

# Suggested NIV Changes

By the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

[Suggested changes for the Old and New Testaments appeared in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* Vol. 79, Nos. 1 & 2, Winter and Spring 1982.]

## New Testament

**Mt 5:32 NIV:** “Anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, *causes her to commit adultery*”

**Propose:**

“causes her to be regarded as an adulteress”

**Reasons:**

- a) the verb is passive, not active
- b) the verb *μοιχεύω* means to seduce or violate a woman (Kittel) or to debauch a woman (Liddell & Scott); the passive means to be seduced, violated or debauched. The lexicons suggest that in this verse the passive form has an active meaning, but this meaning is not well established in any other usage.
- c) The context does not support an active meaning here since the woman has no guilt before God when her husband divorces her for an unscriptural reason. Rather the guilt is the husband's as the passive indicates because he makes her a public spectacle no less than a violated woman (cf. Lenski: stigmatized as adulterous).

**Mt 5:32 NIV:** “Anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery”

**Propose:**

“Anyone who marries a divorced woman is looked upon as an adulterer”

**Reasons:**

- a) The word “so” is not in the Greek
- b) The addition of the word “so” causes serious confusion. Does it refer to those who are improperly put away, or to those who are divorced for “marital unfaithfulness”?
- c) The verb *μοιχᾶται* is passive, not middle.

In suggesting the translation “is looked upon as an adulterer” we are by no means intending to undercut the sternness of our Savior's strictures against easy divorce and lax views of marriage. We agree entirely with the NIV's translation of Lk 16:18: “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery (*μοιχεύει*), and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery (*μοιχεύει*).” Jesus is here enunciating the *general principle* to people who are minded to take marriage vows lightly. Arbitrarily setting aside a wife, or arrogating to oneself the “right” to marry anyone he pleases, regardless of impediments, is categorically branded as adultery.

Though there is the addition of the exclusion clause, and an alternate form of the verb is used, the same general principle is expressed in Mt 19:9. Again we find the NIV's translation entirely acceptable: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery (*μοιχᾶται*).”

Using this alternate verb form (*μοιχᾶται*) in both verses, Mk 10:11, 12 extends the general principle to include the guilt of willful wives. The NIV translates acceptably: “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery (*μοιχᾶται*) against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery (*μοιχᾶται*).” All three passages express the general principle.

Mt 5:32, however, is not an exact parallel to these three passages. The three statements of the general principle were made in the face of Pharisaic opposition (Mt 19:3; Mk 10:2, though the final explanation is given “in the house”—v.10; Lk 16:14).

While it is true that in the Sermon on the Mount Christ is speaking of the Pharisees’ easy attitude toward divorce, nevertheless it must not be forgotten that here Christ is addressing disciples and is describing for them the true righteousness which obtains in the Kingdom. This righteousness heads off two evils that attend the lax views of those who make no distinction between proper and improper grounds for divorce.

a) On the one hand, arbitrarily giving wives a bill of divorce makes them *all* look guilty, despite the possibility of their being unscripturally divorced and therefore innocent.

b) Allowing husbands arbitrarily to grant a bill of divorce to their wives and thus branding all divorced wives as guilty casts a stigma also on everyone who marries a divorcee.

Since all divorced women are *per se* assumed to be guilty, the new husband suffers the opprobrium of seeming to have formed an illicit relationship with a guilty woman. Hence he is being unjustly treated when he is looked upon as an adulterer.

What this interpretation rests on is the observation that Jesus is here not only stating the general principle, but he is also coming to the defense of innocent parties: wives improperly put away, and men maligned for taking as wives women who have the right to remarry. That Christ is speaking in behalf of aggrieved parties is established by his use of the *passive* voice of the verb forms.

The form *μοιχευθῆναι* is unquestionably passive, whereas a case needs to be made for *μοιχᾶται*. *μοιχάω* is simply the Doric equivalent of *μοιχεύω*. It is not a deponent verb. Admittedly the active voice is not very common, but active forms of the verb do occur.

Nor can one easily substantiate what Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich and others assert, namely “in our literature (as well as LXX) only passive.” In the NT and the LXX *μοιχάω* occurs only in the present system. Hence it is impossible to determine by form whether these are middle or passive. Voice here needs to be decided on the basis of context.

We submit that the majority of the *μοιχάω* forms are *middle*, and that they occur in a context that tends to give a shading slightly different from when *μοιχεύω* is used. *μοιχεύω* is a strong, assertive verb describing the activity of him who *adulterates, corrupts, or debauches*. *μοιχάω* seems generally to describe a gentler, though equally incriminating, activity that could best be put under the term *dalliance*. There is in it an element of emotional involvement. Note how apropos that makes the choice of the verb *μοιχάω*, as well as the middle voice, in describing the activity of the “harlot” Israel in involving herself in “adultery” with false gods (cf. especially Eze 16:32–34, but also Eze 23:37; Jr 3:8). With that understanding, middle forms of *μοιχάω* work very well for Mt 19:9 and Mk 10:11, 12, where both men and women are depicted as *involving themselves in adultery*.

And that is precisely the point of the charge made against the men of Mt 5:32b. The man who marries a divorced woman is not charged with “adulterating” an innocent party.

Rather he is viewed as “involving himself in adultery.” Hence the verb *μοιχάω* rather than *μοιχεύω* is used.

The voice of *μοιχᾶται*, however, is not middle here but passive, parallel to the aorist passive infinitive *μοιχευθῆναι*. In both cases innocent parties are being subjected to unfair attack by those who hold to traditional righteousness. Hence with his “exceptive clause” Jesus draws a distinction between the guilty and the innocent parties, and he comes to the defense of the latter.

We have devoted considerable space to setting forth our views here because we realize that what we are suggesting is a novelty in the sense that no printed translations reflect this insight. We venture to suggest our translation, however, because:

- a) it seems eminently supported by the context;
- b) it reckons with the change in meaning suggested by the change from *μοιχεύω* to *μοιχάω*;
- c) it deals realistically with the passive *μοιχευθῆναι*;
- d) it offers a defensible division between the middle and passive forms of *μοιχάω*, thus allowing:
  - 1 the retention of the much-needed warning against easy divorce (Mt 19; Mk 10; Lk 16) and,
  - 2 the possibility of legitimately unburdening the consciences of innocent parties who for too long have suffered under the questionable translations of Mt 5:32.

#### **Mk 16:8/Jn 5:4/Jn 7:53**

In the Preface, the NIV editors state: “The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an eclectic one.” That policy seems generally to have been observed. In the passages cited below, however, the choice seems to have been made on the basis of value assigned to individual manuscripts, with undue weight being given to Aleph and B. We therefore recommend:

##### **Mk 16:8**

drop the dividing line; use a *footnote* as is done at other places; change the note to read, “Some early manuscripts do not have Mk 16:9–20.”

##### **Jn 5:4**

remove the value judgment in the foot note by changing “some less important manuscripts” to “other manuscripts continue ...”

##### **Jn 7:53**

remove the dividing line; use a *footnote* stating, “Many early manuscripts do not have Jn 7:53–8:11.”

**Ac 3:21 NIV:** “He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything.”

##### **Propose:**

“heaven must receive him until ...”

##### **Reason:**

A literal translation of the Greek would be either, “He must receive (the) heaven until ...” or “(The) heaven must receive him until ...” The NIV does not translate *δέχομαι* literally. It means “to receive” or “to take hold of,” not “to remain.” A literal translation of *δέχομαι* is not difficult to understand, so there is no reason to paraphrase. The paraphrase which the NIV uses gives a different emphasis by introducing a prepositional phrase which stresses the thought of space.

**Ro 7:7 NIV:** “I would not have known what it is to covet.”

**Propose:**

“I would not have known what coveting really is.”

**Reason:**

The reader would normally understand the NIV wording to mean that Paul had no experience with coveting, that he had never noticed any illegitimate longings in his heart. That could surely not be true. What he wants to say is that he did not know coveting for what it was, namely sin.

**Romans 7:15 NIV:** “I do not understand what I do.”

**Propose:**

“I do not approve of what I am doing.”

**Reason:**

Paul understood very well what he was doing. His whole discussion demonstrates this. *γινώσκω* can mean “acknowledge” or “approve.”

**Ro 9:22 NIV:** “What if God, choosing to show his wrath, ...”

**Propose:**

“What if God, although he wanted to show his wrath ...”

**Reason:**

God was in this instance and at this time choosing not to show his wrath. He wants to show his wrath, as he will on the day of judgment, but he bears men’s sins with patience to give them time to repent.

**Ro 9:22 NIV:** “prepared for destruction”

**Propose:**

“... fit for destruction ...”

**Reason:**

The NIV translation does not reflect the fact that different verbs for “prepared” are used in verses 22 and 23.

**Ro 11:11 NIV:** “Beyond recovery” should be dropped because:

- a) it is not justified by the context;
- b) it is not justified by the original text;
- c) it is not needed for the sake of clarity;
- d) it introduces a chiliastic flavor into the translation;
- e) some of the Jews did fall beyond recovery.

**Ro 12:6 NIV:** “... in proportion to his faith ...”

**Propose:**

“... in agreement with his faith”

**Reason:**

“In proportion to” locks us into an interpretation that is not beyond question. ἀναλογία means “right relation to,” “agreement with” as well as “proportion.” τῆς πίστεως is not necessarily subjective faith. “In agreement with” leaves the same room for interpretation as is found in the original.

**1 Cor 7:39 NIV:** “but he must belong to the Lord”

**Propose:**

“but in the Lord”

**Reasons:**

- a) the NIV translation says more than the original Greek does. It may confuse and even burden consciences;
- b) a literal translation makes good sense;
- c) the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ is not adjectival (modifying “the man”) but adverbial (modifying “marry”);
- d) the adverbial ἐν κυρίῳ is simply rendered “in the Lord” in many other passages in the NIV.

**1 Cor 11:16 NIV:** “we have no *other* practice”

**Propose:**

“we have no *such* practice”

**Reasons:**

- a) The Greek does not support the meaning “other.”
- b) The NIV translation changes the meaning of the passage and makes Paul say that this is a universal rule in the church.

**Eph 1:19, 20 NIV:** “and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ ...”

**Propose:**

“and his incomparably great power in us who believe by the working of his mighty strength. That power he exerted in Christ ...”

**Reason:**

It is not the power which is used in our behalf in general to which Paul refers, but the power brought to bear upon us when we were made believers, though by nature we were spiritually dead. The NIV translation ignores the *κατά* and fails to tie the *κατά* clause to *πιστεύοντας* as the Greek does.

**Eph 4:9 NIV:** “descended to the lower, earthly regions.”

**Propose:**

adding as a footnote “the lower parts of the earth.”

**Reason:**

The NIV closes out two other options by choosing an interpretation that favors “incarnation.” The phrase could also mean “grave” or “hell.”

**Col 2:12 NIV:** “Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him *through your faith in the power of God.*”

**Propose:**

“through faith worked by the power of God.”

**Reasons:**

- a) The point in this context is not the content of faith but the miracle of faith, paralleling as it does the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. The same appears in the original of Eph 1:19.
- b) Scripture nowhere else teaches that men are saved by faith in the *power* of God.

**1 Tim 1:9 NIV:** “We also know that law is made not for good men.”

**Propose:**

“We also know that *the* law is made not for *a righteous man.*”

**Reasons:**

- a) In this context Paul is not concerned about the fact that if there were no bad people, no laws would be needed. He is concerned about the proper, νομίμως, use of the law. Therefore we suggest that since “law” is a technical term for God’s law, it be articulated for the sake of clear English.
- b) δικαίω does not mean “good” but “righteous,” and in the original repeatedly occurs as a designation for believers, cf. Ro 1:17; Mt 25:46.
- c) Paul is reiterating a truth which is common knowledge among Christians, “We also know.” “You are not under the law, but under grace” (Ro 6:14). “Christ is the end of the law” (Ro 10:4). “You are not under law” (Ga 5:18).
- d) We do well to note that the meaning of St. Paul is that the law cannot burden with its curse those who have been reconciled to God through Christ; nor must it vex the regenerate with its coercion, because they have pleasure in God’s law after the inner man.

**1 Tim 2:9 NIV:** “I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety.”

**Propose:**

“I also want women to adorn themselves with modest clothing, with decency and propriety.”

**Reasons:**

- a) κοσμεῖν does not mean “to dress” but “to adorn.” The emphasis is not on what women wear but on what is their true beauty.
- b) The NIV may burden consciences because it appears to forbid the wearing of jewelry, etc.

**1 Tim 2:15 NIV:** “But women will be kept safe through childbirth.” Footnote: “Or be saved.”

**Propose:**

Incorporate the footnote into the text and make it read, “But women will be saved in child-bearing.”

**Reasons:**

- a) What is now in the text is not factual. Not all Christian mothers come through childbirth safely, nor do only Christian mothers come through childbirth safely.

b) Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich includes this passage in the group of examples it cites to illustrate “attendant circumstance” (διά III, 1, c).

**1 Tim 6:12 NIV:** “Take hold of eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession.”

**Propose:**

“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and to which you made your good confession.”

**Reasons:**

- a) Conversion, being called, precedes confession.
- b) The NIV translation introduces a temporal idea which is not in the original.

**Heb. 6:1, 9:14 NIV:** “acts that lead to death”

**Propose:**

“dead works”

**Reasons:**

- a) the emphasis here is not so much on the fact that the wages of sin is death as it is on the fact that the “good” deeds done apart from Christ and faith in Him are without that inner spiritual obedience that alone meets the requirements of God’s law;
- b) the NIV wording locks in an interpretation which is not certain;
- c) a literal translation makes good sense;
- d) ἔργων is translated “works” in Eph 2:9.

**1Pt 3:18 NIV:** “He was put to death in the body and made alive by the Spirit.”

**Propose:**

“He was put to death in flesh and made alive in spirit.”

**Reasons:**

- a) the grammatical construction is the same in both parts of the sentence and
- b) when flesh and spirit are contrasted in the NT, the word “Spirit” does not refer directly to the Holy Spirit.
- c) In the resurrection the body is changed into a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44).
- d) The NIV locks us into a translation that is not certain. Note: The argumentation for this change has been presented in some detail in an article in the July 1979 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, a copy of which was sent at the request of our faculty to Dr. Palmer.

**2 Pt 3:5, 6 NIV:** “... by God’s Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and *with water*. By *water* also the world of that time was deluged.”

**Propose:**

“... was formed out of water and between the waters.<sup>a</sup> By these waters also the world of that time was deluged.”<sup>b</sup>

Add footnote a) Genesis 1:7

Add footnote b) Genesis 7:11

**Reasons:**

a) The translation “with water” does not correlate with any other information from Scripture about creation, while the translation “between the waters” would correlate with Genesis 1:7.

The Greek preposition *διά* can mean “between” as well as “with.” The plural “waters” is suggested by the plural pronoun which begins verse 6.

b) “By water” which begins verse 6 is not exactly what the Greek says. The Greek is simply “by which” (plural pronoun).

**Re 1:10; 4:2; 17:3 NIV:** “in the Spirit”

**Propose:**

“In spirit”

**Reasons:**

a) There is no article in the original.

b) This phrase refers to an ecstatic state.

**Re 20:3, 5, 7 NIV verses 3 & 5** “... until the thousand years were ended” **NIV verse 7:** “When the thousand years are over”

**Propose:**

verses 3 & 5: “until the thousand years come to an end” verse 7: “when the thousand years come to an end”

**Reasons:**

a) The Greek verb is an aorist subjunctive and not a perfect, as the translation might easily suggest.

b) the thousand years during which the “souls” of the martyrs live and reign with Christ do not come to an end until the bodies are raised in the general resurrection on the last day (Jn 6:39, 40; Re 20:13).

c) The suggested translation leaves room for the “short time” to be within or outside the “thousand years.”

**Re 20:4 NIV:** “they came to life”

**Propose:**

“they lived.”

**Reasons:**

a) The antecedent of “they” is “the souls.” These souls had never died (Jn 11:25) and therefore they could not “come to life.”

b) There is nothing in the context that would indicate that the two aorists should be translated differently.



c) The phrase “a thousand years” can modify both verbs and thus identify them both as constative aorists.

**Re 20:5 NIV:** “The rest of the dead did not come to life.”

**Propose:**

“... did not live ...”

**Reasons:**

a) The NIV translation implies rather clearly that the unbelievers came to life at the resurrection.

b) The resurrection of the unbelievers is not a resurrection to life but to eternal death (cp Jn 5:29; Re 20:14, 15).

(“Exegetical Briefs” will offer suggested Old Testament changes in the Spring issue.)

## Old Testament

(At this time the top NIV translation team is in the process of preparing the first major revision of the version. That is why these suggested changes and those for the New Testament in the previous issue have been submitted.)

It should be understood that generally only such changes were proposed that involve doctrinal issues or glaringly faulty translations. To draw full attention to them, it was deemed advisable to pass by many other renderings not entirely satisfactory.

Readers are invited to propose suggested changes of their own for renderings about which they have strong negative feelings. The faculty will be happy to consider them for possible transmission to the proper place.

It should also be noted that Professor Wendland is not solely responsible for the proposed New Testament changes, despite what the “Contents” page of the Winter issue erroneously indicates. The proposed changes are a result of faculty study.)

**Gn 4:15b NIV:** “Then the Lord put a *mark on* Cain so that ... ”

**Propose:**

“Then the Lord gave a *sign to* Cain that ... ”

**Reason:**

The preposition לְ does not mean “upon” and תִּטֵּן does not mean “mark.” NIV restricts the understanding of תִּטֵּן to a visible mark on Cain’s body. Our proposal leaves undetermined, as the Hebrew does, what the sign was.

**Gn 4:26** (also **12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25**) **NIV:** “At that time men began to *call on the name of the Lord.*”  
fn: or to *proclaim*

**Propose:**

Incorporate the footnote in the text and put the text into the footnote.

**Reason:**

To “call on the name of the Lord” suggests prayer to the reader. Yet nothing in the context of these passages particularly suggests supplication, but rather proclamation, public testimony about the Lord’s gracious revelation and experience of his grace. At best, prayer is included in such use of the name (revelation) of the Lord in public worship, but the emphasis is on *public proclamation*. Cf. *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliches Wissenschaft*, 77:12f (1965). Cf. Aalders, *Bible Student’s Commentary*, I:135: “It is quite unthinkable that no one had prayed to God before this time ... emphasis must fall on the public character of this worship.” Cf. also Ex 33:19 and 34:5f, where NIV translates “proclaim.” If you do not agree that “proclaim” is the preferred translation in the four Genesis passages listed in parentheses, then we urge that footnotes be included as in Gn 4:26.

**Gn 6:3 NIV** “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, *for he is mortal* ... ”

**Propose:**

“My Spirit will not contend with man forever, *for he is corrupt* ... ”

**Reason:**

The context (vv 2 & 5) points to man’s wickedness and sheds light on what the writer understood by בְּשָׂרָא. BDB lists Gn 6:3 under the definition of בְּשָׂרָא as “man over against God as frail or erring.” The term בְּשָׂרָא (“flesh”) implies “corruption,” but not only physical corruption. It is moral corruption that is indicated here. This verse gives a divine reason for the flood. NIV does

not do that. The reason why the Spirit will not contend with man forever is not that men are mortal, but that they are people completely given over to their sinful nature.

**Gn 18:12 NIV:** “After I am worn out and my *master* is old ... ” fn Or *husband*

**Propose:**

Delete the footnote.

**Reason:**

The Hebrew אֲדֹנָי does not mean “my husband.” How can the footnote be upheld in the light of 1 Pe 3:6?

**Gn 28:17 NIV:** “He was *afraid* and said, ‘How awesome is this place!’ ”

**Propose:**

He was *filled with awe* and said, “How awesome ... ’ ” or “He was *filled with reverence* and said, ‘How awesome ... ’ ”

**Reason:**

The promise of God and the awareness of God’s gracious presence inspired reverence, not terror. “He was afraid” for אָרַךְ is misleading. The rendering “awesome” in the following clause for a derived form of the same root correctly reflects the sense in which Jacob “feared.”

**Gn 28:20–22 NIV:** “ ... *then* the Lord will be my God. This stone that ... ”

**Propose:**

“ ... *and* the Lord will be my God, *then* this stone ... ”

**Reason:**

NIV makes “the Lord will be my God” *conditional*. The succession of four *waw* consecutives makes the proposed translation grammatically more likely and shows that all of v 20 is the protasis. In addition the NIV introduces a *bargaining spirit* into the transaction that is foreign to the context. For 20 years Jacob had consistently treated יְהוָה as his God. He worshiped him regularly. He merely waited until he returned to his homeland to build a sanctuary. Note in 31:13 and 35:1 that the Lord accepted this vow as legitimate and exhorted Jacob to redeem his vow by building a sanctuary at Bethel.

**Gn 49:10 NIV:** “ ... until *he comes to whom it belongs* ... ”

**Propose:**

“ ... until *Shiloh comes* ... ” (as the footnote reads)

**Reason:**

The MT does not justify the NIV translation. Accepting the NIV reading involves emending the MT שִׁלְהָ to שִׁלְהָ or שִׁלְוָה. We question whether there is textual warrant for doing this. We grant the LXX supports this emendation, but in the light of what we know about the transmission of the LXX text (in contrast to the transmission of MT) is it justifiable to listen to the voice of LXX, the Peshitta and the Targums in preference to the voice of MT? There is a second reason why we feel strongly that the reading “until Shiloh comes” ought to be incorporated in the text. The Christian community is particularly sensitive about the translation of Messianic passages in the OT. You will recall the negative impact the RSV had on large segments of the Christian community when it was first published. Many well-known Messianic prophecies were translated in such a way that Christians were led to say: “What we thought was Messianic is apparently a dark text.” For at least four centuries English-speaking Christians have grown accustomed to

“Shiloh” as a designation for the Messiah. We admit that the meaning of the Hebrew term is uncertain. The noted Hebraist, Eduard Koenig, however, says that even as the noun formation שִׁילוֹהַ, spark (Is 1:31), is derived from שָׁצַץ, to sparkle, so it is not at all impossible to derive the name shiloh, rest, from שָׁלוֹחַ, to be at rest (*Die Genesis*, p 730). “Man of Rest,” “Rest-giver,” is an appropriate name for the Messiah.

**Ex 1:1, 21 NIV:** “ ... each with his *family* ... he gave them *families* ...

**Propose:**

“ ... each with his *household* ... he gave them *households* ... ”

**Reason:**

The Hebrew בֵּית means household, not family. Family would suggest only the 70 souls mentioned in v 5. The household included servants, a much larger number than the 70. This helps relieve the problem of the growth of Israel in Egypt. Cf. Gn 17:12, 27, where NIV translates the same word as “household.” For consistency’s sake, we suggest “household” also in Ex 1:21.

**Job 13:16 NIV:** “Indeed, *this might turn out* for my deliverance ... ”

**Propose:**

“Indeed, *he will be* my deliverance ... ”

**Reason:**

Literally, the Hebrew reads, “Indeed, he (is) for me for salvation.” The Hebrew אֱנִי with לִי denotes equivalency. The antecedent for אֱנִי is the subject of v 15, namely, God. As in v 15, Job is here expressing his faith, not a mere wish.

**Ps 2:6f NIV:** “I have installed my *King* ... ” *fn: Or king* “ ... you are my *Son* ... ” *fn: Or son*

**Propose:**

Keep the text as is; drop the footnotes.

**Reason:**

The internal evidence shows that a divine person is referred to, e.g., God does not promise a worldwide kingdom to an earthly king (v 8), and an earthly king cannot bring blessedness to “all who take refuge in him” (v 12). The evidence from the NT contradicts the footnotes (Ac 4:25–27; He 1:5; 5:5).

**Ps 8:2 NIV:** “ ... you have ordained *praise* ... ” *fn: Or strength*

**Propose:**

Put the footnote into the text

**Reason:**

The MT reads תִּשְׁבַּח (which NIV renders “strength” elsewhere). “Strength” explains the following phrase, “to silence the foe and the avenger” (viz., by the power of God’s word). (Mt 21:16, following LXX, brings out one aspect of the concept.)

**Ps 8:5 NIV:** “You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings” *fn: Or than God*

**Propose:**

“You let him be forsaken by God for a little while”

**Reason:**

The Piel of חָסַר with מִן means “make (someone) lack” or “deprive” one of something. Literally, MT reads, “You made him lack God a little.” He 1 & 2 do of course compare Christ with angels, but that brings out only one aspect of the thought of Ps 8. (Note also the NIV footnote at He 2:7: “... for a little while.” Cp Luther: “*Du wirst ihn lassen eine kleine Zeit von Gott verlassen sein.*”

**Ps 16:5 NIV:** “Lord, you *have assigned my portion and my cup.*”

**Propose:**

“Lord, you *are* my portion and my cup.”

**Reason:**

NIV differentiates “portion” and “cup” from the Lord by adding “assigned” without warrant from the Hebrew text. The Lord is the psalmist’s “one and all” (cf. v 2).

**Ps 22:21 NIV:** “Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; *save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*”

**Propose:**

“Rescue me from the mouth of the lions.  
“*You have saved me from the horns of the wild oxen.*”

That is: reflect the perfect of עָנִיתָנִי typographically with a period after “lions.” Make a paragraph division between v 21a and v 21b.

**Reason:**

The Hebrew עָנִיתָנִי is not an imperative. The thought of v 21b marks a dramatic change and is connected with v 22–31.

**Ps 22:25 NIV:** “*From you comes my praise ...*”

**Propose:**

“*You are the one I praise ...*”

**Reason:**

Literally, the Hebrew reads, “Of you is my praise.” NIV reverses the intent of the psalmist and does not reflect the Hebrew idiom. The Servant is praising the Father, not the other way around (cf. v 22).

**Ps 68:18 NIV:** “... you received gifts *from* men, even *from* the rebellious—” fn: Or gifts for men

**Propose:**

“... you received gifts *for* men, even the rebellious—” (Put the footnote in the text.)

**Reason:**

The Hebrew מִן does not mean “from” but “in, with, among.” A compound thought is involved: he received gifts, not for himself, but for men (to dispense among men). As Eph 4:10ff. shows, the gifts Christ distributes are the trophies of his victory won *for* men.

**Ps 2:5 NIV:** “*He will endure as long as the sun ...*” fn: *You will be feared*

**Propose:**

“*You will be feared as long ...*” (Put the footnote in the text.)

**Reason:**

The footnote properly renders the Hebrew impersonal active form of the verb as a passive and thus preserves the thought that Messiah will be recognized as God and King.

**Ps 97:7 NIV:** “ ... worship him, all you *gods!*”

**Propose:**

“ ... worship him, all you *mighty ones!*”

**Reason:**

Literally, the Hebrew reads, “Bow down (הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ) to him, all אֱלֹהִים.” The term אֱלֹהִים may be rendered “angels,” as LXX does, but “gods” is a poor choice here. There is not a single passage in the OT that ascribes any kind of activity to the “gods” (אֱלֹהִים), except in cases where heathen are quoted. Men make gods, worship them, burn incense to them, bow before them, carry them, pour out drink offerings to them, etc., but not one passage says that the gods do anything.

**Ps 103:3–5 NIV:** “ ... *my sins ... my diseases ... my life ... crowns me ... my desires ... my youth ...* ” fn: Hebrew *your* (referring to my soul)

**Propose:**

“ ... *your sins ... your diseases ... your life ... crowns you ... your desires ... your youth ...* ”

**Reason:**

The change in persons from vv 1 & 2 jars the reader. The address to the soul at the beginning and at the end of the psalm furnishes the context for understanding the reference to the second person.

**Pr 22:20 NIV:** “Have I not written *thirty sayings ...* ” fn: Or *formerly*; or excellent

**Propose:**

“Have I not written *excellent sayings ...* ”

**Reason:**

We see no warrant for preferring LXX reading over the MT *Qere*.

**Ec 7:11 NIV:** “Wisdom, *like* an inheritance, is a good thing.”

**Propose:**

“Wisdom, *with* an inheritance, is a good thing.”

**Reason:**

Wisdom is not *compared* here with an inheritance; the preposition is בְּ not כִּי. The point is rather that when one has an inheritance, it is also good to have wisdom so that one does not lose the inheritance because of a lack of wisdom.

**Is 41:4 NIV:** “I, the Lord—*with the first of them* and with the last—”

**Propose:**

“I, the Lord, *am the first*; and with the last I am he.”

**Reason:**

“With” and “of them” are not in the Hebrew. The NIV reading obscures the eternity of God. It tends to rank God with the first of generations. But he stands apart from and before created generations.

**Is 51:7 (Jr 23:5f; 33:15f; Mic 7:9) NIV:** “Hear me, you who know *what is right*, you people ... ”

**Propose:**

“Hear me, you who know *my righteousness*, you people ...”

**Reason:**

The thrust of the context in vv 4–8 is gospel. The previous verse speaks of “my salvation” and “my righteousness.” So does v 8. That concept is introduced already in v 1, where the same word is employed. Cf. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, which lists Is 51:7 among those passages that illustrate not the “ethical aspect” of צִדְקָה, but the “forensic aspect” of that term (II: 1879). In any event we object to the phrase, “what is right.”

**Jr 23:5f(33:15f) NIV:** “ ... do *what is just and right* in the land”

**Propose:**

“ ... establish *justice and righteousness* on the earth”

**Reason:**

Since this is Messianic prophecy, the gospel understanding, not the legal understanding of righteousness, is asserted in these passages. We suggest that these verses reflect the translation of Is 9:7, since the context is similar. Christ came to establish God’s grace and salvation. Cf. also Ro 3:21–25, where Paul speaks of the Savior’s work of establishing righteousness. The NIV rendering of Jr 23:5 (33:15) gives the impression that Christ merely advocates moral conduct with his conduct. But the name given Messiah in 23:6 (33:16) (“The Lord Our Righteousness”) is based on the saving work which he does according to 23:5 (33:15).

**Mic 7:9 NIV:** “I will see his *justice*.”

**Propose:**

“I will see his *righteousness*.”

**Reason:**

The context in the previous verses suggests this. If God dealt with us according to his “justice,” it would mean condemnation. The context speaks clearly of the Lord’s deliverance.

**Is 53:9 NIV:** “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, *and* with the rich in his death, *though* he had done no violence ...”

**Propose:**

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, *but* in his death he was with the rich, *because* he had done ...”

**Reason:**

The Hebrew **על** means “because”; rarely does it mean “although.” NIV is not factual. The enemies did *not* assign Messiah a grave with the rich. God overruled the designs of evil men. “Because he had done no violence” follows more logically with the thought which immediately precedes. It explains the reason why he was buried with the rich and not with the wicked.

**Is 53:12 NIV:** “Therefore I will give him a portion *among* the great, and he will divide the spoils *with* the strong.”

**Propose:**

“Therefore I will give him the many as his portion, and he will take the strong as his spoil.”

**Reason:**

“The many” is a repetition of the **רַבִּים** in v 11, and the translation should reflect that “the many” whom Messiah justified are his portion. Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley 119q concerning the use

of א to introduce the object of the verb in certain expressions. Because Messiah fought this battle against Satan single-handedly (cf. 63:3, 5), he, according to the Scriptures, does *not share the spoils with anyone*, but they are all his own. Cf. *The Book of Isaiah*, 53:12, JPS, Phila. (1973).

**Is 63:11 NIV:** “Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses *and his people*.”

**Propose:**

Delete “*and his people*.”

**Reason:**

We agree that “his people” is the subject, but “people” occurs in the text only once, not twice.

**Jr 3:14 NIV:** “I will choose one of you from *every* town and two from *every* clan ... ”

**Propose:**

“I will choose you—one from a town and two from a whole clan ... ”

**Reason:**

“Every” is too precise. God does not say that every town and every clan will be represented. What is conveyed is that there will be a very small number left from a large multitude, and that this small number will be chosen from here and there.

**Ho 13:9 NIV:** “*I will destroy you*, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.”

**Propose:**

- 1) “*This has destroyed you*, O Israel, that you have opposed me, your helper.”
- 2) “*This has been your downfall*, O Israel, that you are against me, your helper.”
- 3) “O Israel, *you have destroyed yourself* by opposing me, your helper.”

**Reason:**

Literally, MT reads, “It has destroyed you, O Israel, that (אָנְךָ) (you are) against me, against your helper.” The translation should bring out the fact that Israel has destroyed itself. Cf. JPSA (Soncino, 1948): “It is thy destruction, O Israel, / That thou art against Me, against thy help.” (Jewish commentators: “O Israel, by revolting against Me, Who am ready to help thee at all times, thou hast destroyed thyself.”)

**Mic 5:2 NIV:** “ ... whose origins are from of old, *from ancient times*.” fn: Or *from days of eternity*

**Propose:**

“ ... whose origins are from of old, *from days of eternity*.” Incorporate the footnote in the text.)

**Reason:**

We prefer the third footnote in this classic Messianic passage. It expresses the eternity of the Messiah more clearly.