

**Please note:** All materials other than Romans and 1 & 2 Corinthians should be regarded as being in final form. The questions for 1 Thessalonians through Hebrews are the older material which was previously published. They have not yet been adapted to the current guidelines, but are being made available, due to the frequent requests from translators for materials to test those books. Testing questions for Genesis are now included. Please send comments to [Robert\\_Stutzman@sil.org](mailto:Robert_Stutzman@sil.org).

This file contains testing questions for the following books:

Prepared by:

Genesis	Doug Trick
Gospel of Matthew	Lyle Scholz/Robert Stutzman
Gospel of Mark	Lyle Scholz
Gospel of Luke 1:1–21:33	Paul Vollrath
Gospel of John	Robert Stutzman
Acts	Henrietta Andrews
Romans	Keir Hansford
1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians	Keir Hansford
Galatians	Robert Stutzman
Ephesians	Robert Stutzman
Philippians	Robert Stutzman
Colossians	Robert Stutzman
1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians	Alice Maryott
1 Timothy, 2 Timothy	Alice Maryott
Titus	Alice Maryott
Philemon	Alice Maryott
Hebrews	Catherine Rountree

James	Robert Stutzman
1 Peter, 2 Peter	Robert Stutzman
Jude	Robert Stutzman
1 John, 2 John, 3 John	Robert Stutzman
Revelation	Robert Stutzman

## PREFACE

Not everyone who attempts to translate the Bible knows the Greek and Hebrew of the original texts. If such a person has not had the opportunity to receive a high level of education in his national language or a European language in a university or seminary, he will find few books that are useful in his understanding the original material well. For a mother-tongue translator (MTT), even the portion of the Bible which he uses as his source for translating is not in the language of his heart or his home life. When the translator's resources have had to be less than the best, the translation testing and checking process becomes even more important in order to produce an accurate and meaningful text that communicates to the readers and hearers. This *Questions for Testing Translations* series, begun in the mid-1980's, is being adapted and supplemented to help translators, especially MTTs, check their translated text against the original one.

The writers of the material in this series have been both translators and consultants for Bible translation. In order to make the questions and answers (Q&As) easier to understand and translate, they have followed the same guidelines as the authors in the *Translator's Notes* series. They have worded the Q&As carefully, trying to avoid those aspects of English language use and grammar that have been problem areas for those who are not native English speakers.

A translator may use these questions to check his own work, but the greater use will be in testing the translation among other speakers of the language who have not been involved in drafting this part of the Bible. Those who prepared this Q&A material have tried to make the wording easily translatable. The translator should ask the questions in the language of the translation and receive an answer that is similar to the printed one. (Of course, if an answer is very different from the printed one, the translator will want to determine the reason. He may need to adjust the translation to make it more accurate and meaningful.)

The authors hope that the wording in the questions will make it easy for the translator to translate them orally in a small group, but writing them out in advance in the language of the translation could bring longer term benefits. Written questions can help the testing process move ahead smoothly. Also, the written questions could be sent to several distant reviewers who can send back their written answers. Later, those written questions could become the basis of Bible study materials in that language.

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being made available, due to the frequent requests from translators for materials to test those books. Testing questions for Genesis are now included.

Now is the time for translators, especially MTTs who want to check Gospel material, to examine the questions and try them out. They should make note of any question or answer that does not make sense to them or is not easily translatable. There may even be places where a translator or consultant feels that the printed answer is wrong or a different question should be asked. All those comments and suggestions should be sent by the postal service or by e-mail to the appropriate address listed below. Each person who does send suggestions will enable this series to be most useful to all.

Before beginning to use the questions, you might want to refresh your minds by rereading Catherine Rountree's article in *NOT 101*, titled "A Preliminary Guide to Comprehension Checking." Donna Gardiner has discussed other articles pertaining to this subject in "An Annotated Bibliography on Comprehension Testing" in *NOT 110*.

For these sets of questions, the biblical text has been separated into units and each unit has a general question concerning the theme and overview. Then specific questions are asked to cover the details of the passage. Is this theoretically correct and does it work in practice? Some have suggested that first asking questions about the specifics helps those who are answering the questions to better be able to answer the general question that follow. Should differences in interpretation of a text be treated more thoroughly? Are the types of questions adaptable to most languages? What types of questions do not get good answers? Are there problems with the questions for any individual verses?

The Translation Department needs comments from all of you! Your criticisms and suggestions are really wanted. We also hope that some of you will volunteer to work on the project. Please address your correspondence to:

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## INTRODUCTION

Questions which have the words "do you think" in them are asking for an opinion about something that is not explicit in the text. At times this is done to be sure that implicit information which the original authors and readers understood from their culture or their logic is understood by those who read the translation. At other times, when the answer cannot be decided positively from the text, the "do you think" question makes sure that a definitely wrong answer is not being assumed by the readers of the translation. Sometimes it helps to keep the reader involved in the message of the translation.

These questions should be adapted to the form that questions take in the language of the translation and they should use the wording of the translation. The persons who drafted these questions cannot anticipate all of the adjustments made in the translation for figurative language and for unique lexical and syntactic requirements of each and every language. If a

question cannot be reworded so as to be pertinent to the text of the translation, or if it does not apply, the translator should decide whether it is because of a problem in the translation or because the translation avoided the problem.

If the translation follows a different interpretation than that assumed by the question, the question should be revised to reflect that interpretation and the translator should note that he/she needs to verify that the interpretation in the translation has scholarly support.

If only part of an answer is given, ask additional questions. If a potential problem appears in an answer, additional questions should be asked which focus on the problem.

If the answer does not agree with the suggested answer, it should be determined whether it is because (1) the translation communicates a wrong meaning, (2) the question was not asked correctly, (3) the one who answered did not fully understand the question, or (4) the one who answered did not answer as other readers probably would.

The questions are to guide the person who is checking a translation, but that person should not limit himself to only asking the questions in this set. He should feel free to ask other questions which follow up on the language assistant's answer. Also, he should ask his own questions about anything which he thinks may not be clear or may be misleading to those who read or listen to that translation. At any time the answer which the assistant gives may also answer another of the questions before the translator asks it. In such a case, that other question does not need to be answered again when he comes to it. Skip it and go on.

Neither the person asking the questions nor the one answering them should feel that testing their translation is a waste of time. It should be an enjoyable time for each. Not only is the translation being tested to confirm its accuracy (or pinpointing its deficiencies), but also, all the speakers of the language of the translation who are assisting or listening to the process are having a thorough study of the text. This testing is another way in the process of translating that can bring glory to God and lead more people to know that Jesus is their only savior.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

English translations: NIV, RSV, CEV, TEV, GW, NCV and NLT

The Greek New Testament, United Bible Societies, 4<sup>th</sup> edition: (GNT)

Key Biblical Terms by Barnwell, Dancy and Pope: (KBT)

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Louw and Nida: (L&N)

Translator's Handbook series, United Bible Societies: (TH)

Translator's Notes series, SIL: (TN)

Old Testament: (OT)

New Testament: (NT)

## **OTHER SYMBOLS**

Numbers in parentheses at the end of a question or answer, e.g. (24), indicate the verse within that section which has the answer. In a long answer in which successive parts all come from the same verse, the verse number generally is only at the end of the last item from that verse.

Some questions check the first occurrences of key theological terms or first occurrences of a sense which is different from the one noted earlier in questions. Those answers begin: (Key Term Check:....).

Comments on possible errors due to grammar or cultural differences begin with (Note:....).

Brackets ( [ ] ) usually enclose implied words or fuller English wording of the Greek text. The basic answer reflects the Greek text wording to a more literal degree. The words in brackets are not explicitly in the verse which the answerer hears or sees, but come from the immediate or wider context and would make a more complete answer.

The brackets also function as parentheses inside parentheses so as to avoid visual confusion of what is opening and closing. They usually contain a Bible reference within a note.

Some words in an answer are in parentheses ( ). Sometimes they contain an explanation or clarify the answer. Sometimes they are from the Greek text and would make a fuller, more complete answer, but are not necessary to answering the question as it was asked. The person asking the questions may decide to accept the shorter answer as adequate if he sees that those additional parts are clearly present in the translated text. If the one answering the questions includes those words, all the better, but not including them in his answer does not make the answer wrong, either.

Alternate choices of words are separated by the forward slash ( / ).

Alternate choices of sentence wording are separated by double forward slashes ( // )

“Why ...?” questions may need to be worded as “What was the reason that ...?” or as “What happened that ...?” This would be to avoid problems in cultures where asking “Why?” is interpreted as questioning the answerer’s motives and implying he has done something wrong. It is not understood as asking for information. When such questions need to be asked here, they are worded as “What do you think is the reason that ...?”, rather than as “Why do you think ...?” This was also done with some “How?” questions in order to avoid asking, “How do you think ...?” We do not want the person who answers the questions to think that we are questioning his thought processes, even though it is a perfectly good, non-offensive question for a mother-tongue English speaker.

When the answer is not made explicit in the text, the question generally cues this with the words “What do you think ...?”. The person who is asking the questions should try to help the one assisting him feel more at ease about such questions. He or she should make it clear at the beginning of the checking session that all the questions which say, “do you think” are asking for the assistant’s opinion based on hearing the text to that point. The answers to those questions are not made explicit in the text and cannot be directly found in the words of one verse or another. Because no clear answer is in the text in such cases, there is not just one right answer. (It may be more appropriate in a particular culture to change all the uses of this pattern to

“What will other (village) people think ...?”)

Where scholars have recognized more than one interpretation of the word order or spelling in the Greek text, different answers are possible. Sometimes the questions here ask for an opinion from the one who is answering. Again, different answers are possible. In both of those cases, various acceptable answers are separated by a line which says “–OR–”. The translation should lead to one of those choices.

When there are a number of aspects to an answer, they are listed in the order in which they appear in the text, each one starting on a new line for visual separation. If the one answering the question gives parts of the answer in random order as he remembers them or locates them in the text, it should be easy for the translator or consultant to tick off which parts have been named and which have not. When the list is more than three or four items, not every detail needs to be stated. If a person remembers many parts, and the translator sees that the other parts seem to clearly be in the text, those other parts can be read to the assistant as also being true. Of course, if any part of the answer cannot be found in the translation text, the translator must correct that omission.

The printed questions may include words which seem to be unnecessary. The person who is translating them into the vernacular may want to leave those words out of the translated question. However, a strong attempt has been made to make every content word and every grammatical relationship in a question be there because that same content or relationship is found in the original Greek text. If the question includes some of the words from the text, then they, too, are included for a purpose. Please try to include all of the printed question when translating it into the vernacular language.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SIL International, [\*Questions for Testing Translations\*](#) (Dallas: SIL International, 2002).