminding them how Christ lived.

Now

Translate this using the words your language uses to introduce a new idea into an argument.

we who are strong

Here "strong" refers to the people who are strong in their faith. They believe that God allows them to eat any kind of food. Alternate translation: "we who are strong in faith"

we

This refers to Paul, his readers, and other believers.

the weak

Here "the weak" refers to the people who are weak in their faith. They believe that God does not allow them to eat some kinds of food. Alternate translation: "those who are weak in faith"

Romans 15:2

to build him up

By this, Paul means to strengthen someone's faith. Alternate translation: "to strengthen his faith"

Romans 15:3

it was just as it is written

Here Paul refers to a scripture where Christ

The insults of those who insulted you fell on me

Those who blasphemed God insulted Christ. This is an indirect way of saying that those who slandered Christ were blaspheming God.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was previously written was written for our instruction

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For in times past, the prophets wrote everything in the Scriptures to teach us"

our ... we

Paul includes his readers and other believers.

in order that through patience and through encouragement of the scriptures

The meanings in the abstract nouns "patience" and "encouragement" can be expressed with the verbs "endure" and "encourage." Alternate translation "in order that by enduring and by being encouraged by the scriptures" or "in order that as we endure and as the scriptures encourage us"

we would have hope

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." What the hope is about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "we would confidently wait for God" or "we would confidently expect that God will do what he has promised"

Romans 15:5

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul starts to tell a new part of the teaching.

may ... God ... grant

"I pray that ... God ... will grant"

to be of the same mind with each other

Here to be of the "same mind" is a metonym that means to be in agreement with each other. Alternate translation: "to be in agreement with each other" or "to be united"

Romans 15:6

with one mind you may glorify with one mouth

The phrases "one mind" and "one mouth" both represent people being united together. Alternate translation: "you may be united when you praise"

with one mind

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

Romans 15:7

receive one another ... received you

"accept one another ... accepted you"

Romans 15:8

For I say

The word "I" refers to Paul.

Christ has been made a servant of the circumcision

Here "the circumcision" is a metonym that refers to the Jews. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ has become a servant of the Jews"

in order to confirm the promises

This is one of the two purposes for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision.

the promises given to the patriarchs

Here "the fathers" refers to the ancestors of the Jewish people. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "the promises that God gave to the ancestors of the Jews"

Romans 15:9

and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy

This is the second reason for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision. Alternate translation: "and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy"

As it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "As someone has written in the Scriptures"

sing praise to your name

Here "your name" is a metonym that refers to God. Alternate translation: "sing praise to you"

Romans 15:10

Again it says

"Again the scripture says"

with his people

This refers to God's people. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "with the people of God"

Romans 15:11

praise him

"praise the Lord"

Romans 15:12

root of Jesse

Jesse was the physical father of King David. Alternate translation: "descendant of Jesse"

in him the Gentiles will have hope

Here "him" refers to the descendant of Jesse and King David, the Messiah. The Gentiles will trust him to fulfill his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait" or "confidently expect." Alternate translation: "the Gentiles will trust in him" or "the Gentiles will confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises"

Romans 15:13

the God of hope

"the God who gives hope" or "the God who causes us to hope." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "the God who causes us to confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises" or "the God who helps us to trust in him"

fill you with all joy and peace

Here "fill you" is a metaphor for "cause you to have." Alternate translation: "cause you to have great joy and peace" or "give you great joy and peace"

in believing

"as you believe in him"

Romans 15:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers in Rome that God chose him to reach the Gentiles.

I myself am also convinced about you, my brothers

Paul is quite sure that the believers in Rome are honoring each other in their behavior. Alternate translation: "I myself am completely sure that you yourselves have acted toward others in a completely good way"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

filled with all knowledge

Paul exaggerates here to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "filled with sufficient knowledge to follow God"

Romans 15:15

the grace given me by God

Paul speaks of grace as if it were a physical gift that God had given him. God had appointed Paul an apostle even though he had persecuted believers before he decided to follow Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God gave me"

Romans 15:16

the offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable

Paul speaks of the Gentiles as if they were an offering brought to God. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles might be like an offering that pleases God"

sanctified by the Holy Spirit

"having been made holy by the Holy Spirit." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"which the Holy Spirit made holy" or "which the Holy Spirit dedicated to God"

Romans 15:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 15:18

I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished

This double negative emphasizes that what Christ has accomplished is the only thing that Paul wants to speak about. Alternate translation: "I will dare to speak only of what Christ has accomplished"

for the obedience of the Gentiles

"so that the Gentiles will obey God"

These are things done by word and action

This can be translated in active form: Alternate translation: Alternate translation: "These are things that Christ has accomplished through what I have said and done"

Romans 15:19

signs and wonders

These two words mean basically the same thing and refer to various kinds of miracles.

so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum

This is from the city of Jerusalem as far as the province of Illyricum, a region close to Italy.

Romans 15:20

In this way, my desire has been to proclaim the gospel, but not where Christ is known by name

Paul only wants to preach to people who have never heard of Christ. Alternate translation: "And so, my desire has been to preach the good news in places where people have never heard of Christ"

in order that I might not build upon another man's foundation

Paul speaks of his ministry work as if he were building a house on a foundation. Alternate translation: "in order that I might not be simply continuing the work that someone else already started. I do not want to be like a man who builds a house on someone else's foundation"

Romans 15:21

It is as it is written

Here Paul refers to what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures. You can translate this in an active form and make the meaning explicit. Alternate translation: "What is happening is like what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures"

Those to whom no report of him came

Here Paul speaks of the "report" or message about Christ as if it were alive and able to move by itself. Alternate translation: "Those whom no one had told the news about him"

Romans 15:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers in Rome about his personal plans to visit them and asks the believers to pray.

I was also hindered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they also hindered me" or "people also hindered me"

Romans 15:23

I no longer have any place in these regions

Paul implies that the reason he no longer has any place is because the Gospel had been preached in all these regions. Alternate translation: "there are no more places in these regions where people have not heard about Christ"

Romans 15:24

I hope to see you

Paul wanted to see the believers in Rome. He did not know if he actually would be able to see them. Alternate translation: "I want to see you" or "I plan to see you"

Spain

This is a roman province west of Rome that Paul desired to visit.

to be helped by you on my journey

Here Paul implies that he wants the Roman believers to provide some financial assistance to him for his journey to Spain. You may have to translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that you will help me on my journey"

have enjoyed your company

"have enjoyed spending some time with you" or "have enjoyed visiting you"

Romans 15:25

serving God's holy people

You may need to make explicit how Paul was serving the people. Alternate translation: "bringing aid to God's holy people")

Romans 15:26

it was the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia

Here the words "Macedonia" and "Achaia" are synecdoches for the people who live in those areas.

Alternate translation: "the believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia were happy"

Romans 15:27

Yes, it was their good pleasure

"The believers in Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to do it"

and they owe it to them

"and the people of Macedonia and Achaia owe it to God's people in Jerusalem" or "and they are obligated to help them"

if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things

"since the Gentiles have shared in the spiritual things of the Jerusalem believers"

minister to them

The word "minister" here means to serve in a formal way as part of their service to God, much like the priests offered sacrifices in the temple.

with their material things

"by giving them material things"

Romans 15:28

and have made sure that they receive all that was collected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and have safely delivered this offering to them"

Romans 15:29

I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ

This phrase means that Christ will bless Paul and the Roman believers. Alternate translation: "And I know that when I visit you, Christ will abundantly bless us"

Romans 15:30

Now

If your language has a way to show that Paul has stopped talking about the good things he is confident of (Romans 15:29) and is now starting to talk about the dangers he faces, use it here.

I urge you

"I encourage you"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

you strive

"you work hard" or "you struggle"

Romans 15:31

I may be rescued from those who are disobedient

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God may rescue me from those who are disobedient" or "God may keep those who are disobedient from harming me"

that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's holy people

Here Paul expresses his desire that the believers in Jerusalem will gladly accept the money from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. Alternate translation: "pray that the believers in Jerusalem

will be glad to receive the money that I am bringing them"

Romans 15:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 15:33

May the God of peace

The "God of peace" means the God who causes believers to have inner peace. Alternate translation: "I pray that God, who causes all of us to have inner peace, will"

Chapter 16

¹ I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is in Cenchreae, ² in order that you may receive her in the Lord. Do this in a manner worthy of God's holy people, and provide her with whatever help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many and to myself as well.

³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who for my life risked their own lives. I give thanks to them, and not only I, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

⁵ Greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epänetus my beloved, who is the firstfruit of Asia to Christ.

⁶ Greet Mary, who has labored hard for you.

⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and fellow prisoners. They are well known among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

¹⁰ Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

¹¹ Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

¹² Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, laborers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has labored much in the Lord.

¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.

¹⁵ Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all God's holy people who are with them.

¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned. Turn away from them. ¹⁸ For people such as these do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach. By their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent. ¹⁹ For your example of obedience reaches everyone. I rejoice, therefore, over you, but I want you to be wise as to that which is good, and innocent to that which is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen. ²² I, Tertius, who write this epistle down, greet you in the Lord. ²³ Gaius, the host for me and for the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, with Quartus the brother. ²⁴[\[1\]](#)

²⁵ Now to him who is able to make you strong according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,

according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages

²⁶ but now has been revealed and made known through the prophetic writings to all nations, by the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever. Amen.

Footnotes

16:24 ^[1]The best ancient copies do not have this verse. (See: Romans 16:20). v. 24

Romans 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul gives personal greetings to some of the Christians in Rome. It was common to end a letter in the ancient Near East with this type of personal greeting.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Because of the personal nature of this chapter, much of the context is unknown. This will make translation more difficult.

Romans 16:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul now greets many of the believers in Rome by name.

I commend to you Phoebe

"I want you to respect Phoebe"

Phoebe

This is a woman's name.

our sister

The word "our" refers to Paul and all believers.
Alternate translation: "our sister in Christ"

Cenchreae

This was a town in Greece.

Romans 16:2

receive her in the Lord

Paul encourages the Roman believers to welcome Phoebe as a fellow believer. Alternate translation: "welcome her because we all belong to the Lord"

in a manner worthy of God's holy people

"in the way that believers should welcome other believers"

provide her with whatever help she may need from you
"help her by giving her whatever she needs"

has been a great help to many and to myself as well

"has supported many people, and she has also supported me"

Romans 16:3

Priscilla and Aquila

Priscilla was the wife of Aquila.

my fellow workers in Christ Jesus

Paul's "fellow workers" are people who also tell others about Jesus. Alternate translation: "who work with me to tell people about Christ Jesus"

Romans 16:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 16:5

Greet the church that is in their house

"Greet the believers who meet in their house to worship"

Epaenetus

This is the name of a man.

firstfruit of Asia to Christ

Paul speaks of Epaenetus as if he were a fruit that he harvested. Alternate translation: "first person in Asia to believe in Jesus"

Romans 16:6

Mary

This is a woman's name.

Romans 16:7

Andronicus

This is a man's name.

Junia

"Junia" is a woman's name. Some versions have "Junias," which would be a man's name.

They are well known among the apostles

You can translate this in an active form. "The apostles Alternate translations: "The apostles know them very well"

Romans 16:8

Ampliatius

This is a man's name.

my beloved in the Lord

"my dear friend and fellow believer"

Romans 16:9

Urbanus ... Stachys

These are the names of men.

Romans 16:10

Apelles ... Aristobulus

These are the names of men.

the approved in Christ

The word "approved" refers to someone who has been tested and proved to be genuine. Alternate translation: "whom Christ has approved"

Romans 16:11

Herodion ... Narcissus

These are the names of men.

who are in the Lord

This refers to those who trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "who are believers" or "who belong to the Lord"

Romans 16:12

Tryphaena ... Tryphosa ... Persis

These are women's names.

Romans 16:13

Rufus

This is a man's name.

chosen in the Lord

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Lord has chosen"

his mother and mine

Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as if she were his own mother. Alternate translation: "his mother, whom I also think of as my mother"

Romans 16:14

Asyncritus ... Phlegon ... Hermes ... Patrobas ... Hermas

These are men's names.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

Romans 16:15

Philologus ... Nereus ... Olympas

These are men's names.

Julia

The name of a woman. Julia was probably the wife of Philologus.

Romans 16:16

a holy kiss

an expression of affection for fellow believers

All the churches of Christ greet you

Here Paul speaks in a general manner concerning the churches of Christ. Alternate translation: "The believers in all the churches in this area send their greetings to you"

Romans 16:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives one last warning to the believers about unity and living for God.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

who cause divisions and stumbling

This refers to those who argue and cause others to stop trusting in Jesus. Alternate translation: "who cause believers to argue with one another and to stop having faith in God"

contrary to the teaching that you have learned

"teaching things that do not agree with the truth you have already learned"

Turn away from them

"Turn away" here is an metaphor for "refuse to listen." Alternate translation: "Do not listen to them"

Romans 16:18

Christ, but their own stomach

The words "they serve" are understood from the previous phrase. This can be expressed as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "Christ. Rather, they serve their own stomach"

but their own stomach

Here "stomach" is a metonym that refers to physical desires. Serving there stomach represents satisfying their desires. Alternate translation: "but they only want to satisfy their own selfish desires"

By their smooth and flattering speech

The words "smooth" and "flattering" mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing how these people are deceiving believers. Alternate translation: "By saying things that seem to be good and true"

they deceive the hearts of the innocent

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the minds and inner beings of people. Alternate translation: "they deceive the innocent believers"

innocent

This refers to those who are simple, inexperienced, and naive. Alternate translation: "those who innocently trust them" or "those who do not know these teachers are fooling them"

Romans 16:19

For your example of obedience reaches everyone

Here Paul speaks of the Roman believers' obedience as if it were a person who could go to people. Alternate translation: "For everyone has heard how you obey Jesus"

innocent to that which is evil

"not involved in doing evil things"

Romans 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet
To say that a person will crush their enemy under their feet means that the person will have complete victory over their enemy. Here Paul speaks of the victory over Satan as if the Roman believers were trampling an enemy under their feet. Alternate translation: "Soon God will give you peace and complete victory over Satan"

Romans 16:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives greetings from the believers who are with him.

Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater

These are men's names.

Romans 16:22

Tertius, who write this epistle down

Tertius is the man who wrote down what Paul spoke.

greet you in the Lord

"greet you as a fellow believer"

Romans 16:23

Gaius ... Erastus ... Quartus

These are men's names.

the host

This refers to Gaius, the person in whose house Paul and his fellow believers gathered for worship.

the treasurer

This is a person who takes care of the money for a group.

Romans 16:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 16:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes with a prayer of blessing.

Now

Here the word "now" marks the closing section of the letter. If you have a way of doing this in your language, you can use it here.

to make you strong

"to make your faith strong"

according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ

"by the good news that I have preached about Jesus Christ"

according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages

Paul says that God has revealed previously hidden truths to the believers. He speaks of these truths as if they were a secret. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God has revealed to us believers the secret that he was keeping for long ages"

for long ages

since the beginning of time

Romans 16:26

but now has been revealed and made known through the prophetic writings to all nations, by the command of the eternal God

The verbs "revealed" and "made known" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses both of them to emphasize his point. You can combine these words and translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but the eternal God has now made known to all the nations through the prophetic writings"

to bring about the obedience of faith

Here "obedience" and "faith" are abstract nouns. You can use the verbs "obey" and "trust" in your translation. You may need to make explicit who will obey and trust. Alternate translation: "so that all nations will obey God because they trust in him"

Romans 16:27

to the only wise God ... be glory forever. Amen

Here "through Jesus Christ" refers to what Jesus did. To give "glory" means to praise God. Alternate translation: "Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we will praise forever the one who alone is God and who alone is wise. Amen"

