



**The great care employed
by the translators of
the Authorised Version**

Outline

Five features the Authorised Version (AV) has, and why it has them:

1. Why are some words in italics?
2. What's the difference between LORD and Lord?
3. Why are third person pronouns, he/his, not capitalised when they refer to God?
4. Do we really need thou and thee?
5. Is it a bad tree or a corrupt tree?

Use of italics

The AV uses italics when it supplies words not in the original Hebrew or Greek, but necessary in a translation into English.

(simplified, it's a bit more complex).

We'll look at four different cases.

History buffs: first version was printed using Black Letters, and used the roman type, not italics.

Psalm 7:11

Juxtaposition in poetry, without italics:

“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day.”

Translated with italics:

“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.”

2 Samuel 21:19

ESV:

“And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, struck down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.”

AV:

“And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.”

1 Chronicles 20:5

But hasn't the AV inserted something unwarranted?

“And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam.”

ESV footnote:

“Contrast 1 Chronicles 20:5, which **may** preserve the original reading”

Psalm 16:8

Not in Hebrew, but quoted in Greek!

“I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”

Quoted in Acts 2:25 without italics as:

“...I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:”

Rebekah, Genesis 24:16–20

In Hebrew the verb `to be' is seldom written, and has to be supplied. Some say: 'no need to use italics in such a case.'

Contrast Genesis 24:16–20, here's how Rebekah is described, all verbs:

“...and she **went** down to the well, and **filled** her pitcher, and **came up**. ...And she **said**, **Drink**, my lord: and she **hasted**, and **let down** her pitcher upon her hand, and **gave** him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she **said**, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she **hasted**, and **emptied** her pitcher into the trough, and **ran** again unto the well to draw water, and **drew** for all his camels.”

We can clearly see a woman of all action.



Doeg, 1 Samuel 21:7

If presence of verbs tells us something, absence of verbs does too.

David has to flee from Saul, and arrives at Nob, speaking to Ahimelech in the temple, asking him for food.

“Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.”

Only a long noun phrase, no verbs are used here, he just is a brooding foreboding presence.



The name of the LORD

In Hebrew, God's own name is יהוה (YHWH), Yehovah, also known as the tetragrammaton.

The AV follows the example of the New Testament which translates God's name as Lord.

But to distinguish between where Hebrew has either Lord or God's name the AV has LORD uppercase where God's name is written.

Psalm 119:55:

“I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.”



God's names

The word Adonai is translated with Lord.

The word Elohim is translated with God.

The word Yehovah is translated with LORD.

The words Yehovah Elohim are translated with LORD God.

The words Yehovah Adonai are translated with Lord GOD.

Genesis 2:4

“in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,”



No capitalisation of pronouns

In contrast to the Dutch ' Statenvertaling' the AV does not capitalise pronouns (he/his) which refer to the deity. This had never been a feature of English translations.

(Hebrew and Greek manuscripts do not distinguish between lower and uppercase).

Psalm 37:23

No capitals:

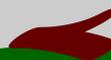
“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”

With capitals:

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way.”

Or perhaps:

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in His way.”



James 4:5

There are more cases where capitals are avoided:

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”

Or should it be:

“Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”



Use of thou and thee, ye and your

Personal pronouns (extract):

		Nominative	Genitive	Objective
singular	1	I	my/mine	me
	2	thou	thy/thine	thee
	3	he/she	his/hers	him/her
plural	1	we	ours	us
	2	ye	yours	you
	3	they	their	them

Thou/thine/thee is singular second person. Ye/yours/you is plural second person.



Easy to remember

ye thou

Thou, one arm.

Ye: two arms.

Tyndale is a genius for realising that if the target language misses something for the accurate translation of Scripture, you change the language, not Scripture!



Is distinction singular and plural important?

Given that Paul makes a whole argument based on the distinction between singular and plural, it really matters!

Galatians 3:16

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”



John 3:7, NIV

John 3 starts with Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night.

At some point Jesus says to him, NIV:

“**You** should not be surprised at my saying, **You** must be born again.”

Who is the you?

(all examples come from Professor John Heading)



John 3:7, AV

AV:

“Marvel not that I said unto **thee**, **Ye** must be born again.”

It was said to Nicodemus, but all of us must be born again!



Luke 22:31-32, NKJV

“And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for **you**, that he may sift **you** as wheat. But I have prayed for **you**, that your faith should not fail; and when **you** have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

You occurs 4 times, to whom does it refer?



Luke 22:31-32, AV

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have **you**, that he may sift **you** as wheat: But I have prayed for **thee**, that thy faith fail not: and when **thou** art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

The AV clearly indicates that Satan desired to have **all** the disciples, but Chris prayed for Peter individually.



Exodus 4:15, NKJV

God is speaking to Moses about Aaron:

“Now **you** shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with **your** mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach **you** what **you** shall do.”

Who(m) does the you refer to?



Exodus 4:15, NIV

The NIV interprets it by adding words:

“**You** shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help **both of you** speak and will teach **you** what to do.”



Exodus 4:15, AV

“And **thou** shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth:
and I will be with **thy** mouth, and with his mouth, and will
teach **you** what **ye** shall do.”

The thou and thy is Moses, the you and ye is Israel.



Exodus 16:28, NKJV

“And the LORD said to Moses, “How long do **you** refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?”

Who does the you refer to?



Exodus 16:28, AV

“And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse **ye** to keep my commandments and my laws?”

It's plural, it's Israel, not Moses who refuses to obey.



Matthew 26:64, NKJV

Jesus before the Sanhedrin after the high priest had said: 'Answerest thou nothing?':

“Jesus said to him, “It is as **you** said. Nevertheless, I say to **you**, hereafter **you** will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven”

Who does the you refer to?



Matthew 26:64, AV

“Jesus saith unto him, **Thou** hast said: nevertheless I say unto **you**, Hereafter shall **ye** see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

The high priest had indeed spoken, but all of them present will see the Son of man.



Matthew 20:21–22, AV

The scene is Jesus going up to Jerusalem with his twelve disciples. Then the mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus:

“And he said unto her, What wilt **thou**? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, **Ye** know not what **ye** ask.”

We immediately perceive that although the mother asks the question, Jesus' answer is to the two disciples: 'ye know not.'



Matthew 20:21–22, NIV

How does the NIV resolve this issue?

““What is it **you** want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” “**You** don’t know what **you** are asking,” Jesus said to them.”

The NIV adds the underlined words, not in italic, to make this clear: but it does not tell the reader it has added words.



Mark 14:37–38, NIV

The garden in Gethsemane:

“Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are **you** asleep? Couldn’t **you** keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that **you** will not fall into temptation.”

Who does the you refer to?



Mark 14:37–38, AV

“And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest **thou**? couldest not **thou** watch one hour? Watch **ye** and pray, lest **ye** enter into temptation.”

The AV makes it clear that Peter is initially addressed, but the commands were to all three apostles.

The examples can be multiplied.



Last reason to retain the singular

The final reason to use a singular: God is one. Not many.

God is never addressed in the scriptures by the word you. For there is only one God and He is to be addressed only in the singular.



Conjugation: regular

Verb forms used after thou generally end in -(e)st.

I	go
Thou	goest
He	goes
We	go
Ye	go
They	go



Conjugation: irregular

A few verbs have irregular thou forms:

verb	present	past
to be	thou art	thou wast
to do	thou dost/doest	thou didst
to have	thou hast	thou hadst
shall	thou shalt	
will	thou wilt	



Words matter: watch out

Matthew 7:15, NIV:

“**Watch out** for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

Dictionary gives these meanings for ‘watch out’:

1. To be alertly on the lookout, look attentively, or observe, as to see what comes, is done, or happens/
2. To look or wait attentively and expectantly.
3. To be careful or cautious.



Beware

Matthew 7:15, AV:

“**Beware of** false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

One meaning only:

1. To be wary, cautious, or careful of



Bad tree

Matthew 7:17, NIV:

“Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”

The Greek word is definitely not `bad’!

Maybe easier to understand, but correct?



Corrupt tree

Matthew 7:17, AV:

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.”

The meaning of the Greek word: rotten, putrid.

We don't have a bad nature, we have a corrupt nature. The word "corrupt" indicates that we were once good: God created all things good, he did not create bad things, instead his good things have become corrupted.



End

I hope you realise even more how careful the translators were, and what a precious heritage we have, and how much there is to lose.

