

**News and Current Events :: Removing "Father" and "Son of God" From the Bible****Removing "Father" and "Son of God" From the Bible - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2012/1/30 15:18**

The blogosphere has caught up with a long-running debate between missionaries and Bible translators over removing "Son of God" and "Father" from the Bible. As a missionary to Muslims, this issue hits very close to home for me. I have been researching and praying about this issue for months, and it is very possible that Muslims who I have been proclaiming the gospel to have received "Muslim Compliant" translations from others which remove or replace the terms "Son of God", "Father" and other familial language from the Bible in favor of less offensive terms such as "Beloved one", "companion" and "Guardian." Anyone with a sense of loyalty to the Bible is going to immediately feel outraged and sickened about these changes, but they come with a complex set of arguments that need to be weighed in order to respond fairly. I have spent months reading thousands of pages in order to weigh the arguments, and I absolutely feel that their reasoning, exegesis and theology is wrong and that removing "Son of God" from the Bible removes the doctrine of adoption and alters the word of God in a dishonest and destructive way; however, most will condemn the authors of these changes far too easily. The proponents of this approach have high motives, they want to reach Muslims with the gospel; however, they have poor theology and have been deceived by postmodern ideas.

Let me add as well that this is not the same debate as the use of Allah for God in the Bible. That issue has its own debate. Allah is the only word for God in the Arabic language and it predates Islam. While some Arab Christians have invented another word for God in their language, most Arab Christians use the term Allah. The Islamic Allah and the Christian God are vastly different in their character and nature, but I believe it is acceptable to use the word Allah in translations as long as it is used consistently to refer to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and not to the Father only as some Muslim Compliant translations choose.

The most published scholar behind the movement to remove "Father" and "Son of God" from the Bible is Rick Brown. I recommend reading his articles *The "Son of God" and Explaining the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in a Muslim Contexts Part I and II* (These are available free on the internet if you search for them) in order to understand the arguments put forth in favor of the removal of familial language. For an overview of the entire debate I would recommend the Biblical Missiology website and their article debating Wycliffe and others, as well as *Chrislam: How Western Missionaries are Promoting an Islamicized Gospel* by I2 Ministries. Brown's arguments generally fall into three categories, though there is a broad range of argumentation:

- 1.) Linguistic: Brown argues that the arabic word for son: Ibn always refers to a biological son and infers a carnal act between God and Mary. A number of Arabic linguists debate this fact and Jesus is referred to as "son of Mary" (ibn of Mary) in the Qur'an in spite of the fact that the Qur'an reinforces the virgin birth and absolutely does not infer a carnal relationship between God and Mary.
- 2.) Exegetical: Brown argues that the term "Son of God" and "Christ or Messiah" are identical and interchangeable, therefore nothing is lost when "Son of God" is removed. I believe this is poor exegesis and completely ignores the most basic meaning of the term and the importance of our adoption.
- 3.) Cultural: Brown argues that Muslims have been taught repeatedly that Christians believe in a carnal relationship between God and Mary, therefore the term "Son of God" is anathema to them. He argues that our understanding of the term son of a b\_\_\_\_\_ is so offensive we would never apply it to Jesus no matter how it was redefined. This is a convincing argument, but all the Muslims I've interacted with take your word for it when you explain that the term does not refer to that and move on to object to the deity of Christ, which is the real issue with the term.

Brown makes a number of other arguments in similar lines, but in another article he makes it clear that he believes the deity of Christ is not necessary for salvation, "These doctrines about the deity of Jesus and his substitutionary punishment are wonderful parts of the Good News, and it is worthwhile discussing them with seekers, as Paul demonstrated in Romans. But the overwhelming Biblical witness is that although these doctrines are important for the disciple to understand, an understanding of them is not required for salvation." (from *What Must One Believe about Jesus to be Saved?*) This belief has crafted an entire missiology. It is dead wrong and endorses cheap grace, false salvation and syncretism and immunizes people to the true gospel.

I will be posting more on this in the future, but please read the links and the following articles in order to inform yourself o

n the subject:

Sign the petition to keep "Son of God" and "Father" in the Bible:

sign the petition here: <http://www.change.org/petitions/lost-in-translation>

In addition you can read the Christianity Today article featuring the debate: The Son and The Crescent

as well as Jay Smith's well articulated critique of the article (at Biblical Missiology). You can find more information at my blog.

**Re: Removing "Father" and "Son of God" From the Bible, on: 2012/1/30 15:37**

This is the version that I read and study from ...

Joh 10:36 SayG3004 yeG5210 of him, whomG3739 theG3588 FatherG3962 hath sanctified,G37 andG2532 sentG649 i ntoG1519 theG3588 world,G2889 Thou blasphemest;G987 becauseG3754 I said,G3004 I amG1510 the SonG5207 of God?G2316

When needed, to also line it up with this ...

Joh 10:36 &#959;&#957;G3739 R-ASM &#959;G3588 T-NSM &#960;&#945;&#964;&#951;&#961;G3962 N-NSM &#951;&#947;&#953;&#945;&#963;&#949;&#957;G37 V-AAI-3S &#954;&#945;&#953;G2532 CONJ &#945;&#960;&#949;&#963;&#964;&#949;&#953;&#955;&#949;&#957;G649 V-AAI-3S &#949;&#953;&#962;G1519 PREP &#964;&#959;&#957;G3588 T-ASM &#954;&#959;&#963;&#956;&#959;&#957;G2889 N-ASM &#965;&#956;&#949;&#953;&#962;G477 1 P-2NP &#955;&#949;&#947;&#949;&#964;&#949;G3004 V-PAI-2P &#959;&#964;&#953;G3754 CONJ &#946;&#955;&#945;&#963;&#966;&#951;&#956;&#949;&#953;&#962;G987 V-PAI-2S &#959;&#964;&#953;G3754 CONJ &#949;&#953;&#960;&#959;&#957;G3004 V-2AAI-1S &#965;&#953;&#959;&#962;G5207 N-NSM &#964;&#959;&#965;G3588 T-GSM &#952;&#949;&#959;&#965;G2316 N-GSM &#949;&#953;&#956;&#953;G1510 V-PAI-1S

Anything written that doesn't line up with this method should be rejected.

jmo

**Re: , on: 2012/1/30 16:00**

This one reply on the link is totally heartbreaking, as I have all of the pictures hanging where I can always see them of the PCA missionaries that I pray for and one older man that is a pilot for Wycliffe through JAARS ...

Quote:  
-----I am a Wycliffe member, working in software development under SIL. Spurred by the PCA's stand (which has already affected my support base), I am now considering the end of my 26-year Wycliffe career over this issue. Years of intense internal protest by many support workers as well as translator/linguists over this issue has made no difference, except to disturb the ministries of many Wycliffe good people. It appears that only external pressure, resignations and the cutting of financial support \*might\* stop this trend. It's time for the "man in the pew" to do what only he can.  
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I pray this man reconsiders and stays in the fight. It is unbelievably hard to read that Wycliffe would even think of this change or any other future corruptions to The Word.

Praying!!

**Re: , on: 2012/1/30 16:59**

The profiles I read suggest that Moslems are coming to Christ without the aid of a Moslem-friendly Bible. Particularly when a Moslem has an encounter with Jesus in a vision or dream, there is no doubt in his mind that Jesus is the Son of God.

Blaine

**Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2012/1/30 17:24**

This is true. However, getting Muslims to read the Bible is central to Muslim evangelism. The top three reasons Muslims come to Christ (usually in combination) are:

1. They met an authentic Christian
2. They read the Bible
3. They had a dream or vision

**Re: - posted by learjet, on: 2012/1/30 19:42**

Hey Jonathan,

Would you like to hook up and drink some coffee when you have a minute or two free? We could also do the Michigan 'coney' thing if you want! ;-)

Let me know and I'll give you a call!

**Re: Removing "Father" and "Son of God" From the Bible, on: 2012/1/30 20:31**

wow, Praise God for you "flame"....mission to the Muslims?

son, thats an uphill climb for sure. i just responded to encourage you in the Name of Jesus, God loves you, stay strong... its a blessed thing you and the Lord are doing, its wonderfully counterintuitive to the way these dark winds of the world are blowing. dont quit.

as to the Bible version, i dunno. in Jesus' love, neil

**Re: , on: 2012/1/30 21:55**

I love this from the Textus Receptus posted above ...

&#959;&#957; WHOM G3739 &#959; THE G3588 &#960;&#945;&#964;&#951;&#961; FATHER G3962 &#951;&#947;&#953;&#945;&#963;&#949;&#957; SANCTIFIED G37 &#954;&#945;&#953; AND G2532 &#945;&#960;&#949;&#963;&#964;&#949;&#953;&#955;&#949;&#957; SENT G649 &#949;&#953;&#962; INTO G1519 &#964;&#959;&#957; THE G3588 &#954;&#959;&#963;&#956;&#959;&#957; WORLD G2889 &#965;&#956;&#949;&#953;&#962; YOU G4771 &#955;&#949;&#947;&#949;&#964;&#949; SAY G3004 &#959;&#964;&#953; FOR THAT G3754 &#946;&#955;&#945;&#963;&#966;&#951;&#956;&#949;&#953;&#962; BLASPHEMY G987 &#959;&#964;&#953; BECAUSE G3754 &#949;&#953;&#960;&#959;&#957; SAID G3004 &#965;&#953;&#959;&#962; SON G5207 &#964;&#959;&#965; T HE G3588 &#952;&#949;&#959;&#965; GOD G2316 &#949;&#953;&#956;&#953; I AM G1510

Holy, Holy, Holy is The LORD GOD Almighty!

**Re: Removing "Father" and "Son of God" From the Bible - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/1/30 22:52**

From <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/february/soncrescent.html?start=2>

" They must make a decision about how to render the phrase in a way that faithfully reflects the original Greek or Hebrew text and also makes sense to readers. And this phrase is anything but clear to Muslim readers. The Qur'an explicitly states that God could not have a son. In Arabic, the word ibn ("son of") carries biological connotations. Muslims reject the possibility that God could have produced a son through sexual relations with Mary. Christians confess that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. But this distinction is lost on many Muslims who lack the theological context for understanding nuanced Christian teaching on the Trinity."

So, what else is new? Is this problem not a common one to any who choose to reject/question the WORD? Hey, Muslims are not the only people who have raised similar objections. Jesus' virgin birth is still being debated by non-Muslims, even by people who consider themselves Christians.

No one has ever told me the Scriptures were written to make it easier for the Romans, the Greeks to understand - was it done? The Scriptures is a Jewish book - from beginning to end and it is up to us to apply ourselves to it. Just because we are Believers does not mean we understand everything written therein - sometimes I think it takes a lifetime to accomplish it.

The "Living Bible" has been in use for many years. It has helped many new Christians but as they grow they want a translation that is faithful to the original. So, why does this have to be an either/or issue with the Muslims?

Another thing, are we dealing with a philosophical issue, one that means a person is won over by intellectual means only? or are we dealing with a spiritual issue where enlightenment can only come from the Holy Spirit?

Questions and more questions.....makes growing tomatoes look easy and I thought this is hard...SIGH

**Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2012/1/31 17:29**

Translators of the Bible have to deal with issues that few of us concern ourselves with. They're forced to make uncomfortable and highly controversial decisions that reflect how the gospel will be heard and how the Word of God is heard and read within a culture. What do you do if there is no word or concept for bread in a language? What are the theological consequences for saying that Jesus is the "rice of life" or the "yam of life." What if there is no concept for snow? Will Christ's blood make us white as milk? What if the people have never seen a sheep as in Papua New Guinea? Do His pigs hear His voice too? All of these questions should make us squeamish if we have a reverence for the Word of God, and the answers are not always simple or comfortable. We don't like to hear about these decisions or most often give the translator the benefit of the doubt.

Many translations are produced by the western world, and locals have a hard time keeping translators accountable, while westerners are often ignorant of the decisions translators are making. Because of this accountability is extremely difficult.

In the case of removing "Father" and "Son of God" from the Bible a number of missionaries, linguists, and indigenous church leaders have come together to petition the engine behind these translations. I recognize that the translators will probably not get a fair hearing. Most conservative Christians will look at the issue and immediately be indignant and take offense without really looking at the issues or motives behind them. They may rail against institutions that are doing very admirable and excellent work otherwise. They may denounce organizations and missions that are doing real and much needed work among the lost. Unfortunately right now the majority of those who are looking at this issue are missionaries and linguists, and the proponents of these translations have published vast amounts of material that are very popular and used to educate those who come to the mission field with little knowledge of the issues or of Islam. They are taught that this is true before they have any interaction with Muslims. Others simply do not want to divide the body of Christ on the mission field where unity is so crucial and division is so costly. These ideas have been generated in the west by American Christianity. Westerners and American Christians will have to take a stand against them. I do not wish to give any of the translators a bad name or any backlash. I want them to reverse their decision.

While I do wish to give the translators the benefit of the doubt, I have read their justifications for these translation choices, and they in no way constitute a strong enough case to make such a choice. Their justifications essentially argue that t

he culture has made the term "Son of God" so offensive that it cannot be translated, as if to say that the term "Son of God" only ever means spawn of carnal intimacy in Arabic, Bengali and a number of other languages that are spoken by a Muslim majority. But even if that's true, so far no one has proposed an alternative wording that communicates a Father/Son relationship that protects the Sonship of Christ and the doctrine of adoption.

In addition are we creating an "evangelistic translation" or a translation Christians can actually use for discipleship? They shouldn't be different. Christians should be able to use the same Bible they give to non-believers, yet Christians and former Muslims all over the globe are protesting these changes and attempting to have these translations banned.

It gives Muslims the ammunition they've always wanted in order to claim that the Gospel has been changed and corrupted. Islamic tradition (not the Qur'an) states that the Injil or New Testament has been corrupted, that Christians changed it and the Qur'an now replaces the previous revelation. This is the number one objection that stops Muslims from reading the New Testament. Muslims have been searching for evidence of this for centuries. If these translations become popular, they now have the evidence that Christians have indeed changed the Bible.

More to follow.

Additional Reading:

Lost in Translation

Fact Check: Biblical Missiology's Response To Wycliffe's Comments On "Lost In Translation" (This is the most thorough and specific exposure of the issue on the web.)

The "Son of God" by Rick Brown

Explaining the Biblical Term "Son(s) of God" in a Muslim Context by Rick Brown

Explaining the Biblical Term "Son(s) of God" in a Muslim Context Part 2 by Rick Brown

Chrislam: How Western Missionaries are Promoting an Islamicized Gospel

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/1/31 18:42**

A friend of mine sent this article to me. It is in regards to reaching Muslims. I found it very interesting.

"Father Zakaria Boutros was in Frontiers office in May 2009 and he graciously allowed me to interview him. You can read my interview in the recent (December 2011) issue of St. Francis magazine:"

[http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/Zakaria-Butros\\_85-92.pdf](http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/Zakaria-Butros_85-92.pdf)

Pilgrim

**Re: - posted by learjet, on: 2012/1/31 18:48**

Jonathan:

Did you get my message earlier in the thread? :-)

Peace!

**Re: changing the words of the bible - posted by jacquelinev, on: 2012/2/8 0:27**

everywhere in the world to my knowledge the bible is the same. we do not ever change the words of the bible..not the words that were in the article. the king james bible stays the same. the rest is up to the Holy Spirit for understanding. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of all things.

thank you...jacquelinev

**Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2012/2/8 8:19**

I think that ginny brings up a great point. As an American, much of the Bible was extremely foreign to me when I was lost. Ha ha...as a saved guy, you know what? Much of the Bible is foreign to me now that I am saved. God reveals to me what He will as I continue to study.

I say don't change the meaning, just translate as accurate to the original as possible, and allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten who He will. Those lost Muslims need prayer; I think it's easy for us to get political instead of spiritual. From Eph 1:

...making mention of you in my prayers;

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

**Re: , on: 2012/2/8 10:27**

Sounds like the dynamic equivlent model verses the literal word for word model debate. The question is which is best to reach moslems with.

Blaine