

**Refutation of Dr. Daniel Wallace's
Rejection of the KJV as the Best Translation
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Introduction

The eminent Greek scholar, Dr. Daniel Wallace, has posted on the Internet his opinion that the King James Version (KJV) is not the best translation available today. He has aimed his sights at and leveled his best volley of shots toward the veritable KJV. Dr. Wallace has employed his nine strongest arguments and one addendum to attempt to destroy the credibility of this four hundred-year-old English translation. This essay is an attempt to scrutinize with Scripture his best arguments, and to show biblically that his strongest challenges to the superiority of the Authorized Version (AV) are unbiblical, illogical, and outright deceptive. Dr. Wallace has spoken out against the KJV--what will be the outcome?

Argument # 1: "There is no verse that tells me how God will preserve his word."

After affirming his faith in the inerrant, inspired Word of God, Dr. Wallace asserts that there is no biblical guidance to determine the correct translation. Since according to him, the Bible does not reveal such things, he "must proceed on other bases." One should note, curiously, that those who proclaim to speak for the Bible seldom seem to allow the Bible to speak. Does the Bible teach "how" God promised to preserve His Words? Indeed, profusely! A quick summary of passages will reveal "how" the Lord preserved His Old Testament (OT) Scriptures. Paul stated that the Jews had certain advantages, namely *"that unto them were committed the oracles of God"* (Rom. 3:2). This general truth is corroborated specifically in several key passages. The Lord instructed Moses to inform future kings of Israel that each should copy the law (from the priests' copies), read it every day, keep (guard) all of its words, so that he could do them (Dt. 17:18-19). Furthermore, not only did the kings have the responsibility to preserve the originals, but so did Jewish parents. Fathers were to teach, bind, and write the words of the Torah so that his family would have access to God's written revelation (Dt. 6:6-9). Scribes such as Ezra and prophets such as Jeremiah shared in the privilege to preserve God's words as well (cf. Ez. 7:6, 11; Jer. 36:2-4; vide also Dt. 27:1-3, 8; Josh. 8:30-32; Prov. 25:1). The Lord guaranteed the perfect preservation of His words, without the loss of one, through Isaiah and his seed, stating: *"My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever"* (Isa. 59:21). Moreover, the Lord commanded Daniel to preserve the words of his book, *"shut up the words, and seal the book,"* until the end (Dan. 12:4). Of course Daniel could only be faithful to the command as long as he lived. Then the Lord guaranteed that the words of the book of Daniel would be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (v. 9). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself declared that the Hebrew text had been preserved up unto His earthly ministry (Mt. 5:18 and 4:4). Concerning Dt. 8:3, Christ said "it is written" (*gregraptai*). Dr. Wallace states the

following about this Greek word: "this common introductory formula to OT quotations seems to be used to emphasize that the written word still exists. It implies a present and binding authority" (Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of NT Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, p. 248). The Lord preserved His word through His Oracles. These verses teach the doctrine of confluence in preservation: God guarantees the preservation of His Scriptures through faithful, albeit fallible, men.

The Bible also teaches the "how" of the preservation of the New Testament (NT) Scriptures. The key passage in the NT which gives the purpose for the existence of the *ekklesia*, the Great Commission, mandates the "how" through the divinely authorized institution (Mt. 28:19-20). The Lord gave this Commission to His apostles, representatives of His first congregation (cf. Mt. 10:1-4 with Eph. 2:20-21; cf. Mt. 16:18-19 with Mt. 18:18), to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Trinity, and teaching the disciples to observe or preserve (*terein*) the Scriptures, ultimately the NT along with the OT. Paul taught that the Ephesian church, the one with a bishop and deacons, was the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:1, 8, 15). To clinch the biblical teaching that the local NT church was the institution that the Lord used to preserve His words is the case study of the recipients of the book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 2:1; 22:7 ff). These church members at Ephesus recognized and received the Apocalypse and then preserved it for the church at Smyrna so that ultimately six perfect copies of the Book of Revelation existed shortly after the original was written. All this was done without any "textual critic" since these literate church members were exhorted to keep the words and not to add or subtract from the original (Rev. 22:7, 18-19). The Lord has used this process of the preservation of His words through His preserved assemblies, since He promised to do so, for two thousand years (cf. I Tim. 3:15).

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ started the "received Bible" movement after which its preserved Greek text was named in 1633. God the Father gave words to the Son who "received" them and then gave these words to His disciples who "received" them (Jn. 17:8, 20). His Apostles preached and then inscripturated these words so that Jews (Acts 2:41), Samaritans (Acts 8:14), and Gentiles (Acts 11:1; 17:11) received these words as the "received Bible" movement began in the first century. Paul epitomized the Thessalonians as an example of a NT church with the "received Bible" mentality stating, "*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*" (I Thess. 2:13). The fruit of this "received Bible" movement is any accurate translation built upon the received Hebrew and Greek texts, including the KJV.

Dr. Wallace seemingly is ignorant of what the Bible says about its own preservation. No wonder he quickly dispatched of the Bible to get to his "strong" arguments.

Argument # 2: "The Greek text which stands behind the King James Bible is demonstrably inferior in certain places."

Dr. Wallace uses two passages in the *Textus Receptus* (TR) to demonstrate allegedly that the TR text is inferior to the *Textus Criticus* (CT) of the modern versions. He asserts that Erasmus had no Greek manuscript for the last six verses of Revelation and

consequently back-translated the Latin into Greek creating unauthorized variants. However, Erasmus translated his Latin from Greek and then translated his Greek from the Latin. The foremost scholar on the text of Revelation, Hoskier affirms that Erasmus followed Codex 141 rather than back translating [H. C. Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, Vol. I (London: Quaritch, 1929), pp. 474-477).

Dr. Wallace also alleges that Erasmus made a promise about inserting I Jn. 5:7 ("*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three agree in one, and there are three that bear witness in earth*") in the Greek text if a manuscript (MS) could be found with it. He did not insert I Jn. 5:7 in his first two editions because he could find no manuscript containing it. Accordingly, he challenged the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) that if a manuscript were presented with the *Comma Johanneum* he would insert it. When a scribe produced the "made to order" Greek MS 61, Erasmus fulfilled his promise. Recent research by H. J. de Jonge refutes this "challenge/promise" scenario, and argues that Erasmus inserted I Jn. 5:7 in the text because he believed it belonged [David Cloud, *The Bible Version Question/Answer Database* (Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature, 2005), pp. 341-343]. Dr. Wallace assures the reader that he is Trinitarian in theology and emotionally he loves many exclusive TR readings (Jn. 7:53-8:11; I Tim. 3:16; Jn. 3:13; and of course I Jn. 5:7), but alas he cannot allow emotion to circumvent the "oldest is best" tenet of textual criticism (of course Gen. 3 affirms that all the "antiquity" argument proves is that both truth and error go back to the beginning).

What Dr. Wallace neglects to reveal to the reader is that the third century patristic Cyprian (AD 200-258) alluded to the *Johannine Comma*, stating "The Lord says, 'I and the Father are one,' and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 'and these three are one'" (*The Treatises of Cyprian*, I:1:6). He also neglects to reveal that a gross grammatical error occurs if the *Johannine Comma* is excised. The antecedent to the neuter nouns "*the spirit, and the water, and the blood*" is the masculine participle "*bear witness.*" This grammatical difficulty is resolved if the *Johannine Comma* is left to stand, because the masculine nouns "*the Father, and the Word*" are postcedents to the aforementioned masculine participle.

Finally, with hypocritical logic, Dr. Wallace claims that the "King James only" crowd is "crying wolf" when they should be "occupying themselves with the more important aspects of advancing the gospel." Dr. Wallace can write books and major articles defending the Critical Text and modern versions, but his opponents should remain silent on the Bible and spend their time evangelizing.

Dr. Wallace seemingly has not kept abreast of the current Erasmian and *Comma Johanneum* research.

Argument # 3: With all the changes in the KJV since 1611, which KJV is inspired?

This of course is a misguided argument, leveled only at those who hold that the English words of the KJV are inspired. Dr. Wallace neglects to distinguish between the extreme Ruckmanites and those who defend the Masoretic and Received Texts as the preserved words of Scripture and that the KJV is an excellent English translation of these texts. Dr. Wallace seemingly fails to recognize other TR/KJV positions than that of Ruckman.

Argument # 4: There are 300 words in the KJV that no longer bear the same meaning.

This sword cuts both ways because the KJV preserves the original meaning of these words as a standard. The two examples he uses are "suffer" (Mt. 19:14) and "study" (II Tim. 2:15). The context usually helps with archaic words, not to mention some recently published works giving the meaning of these words. Furthermore, the context of II Tim. 2:15 demands that "study" be the translation because how else is one "diligent" in rightly dividing the word of truth? Dr. Wallace seemingly thinks that the Bible is an easy read with no research required.

Argument # 5: The KJV contains one very definite error--"strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" (Mt. 23:24).

Dr. Wallace insists that the translation "strain **at** a gnat" is erroneous and should be "strain **out** a gnat." However, the KJV was produced by a "very large committee" and has gone through several revisions, yet the reading still stands. Obviously, the many scholars who have poured over the English renderings of the KJV are not as convinced that this is an error as Dr. Wallace is. The Lord employed the participle *diulizontes* that means "to filter or strain." He used no preposition such as *ek* or *apo* to indicate "out" along with "strain." The English preposition "at" can mean "because of" giving the sense that they strained "because of" a gnat. The Lord's contrast seems to be one gnat versus one camel. The issue is not comprehensive filtering or consuming, because the ancients would no doubt have filtered their drinks and probably have eaten camel meat. The Lord Jesus exposed the Pharisees' glaring hypocrisy as He likened them to swallowing a single camel while at the same time they strained "at" or "because of" a single, individual gnat. The KJV does not need to be changed because it very accurately describes the Lord's specific criticism of "straining at a gnat." Dr. Wallace seemingly thinks that thousands of scholars and scores of generations of believers have inadvertently allowed this "error" to continue in the KJV.

Argument # 6: Some people revere the KJV today "because it is difficult to understand."

This is an inane argument for not preferring the KJV. However, the study of Scripture is a lifetime study that takes great diligence (II Tim. 2:15). Since Scripture is propositional in nature, one must study the words, English, Greek and Hebrew, which make up the statements of divine revelation. The Lord never wrote the Bible so that believers would have an easy, one-time read. In fact, Peter said that some of the things that Paul wrote were "*hard to be understood*" (II Pet. 3:15). Dr. Wallace seemingly misunderstands the nature and purpose of written revelation.

Argument # 7: The KJV does not have exclusive rights "to being called the Holy Bible."

This may be another attack upon Ruckmanism. Of course the KJV was the exclusive English Bible from about 1650 to 1881. But where was the Bible before 1611 or where is it in other languages? Any accurate translation based on the preserved texts of the Hebrew and Greek would be the Bible for that time and language (e.g., the vernacular Waldensian Bible prior to the Reformation). Dr. Wallace seemingly feels compelled to attempt to refute some obscure, remote argument of a small group of KJV only people.

Argument # 8: "Most evangelicals prefer a different translation and textual basis than that found in the KJV."

Again, this is an inane argument. Most liberals prefer a different translation and text than that of the KJV--so what? Neither antiquity nor popularity ever proves the truth. Evangelicalism is not the safeguard for the truth. The NT assembly is the Lord's vehicle for recognizing, receiving, and preserving God's word (I Tim. 3:15). Dr. Wallace seemingly has an allegiance to a misguided authority for the truth.

Argument # 9: The KJV has far more drastically altered the scriptures than have modern translations.

Why do the Lord's Candlesticks (Rev. 1:20) recognize, receive and preserve the KJV and underlying texts and reject the critical text and modern versions? The same Spirit Who inspired and preserved the Scriptures confirms His words in the hearts of believers in these assemblies as He promised (cf. Mt. 28:19-20; Jn. 10:27; I Tim. 3:15; I Jn. 2:27; Rev. 1:13). All one has to do is recognize the deliberate changing of key Christological passages in the modern versions to understand that the critical text is the product of corruption. Furthermore, why do liberals, apostates, Roman Catholics and cultists prefer the critical text and its translations instead of the TR and the KJV--could the answer be the weak, anemic, and ambiguous theology espoused in the CT and modern versions? Why do neo-evangelicals use the *UBSGNT* that has Carlos Martini as one of the editors. After all, Martini was too liberal for the RCC to place as a candidate for the recently vacated office of Pope.

Dr. Wallace, in the end, says that no doctrine is affected by textual changes (John says something different--Rev. 22:18-19). All one needs to do is read Dr. Wallace's defense of the CT rendering in Mk. 1:2 (e.g., "Mk. 1:2 and New Testament Textual Criticism" <wallace@bible.org>). Instead of the TR reading "*in the prophets*," the CT reads "in Isaiah the prophet." Wallace admits that the CT reading seems like an error since Mark cites OT passages from the two prophetic books of Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3. But he goes on to defend the erroneous CT because it is "older" than the TR, which does not harbor any error! Dr. Wallace maintains that the doctrine of inerrancy must be "adjusted" with the evidence. To him the doctrine of inerrancy must mean some sort of "errant inerrancy." Dr. Wallace prefers an errant reading in his beloved *Codex Vaticanus*

and Codex *Sinaiticus* than an inerrant reading in the TR. Do textual changes affect the doctrines of inspiration and preservation? They certainly do!

As his argument winds down Dr. Wallace suggests that the reading of various translations including the KJV, NASV and NIV can save anyone. If the KJV is not bad and reading it can save anyone then why promote new translations? His duplicitous sophistry is obvious. Dr. Wallace seemingly does not recognize that Satan has subtly changed the message of Scripture in the modern versions since he has changed the words of Scripture through the CT.

Addendum Argument: The modern versions were not "borne out of conspiratorial motives."

Dr. Wallace denies that there was an early conspiracy to change the Greek words of the NT to produce the CT from which modern versions come (see his "Mk. 1:2 and New Testament Textual Criticism" <wallace@bible.org>). Surely the Bible believer acknowledges that *"the ministry of questioning"* (I Tim. 1:4) began with the Devil's *"Yea, hath God said"* (Gen. 3:1). Furthermore, both Peter and Paul warned about the first century heretics tampering with Scripture. Peter asserted that the unlearned and unstable "wrested" ("twisted or perverted") Paul's writings as they did other Scriptures (II Pet. 3:15-16). Paul declared that some one was circulating a forged Pauline letter among the Thessalonians (II Thess. 2:2). These passages teach the early conspiracy against the true text and canon of Scripture. The fruit of this early conspiracy has been unbelief and this has plagued Biblical critical studies since the first century. The CT and modern versions are the manifestations of this "rejected Bible" movement. Dr. Wallace seemingly has made an assertion that is contrary to clear Bible teaching.

Conclusion

Dr. Wallace has given his strongest arguments in rejecting the KJV as the best translation. Scripture sustains none of his arguments because they are based on the speculative assumptions and illogical reasoning of textual criticism (i.e., restoring what God presumably has not preserved). He is caught in the web of his own criticism against the defenders of the KJV. His arguments are not only unbiblical, but they are illogical and sometimes deceptive. Since Dr. Wallace's best shots against the KJV have fallen short, his opinion should be rejected. The KJV is the best English translation coming from the preserved words of the Masoretic Hebrew and Received Greek texts. Let's allow the Lord to speak through His Scriptures and reject those who offer opinions contrary to the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself"* (I Tim. 6:3-5).

