

D: Blessing God (Theological) – minus 4 points

Among words that can mislead, figures the word *bless*. I don't say it's a big issue, only that it is an issue. And since it blurs the distinction between God and man, it may be deemed a theological issue. MEVV that still speak of *blessing* God, sacrifice Heb.7:7, an axiom which generalises that blessing is never from the lower to the higher. The basic Hebrew, *BRK*, functioned, through differing forms, sometimes as *to bless*, and sometimes as *to kneel* (to revere, praise). It is generally agreed that the sense between forms, the between kneeling before, and being knelt to, that of God blessing humanity, and humanity *blessing* God, differs. English Bible versions should reflect this. To assess the MEVV's policies, I have looked for phases, such as *bless the LORD*, and *blessed be/is God*. Cutting to the chase, it's the CEB/NJB/NKJV/NRSV on the problem side, and the ERV/NET/NCV/NIV/NLT/NOG on the solution side—a few minor blemishes with the better MEVV are fairly liveable even if not loveable, and should only prove a problem if folk prooftext to 'prove' that we can bless God.

"Those finite verbs...that speak of God as 'blessed,' may very well be qal forms, artificially leveled by the Massoretes because the distinction between the verb patterns had been forgotten (for example, 2 Chr.20:26; Ps.26:12; 103:1), and would mean 'kneel to, revere, exalt.' If such be the case, the distinction between 'bless[ed]' as God to human (piel) and 'revere[d], esteem[ed]' as human to God (qal; cf. NIV 'praise[d]' in such cases), would be apparent. Where the verb appears in a human-to-human context, the qal passive participle would indicate a meaning of 'praised, exalted,' thus 'blessed' (for example, Gen.14:19), while the piel would signify 'bless' in the formal sense" (William Williams: Van Gemenen's 2001:H1384 (barake1)). That is, it's likely the Hebrew text came to lose its distinctive forms between praising God and blessing people. Theodirectionally (ie unto deity), we should sing *praise*, not *bless*. Going back to the Redmans' *Blessed Be Your Name*, Praised be the name of the Lord improves one step, Praised be the name of the LORD, another, Praised be the name of Yahweh, yet another, Praised be Yahweh, perhaps being the best. But can we ever bless (or praise?) this song too highly? Do you see what I mean?