

“GOD FORBID!”

Doug Kutilek is a virulent critic of the King James Bible. He has written this short article criticizing the rendering of “God forbid” as is found in the Holy Bible. Here is his opinion and then I will post the refutation.

Doug Kutilek writes: The phrase “God forbid” occurs some 24 times in the King James Version of the Bible. Nine of these occurrences are in the OT (and thrice the similar “the LORD forbid”), while fifteen are found in the NT. Of the NT occurrences, all but one are found in the writings of Paul.

As has been pointed out countless times with regard to the use of the phrase “God forbid” to render the words of the original Hebrew and Greek, it is a close English equivalent except for two facts: 1. the word “God” is not found in the original text; and 2. neither is the word “forbid.” Other than that, it is a fine representation of the original!

It is obvious, of course, that here at least, the KJV is not a literal translation of the original, but is at best a paraphrase, a “dynamic equivalent.” (Do I hear some rigid KJV adherent mutter under his breath, “God forbid!”?)

The NT passages, gleaned from Strong’s concordance, are Luke 20:16; Romans 3:4; 3:6; 3:31; 6:2; 6:15; 7:7; 7:13; 9:14; 11:1; 11:11; I Corinthians 6:15; Galatians 2:17; 3:21; 6:14. In every case but the last, the phrase is a self-standing grammatical unit, expressing strong opposition or rejection of a just mentioned opinion, point of view, or implied answer to a question. In Galatians 6:14, it is incorporated into a sentence.

In all 15 references, the Greek phrase is identical: ME GENOITO. ME is a negative particle usually used with verbs in the subjunctive, optative or imperative moods. GENOITO is a rare NT occurrence of a verb in the optative mood (just 56 cases in all). It is from the verb GINOMAI, “to be, become, happen,” etc. Taken together, the phrase may be literally rendered, “may it not be,” a phrase weaker in force in English than the Greek original.

Modern English equivalents would be “not at all!” or “absolutely not!” or “certainly not!” or “by no means” or “under no circumstances” or “perish the thought!” or even the colloquial, “no way, Jose!” (see the New King James Bible, New American Standard Bible, and New International Version in the passages involved).

While all of these modern renderings are other than strictly literal renderings of ME GENOITO, they at least have the advantage over the KJV rendering of not introducing the name of God where it is not found in the original.

Frankly, I am at a loss to explain how it came to pass that “God forbid,” came to be considered by Wycliffe and other early English translators from Tyndale to the KJV as a suitable and correct translation of the Greek ME GENOITO. It was strictly a phenomenon that arose in the then-very small English-speaking world, as far as I can tell. It cannot be defended as “the closest possible

English equivalent.” The renderings of the NKJB, NASB, and NIV are very much to be preferred to it.

---Doug Kutilek "AS I SEE IT" Volume 4, Number 4, April, 2001

And now for my rebuttal.

All previous English versions use this same expression, "God forbid", including Wycliffe 1380, 1395; Tyndale 1525, 1534; Coverdale 1535; The Great Bible (Cranmer) 1539, Matthew's Bible (John Rogers) 1549, the Bishop's Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1557, 1587, 1599, 1602, and the Douay-Rheims version of 1609.

"God forbid" is also the reading found in John Wesley's N.T. translation of 1755, Mace N.T. done in 1729, Whiston's Primitive New Testament of 1745, the Worsley Version of 1790, the Book of the New Covenant 1836 (Granville Penn), the English Revised Version (of Westcott-Hort fame) of 1881, and the American Standard Version of 1901. The Douay version of 1950 has "God forbid" in Luke 20:16; Romans, I Corinthians and Galatians, The World English Bible in Luke 20:16 and Gal. 2:17, Weymouth Version in Mat. 16:22, Luke 20:16 and Gal. 6:14, the Revised Standard Version of 1952 in Mt. 16:22 and Luke 20:16, the New Jerusalem bible 1985 has "God forbid" in Luke 20:16, the New Living Translation 1996 in Luke 20:16, and Galatians 6:14, and the 1998 Third Millennium Bible, and The Update Bible of 2003 have "God forbid" in all the same passages as does the King James Bible.

The New RSV has "heaven forbid" in Luke 20:16 (likewise no heaven nor forbid-according to Kutilek). By the way the NRSV also has "God forbid" in Mat. 16:22 where likewise it is not "in the Greek" as the scholars like to say.

The modern Hebrew Names Version contains "God forbid" in Gal. 2:17, The New Century Version has "heaven forbid" in all the same verses where the KJB has "God forbid"; The Living Bible has God forbid in Romans 3:6, Gal 2:17, and 6:14, the Jerusalem Bible has it in Luke 20:16.

Mr Kutilek apparently is totally unaware that the NASB has 'God forbid" in Mat. 16:22 where his own scholarly standards would condemn this version he recommends. It is a different Greek construction, but again neither the words "God" nor "forbid" are found there. Both the NASB and the NIV frequently add the words God or Lord when they are not "in the original text".

Surprise! Even the New KJV, which he told us to consult, has rendered the exact same "me genoito" as God forbid in Galatians 6:14 ! Oh, wait! There's even more. The "old" NIV of 1985 had completely omitted all references to "God forbid" when translating the words me genoito and translated it as "May this never be!" in Luke 20:16. But now in 2005 in the TNIV and again in 2011 the "new" New International Version have come out, and guess what they did. They have now translated this same phrase as "God forbid!"

In fact this is the definition that the Oxford Greek Dictionary gives. Also Constantine Tsirpanlis, former Instructor in Modern Greek Language and Literature at New York University, Former

Consultant for the Program in Modern Greek Studies at Hunter College, Professor of Church History and Greek Studies at Unification Theological Seminary, gives the definition of "me genoito" on page 72 of his book, "Modern Greek Idiom And Phrase Book," Barron's Educational Services, Inc., 1978, ISBN 0-8120-0476-0. The ONLY definition Tsirpanlis (a native Greek) gives for "me genoito" is "God forbid!" There is NO reference to "may it never be", "by no means" or "certainly not"!

The proper force of this Greek phrase 'me genoito' is to express a negative in the strongest of possible terms. The English equivalent of "God forbid" perfectly and accurately expresses this thought, whereas such phrases as "may it not be" come across as prissy and effeminate.

Mr. Kutilek chides our AV because "God" is not literally found in the text. In spite of all his learning he has little understanding of how languages work and exalts his opinion above any bible version out there today.

Another example using the verb kreematizo and the noun kreematismos is found in Romans 11:4 "But what saith the answer of God unto him?". The NIV reads, "And what was God's answer to him?" It is interesting to note that there is no word in ANY Greek text for the word "God". Despite this fact the NIV reads "God's answer". Now I wonder what Mr. Kutilek would say to that?

Literally the Greek of Rom. 11:4 reads, "alla ti legei autoo ho kreematismos". The last word in the previous phrase is 'kreematismos' and it carries the idea of 1) an answer from God or 2) a divine response or revelation. So, in order to accurately preserve the Greek in this sentence the word "God" or "Divine" must be "added" (even though NOTHING has been added) to the English text. In fact if "God" were not 'added' then the sense of the verse would be lost.

The verb form is found in Matthew 2:12, 22; Acts 10:22; and Hebrews 8:5 and 11:7. In Matthew 2:12 and 22 the KJB reads, "And being warned of God". The NASB likewise reads in both, "And having been warned by God", and so does the NKJV in 2:22. The NASB also renders this verb as "warned by God" twice in Hebrews 8:5 and 11:7. The NKJV reads "divinely instructed", though strictly speaking the words God or Divinely are not "literally" there. Once again we see that the NASB, NKJV and NIV have committed the unpardonable sin, according to Mr. Kutilek, of saying "by God" when God is not in the Greek text.

The brand new 2001 English Standard Version also "adds" the word God in the expressions "warned of God", "God's reply", and "instructed by God" in Romans 11:4; Hebrews 8:5 and Hebrews 11:7. It also adds the word God to other passages when not literally found in the Greek. Likewise the New Jerusalem Bible of 1985 has "me genoito" as "God forbid" in Luke 20:16 and has the expression "warned of God" in Acts 10:22, Hebrews 8:5 and 11:7 as well.

Another example of "God not being in the text" is found in the NASB three times in Acts 13:43; and Acts 17:4 and 17. In Acts 13:43 the KJB, as well as the NKJV, RV, ASV, and even the NIV read: "many of the Jews and RELIGIOUS (or devout) proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas". The word is sebomai and there is nothing literally found about God in the word at all. Even the

NASB in this same chapter verse 50 the word is simply translated as “devout” However in Acts 13:43, 17:4 and 17 the NASB reads “GOD-fearing”, with no literal “God” in any Greek text. The NIV too switches gears and in both Acts 17:4 and 17 likewise “adds” the word God just like the NASB, but not so the KJB, NKJV, RV or ASV.

The NASB and other modern versions often adds the words Jesus, God and Lord to their translation, when these words are not found in the Hebrew and Greek texts. The NASB adds the word "Jesus" in Mark 1:45; Luke 22:63, and Acts 3:16; Acts 9:22. It also adds the word "God" in 1 Samuel 16:7, adds "God" in Job 20:23 (as well as the RV, ASV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NKJV, NIV, NET and Holman Standard) and 21:17 (as well as the NIV, NKJV, RV, ASV, NET, RSV, NRSV and ESV), "God" in Isaiah 37:20 (from Dead Sea Scrolls, but not from Hebrew Masoretic text), Nehemiah 6:9 (along with the RV, ASV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, ESV,etc.), Matthew 15:5, 16:22, Acts 3:19, Acts 7:4, Acts 13:43, Acts 19:26, Acts 26:7 - "serving GOD" (along with the NIV, NKJV, NET) Romans 11:28, 1 Peter 2:9; and "Lord" in Exodus 33:9, Exodus 34:10, 2 Kings 23:19, Job 21:19, 2 Chronicles 32:24, 2 Chronicles 33:19 add "God" (NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET, NKJV, RV, ASV and Holman Standard too) Hosea 1:6, 9, and 10:2.

1 Peter 2:9 KJB - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"

NASB 1995 - But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION

NIV 1984 edition - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people belonging to God,**

NIV 2011 edition - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **God's special possession**

It is a bit hypocritical to hear the new versionists complain about the KJB “adding” the word ‘God’ to such expressions as “God forbid”, and then turn around and add the word ‘God’ themselves when it most definitely is not in any Greek text at all.

In Ecclesiastes 2:26 we read: "For GOD giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy..." Even though the word GOD is not in the Hebrew texts, translations like the ASV, RV, NKJV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, ESV and many others "add" the word so the passage makes sense. The NASB and Holman add the word "HE", referring to God, and not even in italics, for the same reason.

Jeremiah 3:1 - "THEY SAY, If a man put away his wife...". So read the King James Bible, the Geneva Bible, the NKJV, RV, ASV, Darby and the Spanish Reina Valera. However the NASB

adds the word "God" here without any textual support from the Hebrew Scriptures. The NASB reads: "GOD says, If a husband divorces his wife..." The NIV, RSV, ESV and Holman just omit the phrase altogether, but the RSV, ESV footnotes inform us that the omission is due to the Syriac and the Greek, but that the Hebrew texts read "saying". So, this is another case of the NASB adding the word GOD when it is not in the text, and the NIV, ESV, Holman omitting what the Hebrew texts do read.

Acts 7:4 is a bit interesting in that all Greek texts read as the King James Bible has it with: "...when his father was dead, HE removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell." The 1963 and 1972 NASBs put GOD in the text with no italics, but in 1977 and again in 1995 they placed it in italics. The online NASB still has it not in italics. Likewise the RSV, NRSV, ESV, NIV, Holman and NET versions place the word GOD in the text (with no italics), when in fact it is not there. The point being, it is highly hypocritical of the modern versionists to criticize the King James Bible for doing something that they themselves do as much or more than that great old Book.

Likewise in Mark 7:11 we read in all texts: "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, A GIFT (dooron), by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free."

However instead of the simple word "gift", the NASB, NIV, ESV all add the word GOD to the text by saying: "given TO GOD", while the NKJV paraphrases and adds these words: "dedicated TO THE TEMPLE", none of which are found in any Greek text.

The NIV likewise mistranslates the word hagios, which means saints, as "God's people" a total of ten times in the New Testament. Neither the words "God" nor "people" are there in any text

The NIV continually adds to and takes away from the true words of God in both the Old and New testaments. There are certain expressions where the word God or Lord are implied, as in 'God forbid' or 'God save the king', and in these cases the KJB as well as many other translations express this. However in the NIV what we often find is the word "God" or "Lord" being left out of these expressions and instead, the NIV adds the words God, Lord, Jesus or Christ when it is not in any text, be it Hebrew or Greek.

You might want to take a look at the NIV complete concordance for yourself. In it you will find by their own documentation that the NIV has added the name of Jesus to the New Testament a total of 336 times when it is not found in the Greek texts they themselves are using. That's three hundred and thirty six times!

The NIV has omitted the name of God or JEHOVAH # 3378 thirty eight times (38 not translated) and 52 times they have added LORD, or GOD when it is not in the Hebrew text.

The word Elohim, or God found on page 454 of the NIV concordance, has not been translated 13 times when found in the Hebrew text and it was placed in the NIV text another 52 times when not in the Hebrew for a total of the word "God" being added 104 times and not translated when it is in the text 51 times, and all this just in the Old Testament.

The NIV has also ADDED the word God 117 times in the New Testament when it does not occur in any Greek text nor when it expresses the idea of "God forbid" and they have not translated it three times when it is in their Greek texts.

Likewise the NIV has added the word Christ 15 times when not in any Greek text See for example Colossians 1:22; 2:9, 10 and 13. The NIV has also added the word Lord to the New Testament 6 times when it is not found in any Greek text - for example: 1 Cor. 1:2; and 7:34. All this factual information is found by merely looking at their own NIV complete concordance.

Apparently the scholarly views of Mr. Kutilek are not shared by others members of the Bible of the Month Club. Perhaps Mr. Kutilek should write his own bible version to give us the true light we benighted souls have so long pined for these many years now ;-)

Mr. Kutilek, and fellow Bible critics are like those described in I Timothy 1:7 "Desiring to be teachers...understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

By the rigid standard he sets up, he himself condemns all bible versions in print. He criticizes the KJB for translating me genoito as God forbid, yet the lexicons, including Thayer, Liddel & Scott, and Baer, Arndt & Gingrich all tell us this is a perfectly acceptable way of rendering this expression. There are a whole host of Bible versions both before and after the King James Bible that do the very same thing, including some that Mr. Kutilek himself recommends!

Words of advice from Proverbs for those who think Mr. Kutilek has a handle on the truth. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." Proverbs 14:7

Will Kinney