

## GUILT-BY-ASSOCIATION ARGUMENTS AND THE KJV

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Many of our opponents try to invalidate our position for the superiority of the KJV by trying to connect us to highly controversial and questionable individuals. This tactic is known as **guilt-by-association**. The logic behind this kind of labeling is as follows.

Dr. Peter S. Ruckman, who Pastors the Bible Baptist Church in Pensacola, FL and is the President of the Pensacola Bible Institute, is one of the most controversial Bible teachers today. Due to his controversial and volatile reputation amongst Fundamentalists, some desire to distance themselves from him. They fear such an association. Despite being aware of their opponents' disagreements with Ruckman, critics of the KJV will label their opponents as "Ruckmanites" (followers of Ruckman) since he shares a similar view in favor of the KJV. His first of many books in defense of the KJV was released in the 1960s. It was entitled The Bible Babel.

Dr. Stewart Custer, professor at Bob Jones University, wrote a book around 1980 entitled The Truth About The King James Version Controversy. In it he insisted that the two basic positions on Bible texts were the Conservative Position and the Ruckman Position. He described the so-called "Conservative" position as being that which upholds the Alexandrian Critical Texts. He then described the so-called "Ruckman" position as one that upheld the KJV, providing no distinction whatsoever of those who defend the TR and KJV but disagree with Ruckman. For about 20 pages, over half the booklet, Custer laid out all manner of questionable characteristics of Ruckman's life and teachings as if anyone and everyone who upholds the KJV is somehow associated with all that. This was a smear tactic. Plain and simple. Many proponents of the Critical Texts adopted this same tactic and thus the label "Ruckmanite" was popularized.

Another controversial defender of the KJV was Dr. Benjamin Wilkinson. Wilkinson authored an excellent treatise in 1930 entitled Our Authorized Bible Vindicated which outlines the two streams of Bible manuscripts throughout history. This writing became popular amongst defenders of the KJV and the Received Texts when it was re-published in David Otis Fuller's classic Which Bible in the 1970s (a personal favorite of mine). In this writing he concluded that the stream of manuscript evidence that supported the KJV was the pure stream, and the stream that led to the modern versions was corrupt.

However, Dr. Wilkinson was a Seventh Day Adventist. Some critics of the KJV try to trace our beliefs in favor of the KJV back to Mr. Wilkinson.

Now no Fundamentalist wants to be associated with someone who is seen as unorthodox, nor someone who is a member of what most consider to be a Cult religion such as the Seventh Day Adventists. So the trick is to somehow connect the opponent to such controversial figures. This is an effort to shame the opponent. It is an effort to intimidate the opponent. It is also a fear tactic; an effort to discourage others from considering their opponents position.

## A FLAWED LOGIC

Some of my friends who defend the KJV work hard to disassociate themselves with Dr. Ruckman because in reality they are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and not a man, especially not the man known as Dr. Peter Ruckman. They make it a point to publicly lay out their disagreements with Dr. Ruckman's teachings. Some will go so far as publicly labeling Ruckman as a heretic and apostate while hoping that their opponents will extend the courtesy of recognizing their efforts of disassociating with Ruckman. But I take a little bit different approach. My approach is that ***I could care less*** what the opponents call me.

I do share the same sentiment with my friends in that I do not worship or follow any man other than the Lord. When someone asks me if I am a Ruckmanite, my initial answer is "No. I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not a follower of ANY man, including Dr. Peter S. Ruckman. And the Bible, not man, is my final authority in all matters of faith and practice." But when they persist in the conversation and insist on categorizing me as a "Ruckmanite" because of my belief in the KJB, my next response is "*whatever floats your boat*".

Some of my friends may insist that in such instances I should take the opportunity to distance myself from "Ruckmanism" by laying out my differences with Dr. Ruckman. But I say ***why bother?*** It's not going to do any good anyways because in their spiritually immature, shallow, narrow-minded way of thinking they already have their minds made up that anyone who disagrees with them are "Ruckmanites" no matter what our true position may be. They have been trained and programmed like droids to think like this through their alma-mater and mentors. If God himself cannot de-program them from their presuppositions and misconceptions, what makes us think that our reasoning will?

I refuse to be intimidated by guilt-by-association labels and arguments because it's not about me anyways. It's about the Lord Jesus Christ. Why take these issues personal? It's his truth. Not mine. My responsibility as a God-called Preacher is to tell the truth. Then it is up to the Holy Spirit of God to bear witness to that truth. Then it is up to the listener to either receive that truth and to act accordingly or to reject it. Once that decision on the hearer's part has been made there is not much else I can do about it other than pray for that individual, live what I preach, and continue to preach what is right. The results are up to God and the hearer. So if an individual who has their mind made up wishes to label me something derogatory or to associate me with some controversial figure, it is only a manifestation of that person's weak-mindedness and inferior position.

I like Dr. Phil Stringer's definition of a "Ruckmanite". He said, "A Ruckmanite is what the opponents call you when they are losing the argument." I agree.

I am well aware of what Dr. Ruckman teaches having read ALL of his material in regards to the Bible issue (as far as I'm aware of) and having referenced many of his commentaries. For some, the simple fact that I even own material by Dr. Ruckman is enough to doom me as being "*a dirty little Ruckmanite*". But if that be the case, I must also be a Calvinist since I own and have read and studied material by Calvinists (such as Spurgeon, Gill, Bridges, Pink, Talmadge, and others) despite the fact that I reject the entire 5 point TULIP system of Calvinism. I must also be an Arminian since I enjoy reading and studying the material of some Arminians (such as Wesley, Sam Jones and

others) despite the fact that I believe in Eternal Security. (Arminians believe you can lose your salvation.)

I guess if ownership and referencing of material defines a person I can be labeled all sorts of things. It's a good thing that I could care less what my opponents think of me or I would probably go insane trying to disassociate myself with every single label that could be thrown my way.

I both agree and disagree with Dr. Ruckman on many things. I'm sure the fact that I agree with Ruckman on **anything** will cause some of my friends to cringe and many of my opponents to salivate at the opportunity to apply their guilt-by-association arguments.

I also agree with Dr. Wilkinson in his assessment of the two streams of Bible texts. But does that all of a sudden make me a Seventh Day Adventist?

I agree with the Catholic church when they uphold the Trinity, the Virgin Birth of Christ, and preach that abortion is murder. Does that necessarily make me a Catholic? I agree with Islam when they teach that men and women should dress modestly and that Hollywood is responsible for much of the immorality that is rampant in America. Does that make me a Muslim? I agree with Calvinists when they say that a Christian cannot lose their salvation. Does that necessarily make me a Calvinist? I agree with Arminians when they say that man has a freewill and therefore has the ability to choose whether to trust Christ or not. Does that necessarily make me an Arminian?

So does sharing a similar view with someone concerning the Bible textual issue necessarily make them one in the same? Absolutely not. You would have to be pretty shallow-minded to make such conclusions.

And by the way, if our opponents really want to play the guilt-by-association game, let's get real about Dr. Benjamin Wilkinson. A friend of mine named Dr. Phil Stringer, Pastor in Chicago and former President of Landmark Baptist College, wrote a booklet entitled Ready Answers. In it he makes a good point about Wilkinson. The truth is that Wilkinson's views on the Bible text issue were not the norm amongst his peers. Wilkinson obviously failed in convincing his colleagues of his position. Dr. Stringer verified this by contacting the Seventh Day Adventist headquarters concerning Wilkinson. They informed Dr. Stringer that they had no intentions of ever reprinting Wilkinson's book Our Authorized Bible Vindicated. The fact is that the general position of the Seventh Day Adventists today is the same as the Critical Text proponents within Fundamentalism today. What about other heretics and cultists that support the Westcott and Hort theories and the Critical Texts? (We'll discuss Westcott and Hort later.) Do our opponents really want to play the guilt-by-association game?

## **INACCURATE ASSUMPTIONS**

Guilt-by-association is not only a flawed logic, it many times leads to inaccurate assumptions. For example, the early Christians of the Piedmont valleys of Northern Italy were labeled by the Catholic church as the Waldenses. They were named after a Christian of whom the Catholic church opposed and hated name Peter Waldo, who started his work about 1130 AD. Historians have adopted this label for this early Christian group since then. But the truth is that this label is inaccurate. For the Waldenses were not started by Peter Waldo in the 1100s.

The “Waldenses” have been around ever since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Prior to the 1100s they were known as the Vaudois. A famous Waldensian literature known as “La Nobla Leycon” (The Noble Lesson) dates the Vaudois back to the days of Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Vaudois, or early Waldenses, were also known as the Italic Church. Theodore Beza dates the Italic Church in his writings as early as 120 AD, just 20-30 years after the death of the Apostle John himself! So as you can see, labels are not always what they appear to be. In fact, labels are many times meant to deliberately distort the truth about an individual or a group of people. Obviously, the Catholic church wished to associate these Christians to Peter Waldo of the 1100s so as to hide the Vaudois’ ancient history which would point to them as the true church of Apostolic succession rather than the Catholic church.

Such labeling is also an effort to polarize a group of people of which the opponents wish to discourage others from joining. Such guilt-by-association tactics have been employed by the Catholic church all throughout history, especially during the Protestant Reformation era and the Spanish Inquisition.

These same tactics are now being employed by many Fundamentalists today. That is what this business of labeling KJV defenders as “Ruckmanites” is all about. However, such arguments will lead one to false presuppositions.

For example, some try to trace the modern “KJV-only movement”, as they label it, to either Dr. Peter S. Ruckman or Dr. Benjamin Wilkinson. More specifically, they try to trace the belief that the KJV is without error back to Dr. Ruckman. They also try to trace back to Dr. Wilkinson the belief in the superiority of the KJV and its underlying text as opposed to the modern versions and the Critical Texts.

Both presuppositions are wrong.

The fact is that our position in defense of the KJV was being held by Bible-believers well before Dr. Benjamin Wilkinson wrote his book *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* in 1930. Also, we are about to see that there were those who believed the KJV was without error before Dr. Peter S. Ruckman was even born.

I have a copy of a newspaper article from *The Vancouver Sun* in July 7, 1951 that contains statements from a Pastor named Mark Buch. Pastor Buch was a fierce opponent of the Revised Standard Version when it first came out. He was a famous debater against proponents of the modern versions. The article stated this concerning Buch’s view of the KJV:

“Another minister, Rev. Mark Buch, of the People’s Fellowship Tabernacle, asked the question ‘Have we today a faultless copy of the Word of God?’ and answered his own question in the affirmative.”

The article goes on to quote Mark Buch verbatim:

“I believe the whole Bible, not a Bible full of holes. I believe we have the inerrant Word of God; I’m here to inspire faith, not doubt.”

Notice the word he used was “inerrant”. Here is a Preacher teaching that the KJV was without error a decade before Dr. Ruckman wrote his first book on the subject. And in case there’s any doubt as to which version he was referring to, the article further states:

“Claiming that the revised versions of the Bible came from questionable sources, Mr. Buch averred that the King James version was directly translated from a pure copy of the original text without mistake, fault or error.”

Dr. Thomas Cassidy has an excellent article in which he reveals a source of an early Fundamentalist named Dr. W.B.Riley who was complaining about a crowd in his day that were standing for the “inerrancy of the King James Bible”. Sound familiar? I’ll let Dr. Cassidy’s information speak for itself:

“W. B. Riley stated in his book "The Menace of Modernism" (New York: Christian Alliance, 1917), the Modernist believes the Bible's "inspiration exists only in its ability to inspire...its interpretation is a matter of mental conscience." Dr. Riley goes on to say there were a group of men whom he describes as the "old conception," who believed the Authorized Version or King James Bible (hereafter AV) was inerrant. He states on page 11, "On this point we are inclined to think that, even unto comparatively recent years, such a theory has been entertained." He then ascribes this belief to ignorance, and says, "I think it would be accepted without fear of successful controversy that such fogies in Biblical knowledge are few, and their funerals are nigh at hand." Actually there are quite a few of us, and I for one am feeling just fine, thank you. Dr. Riley then erroneously states the AV inerrancy position by saying on page 13, "To claim, therefore, inerrancy for the King James Version...is to claim inerrancy for men who never professed it for themselves..." No one, that I am aware of, is claiming inerrancy for men, but only for the words of God. This position is, I believe, a straw man, attempting to ascribe to us something we do not believe, and then condemn us for believing what they claim we believe....

So then, it seems clear to me that Dr. Riley believed there were still a few of the "old conception" men in his day that still believed in an inerrant AV, that they were mostly old men, and were soon to pass away. If these men were old men when Riley wrote his book, they must have dated to at least the latter part of the 19th century. Over one hundred years ago, a group of "old conception" men existed who still believed in the inerrancy of the AV. This appears to indicate the "King James Only" position is not of recent origin.

Thus we can see, in Riley's day, a group of men still existed who believed, "(1) the Bible was finished in heaven and handed down, (2) the King James Version was absolutely inerrant, and (3) its literal acceptance was alone correct." (Page nine of Riley's book as quoted by Dr. George W. Dollar in his book "History of Fundamentalism in America", Page 114) We can easily see that W. B. Riley (1861 - 1947), understood this group of men to believe exactly as the "King James Only" crowd does today, and believed it long before any of the contemporary antagonists were born! The challenge of one scoffer to "Name one person who believed in the inspiration or inerrancy of the King James Version prior to 1950 and I'll send you \$1000", has just been answered (please send the money to me at the address in the front of this book!).

**Textual Criticism: Fact of Fiction** by Thomas Cassidy (First Baptist Church Publications, 8758 Troy Street, Spring Valley, CA 91977)”

Notice that Dr. Riley’s complaint against those claiming inerrancy for the AV was published in his book in **1917!** His information indicates that there was a crowd of “the old conception” that espoused this “KJV Only” position in the late 1800s.

Here is a quote from an individual named Basil Manly Jr in 1888.

“Why so strenuous of exact inspiration of the words, when you admit there may be errors of transcription? What do you gain? We answer, we gain all the difference there is between an inspired and an uninspired original; all the difference between a document truly divine and authoritative to begin with — though the copies or translations may have in minute particulars varied from it — and a document faulty and unreliable at the outset, and never really divine... There is even now, with some ignorant persons, an assumption of the infallibility and equality with the original of some particular translation, as the Vulgate, or King James, or Luther’s.” [*The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration (1888)* pg. 84 by Basil Manly Jr.]

So again, here is evidence that in the late 1800s there were those who believed the KJV was without error and even equal to the Original Autographs.

The following is a statement from Dr. Henry Alford, a proponent of the Alexandrian manuscripts who helped to pave the way for the modern Critical Texts even before Westcott and Hort’s Greek NT came out. It is his commentary on Heb. 10:23:

“**Hebrews 10:23** (KJV) *“Let us hold fast the profession of our **faith**, without wavering...”* We have here an extraordinary example of the persistence of a blunder, through centuries. The word **FAITH**, given here by the A.V., instead of **HOPE** — breaking up the beautiful triad of versus 22, 23, 24 ~ faith, hope, love — was a mere mistake, **“hope”** being accordingly the rendering of **all** the English versions previously to 1611. And yet this is the version which some would have us regard as infallible, and receive as the written word of God! [*The New Testament for English Readers vol. 4, pg. 1546 (written ca. 1860)*] <http://members.aol.com/pilgrimpub/quotesbt.htm>”

This was written around 1860! Notice that in the mid 1800s Alford also complained about Bible-believers during his time that believed the KJV was infallible, thus, without error.

The evidence is undisputable. There are plenty of examples of those who held to the same positions as those of us today who defend the KJV before the era of Ruckman or even Wilkinson. Our beliefs did not originate with Dr. Peter Ruckman or Dr. Benjamin Wilkinson. Concerning Wilkinson’s contribution to the current movement of KJV defense, Dr. Phil Stringer states the following on pgs. 42-43 in his booklet Ready Answers:

“The arguments of Kutilek, Hudson, Williams and others distort the situation. First, there is nothing new or original in Wilkinson’s book (I have a copy). His historical arguments are a restatement of Frederick Nolan’s An Inquiry into the

Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament, published in 1815. The same arguments about church history are seen in the writings of R.L.Dabney and Louis Gaussen in the 1800's and before that in the writings of John Calvin and Francis Turretin. His refutation of Westcott and Hort had already been made by Dean John Burgon, Edward Miller and F.A.Scrivener. His doctrinal arguments about the Scripture had already been made by a number of Church of England, Lutheran, Calvinist and Baptist preachers and writers.

To declare that Wilkinson taught something new about the doctrine of Scripture or the history of the text is to declare yourself ignorant of hundreds of years of debate about the doctrine of Scripture and the history of the transmission of the text.”

## **A WORD ABOUT WESTCOTT & HORT**

Our opponents will accuse us of a double-standard in these matters for pointing out the theological heresies of B.F.Westcott and F.J.A.Hort. But in doing so, they are missing the point and failing to see the difference. The point is that Westcott and Hort's inferior theology is what led them to an inferior view of the Bible and translation theory.

It cannot be proven that Benjamin Wilkinson's theology drove him to his conclusions concerning the Bible issue because first off there were those who held to such a position way before Wilkinson's writings, as we have already documented. These individuals that pre-date Wilkinson were not Seventh Day Adventists. Secondly, the fact that Seventh Day-Adventists today do not hold his view proves that his theology could not have motivated his views on Bible texts.

The same can be said of Dr. Peter Ruckman. Ruckman received his formal theological training at Bob Jones University. As we all know, BJU is a Fundamentalist school that holds to the Critical Text. So the theological training Dr. Ruckman received at BJU could not have motivated his position on the KJV.

Westcott and Hort were indeed heretics. Their denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ, denial of an eternal and literal hell, sympathy and support for Darwin's evolution theory, belief in the universal Fatherhood of God (the belief that all will eventually be saved, even Satan), purgatory, baptismal regeneration, and other liberal views is what led them to treat the Bible as any other man-made literature. They held to a liberal view of theology and thus a liberal view of the scriptures themselves. For sake of time and space, I will not elaborate on all this. For those interested there is already good material that documents Westcott and Hort's apostasy. Some good booklets that I recommend on this subject are Dr. D.A.Waite's [Heresies of Westcott and Hort](#) and [Westcott's Clever Denial of Christ's Bodily Resurrection](#) which are available at [www.deanburgonsociety.org](http://www.deanburgonsociety.org). Also, Dr. Phil Stringer's booklet entitled [The Westcott and Hort Only Controversy](#) is available at [www.fbcpublications.com](http://www.fbcpublications.com). Also Wilkinson discusses Westcott and Hort in his treatise which can be found in D.O.Fuller's [Which Bible](#), a book that I highly recommend.

The point is this. The false textual theories of Westcott and Hort are rooted in a theological liberalism and a heretical perspective of the scriptures. Our views of Verbal Plenary Inspiration and Preservation of the scriptures are rooted in an orthodox perspective of the scriptures that Bible-believing Christianity has held on to all

throughout history. Therefore, Fundamentalists today who defend the Critical Texts are defending a text and translation theories that are the result of liberalism, modernism, apostasy, and heresy. This is a serious matter. Plus, their position is the younger one, not ours.

There is a difference. When the source of your position is liberal and heretical, complaints against such are valid. Our opponents know that Westcott and Hort were apostates so I feel that they have created these guilt-by-association labels to Ruckman and Wilkinson to try and counter our valid complaints against the liberalism of Westcott and Hort. But it won't work. Because as we have already documented, such presuppositions are historically inaccurate. Our position is a traditional position that Bible-believing Christianity has held to throughout history.

History of Bible manuscripts demonstrates for us that the type of text represented in the Traditional Text (or Received Text) family can be traced from the KJV and other faithful TR-based translations in existence today all the way back to the Apostolic age (in the Italic version and Syrian Peshitta). In other words, there is an unbroken chain of manuscript evidence from the Apostolic age to today supporting the type of text that underlies the KJV. Dr. D.A. Waite demonstrates this evidence on pgs 44-48 of his book *Defending the King James Bible* under the heading *The Thirty-Seven Historical Evidences Supporting the Textus Receptus*. This evidence demonstrates the type of text that represents the fulfillment of God's promises to preserve his pure words forever. Therefore, our whole position on the Textual issue is rooted in the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation as found in the word of God.

Even Hort, according to his own writings, recognized that the Traditional Texts were the prominent text of God's word being used by orthodox Christianity from the 4th to the 19th century. All throughout these ages, orthodox Christianity unanimously rejected the Alexandrian type manuscripts such as Vaticanus. It wasn't until Tischendorf discovered Sinaiticus in the early 1800s that any significant amount of attention (outside of the Catholic church) was ever directed toward the Alexandrian manuscripts. And it wasn't really until 1881 that the Critical Text began to develop a following through Westcott and Hort's Critical Greek NT. You mean to say that for all these centuries orthodox Christianity was without the true and pure words of God? Is it to be believed that Westcott and Hort were the "saviours" that restored for us the true representation of the original words of God? My Bible does not promise for us Bible Restoration, but rather Bible **Preservation!** And considering that the Church of Jesus Christ is the pillar and ground of the truth, I refuse to believe that God preserved the true copies of his word through the Catholic church and liberals.

The Alexandrian manuscripts have been around since the 4<sup>th</sup> century. But true Christianity (non-Catholic) unanimously rejected them until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For 20 centuries, the predominant representations of God's pure words were the Traditional Texts, which underlie our KJV. The modern day Critical Text movement is a result of an apostate era amongst orthodox Christianity and it was brought to significance by two liberals named Westcott and Hort. That is not a guilt-by-association argument. That is a fact!

The idea that the modern day KJV movement was brought to significance by Wilkinson and Ruckman are not facts. That is false. Therein is the difference.



## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, the guilt-by-association arguments hurled at us by the Critical Text crowd are false and inferior because the facts of history demonstrate:

1. Our belief that the KJV is without error did not originate with Dr. Peter S. Ruckman.
2. Our belief in the superiority of the Traditional Texts and the KJV as opposed to the Critical Texts and the modern versions did not originate with a Seventh Day Adventist named Benjamin Wilkinson.
3. That the Critical Text crowd has its roots in the liberalism manifested in Westcott and Hort is not merely a guilt-by-association tactic made for the sake of arguing. It is the truth.

May God open the eyes of those who have been conditioned through their alma-mater to keep their minds trapped in a box which disables them to see clearly the true historic position of Bible-believing Christianity throughout the ages concerning the pure words of God.