

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Genesis 2:5

Original text:

Gen 2:5 – וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִהְיֶה בְּאֶרֶץ וְכָל-יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם
אֵין לְעֹבֵד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה:

Gen 3:18 – וְקוֹץ וְדַרְבַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:

NIV rendering:

Gen 2:5 – Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,

Gen 3:18 – It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

Suggestion:

Gen 2:5 – Now no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,

Rationale:

We are surprised at the translation change made in NIV11—moving from “shrub of the field” and “plant of the field” in Gen 2:5 to “shrub” and “plant”—while keeping “plants of the field” in Gen 3:18. We recommend that this change be reconsidered.

First, the change hides the identical wording found in Genesis 2:5 and 3:18 (עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה)—a connection we feel should be preserved in such a close context.

Second, the change favors one interpretation at the expense of a widely held alternate interpretation, whereas the more literal NIV84 rendering allows for both.

By removing “of the field,” the NIV11 implies that Genesis 2:5 is talking about all vegetation. Then the verse must be referring to time prior to the creation of plants on day three of creation. This is a possible interpretation.

However, a good number of modern evangelical commentators (e.g., Hamilton, Hughes, Lawrenz, Mathews, Sailhamer, Waltke) follow Cassuto’s explanation, which puts weight on the phrase “of the field” as a limitation. According to Cassuto, the “shrub of the field” in 2:5 is the same as the “thorns and thistles” of 3:18—inedible vegetation that did not appear until after the fall into sin. The “plants of the field” in 2:5 are the same as the “plants of the field” in 3:18—grains that Adam would cultivate after he

left the Garden of Eden. Supporting this limitation is the fact that the word $\eta\tau\psi$ often is used for the place where domestic animals graze and where crops are cultivated.

Sometimes in a contested passage it is best to present a more literal translation, which allows interpreters to explain it in the way they prefer. We recommend that approach in Genesis 2:5, permitting both of the main interpretive options, while also preserving the connection with Genesis 3:18.

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Bible References:

Exodus 15:17; 34:9

Cf. also Deut 4:20, 9:26, 29, 32:9; 1 Sam 10:1, 26:19; 2 Sam 14:16, 21:3; 1 Kgs 8:51, 53; Ps 28:9, 33:12, 68:9, 74:2, 78:71, 79:1, 82:8, 94:5, 14, 106:5, 40; Isa 47:6, 63:17; Jer 2:7, 10:16, 12:7–9, 16:18, 50:11, 51:19; Joel 2:17, 3:2; Mic 7:14, 18

Original text:

Ex 15:17 – תבאמו ותטעמו בהר נחלתך

Ex 34:9 – וסלחת לעוננו ולקטאתנו ונחלתנו: –

NIV rendering

Ex 15:17 – You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—

Ex 34:9 – forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.

Suggestion:

Ex 15:17 – You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain that is your own—

Ex 34:9 – forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us to be your own.

Rationale:

Hebrew נחל denotes an action by which a person or entity comes into inalienable possession of something, irrespective of how this happens. The noun נחלה simply means “possession” or “property.” The first meaning of English “inherit” in *Merriam-Webster*, however, is “to receive from an ancestor as a right or title descendible by law at the ancestor's death.” This makes “inherit” or “inheritance” a misleading translation in many contexts, but it is perhaps worst in those places where the “inheritance” is the Lord's. We ask that the translations “inherit” and “inheritance” be reevaluated, beginning with the verses listed above.

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Bible References:

Exodus 34:7
Jeremiah 32:18

Original text:

Exod 34:7 – נָצַר הַסֹּד לְאַלְפִים נֶשְׂאָ עֲזָו וְפִשְׁעֵי וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנְקֶה פְקָדוֹ עַל אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים:

Jer 32:18 – עֲשֵׂה הַסֹּד לְאַלְפִים וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל אָבוֹת אֶל־חֵיק בְּנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם –

NIV rendering:

Exod 34:7 – maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

Jer 32:18 – You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them.

Parallel passages:

Exod 20:5-6 – I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations (לְאַלְפִים) of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Deut 5:9-10 – I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations (לְאַלְפִים) of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Deut 7:9 – Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations (לְאַלְפֵי דוֹר) of those who love him and keep his commandments.

Ps 105:8 – He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations (לְאַלְפֵי דוֹר),

Suggestion:

Ex 34:7 – maintaining love to a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

Jer 32:18 – You show love to a thousand generations but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them.

Rationale:

The NIV is inconsistent when the OT says that God will show love לְאֶלְפֵי יָמַי. In Exod 20:6 and Deut 5:10 the NIV translates “to a thousand generations,” but in Exodus 34:7 and Jer 32:18 the NIV translates “to thousands.”

We believe that “a thousand generations” is the better rendering, and we encourage the NIV to make the translation consistent. The concept of “a thousand generations” correlates well with “the third and fourth generation” in Exod 20:5-6; Exod 34:7, and Deut 5:9-10, showing the preeminence of God’s grace over his justice.

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible Reference:

Numbers 27:14

Original text:

Num 27:14 – כְּאֲשֶׁר מָרִיתֶם לִּי בְּמִדְבַר-זֵין בְּמִרְיַבַּת הַעֵדָה לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי בַּיָּמִים לְעֵינֵיהֶם הִנֵּה מִי־מִרְיַבַּת קַדְשׁ מִדְבַר-צֹן:

NIV rendering:

Num 27:14 – for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes.” (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)

Parallel passage:

Num 20:14 – יֵאָסֵף אַהֲרֹן אֶל־עַמּוּי כִּי לֹא יָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל אֲשֶׁר־מָרִיתֶם אֶת־פִּי לְמִי מִרְיָבָה:

Num 20:14 – Aaron will join his ancestors, for he may not enter the land that I’ve given to the Israelites, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah.

Suggestion:

Num 27:14 – for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you rebelled against my command to honor me as holy before their eyes.” (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)

Rationale:

Since the same phrase is used in Numbers 20:14 and 27:14 to describe the action of Moses and Aaron at Meribah, we recommend an identical translation in English, making use of the primary meaning of the verb (“to rebel”). Translating “rebelled against” in 27:14 also provides lexical consistency within that verse itself, translating מָרִיתֶם and מִרְיַבַּת in similar ways, thereby mimicking the Hebrew.

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Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 19:12

Original text:

וְכִי־יִהְיֶה אִישׁ שָׂגָא לְרֵעֵהוּ וְאַרְבַּב לּוֹ וְקָם עָלָיו וְהִכָּהוּ גִפְשׁ וְנָמַת וְנָס אֶל־אַחַת הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּ: 11
וְשָׁלַח זָקְנֵי עִירוֹ וְלָקְחוּ אֹתוֹ מִשָּׁם וְנָתְנוּ אֹתוֹ בְּיַד גֹּאֵל הַדָּם וְנָמַת: 12

NIV rendering:

¹¹ But if out of hate someone lies in wait, assaults and kills a neighbor, and then flees to one of these cities, ¹² the killer shall be sent for by the town elders, be brought back from the city, and be handed over to the avenger of blood to die.

Suggestion:

¹¹ But if out of hate someone lies in wait, assaults and kills a neighbor, and then flees to one of these cities, ¹² the elders of the killer’s hometown shall send for the killer to be brought back from the city and handed over to the avenger of blood to die.

Rationale:

With its desire to be gender neutral in these verses, we fear that the NIV11 winds up with a rendering that could be misunderstood. Since the “town elders” in verse 12 are not identified as the elders of the killer’s hometown (the Hebrew suffix “his” is avoided and no other pronoun is attached), it would be easy to assume wrongly that the town elders belong to the city mentioned immediately before at the end of verse 11—the city to which the killer fled.

We think that the NIV84 was clearer, and we would be happy if it were brought back, in spite of the masculine gender:

¹¹ But if a man hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him, assaults and kills him, and then flees to one of these cities, ¹² the elders of his town shall send for him, bring him back from the city, and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die.

If you want to maintain gender neutral wording, we think that our suggestion is one way, among others, that works better than NIV11. The important thing is to make clear that the elders belong to the killer’s hometown, and not to the city of refuge.

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Bible Reference:

1 Samuel 17:5

Original text:

וּמִצָּתַת נְהָשֶׁת עַל־בְּרִגְלָיו וְכִידּוֹן נְהָשֶׁת בֵּין כַּתְּפוֹיו:

NIV rendering:

on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.

Suggestion:

on his shins he wore bronze armor, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.

Rationale:

We suspect that the word “greaves” is unknown to the majority of modern readers. Our suggestion is a simple alternative that could work well, with “shins” identifying the location of the “armor.” We notice that some modern translations have “bronze shin guards.”

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Bible References:

2 Samuel 1:20
Micah 1:10

Original text:

2 Sam 1:20 – אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ בְּגַת אֶל־תִּבְשְׂרוּ בְּחוּצַת אֲשֶׁקֶלֶון –
Micah 1:10 – בְּגַת אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ בְּכֹוּ אֶל־תִּבְכוּ –

NIV rendering:

2 Sam 1:20 – Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
Micah 1:10 – Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all.

Suggestion:

2 Sam 1:20 – Do not announce it in Gath, do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon,
Micah 1:10 – Do not announce it in Gath; do not weep at all.

Rationale:

Modern speakers of English do not negate an imperative this way: “Eat it not” or “Drop it not.” For the sake of English style and comprehension, we recommend that these negative commands in 2 Sam 1 and Micah 1 be shifted to the construction that is most common in English today. We note that there is nothing unusual about the Hebrew constructions; they are what is ordinary for immediate prohibitions (לֹא with second person jussives).

Because these passages are found in poetry where a higher register may be expected, we have a slight preference for English prohibitions that do not have a contraction: “Do not announce” instead of “Don’t announce.”

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible Reference:

2 Samuel 22:44

Original text:

וּתְפַלְטֵנִי מִרִיבֵי עַמִּי תִשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם עִם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדֵנִי:

NIV rendering:

“You have delivered me from the attacks of the peoples;
you have preserved me as the head of nations.
People I did not know now serve me,

Suggestion:

“You have delivered me from the attacks of the peoples:^a
you have preserved me as the head of nations.
People I did not know now serve me,
^aSeptuagint; Hebrew *my people*

Rationale:

We can understand the NIV’s text critical decision to translate “peoples,” but we are surprised that there is no footnote to indicate the source and the well-attested alternative.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible References:

1 Kings 10:22
2 Chronicles 9:21

Original text:

1 Ki 10:22 – כִּי אָנֹכִי תַרְשִׁישׁ לְמַלְכֹּךְ בַּיָּם עִם אָנֹכִי חִירָם אַחַת לְשָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים תָּבוֹא | אָנֹכִי תַרְשִׁישׁ
נִשְׂאֵת זָהָב וְכֶסֶף שְׁנֵהָבִים וְקָפִים וְתַכְיִים:

2 Chr 9:21 – כִּי־אָנֹכִי־לְמַלְכֹּךְ הַלְכוֹת תַרְשִׁישׁ עִם עַבְדֵי חִירָם אַחַת לְשָׁלוֹשׁ שָׁנִים תָּבוֹאֲנָה | אָנֹכִי־וֹת
תַרְשִׁישׁ נִשְׂאוֹת זָהָב וְכֶסֶף שְׁנֵהָבִים וְקוֹפִים וְתוֹכְיִים:

NIV rendering:

1 Ki 10:22 – The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

2 Chr 9:21 – The king had a fleet of trading ships manned by Hiram’s servants. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

Suggestion:

1 Ki 10:22 – The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.^a

^a Or peacocks

2 Chr 9:21 – The king had a fleet of trading ships manned by Hiram’s servants. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.^a

^a Or peacocks

Rationale:

There is enough uncertainty about the meaning of תַכְיִים that the NIV would do well to put the other main option into a footnote. Supporting the meaning “peacocks” are most of the ancient versions and the rabbinic tradition; it also is the rendering found in most English translations.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible References:

1 Kings 11:5
2 Kings 23:13
Jeremiah 49:1

Original text:

1 Ki 11:5 – בְּגִלְדָּה שְׁלֹמֹה אַחֲרַי עֲשֵׂתָרֶת אֱלֹהֵי צִדְוֹנִים וְאַחֲרַי מֶלֶכָם שֶׁקֶץ עַמֻּנִים:
2 Ki 23:13 -- וְאֶת־הַבָּמֹת אֲשֶׁרוֹ עֲלִפְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר מִימִין לְהַר־הַמִּשְׁחִית אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֲשֵׂתָרֶת וְשֶׁקֶץ צִדְוֹנִים וְלִכְמוֹשׁ שֶׁקֶץ מוֹאָב וְלִמְלָכָם תוֹעֵבֶת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן טַמְאָה הַמֶּלֶךְ:
Jer 49: 1 – לְבָנֵי עַמּוֹן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַבְּרִגִים אֵין לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־יִוָּרֶשׁ אֵין לוֹ מִדּוֹעַ יָרֵשׁ מֶלֶכָם אֶת־גָּד וְעַמּוֹ בְּעָרָיו יֵשֵׁב: –

NIV rendering:

1 Ki 11:5 – He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites.
2 Ki 23:13 – The king also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption—the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the people of Ammon.
Jer 49:1 – Concerning the Ammonites: This is what the LORD says: “Has Israel no sons? Has Israel no heir? Why then has Molek^a taken possession of Gad? Why do his people live in its towns?
^aOr *their king*; also in verse 3

Suggestion:

1 Ki 11:5 -- He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek^a the detestable god of the Ammonites.
^a Hebrew *Milkom*, a variant of *Molek*; also in verse 33
2 Ki 23:13 – The king also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption—the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molek^a the detestable god of the people of Ammon.
^a Hebrew *Milkom*, a variant of *Molek*
Jer 49:1 – Concerning the Ammonites: This is what the LORD says: “Has Israel no sons? Has Israel no heir? Why then has Molek^a taken possession of Gad? Why do his people live in its towns?
^aOr *their king*; also in verse 3; Hebrew *Malkam*, a variant of *Molek*

Rationale:

It is fine for the NIV to present the name as “Molek” in these verses, since that is the most common spelling of the Ammonite god’s name. However, when the NIV regularizes a name in other places, the NIV generally includes a footnote to let the reader have access to the actual Hebrew name in the verse at hand (e.g., Hiram/Huram in 1 Kings 7:13). We recommend the inclusion of such footnotes for “Milkom.”

Most published English translations keep the name as “Milcom” in these verses, so a footnote might help readers who are comparing translations.

We notice that the NIV spells the variant as “Milkom” in footnotes at 2 Samuel 12:30 and 1 Chronicles 20:2. We also see that a note like this has already been included at Zephaniah 1:5.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible Reference:

Ezra 10:16

Original text:

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָהּ וַיִּבְדְּלוּ עֲזָרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֲנָשִׁים רְאֵשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם

NIV rendering:

So the exiles did as was proposed. Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads, one from each family division,

Suggestion:

So the exiles did as was proposed. Ezra the priest selected^a men who were family heads, one from each family division,

^a Septuagint (1 Esdras 9:16) and Syriac; Hebrew and Septuagint (2 Esdras 10:16) was selected and

Rationale:

Usually the NIV includes a footnote when it adopts a reading other than the MT, especially when the variant involves consonants and not just vowel points, as is the case here (“and he selected” would be וַיִּבְדֵּל).

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible Reference:

Nehemiah 12:31

Original text:

וְאַעֲלֶה אֶת־שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה מֵעַל לְחֹמֶה וְאַעֲמִידָהּ שְׁתֵּי תוֹדֹת גְּדוֹלֹת וְתִהְיֶינָה לְיָמִין מֵעַל לְחֹמֶה לְשַׁעַר הָאֲשָׁפֹת:

NIV rendering:

I had the leaders of Judah come up on the wall, and I appointed two large choirs. One proceeded on the wall to the right toward the Dung Gate.

Suggestion:

I had the leaders of Judah come up on the wall, and I appointed two large choirs. One proceeded on the wall to the south toward the Dung Gate.

Rationale:

The word יָמִין can mean “right” or “south.” Here, for purposes of clarity, we suggest that “south” is better.

From the listing of gates and landmarks in Neh 12:31-39, it is understood that the two-direction marching on the wall started on the west side of the city, with the first choir marching south and the other north (see Ritmeyer, *Jerusalem in the Time of Nehemiah*). To say that the first group proceeded “to the right” leaves the direction uncertain, however, because there is no indication which way the choir was orientated. “To the right” works if the choir was facing east, coming at the wall from the outside. If the choir was inside the city, then “to the right” would naturally be understood to be “to the north”—which is not what happened.

A simple way to make the matter clear—with the orientation of the choir not expressed—is to translate יָמִין with its directional, geographical meaning: “to the south.”

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
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Bible Reference:

Proverbs 17:6

Original text:

עֲטָרַת זְקֵנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְתִפְאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם:

NIV rendering:

Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

Suggestion:

Grandchildren are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

Rationale:

We do not recommend changing “children’s children” to “grandchildren” every time it occurs in the NIV, because “children’s children” seems quite natural in other contexts where it is the object of a preposition and where it is preceded by a possessive pronoun (see Ps 103:17; 128:6; Prov 13:22; Jer 2:9; Ezek 37:25). However, here at the beginning of a verse with no possessive pronoun, we think “grandchildren” works better—making the verse a little easier to process and more likely to resonate with older people who are blessed with grandchildren.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Proverbs 22:20

Original text:

הֲלֹא כָתַבְתִּי לְךָ אֶשְׁלֹשִׁים בְּמִוּעָצָת וְדַעַת:

NIV rendering:

Have I not written thirty sayings for you,
sayings of counsel and knowledge,

Suggestion:

Have I not written thirty sayings for you,
sayings of^a counsel and knowledge,
^a Or written to you formerly, with

Rationale:

This verse presents difficulties which were recognized in ancient times, as witnessed by the presence of a *qere* in the MT and a variant reading in the versions. The *kethib* is the adverb אֶשְׁלֹשִׁים, but in every other occurrence of this word in the MT, it is accompanied by some form of the word תָּמּוּל to form a Hebrew idiom referring to yesterday and the day before (often rendered as “formerly” “before” or “in the past” by modern translations). The 1984 NIV offered “Or *not formerly written*” as an alternative translation in the footnote. The *qere* אֶשְׁלֹשִׁים seems to present more problems than it solves for the modern exegete. It appears to be a Hebrew loan word אֶשְׁלֹשִׁים which refers to officers in a chariot. Some exegetes have suggested that it should be translated as “excellent” here (so the 1984 edition of the NIV offered “or *not written excellent*” as the second alternative in the footnote). The Septuagint reads “καὶ σὺ δὲ ἀπόγραψαι αὐτὰ σεαυτῷ τρισσῶς εἰς βουλήν καὶ γνῶσιν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς καρδίας σου.” It has been suggested that this was a guess on the part of the translators, based on the similarity of the word with the Hebrew word for “three” (see Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 453).

The NIV seems to have followed the suggestion found in the critical apparatus to BHS: אֶשְׁלֹשִׁים “thirty.” It then inserted the word “sayings.” Presumably, the NIV accepts the premise offered in the critical apparatus that this verse refers to the Wisdom of Amenemope (“cf doctrinam Amenemope cp 30”), which does indeed have thirty sections or chapters.

This interpretation is by no means certain, however. It is quite difficult to divide this section of Proverbs into thirty clear sayings or statements. As Steinmann notes, several different schemes have been proposed, but the fact that no consensus can be reached on the counting seems to argue against that being the intended meaning here. He also cites Waltke-O’Connor, para 15.2.2b against supplying unstated objects with words of counting, unless the object is a commodity. Finally, as Steinmann notes in some detail (447-451), the relationship between this section of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Amenemope is complex.

Given these uncertainties and the fact that the NIV rendering requires an emendation of the text, we recommend a footnote with the most likely alternative—the *kethib*. This will preserve a reading that has textual support, and it will alert readers that the NIV rendering is not absolutely certain.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible References:

Isaiah 43:11, 25; 51:12

Acts 3:20

1 John 5:4

Original texts:

Isa 43:11 – אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה

Isa 43:25 – אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְחַוֵּה פְשָׁעֶיךָ לְמַעַנִּי

Isa 51:12 – אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְנַחֵם

Acts 3:20 – καὶ ἀποστείλῃ τὸν προκεχειρισμένον ὑμῖν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν,

1 John 5:4 – καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν.

NIV renderings:

Isa 43:11 – I, even I, am the LORD.

Isa 43:25 – I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake.

Isa 51:12 – I, even I, am he who comforts you.

Acts 3:20 – and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

1 John 5:4 – This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Suggestions:

Isa 43:11 – I—yes, I—am the LORD.

Isa 43:25 – I—yes, I—am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake.

Isa 51:12 – I—yes, I—am he who comforts you.

Acts 3:20 – and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—namely, Jesus.

1 John 5:4 – This is the victory that has overcome the world—namely, our faith.

Rationale:

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, what could be called the “epexegetical *even*”—i.e., its use to mean “namely” or “that is to say”—is a KJV reflex that is archaic and obsolete. *Cambridge*, *Macmillan*, and *Merriam-Webster* do not list this meaning at all. The *NIV* has wisely removed the “even” from Eph 1:10, and we recommend updating the language of Acts 3:20 and 1 John 5:4 as well.

We also suggest that, although the “even’s” in Isa 43:11 and 25 and in 51:12 do represent a repeated pronoun in the source text, they are awkward in English. The intensification would be more naturally expressed with “I—yes, I—.”

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022**

Bible References:

Matthew 22:21
Mark 12:17
Luke 20:25

Original text:

Matt 22:21 – Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.
Mark 12:17 – Τὰ Καίσαρος ἀπόδοτε Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.
Luke 20:25 – Τοῖνυν ἀπόδοτε τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ

NIV rendering:

Matt 22:21 – “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”
Mark 12:17 – “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”
Luke 20:25 – “Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Suggestion:

Matt 22:21 – “So give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”
Mark 12:17 – “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”
Luke 20:25 – “Then give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Rationale:

We find the choice of “*give back* to Caesar” to be less than ideal. It is not clear in the context that there is any implication that Jesus is commanding the Jewish people to *return* something to Caesar or to God in this verse. While ἀποδίδωμι can certainly have that meaning, we note that it is the third meaning listed in BDAG, after (1) give, give up, yield and (2) pay, pay out (in the sense of a contractual obligation). BDAG specifically lists this verse under the meaning “pay, pay out” (letter b, “of taxes, pay”). This seems to be a clearer gloss for this verse. Where BDAG does list ‘give back, return’ as a meaning, it explains it as “to restore to an original possessor.” Although Caesar and the Romans had minted the people’s coins, we don’t see the government as the originator or original possessor of the people’s wealth.

If we assume that Jesus is telling his fellow Jews to pay taxes in order to give Caesar’s money *back* to Caesar, it becomes hard to understand his rationale and to implement his command in a thorough and consistent manner. Is Jesus saying that Caesar’s name and image on the coin are in themselves a proof that Caesar owns the coin? That hardly seems compelling. If an artist carves a portrait bust of a celebrity and inscribes on the base the celebrity’s name, neither the inscription nor the likeness makes the celebrity the owner of the bust. So also with coins: an old quarter with a likeness of George Washington does not belong to George Washington, and a Jefferson nickel does not belong to Jefferson. If it were nevertheless true that Jesus considered all coins with Caesar’s name and image to be Caesar’s property, then *all* such coins should be returned to Caesar, not just enough to satisfy the tax collector. And what about Jews who owned no such coins, whose wealth consisted in land, produce, livestock, etc.—was Jesus saying those Jews were tax exempt? That seems absurd. Should we assume instead that Jesus is making totalitarian claims on behalf of the Roman government to the effect that the Romans owned *everything* in Palestine

and should be given *everything*? That too is unnecessary when we see there is a better way of understanding Jesus' statement.

Jesus draws attention to Caesar's name and image on the coin as a visible reminder that the Romans were in control of Israel's homeland. God, who directed Israel's history and had disciplined his people with foreign invasion and occupation in the past, was now upholding the power of the Romans. Like every other government established by God, the Roman government had a right to collect taxes from its subjects, and that tax money was therefore Caesar's money. Give (i.e., pay as a matter of obligation) to Caesar what is Caesar's.

While it would make sense to say "give back to God what is God's" since God is the source and primary owner of all that we have, it also makes excellent sense to say "give (i.e., pay as a matter of obligation) to God what is God's," and that is what the parallelism demands. We give to God everything we have by using it all in grateful obedience to his will—and that includes paying the taxes he wants us to pay to the government.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

The heading before John 21:15 in the online NIV at BibleGateway and some printed Bibles

NIV wording:

Jesus Reinstates Peter

Suggestion:

Jesus Instructs Peter

Rationale:

Section headings can help readers find their way in a Bible translation, but it would be better to avoid tendentious and confusing headings. Experience shows that Bible readers can find “*Jesus Reinstates Peter*” confusing.

Is Jesus *reinstating* Peter here, and if so, into what status or position? Is Jesus restoring Peter as a disciple (i.e., a Christian) by forgiving him in order to rekindle faith after Peter disowned Jesus repeatedly? Is he restoring Peter as a minister of the gospel comparable to the rest of the Eleven? Is he restoring him as the *leader* of the apostles or even the first pope?

We see in Luke 24:34 that Jesus appeared to Simon on Easter before he appeared to the whole group. That is likely to be the occasion commemorated in the little creed Paul passed on to his churches: “...and that *he appeared to Cephas*, then to the Twelve” (1 Cor 15:5). We don’t know the details of what was said and done when Jesus appeared to Peter, but it is hard to imagine that Jesus left Peter wondering whether his sin of disowning Jesus was forgiven and whether he could even be a disciple.

John’s Gospel does not record that incident, but it does record Jesus’ appearance to the disciples on Easter evening. Peter is part of the group Jesus addresses with the words we read in John 20:21-23. Peter is among those who are commissioned to forgive sins. It should be clear to him that he is himself a forgiven disciple and that Jesus wants him to share the gospel of forgiveness with others. What happened in Galilee more than a week after Easter should not lead us to suppose that Peter was left unforgiven or unfrocked until Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

It would be tendentious to infer from the name Cephas in John 1:42 that Peter was given a quasi-papal authority over the other disciples and that Jesus reinstated Peter in that position in John 21:15ff.

Some, including F. F. Bruce, take John 21:15ff as a *new* commission for Peter. Previously he was a fisher of men (Mt 4:19, Mk 1:17, Lk 5:10), and now he receives the shepherd’s staff in addition to the fisherman’s equipment; he is to minister by hook or by crook, as Bruce pleasantly puts it. But it is hard to be sure that John intends any such distinction since he did not previously speak of the disciples as fishers of men. In any case, a *new* commission and a *reinstatement* are two different things, and so the NIV heading is inappropriate also with this interpretation of the episode.

Contextually, the point of the story is that real love for Jesus will lead Peter to serve God's flock, not to engage in competitive displays (Jn 21:7; cf. v. 15, "Do you love me *more than these?*"); it will lead to faithfulness even to the point of death (vv. 18, 19), not empty promises (Jn 13:37) and denials (Jn 18:15-18, 25-27).

If *Jesus Instructs Peter* seems too colorless, any of the following would be a better section heading than *Jesus Reinstates Peter*:

Do You Love Me?

Feed My Sheep

Peter's Love, Ministry, and Death

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022**

Bible Reference:

Acts 8:27

Original text:

καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐπορεύθη, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ Αἰθίοψ εὐνοῦχος δυνάστης Κανδάκης βασιλίσσης Αἰθιόπων, ὃς ἦν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς γάζης αὐτῆς, ὃς ἐληλύθει προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ

NIV rendering:

So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

Suggestion:

So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace^a queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

^a Candace, like Pharaoh, was a royal title that was often treated as a name.

Rationale:

The CBT’s desire for historical accuracy in its use of terms is certainly laudable, but it may not be attainable at this distance in history from the time in which these terms were used. The problem is more pronounced in the Old Testament in regard to loan words and titles, but in this verse we have a New Testament example. Most scholars agree that “Candace” is a royal title rather than a name, and in scholarly literature it is often rendered as the Kandake (although more often it is associated with the kingdom of Kush and its capital at Meroe rather than to “Ethiopia,” as referenced by the text in Acts). However, this is not a piece of information that is well known even to regular lay Bible readers. Many pastors may be unsure how to pronounce the title as printed here, which complicates usage for public worship.

But the main problem we see with the NIV’s rendering of this verse is that it fails to do justice to the fact that the book of Acts very likely follows the practice found in some ancient Roman and Greek literature (see Strabo) of referring to the title Kandake as a proper name. The NIV’s rendering with its parenthetical “which means,” in effect, substitutes an entry from a Bible dictionary for a translation. We note that the Greek text does not say that “Kandake means queen of the Ethiopians.” It does not use any of the common New Testament ways of offering a gloss for a foreign loan word.

We understand the desire to educate the common reader on the fact that Candace is not a name. We feel a footnote as we have offered here is a better solution. We believe that tying it in to the Old Testament usage of Pharaoh will help the average Bible reader to that this practice was not isolated in the Ancient Near East.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Galatians 2:11

Original text:

Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν.

NIV rendering:

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Suggestion:

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because his actions condemned him.

Rationale:

Quite a number of English translations render this verse in a way that is similar to the NIV, however, we are not convinced that it communicates well in the target language (English). The gloss “he stood condemned” appears to derive from a suggestion in BDAG. But a fuller reading of the entry states:

he stood condemned (by his own actions or by his opinions publicly expressed, cp. Diod S 34+35 Fgm. 29 κατεγνώσθη=he was condemned [by his outrageous deed or by his opinion publicly expressed], i.e. the faithless friend of Gracchus; Diog. L. 6, 33 καταγινωσκομένους [by their public opinions]; Jos., Bell. 2, 135)

It seems clear to us that BDAG’s intention is to communicate that the word means that someone’s own words or actions condemn them. But we are not convinced that the gloss “stands condemned” achieves that purpose. To our ears, it seems rather to imply that some kind of judicial proceeding has taken place.

We understand the desire of the CBT to update their choice of “he was clearly in the wrong” to reflect the more specific vocabulary that appears in this verse. But we believe that this choice will fall short of the CBT’s desire that the NIV be understood by readers with a more limited education and by readers for whom English is a second language. While our suggestion is a little bit free, we think it is clear and that it conforms with the NIV’s overall translation philosophy.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Ephesians 4:31

Original text:

πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ’ ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ

NIV rendering:

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Suggestion:

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, quarreling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Rationale:

The English word “brawling” appears to us to be a relatively difficult word which may be outside of the vocabulary of many readers and listeners of the Bible, especially those for whom English is a second language or those who have limited reading skills. We note that this is the only verse in the NIV where it is used. In addition to being difficult for some people to understand, it is also a difficult word to pronounce during public reading of Scripture in services. And, in our experience it is often used quite narrowly for violent fighting—as in “barroom brawl” or “drunken street brawl.”

We suggest that the more accessible word “quarreling” will serve just as well. We note that the NIV already uses it in Matthew 12:19 to translate the verb *κραυγάζω*. It is true that the NIV uses the gloss “quarrel” to translate half a dozen different Greek words, but it may simply be that English lacks the wealth of well-known words to convey this idea that was available to the 1st century Greek author.

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022**

Bible Reference:

1 Timothy 6:12

Original text:

ἀγωνίζου τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως, ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, εἰς ἣν ἐκλήθης καὶ ὁμολόγησας τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων.

NIV rendering:

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Suggestion:

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Rationale:

When did Timothy make his “good confession in the presence of many witnesses”? Did it occur during the apostle Paul’s first visit to Lystra? Was it after a period of instruction given by the elders of the church? Was it when he was baptized? Did it occur when a rite of ordination or commissioning took place prior to his departure with Paul and Silas? Scripture provides no answer to such questions—not elsewhere, and certainly not here with the conjunction καί.

We were surprised, then, when the CBT chose to carry over a long-standing NIV translation of this verse. This rendering clearly indicates that Timothy’s “good confession” occurred at the same time as his being called to the faith, thus eliminating all other occasions when it may well have taken place.

We propose a rendering here that leaves the timing of Timothy’s “good confession” an open question.

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022**

Bible Reference:

2 Timothy 2:20-21

Original text:

²⁰ Ἐν μεγάλῃ δὲ οἰκίᾳ οὐκ ἔστιν μόνον σκεύη χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύλινα καὶ ὄστράκινα, καὶ ἃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν ἃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν ²¹ ἔὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων, ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμὴν, ἡγιασμένον, εὐχρηστον τῷ δεσπότῃ, εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον.

NIV rendering:

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. ²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Suggestion:

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for honorable purposes and some for dishonorable. ²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for honorable purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Rationale:

The statement that this passage illustrates is quite clear: “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness” (2 Tim 2:19). The wickedness referred to is what is being spread by false teachers such as Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim 2:17). Unfortunately, the NIV’s rendering of the illustration that follows here in 2 Tim 2:20-21 is confusing. Nowadays English speakers only rarely employ the word “common” as a descriptor for that which is ignoble, base, or profane. So the point of Paul’s analogy here is actually in danger of being lost entirely if εἰς ἀτιμίαν is rendered “for common use” and if εἰς τιμὴν is rendered “for special purposes.”

It is worth noting that τιμή appears 41 times in the New Testament and that ἀτιμία appears 7 times. On only one other occasion (Romans 9:21) has the CBT rendered these nouns as “special” and “common.” The combination that’s acceptable there, however, does not work well here in 2 Timothy 2. Instead we recommend the translation of τιμή that appears most frequently by far in the NIV, with “honor” becoming “honorable,” given the adjectival function of εἰς τιμὴν. The adjectival phrase εἰς ἀτιμίαν is then contrasted with εἰς τιμὴν here when it is rendered “dishonorable.”

This rendering, we feel, will actually illustrate the apostle’s command to “turn away from wickedness.”

**Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022**

Bible Reference:

Hebrews 13:17

Original text:

Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπαίκετε, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες, ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσιν καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες· ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο.

NIV rendering:

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Suggestion:

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Rationale:

We recommend a return to the rendering used in the 1984 version of the NIV. The rendering “have confidence in your leaders” strikes us as problematic. Under the passive of πείθω BDAG lists a number of possibilities that derive from the idea of “to be won over as the result of persuasion.” “Have confidence in” seems a step away from usage elsewhere in the New Testament. “Obey” or “follow,” however, are clearly attested meanings. We understand the desire to differentiate between “obey your leaders” and “submit to their authority,” but in our experience, when Paul piles up terms, it is not always possible to produce a progression of meanings in English that accurately reflect the progression in Greek.

There is no need to regard the uses of πείθω in verses 17 and 18 as lexically similar. They occur in different constructions (Πείθεσθε + dative in 17, πειθόμεθα + ὅτι clause in 18).

We note that overwhelmingly the English translations accessible at BibleGateway.com use “obey” or a synonymous expression for Πείθεσθε in verse 17. We also note the preference of Ceslas Spicq, who was specially qualified to attend to the nuance of the verb here. Not only did he write commentaries on Hebrews and other NT epistles, but he also published a large set of lexicographical notes on NT words, including an extensive study of the verb πείθω. While we are unacquainted with the French original, we see this finding in the ET: “Finally, the meaning ‘obey’ is evident in Heb 13:17—‘obey your leaders and be in submission’” (*Theological Lexicon of the NT*, vol. 3, 77).

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

1 Peter 3:19

Original text:

ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν,

NIV rendering:

After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—

Suggestion:

After being made alive, he went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—

Rationale:

The meaning of κηρύσσω in this verse does present difficulties for the translator. From what we can see, three main glosses have been offered by different English translations. The most popular choice, which the NIV 84 followed, is “preach.” (Other examples include the KJV, NKJV, NABRE, NCV, and NLT). Another choice is that which currently stands in the NIV, “make proclamation.” This choice is followed by the NASB (including the 1995 and 2020 revisions), and the CSB. A third choice, which we are recommending here, is “to make a proclamation.” This is the choice of the NRSV and is similar to the reading in the ESV.

We can appreciate the questions that “preaching to the spirits in prison” raises, especially in view of Peter’s explanation that they include those who died in the great flood, and so are in hell. In the context of the work of the church, “preach” in modern English generally implies a proclamation of the gospel with a hope of generating saving faith, which would not apply in this context. But “make proclamation” is a very unusual construction in English. A quick internet search revealed that it is used primarily in legislation which has a very stylized way of speaking, and in translations of the Mishna and other Halahkah, which seem to us to be very stilted in their approach. Given the NIV’s desire to be the main English translation also of people for whom English is a second language, we would discourage using language that is as unnatural for most native speakers as “make proclamation.” The simple insertion of the article “a” allows the NIV to avoid the questions raised by “preach,” but to maintain a more colloquial usage of the English language.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Jude 12

Original text:

οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν σπιλάδες συνευωχούμενοι ἀφόβως, ἐαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες, νεφέλαι ἄνυδροι ὑπὸ ἀνέμων παραφερόμεναι, δένδρα φθινοπωρινὰ ἄκαρπα δις ἀποθανόντα ἐκριζωθέντα,

NIV rendering:

These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.

Suggestion:

These people are hazardous reefs^a at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.

^a Or *blemishes*

Rationale:

At 2 Peter 2:13 the writer warns against false teachers who will prove to be σπίλοι (“stains, blemishes”; lexical form σπίλος, ου, ό) when they feast with his readers. Following a similar line of thought, here in Jude a different inspired writer mentions those who have been σπιλάδες (lexical form σπιλάς, άδος, ή) as they feast with the believers.

Taken in apposition to οἱ ...συνευωχούμενοι, σπιλάδες could be rendered as “blemishes” or “stains,” as with σπίλοι in 2 Peter 2:13. There is a good possibility, however, that σπιλάδες is to be understood in keeping with the first rendering suggested by BDAG: “a rocky hazard hidden by waves, a rock washed by the sea, a (hidden) reef.”

We suggest the latter here. As Thomas Schreiner explains, σπιλάς (plural σπιλάδες) “is commonly used in Greek literature for rocks; only in later literature does it mean ‘stains.’” (Schreiner, *1,2 Peter, Jude*, 465. See also Mayor, *Jude and Second Peter*, 40-41; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 270; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 85-86.) In addition, the Epistle of Jude is loaded with vivid imagery from nature. In this passage alone he mentions clouds, rain, wind, autumn trees, wild waves of the sea, wandering stars, and blackest darkness. “Hazardous reefs” fits in so well in this context, in fact, we propose this as the primary translation.

Given the history of rendering σπιλάδες as “blemishes” or “stains” here, we propose that as a footnote.

If the CBT prefers to retain “blemishes” in the text, then we recommend that a footnote for “hazardous reefs” be added in order to make the alternate translation available.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Revelation 7:8

Original text:

ἐκ φυλῆς Ζαβουλῶν δώδεκα χιλιάδες,
ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰωσήφ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,
ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμὴν δώδεκα χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι.

NIV rendering:

from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

Suggestion:

from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000 were sealed.

Rationale:

In verse 5, the Greek includes the verb ἐσφραγισμένοι, which is repeated at the end of verse 8. The repetition does not appear to us to be senseless or frivolous, rather poetic, bookmarking the unique list of twelve tribes recorded here. We suggest it be retained in verse 8 to preserve the bookmarking.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Revelation 14:4

Original text:

οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν, παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν, οὗτοι οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγῃ. οὗτοι ἠγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπαρχὴ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ,

NIV rendering:

These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

Suggestion:

These are those who did not defile themselves with women; they are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

Rationale:

The NIV's current rendering of παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν does not actually provide an explanation for the previous clause. Instead, it makes an identical point with different words. It's like saying, "They did not go outside, for they stayed inside."

What, then, is the writer's explanation here? That the 144,000 standing before him with the Lamb "are virgins." This implies two things, that (a) in the past they were morally pure; and that (b) they considered their moral purity worth hanging on to. This explains why they did not defile themselves.

We make this suggestion also because of the impressive simplicity of the John's forms and syntax. The verb εἰσιν is in the present tense, just as οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες in this verse and εἰσιν in the following verse are in the present tense and are currently rendered as such. Why render εἰσιν in any other tense in English?

The explanatory particle γάρ and the parallel nature of the first two clauses in this verse are brought out more smoothly, we feel, with the insertion of a semicolon. The first two clauses in this verse are then matched by the parallel clauses in verse 5: "No lie was found on their lips; they are blameless."

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2022

Bible Reference:

Revelation 20:6 and 21:8

Original text:

20:6: μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ πρώτῃ· ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ [τὰ] χίλια ἔτη.

21:8: τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

NIV rendering:

20:6 – Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

21:8 – But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

Suggestion:

20:6 – Blessed and holy are those who have a share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

21:8 – But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their share will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

Rationale:

Our concern with these two verses is twofold. First of all, we are not certain that the verb “to be consigned” will be understood by people who use English as a second language. We know that the CBT envisions the NIV being used in many contexts by such people, and we fear this word might be a stretch.

Our second concern is in bringing out the parallel between the two verses, which use very similar language and are only a chapter apart. Both verses specifically reference “the second death” and use a construction built off the Greek word μέρος, followed by the preposition ἐν and a reference either to the first resurrection or the lake of fire, which is then identified as the second death. We hope that our suggestion will bring out the parallel a little more clearly.