

Biblical Notes – Philippians 2:6

6 – who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (6. ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ)

The KJV and YLT are the only two translations that render ἀρπαγμός as Robbery. It makes Philippians 2:6 ambiguous.

The better and more accurate translation is provided by the NIV and NASB rendering ἀρπαγμός in the passive sense as a noun in the positive as it applies to his attitude of humility not his decision.

Liddell-Scott-Jones Definitions

ἀρπαγ-μός, ὁ,

1. robbery, rape, Plu. 2.12a; ἄ. ὁ γάμος ἔσται Vett.Val. 122.1.

2. concrete, prize to be grasped, Philippians 2:6; cf. ἄρπαγμα 2.

^^ Liddell & Scott agree "grasped" should be used for Philippians 2:6.

You can even see the comments made by the NIV11' committee:

When the NIV was first translated, the meaning of the rare Greek word harpagmos, rendered "something to be grasped," in Philippians 2:6 was uncertain. But further study has shown that the word refers to something that a person has in their possession but chooses not to use to their own advantage. The updated NIV reflects this new information, making clear that Jesus really was equal with God when he determined to become a human for our sake: "[Christ Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage."

Website Reference: <https://www.biblegateway.com/niv/Translators-Notes.pdf>

The translation provided in the NASB (above) is accurate and consistent with the best scholarship.