

A Review Of The New International Version

by

Ben. F. Vick, Jr.

REVIEWING THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

The apostle Paul expressed gratitude for the Thessalonian brethren's reception of the word of God. He wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). However, we express no gratitude, but grieve, that many today accept the New International Version, the word of men, as if it were the word of God. In the case of some, their use of this perversion is a matter of ignorance; but with many professors and preachers, who should know better, it is wholly uncalled for and inexplicable. They do not desire the unadulterated word of God; otherwise, they would use a reliable translation.

Objections to this version have been made for many years; but because this version has become so popular, both within and without the church, it is necessary that further opposition be made against it.

Claims for the Purpose of Translation

We are informed in the Preface that this translation is "transdenominational in character." In other words, it was an ecumenical work in which some from different denominations had a part. It is regrettable and an embarrassment that, in the list of denominations represented, the Church of Christ is mentioned. The Lord's church is no denomination, contrary to the inclusion. It would have been far better for the truth if brother Jack P. Lewis had refused to have had anything to do with this translation, even in an advisory capacity, because now some will link the Lord's church to it. Lewis should have done as brother H. Leo Boles did in reference to the Revised Standard Version when invited to have a part in the translation work. Having seen the direction of the translation, he withdrew himself from the effort.

In the Preface of the New International Version we are told that the translating committee held to "certain goals," like "an accurate translation," "clarity," and "literary quality." On the last-mentioned goal, we shall let others judge; but as to the other points, we simply say that it is clear that the NIV is not an accurate translation, as we shall demonstrate. It may be easy to read, but accuracy and faithfulness in translation must precede readability.

We are told: "The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers. They have weighed the significance of the lexical and grammatical details of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. At the same time, they have striven for more than a word- for-word translation."

But if translators' first concern was to be accurate in translating the thoughts of the Bible writers, why did they strive for "more than a word-for-word translation"? Jesus, in quoting from the Old Testament, said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The writer of Proverbs wrote, "Every word of God is pure..." (Prov. 30:5). It is understood that, in translating the Greek into English, it might take two or three words in the

English to translate one Greek word; but we should strive for the exact equivalent, whether it be one, two, or three words. No one has the right to modify the word of God by adding or subtracting from it (Rev. 22:18-19).

We are also told that “The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an eclectic one.” The word “eclectic” means “selecting what appears to be best in various doctrines, methods, or style, composed of elements drawn from various sources.” In other words, they did not have a specific text but followed the highly educated method of “eeny, meeny, miney, mo.” To say the least, such a method is subjective. It is evident that the translators basically followed the Westcott and Hort text, which is based on two or three scandalous, corrupt manuscripts that had omitted words, phrases, verses, and paragraphs.

There are other points mentioned in the Preface that could be addressed, but the best way to test a product is to check it out. We have no intention of discussing every criticism that could be made of New International Version, but we want to give enough to demonstrate that it is not reliable.

Teaches That One Is Born A Sinner

A glaring error in the NIV is the rendering of Psalm 51:5 to teach that David was born a sinner. The 1978 edition of the NIV says, “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” The 1984 edition does not improve the earlier rendering of this verse. It says, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” This is rank Calvinism. John Calvin taught that one is born into this world totally depraved, having inherited his sin from Adam. None among us preaching and promoting the NIV could meet successfully the sectarians on this tenet of Calvin. A sectarian preacher could hold the feet of those supposed gospel preachers to the fire on this verse. If they do not believe the verse as it is rendered, then, why do they use this version?

Calvinism permeates the denominational world. Gospel preachers of bygone years silenced the sectarian preachers on this tenet by using the Authorized, or King James Version. Psalm 51:5 faithfully rendered says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). David was not saying that he was born a sinner but that he was born into a world of sin. We were born into the English-speaking world, but we were not born speaking English nor any other language (Acts 2:8). We had to learn it. We are not born sinners. To become sinners, we must first transgress God’s law (1 John 3:4).

The NIV changes “flesh” to “sinful nature” in Romans 7 and 8 and Galatians 5 and 6. There is no reliable lexicographer, to my knowledge, who will so render the Greek word *sarx* as “sinful nature.” According to Thayer’s lexicon, the definition to be applied to this word in the passages cited is that it “denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God.” (p. 571).

Once again, this shows the influence of Calvinism in this version. Calvinism teaches that one is born a sinner. “Nature” has to do with one’s birth; “sinful” means full of sin. Therefore the conclusion, according to the NIV, is that one is born full of sin. Those who quote from the NIV need to address this striking error. R. L. Whiteside wrote:

Sin is no more a part of your nature than dust in your eye is a part of the nature of your eye. Because the desires, appetites, and passions of the flesh so often lead to sin, flesh is called sinful. But we should remember always that fleshly desires lead to sin only when the mind, or heart, purposes to gratify the flesh in an unlawful way. (Commentary on Romans, p. 170).

Deleted Words and Phrases

The deleted words, phrases, verses, and passages of New International Version is inexcusable. Some of the whole verses omitted are: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; Mark 15:28; 16:9-20; John 7:53 – 8:11; and Acts 8:37. There are some other significant expressions excised from the text as well. For instance, the latter part of Matthew 19:9, which says, "...and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," is omitted. In regard to the crucifixion, an Old Testament reference, as Matthew gives it, is omitted: "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots" (Matt. 27:35). Luke's statement of the trilingual superscription over the cross is deleted in the NIV (Lk. 23:38). Acts 2:30 omits, "according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ." Saul's question is removed in Acts 9:6 which reads: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Many others could be mentioned. According to one source, 17 verses and 180 significant expressions are omitted in the NIV.

A Contradiction on Abolishing the Law of Moses

In Matthew 5:17 the NIV says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them...." However, this translation contradicts a later statement found in Ephesians 2:15 of the same version, which reads: "...by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulation. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,...." If Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the law or the prophets, and Paul said that Christ did abolish the law with its commandments and regulations, then, that puts Jesus and Paul in conflict with each other. Those who preach and teach from this version as if it were reliable need to explain this contradiction. On this point they would be hard pressed to answer the atheist.

The King James Version uses the word "destroy" in Matthew 5:17 and "abolish" in Ephesians 2:15. Though these terms are considered to be synonymous, their nuances are different in both the Greek and English. These different shades of meanings need to be noted. The word "destroy" means to "undo or unbuild; to ruin the structure, organic existence, or condition of;...to ruin completely or injure or mutilate beyond possibility of use, as by tearing, breaking, burning, erosion, etc.; as, to destroy a document, a dress, a work of art, a river's bank." One might speak of a building's being destroyed by fire.

But Jesus did not come to mutilate nor demolish the law of Moses beyond the possibility of use. In fact, Paul later said that things written aforetime were written for our learning and admonition (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). If Jesus' purpose was to annihilate the law, why did the New Testament writers allude to it so often? The word "abolish" means "to do away with wholly; to annul; to make void." The word "abolish" applies, in particular, to things of a permanent nature, such as institutions, usages, customs; as, the abolition of slavery.

Inaccuracies Regarding Matthew 5:32 and 19:9

The NIV is not accurate in its translation of the Greek word *porneia*, which is translated "fornication" in a reliable translation. Both in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, the NIV says, "marital unfaithfulness." Fornication, strictly speaking, means "illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer). The Analytical Greek Lexicon defines the Greek word as fornication, whoredom, concubinage, adultery, incest, lewdness, uncleanness. One might be unfaithful to his marriage vows and, yet, not be guilty of fornication. A husband might fail to provide for his wife, or a wife might refuse to obey her husband; but neither could be accused in such instances of fornication. They would be guilty of marital unfaithfulness but not fornication. The NIV opens the door for other causes for a divorce than on the ground of

fornication.

Denials of the Deity of Christ

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Jesus asked him, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:16-17). Jesus’ response affirmed his being God. To put it in syllogistic form:

Major Premise: Only one is good; i.e., God.

Minor Premise: You have called me good Master.

Conclusion: Therefore, I am God.

However, the NIV, based on a corrupt text, changes the young man’s address to Jesus and removes the Lord’s argument on his being deity. It reads, “Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?’ ‘Why do you ask me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’” (Matt. 19:16- 17). The translators were wrong in perverting this passage (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19); our professors and preachers are wrong in promoting this version; and it is the acme of gullibility for brethren to accept it as a reliable Bible.

The words “only begotten” have been removed from the text in favor of the inadequate rendering “one and only” in the NIV (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9). It is a point that favors modernism. The Greek word monogenes, from which the excised expression comes, is a four-syllable, compound word. Mono means only; genes means begotten. Thus, “only begotten” is the only faithful English rendering that can be given. Neither “only” nor “one and only” carries the precise meaning of the Greek word. Someone can be an only son and, yet, not be the “only begotten” son. But if one says “the only begotten Son of God,” that carries the sense in which he is the one and only. The expression “only begotten Son of God” tells us not only that he is special but why he is special — it expresses his deity.

Salvation Based on Faith Only

The errors regarding the passages having to do with salvation are replete in the NIV. According to Romans 1:17 in this version, salvation is based on faith only. “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” It is possible for a verse or passage to be incorrectly translated and, yet, no harm, in a sense, be done to the basic truth of God’s word. But this is not only an unfaithful rendering of the Greek text, but it also perverts the truth. Romans 10:10 in this version teaches that salvation is at the point of belief and confession. The translators took the Greek preposition eis, which always looks forward, and made it into the present tense verb “are.” In Ephesians 1:13, according to this same perversion, the Ephesians were “included in Christ when they heard the word of truth.” That is not what the verse says in a reliable Bible. This also contradicts what Paul said in Galatians 3:27 — even in the NIV!

Testimonials vs. Testimony

Some today in the Lord’s church are advocating the idea that we should preach the gospel records about Jesus which, according to them, are the substance of the Bible, and should pay little, if any, heed to

the Old Testament prophets which, as per the view of some, are mere shadow. Likewise, we are told to ignore the book of Acts and the epistles and to focus on the gospel about Jesus. This approach seems to be permeating the church through young preachers and liberal professors among us.

The New International Version supports this testimonial type of preaching in its rendering of 1 Corinthians 1:6. It says, "...because our testimony about [emphasis-BFV] Christ was confirmed in you." But the reliable King James Version renders the verse, "Even as the testimony of [emphasis-BFV] Christ was confirmed in you:...." The testimony of indicates that which belongs to Christ, a possessive relationship. It also could denote origin or derivation. Thus, "the testimony of Christ" means that which came from Christ or belongs to him. It is synonymous with the gospel of Christ or the doctrine of Christ. There is nothing in the Greek text to indicate that the preposition "about" should be inserted in lieu of the genitive "of" which shows possession or origin. To talk about Christ is not the same as to preach the testimony of Christ. To tell about God is not the same as to proclaim the testimony of God (1 Cor. 2:1). One might talk all day about Christ or God and never declare the testimony of either.

NIV Supports Continuation of Miracles

The NIV's incorrect rendering of two passages in the context of the miraculous gifts allows for the support of continuation of miracles. The Pentecostal groups have more "ammunition" for their false views in the NIV than they do in the faithful KJV. In 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 the NIV reads: "For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears." The most that can be said in favor of this rendering is that it is ambiguous.

What "perfection" is under consideration? Did Paul have reference to the individual's spiritual maturity? Or did he have reference to the time when the revelation would be complete? One cannot be sure in reading the NIV. However, the King James Version makes it clear by translating the expression, which is in the nominative case and the neuter gender, as, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:9-10).

Another passage dealing with the miraculous is wrongfully translated in the NIV. Ephesians 4:13 reads, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." This shows the Pentecostal prejudice of the translators of this corrupt version. This rendering allows the miraculous to continue until we are united spiritually. This is handling the word of God deceitfully.

The King James Version, or Authorized Version, says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The spiritual gifts endowed upon the offices cited in 4:11 were to continue until the system of faith, the gospel, was complete, entire, or whole. The word "till" is an adverb of time with the force of a conjunction, implying cessation of some action or thing at a certain point in time. The faith has been once for all delivered (Jude 3). Therefore, the miraculous has ceased.

The prepositional phrases in Ephesians 4:13, "of the faith" and "of the knowledge of the Son of God" [emphasis-BFV] in the King James are correct, being in the genitive case in the original. There is no sound reason for changing them to the locative case as the NIV has done.

NIV Teaches Not Under Law

The NIV is the Bible of the liberal mind set. Some will argue that we are not under law today. This is false. However, if one were to show them Philippians 3:16, they would deny the rendering in an accurate translation. The King James Version reads, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." But the NIV mutilates this verse. It says, "Only let us live up to what we have already attained." It removes from the text the idea that we are under the same

rule and that we are to mind the same thing which has the support of the vast majority of manuscripts that are available today.

Perversion of 2 Peter 3:10

Second Peter 3:10 is perverted in the NIV. It says that when the Lord shall come again, the earth will be “laid bare” rather than “burned up” as the KJV has it. The NIV reads, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare” (2 Peter 3:10). The Greek equivalent for “laid bare” or “discovered” is found only in a third-century papyrus, the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and four others of later date. Thayer says that the rendering by the fourth-century manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, is “strange but improbable.” (p. 261). Burgon stated that it “obviously makes utter nonsense of the place.” (Revision Revised, p. 356). The overwhelming evidence supports the words “burned up.” The majority of manuscripts, plus some of the ancient versions, sustain the King James Version’s rendering.

Conclusion

This is enough to demonstrate to the honest soul that the New International Version is not reliable. This version should not be used in the pulpit or the classroom as a reliable version. It is full of denominational dogma. It will lead the ignorant and innocent into error. Faithful brethren should not use it except as a reference tool, being aware of its many inaccuracies and short-comings.

This material can be ordered in tract form from:

Shelbyville Road Church of Christ
4915 Shelbyville Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46237