

Devotional Questions: Matthew 17:24-27 Paying Tribute:

1. *What was the temple tax* (Matthew 17:24; see also Exodus 30:11-16)?* *The correct word, translated idiomatically, is **“tribute”** Matthew 17:24 twice as **“tribute money...tribute,”** 25, 22:17, 19, Mark 12:14, Luke 20:22, 23:2, Romans 13:6, 7 twice, 11 references in all in the 1611, 2011+ AV1611s. Note:
 - The **“tribute”** is not to the temple but **“tribute unto Caesar”** Matthew 22:17, Luke 20:22 because Caesar is **“a raiser of taxes”** Daniel 11:20 in that **“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed”** Luke 2:1. Caesar is **“a king”** John 19:15 and tax is **“the king’s tribute”** Nehemiah 5:4* then as now, 2 Chronicles 8:8, 10:18, 17:11, Ezra 4:13, 20, 6:8, 7:24, Esther 10:1, Matthew 22:17, Mark 12:14, Luke 20:22, 23:2, Romans 13:6, 7 twice with 1 Peter 2:17 **“Honour the king,”** in part by paying **“the king’s tribute”** Nehemiah 5:4. *Note that local taxes imposed in Nehemiah’s time merely to enrich local rulers in addition to **“the king’s tribute”** were *not* legitimate, Nehemiah 5:1-15. **“Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother...I pray you, let us leave off this usury”** Nehemiah 5:7, 10. An offering equivalent to **“a half shekel...an offering of the LORD”** Exodus 30:13 was, however, re-established in Nehemiah’s time. **“Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God”** Nehemiah 10:32. This offering was set up via **“a sure covenant”** that was written and **“Nehemiah, the Tirshatha”** i.e. **“Nehemiah the governor”** was its first signatory Nehemiah 9:38, 10:1, 12:26. This offering will be addressed below with reference to Exodus 30:13, 15-16 that set out the original offering as follows. **“This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD...The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.”**
 - No word for **“temple”** as such appears in Nestle’s 21st, Ricker Berry’s 1897 Edition of Stephanus’ 1550 Received Text or the Farstad-Hodges ‘Majority’ Text Greek-English Interlinears in Matthew 17:24.
 - None of the pre-1611 Bibles has the reading **“temple tax”** in Matthew 17:24. They read:
1385, 1395 Wycliffe Bibles **“tribute...tribute”**
Tyndale New Testament **“poll money...tribute”**
Coverdale, Great, Bishops’ Bibles **“tribute money...tribute”**
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 - The reading **“temple tax”** in Matthew 17:24 appears to have been derived from a footnote on Matthew 17:23 (24) in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Version, 1749-1752 Challoner’s Revision, reading as the 1582 Jesuit Rheims New Testament, which transliterates the underlying word as **“didrachmas...didrachmas,”** to the effect that **“A didrachma was...about 15d. English: which was a tax laid upon every head for the service of the temple.”** Neither the 1582 Jesuit Rheims New Testament separate online edition nor the 1610 DR has that note.
 - Similar footnotes appear for Matthew 17:24 in the NASVs, from 1960 onward, which have **“two-drachma tax...two drachma tax”** (the 1984, 2013 NWTs read similarly with **“two-drachmas tax...two drachmas tax”**) and the JB, from 1966, which has **“half-shekel...half-shekel”** as does the 1985 NJB and the 1881 RV, 1901 ASV, which would establish a bogus connection with Exodus 30:13, 15-16. The 1946, 1971 RSVs retain that bogus connection with **“half-shekel tax...tax”** in Matthew 17:24.

- The reading “*temple tax*” in Matthew 17:24 is therefore a recent imposition that is traceable to the 1973 NIV* but prompted by the Catholic Challoner Revision footnote for Matthew 17:24. It is therefore *not* an idiomatic translation like “**tribute money...tribute**” AV1611s but an *explanation* instead of a *translation* in the NIV which is both *illegitimate* and *wrong*. *See **Appendix - NIV Infidelity in Translation** as shown by the TBS, Trinitarian Bible Society.
- The 1978, 1984 NIVs have “*two-drachma tax...temple tax*,” the 2001, 2011 ESVs, 2011 NIV have “*two-drachma temple tax...temple tax*” and the 1989 NRSV, NKJV have “*temple tax...temple tax*” in Matthew 17:24. A further drift to Rome is therefore apparent in the later versions via the 1749-1752 Catholic Challoner DR footnote with the additional insertion of “*temple tax*” in Matthew 17:24. The NKJV, which is not a KJV of *any* description, is also in lockstep with Rome in its footnote on Matthew 17:27 with the statement “*Greek stater, the exact amount to pay the temple tax (didrachma) for two.*”
- The 1611, 2011+ AV1611s have no note concerning the purpose of the tax in Matthew 17:24 being “*for the service of the temple.*”
- Rome therefore appears to have slyly devised a means of *doubly* filling her coffers with both a *political* tax i.e. to Caesar, Matthew 22:17, Luke 20:22 and a *religious* tax according to its Catholic version footnotes on Matthew 17:24, dutifully inserted into the texts of the ESVs, NIVs, NRSV, NKJV by her evangelical Christian fundamentalist allies (who make the Lord sick, Revelation 3:16). Perhaps that is where en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter%27s_Pence Peter’s Pence *really* derives from, though no immediate web reference says so. Peter’s Pence is nevertheless said, this writer’s emphasis, to be “*Regarded as a tax rather than an offering.*” That should surprise no-one because no-one can beat Rome at graft and money-making scams and she is foremost among “*robbers of churches*” Acts 19:37, including her own, or especially her own e.g. by asserting that since Jesus and Peter paid this *tax* for the upkeep of the building, so should you. See *Smokescreens* by Jack T. Chick Chapter 10 *The Richest Man on Earth?* www.chick.com/catalog/catholicism.asp.

In sum, “**tribute money...tribute**” Matthew 17:24 AV1611s is the correct *idiomatic* translation of the underlying word *didrachma*. Most of the pre-1611 Bibles either have that expression or similar wording. The expression “**tribute money...tribute**” refers to “**tribute unto Caesar**” Matthew 22:17, Luke 20:22, not to “**half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary**” Exodus 30:13 for reasons that will be shown. See **Answers to Questions, Question 1, “Tribute money” Matthew 17:24 not “atonement money” Exodus 30:16**. The NIVs’ “*temple tax*” appears in *no* English Bible before the 1973 NIV New Testament and derives from the Douay-Rheims Catholic Version, 1749-1752 Challoner’s Revision footnote “*A didrachma was...about 15d. English: which was a tax laid upon every head for the service of the temple.*” The footnote is incorrect and NIVs’ and subsequent versions’ “*temple tax*” is therefore an *explanation*, not a *translation*. It is also a *wrong* explanation and should be avoided. The New International Version is notorious for substitution of *explanations*, i.e. *wrong* explanations, for *translations* in its text. See **Appendix - NIV Infidelity in Translation** as shown by the TBS Trinitarian Bible Society.

Devotional Questions: Matthew 17:24-27 Paying Tribute, Continued:

2. *Why would the authorities think Jesus should pay the temple tax*? What does this teach us about their views of Jesus? *See Question 1 and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.*
3. *What would a negative answer imply?*
4. *What would a positive answer imply?*
5. *What is the point of Jesus' question (Matthew 17:25)?*
6. *Why are Jesus and the disciples free from the obligation to pay a temple tax* (Matthew 17:26)? *See Question 1 and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.*
7. *If Jesus did not need to pay the tax* – why did he (Matthew 17:27a)? *See Question 1 and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.*
8. *What lesson is there regarding how to discern what issues are appropriate for Christians to prioritise (Matthew 17:27)?*
9. *What wisdom about [the] Christian life is Jesus teaching here about 'picking my battles' (Matthew 17:27)?*
10. *What is amazing about the miracle (Matthew 17:27b)?*

Devotional Questions: Answers to Questions, Matthew 17:24-27 Paying Tribute:

See Dr Ruckman's works *The Book of Exodus* pp 557-562, *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* p 310, *The Book of Matthew* pp 331-334, 459-464, *The Book of Luke* pp 641, 694-697, 699-700, *The Books of First and Second Corinthians* pp 216-217, *The Book of Revelation* Chapters 13, 17, *Mark of the Beast* Chapters 2-4 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 155, 656, 1157, 1269, 1279, 1332, 1375, 1407, 1419-1420 for detailed comment.

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“Tribute money” Matthew 17:24 not **“atonement money”** Exodus 30:16

The **“tribute money”** Matthew 17:24 cannot be **“the atonement money”** Exodus 30:16 because:

1. *All the payees had to be numbered.* **“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them”** Exodus 30:11-12. Matthew 17:24-27 does not refer to any numbering of payees.
2. *A precise amount had to be given, which was not subject to change for personal atonement.* **“This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD...The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls”** Exodus 30:13, 15. The New Testament gives no indication that **“the shekel of the sanctuary”** was still in circulation at the time of Matthew 17:24-27. It is impossible to believe that the Romans would have tolerated a rival currency during their occupation of Israel, as the Lord Himself indicated. **“Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar’s”** Luke 20:24.
3. *Each individual had to pay that precise amount.* **“Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls”** Exodus 30:14-15. No two individuals were able to ‘double-up’ the payment to pay for each other simultaneously, as the Lord does with Peter in Matthew 17:27 **“when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”** ‘Doubling-up’ of the payment would in fact defeat the purpose of **“the atonement money”** Exodus 30:16, which was **“to make an atonement for your souls”** Exodus 30:15 i.e. each individual soul.
4. *King Jehoash reinstated collection of “the atonement money...for the service of the tabernacle”* Exodus 30:16 as **“the king’s tribute”** Nehemiah 5:4. See first bullet point.

“And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man’s heart to bring into the house of the LORD, Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found...Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD” 2 Kings 12:4-5, 9. **“The money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man’s heart to bring into the house of the LORD”** 2 Kings 12:4 shows that Jehoash was requesting *voluntary contributions over and above* the obligatory **“half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary”** Exodus 30:13.

“And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? And at the king’s commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD...And at the king’s commandment they

made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness” 2 Chronicles 24:4-6, 8-9.

Insofar as **“the LORD spake unto Moses**” Exodus 30:11, **“the LORD is our king**” Isaiah 33:22 and **“God...removeth kings, and setteth up kings**” Daniel 2:20-21, Moses could impose that collection because **“Moses...was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together**” Deuteronomy 33:5. Moses could therefore levy **“the king’s tribute**” Nehemiah 5:4.

However, at the time of Matthew 17:24-27 **“there was no king in Israel**” Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25 of Israel according to Deuteronomy 17:15 **“Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.”** Exodus 30:11-13, 2 Chronicles 24:9 show that *according to God’s original commandment to Moses a king in Israel, of Israel had to be present for “money to repair the house of your God from year to year” 2 Chronicles 24:5 to be exacted as “the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD” 2 Chronicles 24:6.*

No such king existed in Israel in the time of Matthew 17:24-27. Neither **“Herod the tetrarch**” Matthew 14:1 nor Caesar Matthew 22:17, 21 were of Israel. Moreover, God had said of Israel’s last king **“Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah”** Jeremiah 22:24 **“Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah”** Jeremiah 22:30.

The above does not contradict the offering equivalent to Exodus 30:11-16 set up in Nehemiah’s time. **“Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God”** Nehemiah 10:32. Nehemiah, though not a king, Nehemiah 6:6-8, was **“appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah”** Nehemiah 5:14 and occupied **“the throne of the governor”** Nehemiah 3:7 to implement according to **“the king’s words that he had spoken unto me...the king’s commandment...at the king’s hand”** Nehemiah 2:18, 11:23-24. Nehemiah was a governor *in Israel of Israel with kingly power.* **“Pilate the governor”** Matthew 27:2 was *not.*

“The collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD” 2 Chronicles 24:6 could therefore not have been obtained as **“tribute money”** Matthew 17:24 i.e. **“that every man is set at”** but as a *voluntary* offering only i.e. **“that cometh into every man’s heart”** 2 Kings 12:4. That was the case in the time of Matthew 17:24-27.

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing” Mark 12:41-42 with Luke 21:1-2.

5. **The Lord rebukes the scrupulosity of Israel’s leaders only in their tithing in kind. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone”** Matthew 23:23. Had payment of **“the atonement money”** Exodus 30:16 still been in operation in Matthew 17:24-27, the Lord surely would have rebuked Israel’s leaders for their scrupulosity in making that payment while robbing widows but He doesn’t explicitly do so, though He does take a strip off them for their victimisation of widows. **“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation”** Matthew 23:14.

The lesson for today’s believer is that **“error against the Lord”** Isaiah 32:6 results from failure in **“rightly dividing the word of truth”** 2 Timothy 2:15 *and changing the words of the AV1611.*

2. *Why would the authorities think Jesus should pay the temple tax*? What does this teach us about their views of Jesus? *See Question 1 and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.*

The question is really *Why would the authorities* raise the issue of “tribute money...tribute” Matthew 17:24 with the Lord Jesus Christ? *The authorities for the purpose of this study are defined as “the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people” Matthew 26:3, who on this occasion received their information from “they that received tribute money” Matthew 17:24, whom they despised as “publicans and sinners” Matthew 11:19. The Lord Jesus Christ makes enemies friends and friends enemies:*

“And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Matthew 10:36.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” Luke 23:12.

Today’s believer should therefore remember James’ admonition:

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” James 4:4.

The answer is first that the authorities were made aware of the issue because Lord had amongst His own disciples *“Matthew the publican”* Matthew 10:3, who oversaw *“the receipt of custom”* Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27 i.e. *“custom or tribute”* Matthew 17:25. That enabled the authorities to try to discredit the Lord Jesus Christ by declaring publicly *“Behold...a friend of publicans and sinners”* Matthew 11:19 with Mark 2:16, Luke 5:30, 7:34 because their view of the Lord was as *“that deceiver”* Matthew 27:63, not *“the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ”* John 1:41 with John 4:25.

They then sought to use the issue of *“tribute money...tribute”* Matthew 17:24 for the purpose of entrapment.

A negative answer to their question in Matthew 17:24 would have enabled the authorities to make the accusation *truthfully* *“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar”* Luke 23:2. They later made the accusation *falsely* for the same purpose *“to put him to death”* John 11:53, which the Romans would do to anyone judged to be *“a malefactor”* John 18:30 like *“two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death”* Luke 23:52.

A positive answer to their question in Matthew 17:24, which was what they received, would have enabled the authorities to make good their accusation that the Lord Jesus Christ was *“that deceiver”* Matthew 27:63 because in their perception *“the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”* John 12:13 would never *“pay tribute”* Matthew 17:24 to a foreign ruler according to Deuteronomy 17:15 *“thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.”* On that basis, since once before *“took they up stones to cast at him”* John 8:59 because *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am”* John 8:58, *“Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him”* Matthew 26:3-4 with Mark 14:1-2.

The authorities of course did not understand why the Lord Jesus Christ came the *first* time. It was *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* Luke 19:10 not to *“restore again the kingdom to Israel”* Acts 1:6. That is why He will come the *second* time *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory”* Matthew 25:31. That is also why the Lord said to Pilate *“now is my kingdom not from hence”* John 18:36.

The lesson in principle for today’s believer is that the Lord Jesus Christ at His *first* Advent via *“his cross...having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it”* Colossians 2:14-15 *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of*

God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” Ephesians 6:13.

3. What would a negative answer imply?

See *Question 2* above.

4. What would a positive answer imply?

See *Question 2* above.

5. What is the point of Jesus’ question (Matthew 17:25)?

Matthew 17:25 states “...***And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?***”

The point of the Lord’s question was to help Peter that a new kingdom was ‘a-comin’ populated by **“the good seed...the children of the kingdom”** when **“shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”** Matthew 13:38, 43 including today’s believers.

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the re-generation when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” Matthew 19:28.

Peter did understand the point of the Lord’s question eventually and in addition his statement to that effect is pivotal for today’s believer in understanding *now* the priesthood of all believers, which is one reason why no believer should have to tolerate ‘the original’ so-called being put on him by some ‘Greekiolator’ *not* in **“words easy to be understood”** 1 Corinthians 14:9.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

6. Why are Jesus and the disciples free from the obligation to pay a temple tax* (Matthew 17:26)?

*See *Question 1* and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.

See *Question 2* and Luke 19:10, Matthew 25:31, John 18:36 and accompanying remarks. They were not exempt from paying **“tribute unto Caesar”** Matthew 22:17, Luke 20:22 because the Lord said **“Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them”** Matthew 17:26. The Lord was conscious of the *principle* of Jeremiah 29:7 **“And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace”**. He was therefore not about to lay Himself open to a charge **“for a certain sedition made in the city”** Luke 23:19. Paul shows that the same principle is binding on today’s believer. **“For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour”** Romans 13:6-7.

Note that this issue of **“tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom”** Romans 13:7 is of national importance today because *MPs back moves to decriminalise TV licence fee non-payment* www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26727068 March 25th 2014. If the MPs succeed that would yield considerable individual savings because *A TV licence, which is required if a user watches or records live broadcasts on any device in the UK, currently costs £145.50 per year.*

Today’s believer will nevertheless be free from paying **“tribute unto Caesar”** at the Lord’s Return. Caesar, Luke 2:1, typifies **“the prince of this world”** John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11. The Lord said of him **“the prince of this world...hath nothing in me”** John 14:30 and **“the prince of this world”** has nothing of jurisdiction in today’s believers because **“ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”** 1 Corinthians 3:23.

7. *If Jesus did not need to pay the tax* – why did he (Matthew 17:27a)?* *See Question 1 and subsequent bulleted and numbered points.

See Question 6.

8. *What lesson is there regarding how to discern what issues are appropriate for Christians to prioritise (Matthew 17:27)?*

See Questions 5, 6 with respect to the priesthood of all believers 1 Peter 2:5, 9 and Paul's admonition to ***“Render therefore to all their dues”*** Romans 13:7. As Peter states, Question 1, second bullet point ***“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king”*** 1 Peter 2:17. That is why a formal letter to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II should close with:

‘I have the honour to be, Madam, Your Majesty’s humble and obedient servant’

See www.royal.gov.uk/hmtthequeen/contactthequeen/overview.aspx.

9. *What wisdom about [the] Christian life is Jesus teaching here about ‘picking my battles’ (Matthew 17:27)?*

Paul expressed the elements of the Lord’s wisdom in Matthew 17:27 to the effect that:

- *God will be glorified. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* 1 Corinthians 10:31.
- *Testimony will be consistent. “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God”* 1 Corinthians 10:32.
- *Witness will be steadfast – “whether they will hear: or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious”* Ezekiel 2:7 with Ezekiel 2:5, 3:11 e.g. *the authorities* as depicted in Questions 2-4 and most of those in the local high street 12:30-13:30 Thursdays who resist ***“the gospel of the grace of God”*** Acts 20:24 – *without unnecessary confrontation. “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved”* 1 Corinthians 10:33.

10. *What is amazing about the miracle (Matthew 17:27b)?*

What is most amazing to this writer is the precise fulfilment of scripture. ***“His riches in glory”*** include time, place, person, resources, means, power, authority and precision.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:19.

Appendix - NIV Infidelity in Translation

TBS Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record* October-December 1987 No. 501

Examples of Inaccurate Translation

As has been mentioned already, the NIV is not often guilty of gross inaccuracies, but on the other hand there are countless passages where it falls short in significant matters of detail. A few examples can be given here.

Matthew 2.15 “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said” (AV “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord”). The expression “that it might be fulfilled” is used several times in Matthew, on each occasion indicating the *deliberate* fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. In each case the implication is that God Himself deliberately brought the event to pass, in performance of the promises which He had made through the mouth of His prophets. These events were therefore not some chance fulfilment of a merely human prediction or forecast. Here and also in Matthew 2.23 and 13.35, the NIV omits Matthew’s clear reference to the divine *purpose* which caused the prophecies to be fulfilled. This has resulted from incorrect translation procedure, and is not affected by the use of different Greek manuscripts. (See the TBS *Quarterly Record* for July, 1985, pages 14-15, for a more detailed examination of this point).

Luke 1.10 “all the assembled worshippers” (AV “the whole multitude of the people”). Here the NIV introduces two ideas which are not in the original Greek. There is no word here in the Greek meaning either “assembled” or “worshippers”. It can be deduced from the context that the people had indeed assembled together, and that their purpose was to worship, but this is not the primary meaning of the Greek. The NIV fails to distinguish translation from explanation. It is the task of the preacher or commentator to explain the implications of the text, but the task of the translator is to give the actual meaning of the original words.

Luke 1.42 “blessed is the child you will bear” (AV “blessed is the fruit of thy womb”). The colourful Greek-Hebrew metaphor referring to Christ as the “fruit of Mary’s womb” is totally removed by the mundane phrase of the NIV. This idiom “fruit of the womb” is intelligible to the ordinary reader, and is not in need of further simplification or explanation by the translator. The same idiom occurs in the Old Testament at Genesis 30.2; Deuteronomy 7.13; Psalm 127.3; and Isaiah 13.18, of which only the passage in Deuteronomy is correctly rendered by the NIV.

John 18.1 “an olive grove” (AV “a garden”). The phrase “olive grove” is hardly more than a guess at the meaning. The Greek word means simply a garden, and does not necessarily refer to olive trees at all. Inconsistently, the NIV does not venture to insert “olive grove” in John 19.41 when referring to the garden tomb in which Christ was buried, nor in Luke 13.19 when referring to the garden in which a man

planted his grain of mustard seed, although the same Greek word is used in both places.

1 Corinthians 4.9 “God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena” (AV “God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death”). The words “procession” and “arena” do not occur here in Paul’s Greek, and it is not certain that Paul is even indirectly referring to these ideas. By exercising their imagination in this way, the NIV translators here overstep the boundary between translating and explaining.

Galatians 5.25 “keep in step with the Spirit” (AV “walk in the Spirit”). The NIV here does not provide a true English equivalent of the Greek expression, which implies that in all our conduct and testimony our steps must be taken by the help and guidance of the Spirit. “Keep in step” is not an appropriate idiom in this context.

The above examples could be considerably multiplied. (For a more extensive examination of passages, see the TBS *Quarterly Record* for October, 1980, pages 12-16). Taken individually, such distortions of the meaning might not appear to be very significant, but the cumulative effect of thousands of alterations of this kind undermines the trustworthiness of the whole translation. The average reader, and especially the evangelical reader, wishes to be sure that the translation in front of him precisely represents the wording of the original language. The reader needs to be able to distinguish between the inspired words of the Biblical writers and the explanations, additions and omissions produced from the imagination of the translators, through their zeal to achieve “more than a word-for-word translation”. The reader who relies on the New International Version as his sole means of access to the Word of God has no grounds for confidence, at any given passage, that he is hearing the words of God rather than the words of man.

See also the TBS Publication:

New International Version, What today's Christian needs to know about the NIV G. W. Anderson, D. F. Anderson

www.tbsbibles.org/articles/new-international-version-what-todays-christian-needs-to-know-about-the-niv-1 pp 24-31 for **16** further examples on inaccurate translation in the NIV.

These include in order of citation 1 John 3:7b, Titus 1:2, Philippians 2:7, James 3:1, 1 Corinthians 7:1b, Galatians 6:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:12, 14, John 20:27b, Galatians 5:16, Romans 7:18, 1 Corinthians 5:5, John 14:1, 16:31, Luke 1:42, Hebrews 11:11.

The 1987 TBS article's **6** examples, Matthew 2:15, Luke 1:10, 42, John 18:1, 1 Corinthians 4:9, Galatians 5:25 give a total of **22** New Testament examples where the NIV translators have shown infidelity in translation.

As G. W. and D. F. Anderson rightly state, *New International Version, etc.* p 31:

“Translators...are not free to build or create their own Greek text based upon their interpretation of a passage; they are only to translate the text before them.”

In sum, to all NIV and other modern version supporters:

“But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee” Psalm 50:16-17.