

# The Unprecedented Corruption

## By Paulinism of Bible Analysis

People have always misconstrued the Bible or quoted out of context. That happens in every field where it is important to know what has been previously said, *e.g.*, the legal profession.

However, a new kind of analytical error has emerged for the first time in human history in the past four hundred years. It is unique to analysis of the Bible. It arose due to a peculiar convergence of a technological advance at the same time as other significant communication avenues were opening up.

What was this technological advance and how did it lead to a peculiar corruption of textual analysis of the Bible? It was the emergence of the printing press in the 1500s combined with the new revived profession of Bible translator. The common man prior to the 1500s could not read the Bible in vernacular texts, *i.e.*, in the common language. They had to read it in Latin, and this ordinarily was in rare hand-written copies. Thus, at the same time this new technology arose, an opportunity arose to make fresh translations. However, unfortunately, at this very moment there began a fundamental loss of loyalty to Jesus. Instead, there arose a zealous presupposition that Paul's doctrines of salvation must predominate over Jesus' doctrines at all costs. There was a fervor for Paul that knew no bounds — like a secret was hidden and now was the great pearl that any price — even the loss of Jesus' words — must be paid to guard its discovery.

This convergence of a new printing technology with a clear opportunity to make virtually never-before seen translations could have done the world a lot of good. However, it hit the shoals of destruction because the opportunity to make new Bible translation fell into the hands of zealots who were out to vindicate Paul no matter what the cost.

To comprehend the huge temptation involved, consider the following hypothetical situation. Imagine if I am an attorney arguing a case to a judge in favor of my client Paul and the following is true.

- *Suddenly all the printed legal decisions I am studying to help Paul now suddenly are ordered by government decree to be exclusively in computer form.*
- *All the legal precedents on computer now must be in Italian.*
- *The Judge is barred from access to the original English texts that the judge could understand.*
- *The government orders the judge to analyze the case solely from the Italian computer texts.*
- *The government hires me to translate the cases from English to Italian for the Judge to read—the very same cases upon which the fate of my client Paul depends.*
- *My law office has no oversight from a neutral panel of translators to make sure I translate correctly English into Italian.*
- *Thus, I am actually quite free to alter the legal texts that the judge will read.*
- *Perhaps in centuries people can figure out any changes I made to help my client Paul, but by that time, the verdict in favor of my client Paul will be so cemented into tradition that it will be virtually impossible to dislodge.*

This scenario gives you a small taste of the extraordinary temptation this convergence of events presented in the late 1500s. The common man had virtually no access to any text in their own tongue. It was all new. They had no access to any of the Greek originals, and if they did, they would have no way to know whether anyone was pulling a fast-one over on them. Instead of the predominant translators being unaffected by any agenda, they came first from Geneva. They were all Calvinists. In 1599, they produced the Geneva Study Bible in English. Next, the King of Scotland where the Calvinist Presbyterian Church was the state church took over England. His name: King James. When in 1604, King James brought together translators to bring us the Bible, he predictably chose the lead editors from the Puritan (Calvinist) party. The end result was predictable. A Bible that vindicated Paul no matter what the underlying text really said, as we will prove below.

This convergence of technology and opportunity was so tempting that it led to a new kind of analytical error unique in history. I call it the Presuppositional Pauline Double-Team Spin & Translation error.

Under this approach, a person analyzing a Biblical text permits himself to imagine any reinterpretation of Jesus' words that keep Paul's doctrines as valid. It does not matter if this spin violates Jesus' obvious and literal meaning. Thus, there is an unbalanced Pauline Presupposition that affects textual analysis. Then, if this is too hard to sell, translators are enlisted to help by deleting or changing Jesus' words to make these reinterpretations appear plausible. Hence, there is a double-team of not only spin, but also translation error to make an analysis of a Biblical text. One cannot find such analytical mayhem in any other endeavor, such as in science or law. It flows from the unique history of the 1500s.

Sounds impossible? Have we evangelicals been viewing Scripture through a cult-like lense that overlaid the Scripture? Let's look at just a sampling of literally *dozens* of examples I could cite. We indeed are inside a distorted bubble that has prevented us from seeing the reality of the true Biblical text that was always present.

## **Metaphor of the Vine**

The perfect example of Presuppositional Pauline Double-Team Spin & Translation error is what has happened to Jesus' Metaphor of the Vine in John 15:1-6.

In this passage, Jesus says He is the Vine and the apostles are the branches. Jesus does not say the apostles' *works* are branches. Instead, Jesus says an apostle — body, mind and soul — is a branch. Jesus then says a branch that fails to stay in Him and produces no fruit will be as a branch that has dried up (lost all life/is dead), and is "thrown outside" (in the original Greek) and has been thrown into the fire to be burned.

Do you recognize this message? It is James' chapter two from Jesus' mouth. Faith without works (*i.e.*, fruit on the branch) is dead and cannot save. (James 2:17.) John Wesley saw clearly Jesus' meaning:

They are burned. It is not possible for words more strongly to declare, that even those who are now branches in the true vine may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.<sup>1</sup>

However, because this contradicts Paul's doctrines of salvation, perseverance of the saints and eternal security, you will hear endless examples of the analytical error I am discussing. Never is the option considered that Paul is *not inspired*. Thus, the literal words of Jesus are re-spun by Paulinists so that we are asked to imagine a branch is not an apostle. Instead, we are told that the branch is an apostle's works. The Paulinist insists Jesus is not threatening to throw any apostle *outside* where the sinners go en route to hell in Revelation 22:15. Why? Because our English translations, beginning with the KJV (a Calvinist production) and up through our NIV, omit rendering the word *outside* that is present in the Greek.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, we might see the link to the "unbelievers, fearful, and liars" who in Revelation are "outside" waiting to be thrown in the lake of fire. As a result, by means of translation, Jesus' threat of hell in John 15:6 is toned down or made more obscure.

Then Paulinists tell us how to understand the passage. Paul speaks of our works being burned so God can discern the good works from the bad. (1 Cor. 3:15.) Thus, when Jesus says the branch is thrown outside to be burned, while Jesus literally says *you are the branch*, Jesus surely must mean your works are the branch. Otherwise, Paul's entire doctrine would be falsified by Jesus. We surely cannot have that. Thus, because we are compelled to use Paul's picture (to save his canonicity), the branches represent works and Jesus means they are merely smelted down in the manner Paul speaks of in 1 Cor. 3:15. In this way, the branch is burned so God can find the good works while burning off the bad works. Thus, if you accept this spin, Jesus does not therefore contradict Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith alone without works.

Unfortunately for this hypothesis, branches that are burned are entirely consumed. No branch thrown in the fire will survive. If a branch could represent either good or bad works, as this hypothesis assumes, there is still no branch that can survive a fire. Burning a branch will never reveal some left over good works. It will all be ash. Thus, the picture Jesus used of branches cannot line up with the picture Paul used. Paul's picture mismatches the context of Jesus' metaphor and thus does not assist us in interpreting Jesus' words.

Yet, Paulinists are undaunted. One Paulinist amazingly suggests the word *fire* does not mean God's judgment. Joseph Dillow in *Reign of the Servant Kings* at first concedes that fire is

1. John Wesley, "Perseverance of the Saints," *Fundamental Christian Theology: A Systematic Theology* (A. M. Hills ed.) (C. J. Kinne), 1931, Vol. II, at 266-281
2. It is self-evident that this was the product of a Pauline bias to avoid the reader seeing a parallel to Rev. 22:15 (those *outside* await going into the fire of hell). Otherwise, one cannot explain the inconsistency why the KJV translated Matthew 21:39 differently. The same word for *outside* was in Matthew 21:39 as in John 15:6. When Pauline doctrine is not threatened in the Matthew passage, Jesus is heard to say "cast him *outside* the vineyard." (Matt. 21:39.) However, when Pauline doctrine is threatened, we read "cast [him] *forth* from the vineyard." (John 15:6.) One would have to be totally naive to not recognize the motivation involved in this alteration. Otherwise, it would have been just too plain for a Christian reader to recognize "outside" and "burned" in John 15:6 precisely parallels Rev. 22:15 "outside" and "fiery pit" where sinners and Satan are thrown. If *outside* is used in John 15:6, all of Paul's doctrines would more readily be seen as false.

used in Scripture as a symbol of God's judgment, *e.g.*, Isaiah 26:11. However, then he shockingly says: "Only rarely and exceptionally is it associated with the fires of hell." (*Reign*, at 412). Dillow completely ignores Jesus frequent references to hell as a "fiery furnace" or "flames" or "fire." Jesus in the same speech that appears in the Metaphor of the Vine (John 15:1-6) says in John 16:1-2 that this warning is so the apostles will not be "ensnared" (Greek *scandalizo*). Jesus in Matthew 13:41-42 similarly says that when He returns with the angels all those who are "ensnared" (Greek *scandalizo*) will be sent to the "fiery furnace." Thus, if the warning of the Metaphor of the Vine was given to discourage the apostles from being "ensnared" (John 16:1-2) and thereby avoid being thrown into the fire in John 15:6, it is clear this fire is the "fiery furnace" of hell. This is because Jesus says the "ensnared" will go to this "fiery furnace" in Matthew 13:41-42 when Jesus returns in glory. It is thus utter nonsense to argue that John 15:6 is talking about a fire other than the fires of hell.

We see in these various explanations of the Metaphor of the Vine a cult-like manner of explanation. Jesus' literal words are to be mercilessly bent and twisted. Some of His words are not to even be permitted to be seen in translation, *i.e.*, the word "outside" in this passage. While Deuteronomy 4:2 reads: "YE SHALL NOT ADD unto the word which I command you, NEITHER SHALL YE DIMINISH ought from it....," translators quickly learned the fox-whole that their profession provided them. The Christian community at large was without knowledge or resources to verify the translation until the advent of the Internet.

### Hebrews 6:4-6

The mistreatment of John 15:1-6 is not an isolated phenomenon of Bible translators changing the New Testament to protect Paul.

For example, Hebrews 6:4-6 was completely distorted by the Calvinist KJV translators. This verse taught that those who had *already* fallen away from Christ after having been *born* of the Holy Spirit, who then renounced Christ, are incapable of repenting again. Their future is only to be burned. Paul was thereby contradicted again on the doctrine of salvation. However the Geneva Study Bible by the Calvin Institute (1599) and then the Calvinist KJV (1611) added an *if* to make it sound hypothetical. This read as if the writer spoke hypothetically about these Christians—*if they should fall away*. Instead, the verb tense without the false *if* means *those who have fallen away*. The verse is about *fallen Christians*, not hypothetically lost Christians. Over two hundred years ago, John Wesley pointed this out:

There is no *if* in the original. The words are *kai parapesontas*—that is, in plain English, 'It is impossible to renew again unto repentance, those who were once enlightened, and have fallen away;' therefore they must perish everlastingly.'

Adam Clarke in his *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* (Beacon Hill: 1967) at 1260 explained this addition of *if* originated with Theodore Beza (1519-1609)—Calvin's successor at Geneva. Clarke also explains that the verb tense for *fall away* was in the past tense, not in the subjunctive tense, as the GSB and KJV rendered it. Clarke identifies both errors in the Calvinist KJV

and points out the obvious intention was to bias the text. This same passage had previously been used by Arminius, a Calvinist opponent, to disprove perseverance of the saints. Clarke comments:

*And having fallen away.* I can express my own mind on this translation nearly in the words of Dr. Macknight: ‘the participles that were enlightened, have tasted, and were made partakers, being aorists, are properly rendered by our translators in the past time; wherefore *parapesontas*, being an aorist, ought likewise to have been translated in the past time, ‘HAVE fallen away.’ Nevertheless, our translators following Beza, who without any authority of any ancient MSS., has inserted in his version the word *if* have rendered this clause IF they fall away, ***that this text might not appear to contradict the doctrine of perseverance of the saints.*** But as no translator should take it upon him to add to add or alter the Scriptures, ***for the sake of any favorite doctrine,*** I have translated *parapesontas* ‘have fallen away,’ according to the true import of the word, as standing in connection with the other aorists in the preceding verses.’

Thus, here we find Paul’s doctrine of perseverance was being guarded by the most blatant distortion of a Biblical text. Words are added and verb tenses changed. Then you will hear Paulinists to this very day proudly declare Hebrews 6:4-6 is hypothetical. It is supposedly speaking about what would happen if Christians hypothetically could renounce Christ. So the Paulinist says Paul’s teaching that God will preserve them is not refuted by Hebrews; they will never actually fall away and be damned to hell. It is supposedly a hypothetical discussion only.

### **Jesus on Obedience and Salvation: John 3:36**

Another example of mistranslation and spin to serve Paul is in the translation of John 3:36. There is a word in Greek — *apeitheo* — which only has one meaning in Greek: *disobey*. It does not mean *disbelieve*.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus uses *apeitheo* in John 3:36, but if you did not alter its proper translation, Jesus refutes Paul’s doctrine of salvation. Here is what John 3:36 says literally in a correct translation:

He that keeps on believing on the Son keeps on having everlasting life, and he that keeps on *disobeying* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God keeps on remaining on him.

Only the American Standard Bible (and its progeny, RSV, NASV and WEB) and the Good News Bible among leading Protestant translations render this second half correctly. In the ASV

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1. Even though Liddell’s is a Christian Lexicon, it is the most respected. It defines “apeitheo” as “to be disobedient, to refuse compliance,” “disobey,” or “not to abide by.” That’s the total sum of meanings. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%2311688>

we read: “He that **obeyeth not** the son shall not see life.” In the Good News Bible this similarly reads, “He who **disobeys** the son shall not see life.”

Its meaning is quite obvious. John MacArthur in *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Zondervan: 1994) says that John 3:36 teaches that Jesus makes salvation depend on a lasting obedience to Christ’s authority, not a one-time obedience to believe. (*Id.* at 39 fn.) A saving faith is one that “produces obedience.” (*Id.* at 53.) Hence, disobedience to Jesus’ commands means God’s wrath rests on you regardless of your subjective experience of a one-time *belief*.

However, the Luther German Bible of 1522 and the King James of 1611 reads to the contrary:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that **believeth not** the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (KJV).

These translations make it sound like one could receive commands from Jesus and disobey them, but because you *believed* in Jesus at *one time*, you still would have eternal life. The verse has been changed in translation to make it sound like **you can disobey Jesus, and the wrath of God will not rest upon you**. This change thereby contradicted Jesus’ express message.

How is this possibly defended? We find the argument presented in a Greek *Christian* lexicon popular in Paulinist Bible colleges. It argues that even though we can find no ancient usage of *apitheo* to mean *disbelieve* we can treat it as a dictionary meaning because disbelieving Jesus is the same as disobeying Jesus. Thus, we are free to change the word meaning from *disobey* to *disbelieve*. We thereby can add this new meaning to the dictionary. Sounds incredible? Please continue reading.

In the *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker (BAGD), they say this about the word *apitheo*:

Since in the view of the early Christians, the supreme disobedience was a refusal to believe their gospel, *apitheo* may be restricted in some passages to the meaning *disbelieve*, be an unbeliever. This sense, though greatly disputed (it is not found outside our literature [*i.e.*, outside the New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers, and other early Christian literature]), seems most probable in John 3:36; Acts 14:2; 19:9; Rom. 15:31. (BAGD, at 82).<sup>1</sup>

This could easily be laughed off normally except this argument has won the day to alter the leading Scripture translations that we read! We find the KJV’s translation of *apitheo* as *not believe* now appears in otherwise good translations like Young’s Literal.

As a result, even the *Christian dictionary* in Greek is altered to protect Paul! It is astonishing that anyone would do such a thing! The Paulinist does not even wait to use *spin* in some commentary. The translation is so altered that the casual KJV reader would not even know there is a conflict between Jesus and Paul in this verse.

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1. This reasoning has taken on a life of its own. Other Greek Dictionaries by Pauline *Christian* authors simply assert baselessly that *apitheo* means “to refuse *belief* or obedience.” (Thayer’s.) This is untrue. It simply means *disobey*. It has nothing to do with *belief*. If a Greek wants to say someone disbelieves someone, he would use the negative article *a* in front of the verb for believe, *pisteuo*. That’s how you can know this is just so much nonsense to protect Paul.

Incidentally, Jesus says the same thing about the *obedience-salvation* principle elsewhere in Scripture. Thus, changing John 3:36 to match Paul is a fruitless endeavor. For example, Jesus in John 5:28-29 says: “all that are in the tombs...shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (ASV.) Salvation is clearly linked to deeds. Another good example is when Jesus says:

Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does the will of my Father** who is in heaven ... I will declare to them, Depart from me you who practice *anomia* [*i.e. negation of the Law of Moses.*] Therefore everyone who **hears these words of mine** and **puts them in practice** is like a man who built his house on the rock....And every one that **heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man... (Matt. 7:21, 24, 26).

The Greek is more accurately *the one who keeps on doing the will of my Father*. The verb for *doing* is the present participle active. It is thus a continuous tense—*keeps on doing*. (See Appendix A of the *Jesus' Words Only* book.)

The Paulinist claims that Matthew 7:21 and John 3:36 are easily explained even if translated correctly. The only obedience you owe to Jesus or God is *believing*. But this does not follow. If Jesus meant just that, the word *disbelieve* is the only way to convey such a limited scope of *doing God's will*.

Beyond that simple fact, the absurdity of the Paulinist spin is easy to demonstrate. For example, Jesus teaches it is God's will that you follow the least command in the Law of Moses. (Matthew 5:19.) But if the Pauline spin is correct of Matthew 7:21-26, those who believe in Jesus and call him Lord and do many miracles in His Name, but who do not keep on doing the will of God by blatantly disobeying the least command in the Law of Moses are going to heaven. Yet Jesus said in this passage that those who do not keep doing the will of the Father will not go to heaven. (Matt. 7:21-22.) Because the person violating the Law of Moses is not doing the will of God (Matthew 5:19), it is impossible to teach, as Paulinists insist, that Jesus says this person goes to heaven anyway. Jesus says the opposite of what Paul teaches.

Furthermore, such spin of Matthew 7:21-24 leads to inherent illogic in the context of the passage. In Matthew 7:21, the people going to hell called Jesus *Lord*, and did many mighty miracles and signs and wonders *in His name*. Jesus never suggests that they did not *believe* in Him. Rather, they called Him Lord, but they *did not keep on doing the will of the Father; they also negated the Mosaic law* (v. 23)— which contradicted Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:19— and they heard Jesus' words *but did not put them into practice* (vv. 24-26). In fact, verses 24-26 are Jesus' amplification of the same theme — faulting people who hear His words but *do not put them in practice*. Jesus is not worried about people who fail to believe He is Lord. Jesus is concerned about those who *disobey* His teachings and “do not put them in practice” even though they call Him Lord. (Matt. 7:21, 24-26.) Thus, Jesus' meaning in verse 21 is that Christians who *disobey Jesus* can call Him Lord and do great works for Him but, as Jesus explains in verse 27, they risk a “great fall” of their house if they disobey Jesus and do not put in practice His teachings and commands.

Thus, John 3:36 is indistinguishable from Matthew 7:21-27. The Paulinists hid this by mistranslating John 3:36. They buried this by even changing Greek dictionaries to suit their biased Pauline spin.

## The Poison of Mistranslation of John 3:36 Causes Rejection of Jesus' Rule of JWO

The perfect illustration of how the Pauline spinning commentators have corrupted the church is seen in how we respond to Matthew 23:8-11. We are blatantly unconcerned about disobedience to one of Jesus' most clear commands. John 3:36 says if we disobey the son, the wrath of God remains on us. When you read what follows, you should be in immediate concern! But it won't happen because we trust Paul's spin that lets us think if we ever once believed in Jesus, we are free to disobey His clear commands.

Jesus in Matthew 23:8-11 defends the principle of *Jesus' Words Only*, telling us:

- (8) You must not be called *Teacher*, because you are all equal and have only one Teacher.
- (9) And you must not call anyone here on earth *Father* because you have only the one Father in heaven.
- (10) Nor should you be called *Leader*,<sup>1</sup> because your one and only leader is the Messiah.
- (11) The greatest one among you must be your servant. (Good News.)

There is rarely a Christian group, from the best to the worst, that does not expressly violate Jesus' words in this passage. The commentaries on these verses in Matthew are uniform that Jesus' meaning is inescapable.

For example, Barnes says of the prohibition on using the title *leaders*:

[Jesus] prohibits the disciples of Jesus from seeking or receiving mere empty titles, producing distinctions among themselves, implying authority to control the opinions and conduct of others, and claiming that others should acknowledge them to be superior to them. (Comm. Matt. 23:10.)

Clarke likewise says:

God is in all these respects jealous of his honor. To him *alone* it belongs to guide and lead his Church, as well as to govern and defend it. ***Jesus is the sole teacher of righteousness.*** It is he *alone*, (who is the word, light, and eternal truth), that can illuminate every created mind; and who, as Savior and Redeemer, speaks to every heart by his Spirit. (Comm. Matt. 23:10.)

But because Paul claimed God "appointed me as a ... teacher" (2 Tim. 1:11) and God "gave some...to be teachers" (Eph. 4:11), it has become acceptable to use these titles in our churches. We created other titles of leadership such as *pastor*, *minister* or *leader* when Jesus was

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1. The word here is translated often as *Master*. Barnes explains the word in Greek means "leaders, guides, for this is the literal meaning of the word. It refers to those who go before others; who claim, therefore, the right to direct and control others. This was also a title conferred on Jewish teachers."

commanding us to use no labels of *distinction* because ***there was to be no hierarchy of command***. Jesus makes this unequivocal because He explains why we must not use such titles: “You are all equal.” Jesus reiterates there is to be no hierarchy of leadership in the clearest possible terms in Mathew 20:25-26 but we disobey Him routinely. Jesus said: “Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you.”

Yet, if we had John 3:36 clearly in mind, how could we take the risk of ever disobeying the words of Jesus? We could not. For Jesus says “if you disobey the son, the wrath of God remains on you.” Yet, because we have Paul as our security blanket, we actually think is ***if we ever believed in Jesus, we are now free to disobey Jesus***. Jesus must accept us into His kingdom because we are trusting Paul as our teacher that faith alone guarantees our inheritance in heaven. God help us if John 3:36 means what it says!

### **A Footnote On Why I Always Rely Upon the American Standard Version (1901)**

Throughout my book *Jesus' Words Only*, I repeatedly cite to the American Standard Version. From the discussion above, one should now see why. The ASV and its progeny are the most reliable English translations. They did not distort Hebrews 6:4-6 or John 3:36 to fit Pauline doctrine. In many other examples that could be cited, the same fidelity to the original Greek is evident.