12

*12:1-9* **God Calls Abram**

Gen 12:1 **Then Yahweh said to Abram, “You yourself must go from your land and from your relatives and from the house of your father, to the land that I will show you.**

**Then**

“Then {one day}” or “{One day}”. Consider the best way to begin this new section in your language. (See: writing-newevent)

**Yahweh said to Abram,**

“Yahweh told/commanded Abram,” (See: writing-quotations)

**“You yourself must go from**

“Get yourself away from” or “You must move away from” or “You must leave {behind}”

**your land**

“your homeland/country” or “the land/country where you are living”

**and from your relatives**

“and your relatives/people,

**and from the house of your father,**

“including your father’s household/family,” (See: figs-metonymy)

**to the land**

“{and go/move} to the land”

**that I will show you.**

“that I will guide you to.”

Gen 12:2 **And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”**

**And I will make you into**

“I will make you {and your descendants} become” or “I will make you {the father/ancestor of}”

**a great nation,**

“an important/large people group,” or “a large, important people/ethnic group,”

**and I will bless you,**

“and I will bless/prosper you {and them}.” or “and I will cause you {all} to prosper/flourish.” See how you translated “blessed” in Gen 1:22, 28. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

**and I will make your name great,**

“I will make you {important and} well-known/famous,” Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: figs-idiom)

**and you must be a blessing.”**

“and you will be a blessing {to many people}.” or “and you {and your descendants} will bless {many people}.” or “and {I will use} you {and your descendants} to bless {many people}.” (See: figs-explicit)

Gen 12:3 **And I will bless those who bless you, but whoever curse you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

**And I will bless those who bless you,**

“I will bless everyone who blesses you,”

**but whoever curses you I will curse.**

“but I will curse anyone who curses you.” See how you translated “curse” in Gen 8:21.

**And in you**

“Through you {and your offspring/descendants}” or “Because of you {and your offspring/descendants}” or “By means of you {and your offspring/descendants}”. This phrase refers to Abram and his descendants, including ultimately the Messiah. In other words, God’s promise in this verse is part of his wonderful news (the Gospel message) for all people (Galatians 3:8-9) and is a prophecy about the Messiah/Christ, who was one of Abraham's descendants (Matthew 1:1, Genesis 22:18, Galatians 3:16). God blessed all people on earth by sending his Son Jesus (the Messiah/Christ) to die in their place and pay for all their sins (John 3:16-18, 1 Timothy 2:3-6), so that they could have a close relationship with him/God and be part of his family forever. God repeats this great promise in Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: figs-metonymy)

**all the families of the earth will be blessed.**

“all the families/people on the earth will be blessed {by me}.” or “{I} will bless all the families/people on the earth.” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this passive sentence. For some languages it is clearer to change the order of the sentence and say, “I will use you {and your offspring/descendants} to bless all the families/people on the earth.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-activepassive)

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Gen 12:4 **Then Abram went, just as Yahweh had told him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was the son of 75 years when he departed from Haran.**

**Then**

“So”. Consider what is the best way in your language to begin this sentence to show that Abram is now doing what God just commanded him to do (verse 1). (See: grammar-connect-words-phrases)

**Abram went, just as Yahweh had told him,**

“Abram left {the city of Haran}, just/exactly as Yahweh had told/commanded him {to do},” or “Abram did/obeyed what Yahweh had told/commanded him {to do} and left {the city of Haran},”

**and Lot went with him.**

“and {his nephew} Lot went/left with him.”

**And Abram**

“Now Abram” or “Abram”. Many translations omit the conjunction “And” or “Now” here. Do what is best in your language. (See: grammar-connect-time-background)

**was the son of 75 years**

“was 75 years old”. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 5:32 and 11:10.

**when he departed from**

“when he left from” or “when he left” or “when he set out from”

**Haran.**

“{the city of} Haran.” or “there.”

Gen 12:5 **And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot the son of his brother and all their possessions that they had accumulated and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. Then they came to the land of Canaan.**

**And Abram**

“Abram/He” (See: writing-pronouns)

**took Sarai his wife**

“took/brought {with him} his wife Sarai”. Be consistent here with how you spelled “Sarai” in Gen 11:29-31. (See: figs-go)

**and Lot the son of his brother**

“and his {deceased} brother’s son Lot” or “and his nephew Lot”. For some languages it is more natural to make “son of his brother” or “his nephew” explicit in verse 4 (where Lot is first mentioned in this section) and leave it implied here in verse 5. Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-explicit)

**and all their possessions that they had accumulated and the people whom they had acquired**

“everything that they owned, including slaves/servants {and everything else} they had acquired/gotten”. The word “possessions” is general here and includes slaves, animals, furniture, clothes, and money. See how you translated “slave” or “servant” in Gen 9:25-27.

**in Haran,**

“in {the city of} Haran,” or “in Haran {City}

**and they set out to go**

“and they {all} started traveling”

**to the land of Canaan.**

“to the land/region of/called Canaan.” or “to Canaan Land.”

**Then they came to the land of Canaan.**

“Then/Eventually they arrived in Canaan.” or “When they reached Canaan,” or “When they arrived/got there,”

Gen 12:6 **Then Abram passed through the land as far as the place of Shechem to the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites {were} in the land at that time.**

**Then Abram**

“Abram” or “Abram {and his family}” or “they”. Abram is the only one named here because he is in focus. However, your translation should not sound like he traveled alone in verse 6. Also make sure that the way you begin this verse in your translation fits with the way you ended verse 5. (See: figs-metonymy)

**passed through**

“traveled/went through”

**the land**

“that land/region”. See how you translated “land” in verse 5.

**as far as**

“until they arrived at” or “to”

**the place of Shechem**

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It can mean (1) “the city of Shechem” (2) “the/a {sacred} place at/near {the city of} Shechem”

**to the terebinth tree of Moreh.**

“to Moreh’s terebinth/oak tree.” or “to the terebinth/oak tree on Moreh’s land.” Moreh is probably the name of the person who owned the land where the terebinth tree was. A terebinth tree is a large, broadleaf, flowering tree in the cashew family that can grow to a height of 5 to 12 meters (16 to 40 feet). The Hebrew words for “oak” and “terebinth” are similar, so many translations (including LXX) translate this as “oak tree” here. Notice, however, that oak trees and terebinth trees are from two different tree families. (See: translate-unknown)

**And the Canaanites {were} in the land at that time.**

“At/During that time the Canaanites {were still living} in that land/region,” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to put the time phrase (“at that time”) first in this sentence. (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 12:7 **Then Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to Yahweh, who had appeared to him.**

**Then**

“but”. Yahweh’s promise in verse 7 to give Canaan to Abram’s descendants contrasts with the fact that the Canaanites were still occupying that region (verse 6). (See: grammar-connect-logic-contrast)

**Yahweh appeared to Abram**

“Yahweh came to Abram” or “Yahweh visited Abram”. The text does not specify in what form or in what way God appeared to Abram, so your translation should not do that either.

**and said,**

“and said/promised {to him},” (See: writing-quotations)

**“To your offspring I will give this land.”**

“I will give this land to your offspring/descendants.” In the Hebrew text, the phrase “to your offspring” is emphasized by its position at the beginning of this quote. However, for some languages it may be clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses and say, “I will give this land to your offspring/descendants.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

**So he**

“So/Then he/Abram”. Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Abram. (See: writing-pronouns)

**built an altar**

“built/made an altar {out of large stones}” or “built/made a sacrifice table/mound {with stones}”. See how you translated “altar” in Gen 8:20.

**there**

“near the tree” or “in that place”

**to Yahweh**

“to worship Yahweh” or “{and burned sacrifices on it} to {thank and} worship Yahweh”

**who had appeared to him.**

“who had appeared/come to him {there}.” or “because he/Yahweh had appeared/come to him {there}.” See how you translated “appeared” earlier in verse 7.

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Gen 12:8 **Then from there he went on to the mountains to the east of Bethel and pitched his tents, {with} Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to Yahweh, and he called on the name of Yahweh.**

**Then from there**

“From there” or “From {the place/city of} Shechem”

**he went on to**

“he/Abram {and his family} moved/traveled {south} to” (See: writing-pronouns)

**the mountains to the east of**

“the hill country that was east of” or “the mountainous region east of”

**Bethel**

“{the town of} Bethel”

**and pitched his tents,**

“and set/put up his/their tents {there}” or “They set up their tents/camp”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “tent” in Gen 9:21, 27.

**{with} Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.**

**“**between Bethel to the west and {the town of} Ai to the east.” or “Bethel was to the west {of them} and {the town of} Ai was to the east.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

**And there he built**

“There he/Abram built/made”

**an altar**

“another altar” or “another sacrifice mound”. See how you translated “altar” in verse 7.

**to Yahweh,**

**“**{and burned sacrifices on it} to worship Yahweh,” See how you translated “to Yahweh” in verse 7.

**and he called on the name of Yahweh.**

“and he worshiped/praised Yahweh/him by name.” or “he addressed Yahweh/him by {his} name as he worshiped/praised him.” or “he used Yahweh’s/his name in his prayers and worship.” or “he worshiped/praised Yahweh/him.” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 4:26. (See: figs-idiom)

Gen 12:9 **Then Abram set out and continued to travel toward the Negev.**

**Abram**

“Abram/he {and his family}”

**set out and continued to travel**

“traveled in stages” or “moved from place to place”

**toward**

“{south} toward” or “{southward} until they reached”

**the Negev.**

“the Negev/Southern {Wilderness/Desert}.” The Hebrew word “Negev” can mean “south” or “dry country,” so some translations translate the meaning. But most translations transliterate the Hebrew name (as “Negev” or “Negeb”) as they do with other names in the Bible. (See: translate-names)

*12:10-20* **Abram And Sarai Go To Egypt**

Gen 12:10 **Then there was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, because the famine {was} heavy in the land.**

**Then there was**

“Now there was”. This clause gives the setting for the rest of the sentence. Translate this in a way that is natural in your language.

**a famine**

“a serious/extreme shortage/lack of food” or “a hungry/starving time when food was very/extremely scarce”. A “famine” is a prolonged period of time when people are starving because crops are failing, often due to a lack of rain or other severe weather conditions.

**in the land,**

“in that land/region/area,” or “in the Negev Wilderness/Desert,”

**so Abram**

“so Abram {and his family}”

**went down**

“headed/traveled southwest” or “went/traveled/moved {further} south”. This phrase refers to the fact that Egypt is lower in elevation than Canaan (verse 5). It is also located southwest of Canaan.

**to Egypt**

“to/toward {the land/country} of Egypt”

**to sojourn there,**

“to live/stay there for a while,”

**because the famine {was} heavy**

“because the food shortage was {very} severe/oppressive”

**in the land.**

“in that land/region.” or “in the Negev {Wilderness/Desert} {so they could not survive/live there}.” It may be more natural to put this clause near the beginning of this verse and say, “Then/Now there was a famine in that land/region that was so heavy/severe/bad that Abram {and his family} {left there and} went down to {the land/country of} Egypt to live for a while.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 12:11 **And it happened that as he was about to enter Egypt, then he said to Sarai his wife, “Behold now, I know that you {are} a woman beautiful in appearance.**

**And it happened that as he was about to enter Egypt,**

“Just before they arrived in Egypt,” or “As they approached Egypt,”

**then he said to**

“he/Abram told/urged”

**Sarai his wife,**

“his wife Sarai,”

**“Behold please,**

“Listen please,” or “Please listen {to me/this}:”

**I know that you {are} a woman beautiful in appearance.**

“I know/realize that you {are} a very beautiful woman.” or “You {are} a very beautiful woman.”

Gen 12:12 **So it will happen when the Egyptians see you, then they will say, ‘This {is} his wife,’ and they will kill me but let you live.**

**So it will happen when**

“So when” or “When”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin this sentence with or without a conjunction (“So”). (See: grammar-connect-logic-result)

**the Egyptians**

“the people of/in Egypt”

**see you,**

“see/notice you {with me},”

**then they will say, ‘This {is} his wife,’**

“they will say/know that you are my wife,” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: figs-quotations)

**and they will kill me but let you live.**

“Then they will kill me but/and let you live {so that they can have/take you}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Gen 12:13 **Please say {that} you {are} my sister, so that it will go well for me for your sake and my life will live because of you.”**

**Please say**

“{So} please tell {people/them}”

**{that} you {are} my sister,**

“ ‘I am his/Abram’s sister,’ ” Consider whether an indirect quote or direct quote is best here in your language. (See: figs-quotations)

**so that it will go well for me**

“so that I will be treated well” or “so that they/people will treat me well”

**for your sake**

“because of you”

**and my life will live because of you.”**

“and my life will be spared {by them}.” or “and they will spare my life.” or “and {they will} let me live.” For some languages it is not natural to include the phrase “because of you” here, because it repeats the same idea as “for your sake” that was earlier in the sentence. Do what is best in your language.

Gen 12:14 **Then it happened, when Abram came into Egypt, then the Egyptians saw the woman that she {was} very beautiful.**

**Then it happened,**

“That is {exactly} what happened:”

**when Abram**

“When Abram {and his family}”. Although Abram is in focus here, your translation should not sound like he was traveling alone. (See: figs-explicit)

**came into**

“entered” or “arrived in”

**Egypt,**

“{the land/country of} Egypt,”

**then the Egyptians**

“the Egyptian {people}” or “the people {living} there”

**saw the woman that she**

“saw/noticed that the woman {with him}” or “saw/noticed that Sarai”

**{was} very beautiful.**

“{was} {indeed/truly} very beautiful.”

Gen 12:15 **And the officials of Pharaoh saw her, so they praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house.**

**And the officials of Pharaoh saw her, so**

“{Some of} the officials/officers who served/ruled under the {Egyptian} king/ruler noticed/spotted her, so” or “When some officials/officers of/under Pharaoh {the king of/over Egypt} saw/noticed her,” The term “officials” is general and refers to leaders or rulers who were under Pharaoh and served him. Also, the term “Pharaoh” is a title that refers to the king or ruler over Egypt. However, in the Old Testament, it is treated as a name (that frequently occurs with the title “king of Egypt”), so translators often transliterate “Pharaoh” (which is how other names in the Bible are normally treated). Decide how you will handle this in your translation. (See: translate-names)

**they praised her to Pharaoh,**

“they told Pharaoh/him how beautiful she was,” or “they highly recommended her to him,” (See: writing-pronouns)

**and the woman was taken**

“and she/Sarai was taken/brought” or “So he had them bring her/Sarai”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: figs-activepassive)

**into Pharaoh’s house.**

“into/to his palace {to be one of his wives}.”

Gen 12:16 **Then he treated Abram well for her sake, so that he had flock{s} and herd{s} and male donkeys and male slaves and female slaves and female donkeys and camels.**

**Then he treated Abram well for her sake,**

“Then Pharaoh treated Abram well because of her/Sarai,” or **“**The king thought that Abram was her/Sarai’s brother, so he treated him well.”

**so that he had**

“and Abram acquired {from him}” or “and he gave him/Abram” or “He gave him/Abram”. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: writing-pronouns)

**flock{s} and herd{s}**

“flocks {of sheep} and herds {of cattle},” or “many sheep and cattle,”

**and male donkeys and male slaves and female slaves and female donkeys**

“as well as men and women slaves/servants, and male and female donkeys,”

**and camels.**

“and {larger load-bearing animals called} camels.” If camels are not known in your language area, you could include a picture of a camel in your translation. You could also describe it in the text or in a footnote. (See: translate-unknown)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Paragraph Break\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gen 12:17 **But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house {with} great plagues on account of Sarai the wife of Abram.**

**But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house**

“But/Then Yahweh struck/afflicted the king and {the people in} his household/family” or ”Then Yahweh caused {King} Pharaoh and {the people} in his household/family to get/be very sick”. See how you translated “Pharaoh” in verse 15. You could translate it differently in different contexts. Do what is clear and natural in your language in each context.

**{with} great plagues**

“{with} severe/terrible diseases/illnesses”

**on account of Sarai the wife of Abram.**

“because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” or “because he/Pharaoh had taken Abram’s wife Sarai.” For many languages it is clearer and more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “But since {King} Pharaoh had taken Abram’s wife Sarai, Yahweh afflicted the king and his family {with} severe illnesses.” Do what is best in your language (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 12:18 **So Pharaoh called for Abram and said, “What {is} this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she {was} your wife?**

**So Pharaoh**

“So/Then Pharaoh/he” or “So/Then the king” or “So/Then {King} Pharaoh”

**called for Abram**

“sent for Abram {to come to him}” or “summoned Abram {before him}”

**and said,**

“and said {to him},” or “and asked {him},” Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way that you translate the following quote. (See: writing-quotations)

**“What {is} this you have done to me?**

“Why have you treated me so badly?” or “You have treated me very badly!” Pharaoh uses rhetorical questions in verses 18 and 19 to express his anger at what Abram had done; he does not expect Abram to answer him. Some languages must use statements or exclamations here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**Why did you not tell me that she {was} your wife?**

“You should have told/informed me that she/Sarai {is} your wife!” (See: figs-rquestion)

Gen 12:19 **Why did you say, ‘She {is} my sister,’ so that I took her to me as a wife? Now then, behold your wife. Take her and go!”**

**Why did you say, ‘She {is} my sister,’**

“Why did you say/pretend that she {is} your sister,” or “You should not have said/pretended that she {is} your sister,” Pharaoh uses this rhetorical question to scold Abram and express his anger at him. Consider the best way to do that in your language. Also consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: figs-rquestion)

**so that I took her to me as a wife?**

“so that I took/chose her to be a/my wife!” or “so that I ended up taking her to be my wife!” or “I believed you and took her to be my wife!” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. (See: grammar-connect-logic-result)

**Now then,**

“Now therefore,” or “So now,”

**behold your wife.**

“here is your wife {back}.” or “look, I’m giving your wife back to you.”

**Take {her} and go!”**

“Take {her} and leave {my country}!”

Gen 12:20 **Then Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away and his wife and everything that {belonged} to him.**

**Then Pharaoh**

“Then {King} Pharaoh“ or “Then the {Egyptian} king” or “Then the king {of/over Egypt}”. Consider again how you translated “Pharaoh” in verses 15-18, 20. It may be helpful to read this section aloud to make sure it is clear and natural in your language.

**commanded**

“ordered” or “gave orders to”

**his men**

“{some of} his men/soldiers”

**concerning him,**

“concerning/about him/Abram,” or “to make sure that Abram left,” Throughout this verse, make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to. (See: writing-pronouns)

**and they sent him away**

“and/so they forced him to leave {the/their country},” or “and/so they expelled him {from Egypt},” (See: grammar-connect- logic-result)

**and his wife**

“along with his wife”

**and everything that {belonged} to him.**

“and all that he/they had/owned.” or “all his/their possessions.” This included Abram’s slaves, animals, and everything else that he owned.