

Doug Kutilek's Incredible Errors

Doug Kutilek, author of many articles at the anti-KJV/TR website www.kjvonly.org, claims that many defenders of the KJV/TR, such as David Otis Fuller, are unreliable and unscholarly. The purpose of this brief examination, mainly of his article, "Wilkinson's Incredible Errors," originally published in Baptist Biblical Heritage, Vol. I, No. 3; Fall, 1990, and available at http://www.kjvonly.org/doug/kutilek_wilkinson_incred.htm, is to see if Kutilek himself is reliable and scholarly, or if he is himself what he alleges that David Otis Fuller and other men of God who defend the KJV are. The following quotes come from the article "Wilkinson's Incredible Errors," an attack upon the SDA Wilkinson and the Baptist fundamentalist David Otis Fuller. Each quotation is allegedly an "incredible error" made by Wilkinson or Fuller. Seven "incredible errors" made by Fuller or Wilkinson are examined.

Quote #1, an "incredible error": Kutilek said: "Unquestionably, Wilkinson ascribes to the KJV translators a period of suffering and persecution in connection with their translation work. . . . Fuller recognized this glaring misrepresentation."

However, Wilkinson did not say that suffering was on account of their translation of the KJV specifically. Nothing in the context of the passage from Wilkinson's work, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, proves Kutilek's affirmation. Is it Wilkinson or Kutilek that is making a glaring misrepresentation here?

Quotes #2-3, "incredible errors": Kutilek said, "In discussing variations among existing manuscript copies of the Greek New Testament, Wilkinson reveals his own astonishing ignorance by saying, 'The large number of conflicting readings which higher [sic; he means lower] critics have gathered must come from only a few manuscripts, since the overwhelming mass of manuscripts is identical.' (WB, p. 264) No one with even the smallest acquaintance with the manuscripts of the Greek New Testament would blunder so badly. . . . For Wilkinson to affirm that the 'overwhelming mass of manuscripts is identical' is a gross distortion of the worst sort, giving a wholly false impression of both the relative extent of Alexandrian variants from the Byzantine text and the relative uniformity of Byzantine manuscripts. Such a mistake should warn us that Wilkinson is not adequately or accurately enough informed to be a safe guide in these matters."

Here two errors are allegedly made by Wilkinson and reproduced by David Otis Fuller. The first, lesser error they allegedly make is a confounding of lower and higher criticism—Wilkinson (and Fuller, it seems) were too ignorant to know the difference between them. Apparently the fact that the editors of the modern critical text believe in higher criticism as well as lower criticism, and that lower criticism is saturated with higher criticism, are not considerations of enough weight to stop Kutilek from assuming an error by Wilkinson and Fuller, nor is the fact that the statement that is the "incredible error" is true—higher critics have gathered large numbers of conflicting readings. The second, larger error is that Wilkinson allegedly believed that the great majority of Greek MSS are absolutely identical in every respect, so that he does not have even the smallest acquaintance with them, as evidenced in his "blunder[ing] so badly" as to affirm an identity as perfect as that from a copy machine among the handwritten Greek documents. However, the context of Wilkinson's statement makes his meaning clear:

[O]f the Greek New Testament, Dr. Hort, who was an opponent of the Received Text and who dominated the English New Testament Revision Committee, says: ‘An overwhelming proportion of the text in all known cursive manuscripts except a few is, as a matter of fact, identical.’ . . . Thus strong testimonies can be given not only to the Received Text, but also to the phenomenal ability of the manuscript scribes writing in different countries and in different ages to preserve an identical Bible in the overwhelming mass of manuscripts. The large number of conflicting readings which higher critics have gathered must come from only a few manuscripts, since the overwhelming mass of manuscripts is identical. (*Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, elec. acc. at <http://kjv.benabraham.com/index.html>; all following quotations from the book by this reviewer come from this source)

If Kutilek wishes to make Wilkinson into such a simpleton that he did not know that there were copyist errors, etc. in Greek MSS, he would need to put Hort, one of the two main originators of Kutilek’s beloved critical text, in the same category. Is it Wilkinson and Fuller who are the simpletons engaged in “gross distortion” here?

Quote #4, an “incredible error”: After a third quote from Wilkinson as republished by Fuller, Kutilek writes, “This can only mean that Wilkinson thought that the departures from the received text by these two manuscripts were unknown before 1881, when they were suddenly sprung on the world. Again, no one who has made any investigation of the subject could display such ignorance.” It is unfortunate that Kutilek did not consider the sentence immediately after the one he quotes from Wilkinson, which reads, “The Forum informs us that 250 different versions of the Bible were tried in England between 1611 and now, but they all fell flat before the majesty of the King James. Were not the Alexandrinus and the Vaticanus able to aid these 250 versions, and overthrow the other Bible, resting, as the critics explain, on an insecure foundation?” Wilkinson was aware that Bible versions following a Vaticanus-type of text were made before the Revised Version of 1881. Furthermore, Wilkinson writes two sentences after the immediately preceding quotation, “The problems presented by these two manuscripts [Alexandrinus and Vaticanus] were well known, not only to the translators of the King James, but also to Erasmus.” So when Kutilek states that “Wilkinson thought that the departures from the received text by these two manuscripts were unknown before 1881, when they were suddenly sprung on the world. Again, no one who has made any investigation of the subject could display such ignorance,” are Wilkinson and Fuller the ones really displaying ignorance, or is it an “incredible error” and “ignorance” to impute to a writer what he obviously disavows only a few sentences afterwards?

Quote #5, an “incredible error”: Kutilek quotes Wilkinson as saying, “It is an exaggerated idea, much exploited by those who are attacking the Received Text, that we of the present have greater, as well as more valuable, sources of information than had the translators of 1611.” Commenting on this, Kutilek writes, “Wilkinson’s error, whether due to ignorance or distortion, is monstrous.” Kutilek does not interact with the quotation Wilkinson makes to support his statement, nor with other sources that present evidence that validate the truth of Wilkinson’s assertion (e. g. <http://wayoflife.org/fbns/isthereceived.htm>). Here again, Kutilek reads into Wilkinson an error, and the notion that Wilkinson did not know that we have unearthed many more

MSS since 1611 (although we have not discovered new types of text that were unknown in 1611). Is this an “incredible error” by Wilkinson, or a manufactured error by Kutilek?

Quote #6, an “incredible error”: Kutilek writes, “In a work devoted to a discussion of the text of the New Testament, the analysis of ancient manuscripts should display particular care and attention, but such is not the case with Wilkinson. He makes the amazing statement: ‘...the scholars of Europe and England, in particular had ample opportunity to become fully acquainted by 1611 with the problems involved in the Alexandrinus manuscript.’ (WB. p. 252) [but] in the very next paragraph, notes that this manuscript arrived (in England) from the Middle East in 1627! (pp. 252-3).” The impression is made that Wilkinson was too foolish to know that 1611 came before 1627. However, Wilkinson provides evidence in the passages around the section quoted by Kutilek that the alternatives in Alexandrinus were available to English scholarship. Wilkinson specifically deals with the history of the manuscript before its arrival in England in 1627. He correctly writes, “We would humbly inquire if a manuscript must dwell in the home town of scholars in order for them to have the use of its information? If so, then the Revisers of 1881 and 1901 were in a bad way.” Is Wilkinson the one making an “incredible error” here?

Quote #7, an “incredible error”: Kutilek writes, “Informed readers will be surprised to learn (WB, p. 315), that the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai is a ‘Catholic Monastery.’ Of course, it is not Catholic at all, but the oldest monastery of the Greek Orthodox Church.” In the same sentence that Kutilek gets his quote from, in the very next phrase, Wilkinson wrote of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus as “types of manuscripts upon which the [Latin] Vulgate was built.” When Sinaiticus was copied, as when the Latin Vulgate was translated, there was no Greek Orthodox Church; Eastern and Western Catholicism were united. Besides, there is nothing wrong with calling Eastern Orthodoxy “Catholicism.” The Eastern Orthodox certainly would not admit that Romanism is the Catholic or universal faith, but claim the title for themselves. Protestants and Baptists would hardly call Romanism the universal faith either. Is Wilkinson really ignorant of the fact that the Great Schism that divided Eastern and Western Catholicism happened in the 11th century, and so making an “incredible error,” or is Kutilek trying to create errors that are not there?

Kutilek’s final paragraph contains these three sentences: “[T]hese examples are adequate to demonstrate beyond honest cavil the wholly unreliable nature of Wilkinson’s writings. . . . Instead of helping resolve the text and translation controversy, Fuller, by virtue of his republication of Wilkinson, has created (again to use Fuller’s own words) “such profound confusion in Christian circles” (*Which Bible*, p. 174). He has gotten for himself such a blot on his escutcheon as shall tarnish his reputation as long as his memory shall endure among the living.” In light of the errors made by Kutilek—in an article that is supposed to be exposing “incredible errors,” KJV defenders—would it be better to replace the word “Kutilek” with “Wilkinson” or “Fuller” in the quotation above?

A final example of error, too blatant to be ignored, comes from Kutilek’s article “The Septuagint--B.C. or A.D.?” reprinted from “As I See It” 7:7, 7:8, and available on the web at http://www.kjvonly.org/doug/kutilek_septuagint.htm. In this article, Kutilek affirms that a “remarkably uninformed opinion is [expressed by] Pastor Kent Brandenburg, who in all seriousness actually affirmed” a quotation that follows. The source for the quotation is given by Kutilek as “*God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible*

Preserved For Us by Kent Brandenburg.” Not a little problem is posed by the fact that Kent Brandenburg did not write *God’s Word in Our Hands*, a pro-critical text, anti KJV/TR book edited by James B. Williams and Randolph Shaylor that Pastor Brandenburg, general editor of *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*, an ardent KJV/TR defender, and an author of a critique of that very volume, would by no means endorse, not to mention write. When Kutilek affirms that Kent Brandenburg wrote the anti-KJV/TR book *God’s Word in Our Hands*, he is making a fool of himself.

The intention of this study is by no means to indicate that there are no heretics, wackos, ignoramuses, or dishonest defenders of the KJV. Wilkinson was a Seventh Day Adventist, and Seventh Day Adventism is heresy. Wilkinson’s book *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, unlike the Bible it defends, is not infallible. Peter Ruckman is unquestionably a wacko. However, these problems are not at all unique to the defenders of the KJV—Kutilek, in his slander of David Otis Fuller and Kent Brandenburg, his bungling critique of Wilkinson, and the other myths (such as the idea that Wilkinson founded the movement defending the KJV) propounded on his website is an example of the inaccuracy, out of either ignorance or dishonesty, that is sadly too often found among opponents of the KJV/TR position.