22 Right To The Tree Of Life

Confirmation Of The Message To The Young Rich Man In The Book Of Revelation

In the Book of Revelation at 22:14, in the middle of two statements by Jesus, we are told the consequence of “doing His commandments” is the “right to the tree of life” and to “enter” the new heavens — the City of the New Jerusalem.¹ In Revelation 22:14, the various versions read:

Happy [are] the ones doing His commandments,² so that their right will be to the tree of life, and they shall enter by the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14)(ALT)

Blessed are they, that doe his commandments, that their right may be in the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the citie. (Rev 22:14)(Geneva)

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¹. The immediately preceding verses are clearly from Jesus: “Look, I am coming soon, bringing My reward with Me to repay all people according to their deeds. (13) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (Rev 22:12-13 NLT.) And the immediately following verse is clearly from Jesus: “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to His throne. I am the bright morning star.” (Rev 22:16 NLT.)

². For the discussion on how this ‘obey his commandments’ exists in the earliest known Greek manuscripts from the 200s, and was quoted in 208 A.D. by Tertullian and 251 A.D. by Cyprian, see page 382 below. On why the modern translations materially vary the verse in reliance upon a single much later errant and sloppily prepared Greek text — the Sinaiticus — from 330 A.D., see page 384 below.
Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14)(KJV)

The only significant difference in these three translations is that one says those who do his commandments “shall” have the right to the tree of life, and other two say those who obey the commandments “may” have the right to the tree of life. Which is correct?

‘Shall’ Is The Correct Translation

The verb infinitive at issue is eimi. The future indicative of eimi (‘to be’) is estai. The subjunctive of eimi is ê. In Revelation 22:14, eimi reads both ways simultaneously — “ina estai ê exousia autôn.”³

How should this odd sequence be understood and translated? As a subjunctive — may, should or might? Or as a future tense — shall?

This unusual structure appears four times in the New Testament. First, we find it in Luke 10:12 — “anektoteron estai ê tê polei ekeinê.” This is translated as “it shall be more tolerable in that day” for Sodom than for that city. Clearly, Jesus did not mean it may be more tolerable for Sodom. Instead, Jesus meant it should be and will be.

The combination estai ê appears again in Luke 17:30 — “tauta estai ê êmera o uios tou anthrôpou apokaluptetai.” This is translated, “even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” Jesus is not saying it ‘may’ be business as usual’ when He returns. Rather, Jesus clearly means it should and will be just like in the days of Lot.

3. Estai appears in all compilations of the Greek New Testament texts, without variation. See Stephens 1550 Textus Receptus; the Scrivner 1894 Textus Receptus; the Byzantine Greek text; and the Alexandrian (Westcott-Hort (1881)).
This *estai ê* appears again in Mark 12:7 — “*estai ê* klêronomia.” This is where the scheming husbandmen say to themselves that they will kill the son so “the inheritance *shall* be ours.” Their scheme to kill the son is so that it *should* and *shall* be theirs at the same time.

*Estai ê* finally appears in Romans 15:12 — “*estai ê* riza.” This is quoting Isaiah as saying “there *shall* be a root” of Jesse, etc.

Obviously, the quote from Romans 15:12 settles the usage issue. It is not conceivable that Isaiah spoke that Jesus *may* be from the root of Jesse.

Hence, the meaning of this future subjunctive structure *estai ê* is something that not only *should* happen but also *will* happen. *Estai ê* cannot be weakly understood as merely *something may* happen.

Hence, Revelation 22:14 properly should be translated as “their right *shall be* to the tree of life, etc.”

**Obedience To Commandments Is A Conditional Salvation Beatitude**

Revelation 22:14 is a conditional beatitude. Only those who do His commandments *shall have* the right to the tree of life and enter the New Jerusalem. Cf. Rev. 14:12 (the faithful “keep the commandments of God....”)

Thus, this verse says those who do God’s commandments *shall* have a right to the tree of life, and enter into the gates of the New Jerusalem — the new Heaven.

Clarke acknowledges these words mean in Greek they enjoy “an authority founded on right, this *right founded on obedience to the commandments of God....*”

Thus, this passage has a simple meaning. Those who do God’s commandments have a right to the tree of life and to enter the New Jerusalem.

What does this tree of life represent?
Right To The Tree Of Life

The Tree of Life

The fruit of that tree was explained in Genesis to impart eternal life. God said in Genesis that if the human Adam who already had fallen into sin were now to eat from the tree of life, Adam would have “lived forever” and “become as one of us.” (Gen. 2:9, 3:22 JPS.) To prevent a disobedient Adam from enjoying living forever as “one of us,” God had to prevent any uncontrolled access by Adam to the tree of life. Thus, God removed Adam from the Garden of Eden. This was to prevent any further unrestricted access by Adam to the tree of life. Hence, when Jesus says in Revelation 2:14 that those who “do the commandments of God shall have the right to eat of the tree of life,” Jesus means those shall receive salvation — the right to “live forever.”

Access To The New Jerusalem

That salvation is involved in Revelation 22:14 is also obvious from the fact that those who receive the right to eat of the tree of life shall have a right to “enter the city (i.e., the New Jerusalem).”

What does the city of the New Jerusalem signify? The new abode created by God to share presence with us. (Rev. 3:12.)

Thus, Revelation teaches, like Jesus taught the young rich man, that the path to eternal life with God is doing God’s commandments in the here and now.

4. “He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name.” (Rev 3:12 ASV) “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven of God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Rev 21:2 ASV)


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See Table 1.

### TABLE 1. Comparison of Revelation 22:14 and Matthew 19:16-26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revelation 2:14</th>
<th>Matthew 19:17-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Happy [are] the ones doing His commandments, so that their right will be to the tree of life, and they shall enter by the gates into the city.”</td>
<td>“(17) if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, etc.” (ASV)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_A Singular Command Or Plural Commands? A Command Only To Believe?_

Those wed to the gospel of cheap grace insist Jesus means in Revelation 22:14 that the obedience required is solely to the _single_ command to believe. (Jamieson, Gill.) There is supposedly no implication that any command more than simply _believing_ is necessary to have a right to the tree of life and enter the New Jerusalem.

Is this a sound reading of _this verse_? No.

First, in Revelation 22:14, the obedience which gives us the right to the tree of life is obedience to _commandments_ in the plural form.

Second Revelation 22:18-19 refutes this idea that an obedience to a single command to believe is in view.

This passage comes only four verses after Revelation 22:14. In Revelation 22:18-19, we see a deliberate parallel to Revelation 22:14 by use of the _identical expression_ “right to the tree of life and to enter the city.”

Revelation 22:18-19 speaks precisely of someone violating Deuteronomy 4:2 (adding or subtracting from God’s word). This is then applied specifically to the “words of this
Right To The Tree Of Life

book of prophecy.” The violator of that command will find “his share removed” from the “tree of life and in the holy city....”

Here is Revelation 22:18-19:

And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. (19) And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book. (Rev 22:18-19 NLT.)

Hence, if someone is doing “his commandments,” they enjoy the “right to the tree of life and to enter the gates of the city” (Rev. 22:14). However, if they violate a command such as adding to or subtracting from the words of an inspired text (here Revelation), then “that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city” shall likewise be “removed.” (Rev. 22:18-19.)

Obviously, these commands in Revelation 22:18-19 — the obedience to which is absolutely necessary to retain one’s right to the tree — has nothing to do with belief alone. It has to do with not tampering by adding or subtracting from the text of God’s word, which command originates with Deuteronomy 4:2. Thus, one way to understand the scope of “commandments” in Revelation 22:14 is to see its scope just four verses later. The commands are extended just four verses later to something distinctly different than merely disbelieving. Instead, one’s share in the tree of life is removed due to violation of Revelation 22:18-19 — wrongfully adding or subtracting from the Book of Revelation itself.

As one Christian scholar notes, Revelation 22:18-19 is the “mirror-image” of the beatitude of Revelation 22:14.

[In a mirror-image of the beatitude in [Revela
tion] 22:14, the warning to those who remove
anything from the book is of exclusion from the city and the tree of life.\(^6\)

Hence, the way Gill and Jamieson read Revelation 22:14 ignores its plural reference to ‘commands.’ They also ignore the mirror-image application of 22:14 just four verses later in Revelation 22:18-19. Thus, together 22:14 and 22:18-19 hinge salvation on a violation of a command other than to believe by someone who clearly, as a result of their disobedience, is being threatened with having God “remove his share” in the tree of life.

Moreover, Revelation 22:14 says — just as Jesus said in His earthly ministry — that obedience to the multiple commandments, in particular the Ten Commandments, are what allows one to “enter life.” (Matt. 19:16-26.) This is the “path to the tree of life” which God set up cherubim and flaming swords to guard against access by an unrepentant Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3:24.) Yet, Jesus was the Way (John 14:6) and He gave the secret to the “way to the tree of life” for the repentant sons of Adam: obedience to God’s commandments.

Lastly, the proof that eternal life is not merely by belief alone is self-evident in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats as well as numerous other lessons and parables of Jesus.\(^7\) In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus says those who obey the duty to be charitable inherit eternal life, but those who disobey this principle are sent to “eternal fire.” (Matt. 25:31-46.) Jesus could hardly be more blunt.

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7. See “Parable Of The Sheep & The Goats” on page 219 et seq.
Modern Gospel Of Cheap Grace: How It Views Revelation 22:14

Bob Wilkin, head of the Grace Evangelical Society, is a renown belief-alone teacher. In his article entitled, “Who Are The Outsiders? Revelation 22:14-17,” he provides arguments to allow cheap grace to survive this passage.

By examining how weak is Wilkin’s case for reconciling Revelation 22:14 with such doctrine, we will realize just how strong a passage it is for confirming Jesus literally meant what He said to the young rich man.

Wilkin claims the “tree of life” in Revelation 22:14 means abundant life for Christians, not eternal life in heaven. Then what about the fact it meant eternal life to Adam? Wilkin’s response is that had Adam eaten from the tree, it did not allegedly mean eternal life in heaven. He argues it would have meant everlasting life for Adam in hell. It is stupefying sometimes to hear such tripe!

Then what about those who have the right to enter the New Jerusalem? Wilkin’s solution is that those who lose the right to enter the New Jerusalem means they are still living safely in heaven outside of the New Jerusalem. What about the fact the place outside is identified in Revelation as where those are sent preparatory to being sent to hell, including unbelievers, murderers, liars, cowards, etc. (Rev. 21:8; 22:15.) Wilkin imagines there is a place way outside the New Jerusalem where the lost go en route to hell. But those Christians outside the New Jerusalem are still safe outside, but somehow are still inside heaven. What utter nonsense! It is almost insufferable to tolerate such sad arguments.

9. An extensive discussion and critique appears online in the supplement section, entitled Rebuttal Arguments to Right to Tree of Life.
Obviously, only because this passage refutes the cheap grace gospel — and repeats Jesus’ message to the rich young man,\(^{10}\) this passage is being fought off by the silliest of arguments. If one can believe all such nonsense of the cheap grace gospel enthusiasts, one cares not at all to know the true meaning of this passage. One is simply superimposing dogma at odds with Jesus’ teaching so that every verse comes out compatible with one’s presuppositions of what the gospel should mean. It is as Jesus said repeatedly ‘They hear but do not listen. They see, but do not understand.’

**HISTORICAL NOTE: LATER CORRUPTION OF TEXT**

Incidentally, there is a modern movement to accept a textual corruption of Revelation 22:14 from the middle 300s. This corruption erases the problem to cheap grace posed by the original wording of the verse. This is worthy of extensive discussion for two reasons:

1. It highlights the fact that modern compiled texts from the 1800s to the present have permitted influences that are illegitimate, in particular from the Sinaiticus (Aleph), which is the source of this variation; \(^{11}\) and

2. Despite the evidence being overwhelming here that ‘obey his commandments’ is the original text and that the Sinaiticus is both highly corrupted in this passage as well as generally, no one has lifted their finger to protect the words of Revelation from the loss of this very important verse.


\(^{11}\)An excellent synopsis in columns of the changes and deletions of texts in the modern compiled texts reflected in the NIV can be found in Richard Anthony, *Comparisons Between the Majority(KJV) and Minority (NIV) Texts* at http://ecclesia.org/truth/m-m.html (last accessed 9-7-07). For example, the NIV deletes Matthew 12:47 and 21:44 and a host of other passages.
At the same time, a very horrible injunction hangs over the book of Revelation. It is a threat which compilers and translators should never have dared to transgress:

And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. (19) And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book. Rev 22:18-19 NLT

In fact, ironically, this little injunction is the converse of Revelation 22:14, as mentioned above. Those who “obey his commandments” have the right to “tree of life and to enter the holy city,” but those who transgress by removing or adding words from this particular book of prophecy would find “that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city” taken away.

I suggest all compilers of the New Testament, who are true Christians, to give immediate heed to what follows.

The Text Tradition That Has ‘Obey His Commandments.’

The Majority Greek manuscripts have Revelation 22:14 saying “obey his commandments.” This tradition is documented in the Stephens 1550 Textus Receptus; the Scrivener 1894 Textus Receptus; and the Byzantine Majority Text.12 It appears in the oldest Latin Vulgate, [411-424 A.D.], the Syriac versions (Peshitta, Harkelian, and Philoxenian), Lamsa’s 1936 translation of the Syriac Peshitta, the Coptic Boharic (3rd to 4th century), and the Armenian ancient versions.

Jesus’ Words On Salvation

Modern Gospel Of Cheap Grace: How It Views Revelation 22:14

Jamieson concedes the King James source text is based on the earliest evidence from church commentators who quoted it in the 200s, as well as very early Bible texts likewise from the 200s: “so B, Syriac, Coptic [3d/4th Century], and CYPRIAN [251 A.D.] [says ‘do his commandments’].”

Quotes of Revelation 22:14 in the 200s Solve The Case

Tertullian in 208 A.D. and Cyprian in 251 A.D. both quote the ‘obey his commandments’ rather than the ‘wash their robes’ variant. Tertullian quotes Revelation 22:14 in On Modesty (208 A.D.):

[T] Apocalypse [Revelation says]... again “Blessed they who act according to the precepts, that they may have power [authority, potestatem] over the tree of life and over the gates, for entering into the holy city.” “Dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, out!”

Cyprian in 251 A.D. quotes Revelation 22:14 as saying:

In the Apocalypse [Revelation, we read]... Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have power [authority, potestatem] over the tree of life.

13. Cyprian lived in Carthage, and was a pupil of Tertullian.
This would settle almost certainly that the correct translation of the Greek is ‘obey his commandments.’

**Tradition And How It Changed**

For this reason, all Bibles until the modern era have translated Revelation 22:14 as *obey his commandments.*

Why did this change? Jamieson says:

> But A [Alexandrinus, ca. 450 A.D.], Aleph [Sinaiticus ca. 330 A.D.], and the Vulgate [of 425] read, ‘(Blessed are they that) wash their robes’.

Aleph means the Codex Sinaiticus. It dates to approximately 330-340 A.D. It is thus the obvious source text of the much later Vulgate and Alexandrinus texts. At the same time, Sinaiticus clearly post-dates commentaries from the 200s by over one-hundred years. Thus, ‘Wash their robes’ is remarkably isolated, late and rare in the Greek text tradition. According to Jamieson, no other earlier Greek text than the Sinaiticus reads ‘wash their robes.’

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15. Cyprian (died 258), *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, Book II: *That In the Sign of the Cross Is Salvation for All People*, available online at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.xii.iii.xxiv.html?highlight=blessed,are,they,that,do,his,commandments#highlight (access 7-15-07).
16. The ‘obey his commandment’ appears in the following translations: Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, the Bishop’s Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587, the 1611 King James Holy Bible, Wesley’s 1755 translation, Webster’s 1833, Luther’s German Bible of 1545, the Italian Dio- dati, Young’s 1911, the NKJV 1982, the KJV 21st Century version, Green’s Modern KJV 1998, the Hebrew Names Version, World English Bible, the Third Millenium Bible, as well as the Spanish Reina Valera from 1602 - 1909. The Spanish Reina Valera of 1960 changed its text to ‘wash their robes.’
The Scribal Error That Explains The Discrepancy

How did this Greek manuscript with the variation ‘wash their robes’ come about? Did it substitute ‘wash their robes’ in place of an original expression of ‘obey his commandments’? Or was the error the other way around?

It turns out that a transposition of a few Greek letters clearly explains a scribal error took place — in whatever direction it took place. The Trinitarian Bible Society explains how ‘obey his commandments’ and ‘wash their robes’ are almost identical in Greek. It is thus obviously a scribal error which explains the errant text:

But we desire to be sure that we set down in the printed Scriptures an accurate representation of the words of the Holy Spirit and not the product of an ancient scribal error. There is a close similarity in the Greek between \textit{PLUNONTES TAS STOLAS AUTON} (wash their robes), and \textit{POIOUNTES PAS ENTOLAS AUTOU} (do his commandments). The unfamiliar appearance of POIOUNTES (‘do’ rather than ‘keep’) may have led a scribe, whether or not deliberately, to adopt the other form of wording, and so produce the prototype of the manuscripts which underlie the modern rendering ‘wash their robes.’

Which Way Is The Corruption Of Revelation 22:14?

In theory, this corruption could be in either direction. It could have been corrupted prior to 200 A.D. If so, then Tertullian and Cyprian in 208 A.D. and 251 A.D. respectively simply quoted the erroneous passage. They might have erred saying ‘obey his commandments.’

How would this be evaluated?

If the Sinaiticus is much younger than 208 A.D., then clearly it would be more likely that Tertullian and Cyprian relied upon an errant \textit{later} text. Conversely, if the Sinaiticus
is much older than 208 A.D., then Tertullian and Cyprian are relying on the correct text which existed previously. And then ‘obey his commandments’ is truly the original text.

How old is the Sinaiticus? It was found in 1844 in a monastery in the Sinai. It is dated for textual reasons to the mid-300s. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* in “Codex Sinaiticus” explains why:

> Its antiquity is shown by the writing, by the four columns to a page (an indication, probably, of the transition from the roll to the codex form of manuscript.), by the absence of the large initial letters and of ornaments, by the rarity of punctuation, by the short titles of the books, the presence of divisions of the text antedating Eusebius [died 340], the addition of Barnabas and Hermas, etc. Such indications have induced experts to place it in the fourth century, along with Codex Vaticanus and some time before Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Ephremi Rescriptus; this conclusion is not seriously questioned, though the possibility of an early fifth-century date is conceded.17

Thus, the Sinaiticus is dated to somewhere in the 300s, probably near 330-340 A.D.

Because this comes too late for Tertullian and Cyprian to have ever known about, it is obvious Tertullian in 208 A.D. and Cyprian in 251 A.D. are looking at the original version. It always read “obey his commandments.”

Yet, is there any other evidence that would strengthen our opinion such as proof the Sinaiticus is a poorly prepared copy?

Modern Gospel Of Cheap Grace: How It Views Revelation 22:14

The Answer Bears On The Reliability Of Many Modern Translations

Before we analyze the quality of the Sinaiticus, there is a lot more at stake here than just Revelation 22:14.

It turns out the reliability of the Sinaiticus also bears on the very important question whether we are going to change allegiance to modern versions like the New International Version.

For we shall see, numerous Bible texts (such as the NIV) today rely upon the Bible-compilers Westcott and Hort. They were the first to incorporate in the 1800s the variants from the Sinaiticus into their new Greek New Testament compilation. Their compilation included the Sinaiticus’ ‘wash their robes’ for Revelation 22:14. The Westcott Hort compilation became the basis for today’s Nestle-Aland compilation. It is published by the United Bible Societies. The Nestle-Aland is on its 26th Edition. It is still going strong. This compilation was the basis for the New International Version. Thus, because the Westcott-Hort-Nestle-Aland compilation adopted the Sinaiticus-variant of Revelation 22:14, the Sinaiticus version is now rampant throughout most modern texts.

For example, the Sinaiticus-version of Revelation 22:14 can now be found in such versions as the NIV, RSV, NASB, ESV, Holman Standard, and Darby. All these versions read: “Blessed are those WHO WASH THEIR ROBES, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”

Proof Of Carelessness In Scribes Who Worked On Sinaiticus

So is the Sinaiticus a reliably prepared copy of the New Testament? Eminent professionals who handled and inspected the Sinaiticus concur it is very poor and very rough. These include Burgon and Scrivener.

First, we will start with Burgon’s views.
John William Burgon matriculated at Oxford in 1841, taking several high honors there, including a B.A. in 1845 and an M.A. in 1848. In 1860, while temporary chaplain of the English congregation at Rome, he made a personal examination of Codex B (Vaticanus), and in 1862 he inspected the Sinaiticus at St. Catherine’s Convent on Mt. Sinai.

In 1883, Burgon wrote *Revision Revised* (London: John Murray: 1883). It was primarily a criticism to the compilation text done by Westcott Hort which in turn was used to translate the *Revised Version of the Bible* (1881).

Burgon often is misused today to prove he thought the King James’s source text was infallible and excellent. Burgon not only did not say that, but also denied that was his point. He declared that issue was not the subject matter of his particular book. In fact, Burgon was fully admitting that sometimes the Majority Text collation text upon which the KJV is based could be found to have errors. (See Footnote 19, page 389.) Yet, Burgon’s focus was upon the reliability of Aleph (Sinaiticus) and similar texts which formed part of the basis for the *Revised Version of the Bible* in 1881.

Burgon wrote this regarding Aleph (Sinaiticus):

I insist and am prepared to prove that the text of these two Codexes (B and Aleph) is very nearly the foulest in existence... That they exhibit fabricated texts is demonstratable....B and Aleph are covered all over with blots — *Aleph even more than B*... On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters, words or even whole sentences are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same

words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament.

Next and finally, another Greek scholar, Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener (1813-1891), was also permitted to examine the Sinaiticus. He wrote a seminal scholarly work on it entitled *A Full Collation of the Sinaiticus Ms. With The Received Text of the New Testament* (Cambridge: 1864). This represented a collation of the Sinaiticus to the Textus Receptus (Majority Text.) Yet, he speaks identical to what Burgon observed about a confusing array of correctional alterations made to the Sinaiticus manuscript:

The [Sinaiticus] Codex is covered with such alterations...brought in by at least ten different revisers, some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional or limited to separated portions of the MS, many of these

19. In the King James Only debate Burgon is often cited as if he was a purist about the Majority Text. However, Burgon himself proposed over 100 corrections to the Book of Matthew alone. In his *Revision Revised*, Burgon said he used the Stephanus' Greek Testament of 1550 as a standard. Yet, he wrote, “...by so doing I have not by any means assumed the textual purity of that common standard. In other words, I have not made it 'the final standard of appeal.'” Burgon added that it is simply the “most convenient standard of comparison; not, surely, as the absolute standard of excellence.” *Id.*, at xviii-xix, preface. He added later: “Let no one at all events obscure the one question at issue, by asking,— ‘Whether we consider the textus receptus infallible?’ The merit or demerit of the Received Text has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the question. We care nothing about it. Any Text would equally suit our present purpose.” *Id.* at 17. “Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, *claim perfection for the Received Text*. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out (e.g. at page 107) that the *textus receptus needs correction.*” *Id.*, at 21, footnote 2. “[I]n not a few particulars, the ‘Textus receptus’ does call for Revision, certainly.” *Id.* at 107. Of interest, Burgon discusses the idea whether God promised to protect the textual transmission from error. To this he said: “That by a perpetual miracle, Sacred Manuscripts would be protected all down the ages against depraving influences of whatever sort, — was not to have been expected; certainly, was *never promised.*” *Id.* at 335.
being contemporaneous with the first writer, but the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century. (Id., at xix.)

Dr. Scrivener continued and gave a very sobering analysis of the chaos evident in the Sinaiticus text:

This manuscript must have been derived from one more ancient, in which the lines were similarly divided, since the writer occasionally omits just the number of letters which would suffice to fill a line, and that to the utter ruin of the sense: as if his eye had heedlessly wandered to the line immediately below. Instances of this want of care will be found (in) Luke 21:8; 22:25, perhaps John 4:45;12;25, where complete lines are omitted; John, 19:26; Heb. 13:18 (Partly corrected); Apoc. 8:16; 19:12; 22:2, where the copyist passed in the middle of a line to the corresponding portion of the line below. It must be confessed, indeed, that the Codex Sinaiticus abounds with similar errors of the eye and pen, to an extent not unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance; so that Tregelles has freely pronounced that ‘the state of text, as proceeding from the first scribe, may be regarded as very rough.’ Id. at xv.

Dr. Scrivener exposed that Westcott Hort compiled their famous Greek New Testament using a wrong and conjectural theory. They did not use reliable textual analysis:

There is little hope for the stability of their imposing structure, if its foundations have been laid on the sandy ground of ingenious conjecture. And, since barely the smallest vestige of historical evidence has ever been alleged

in support of the views of these accomplished Editors [i.e., Westcott Hort], their teaching must either be received as intuitively true, or dismissed from our consideration as precarious, and even visionary. (Scrivener, Introduction, Vol. 11, at 295.)

In light of this, Bible Researcher notes: “The text of Sinaiticus...contains an unusually high number of readings which have clearly arisen by transcriptional error....”

Why Did Modern Bible Translators Not Adjust For This Error In The Texts Used To Translate Revelation 22:14?

It is abundantly clear from the above that the Sinaiticus is in error. It is a mess of chaos. Westcott Hort selected its erroneous language without doing the kind of textual analysis that Bible scholars were expected to do. The complaints, however, of Burgon and Scrivener — men of excellent credentials — fell on deaf ears. At least, it seems that’s what has happened. For what else can explain why the error in Revelation 22:14 persists in each edition of the Nestle-Aland of the United Bible Society which contains “wash their robes”?

Do modern authorities explain themselves, or even identify the question? Generally not. For example, the New International Greek Testament Commentary is typical of a number of recent commentaries. It makes no mention of the variant reading for Rev. 22:14. It fails to disclose “do His commandments” is the alternate to “wash their robes.” Others mention it, but try to suggest the case is equally plausible either way. In truth, instead, it is decidedly in favor of ‘obey his commandments.’

Unfortunately, this silence or misleading presentation has a tragic explanation.

Revelation 22:14 is one of the most important verses that explains *obeying multiple commandments* are what gives you the right to enter the kingdom of heaven. **It is a verse (among many others) that refutes clearly the belief alone doctrine of our modern era.** One need only look at the commentators falling over backwards to try to explain how cheap grace is still valid when faced with the original text ‘obey His commandments.’ For example, listen to Jamieson, Faussett and Brown and how they try to truncate *do his commands* to the single command to believe:

The English Version (King James Bible) reading is quite compatible with salvation by grace; for God’s first and grand Gospel “commandment” is to believe on Jesus. Thus our “right” to the tree of life is *due not to our doings*, but to what He has done for us. The right, or privilege, is founded, not on our merits, but on God’s grace.

Yet, that is completely contrary to the text. It says *commandments*. Not command! It says our doing of the commandments do give us the right to enter. It is no different than when Jesus said those who do “good things” (plural) shall rise to resurrection and those who “do evil things (plural)” shall rise to condemnation. (John 5:28-29 KJV.) (For a thorough discussion of that passage, see page 395 *et seq.*

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22.G.K. Beale, “Revelation is The Book of Revelation, a Commentary on the Greek Text,” *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, Editors) (Wm. B Eerdmans: 1999) at 1139. Without mentioning the variation, Beale sloughs off the concern by saying ‘wash their robes’ is another way of speaking about an enduring faith. Yet, there is a stark elevation of meaning by ‘obey his commandments’ that even the proponents of ‘wash their robes’ know the latter does not contain.

Thus, Revelation 22:14 is a clear problem passage (like all the others cited in this book) for modern doctrine. Yet, not in the Sinaiticus version. No! All the problems go away! It’s like a dream come true for the cheap grace enthusiast. There is a scribal error that erases the problem. If you go with it, you don’t need to offer any more lame explanations.

This is not merely my surmise. Many concede this is precisely the real reason that ‘wash-their-robes’ is preferred over ‘obey his commandments.’ For example, Gaebelin says the “correct” reading is “wash their robes” because we know “obey his commandments” is the wrong salvation doctrine.

The Authorized Version [KJV] is faulty. Instead of ‘blessed are those that do his commandments’ the correct reading is ‘blessed are they that wash their robes....Eternal life and eternal glory cannot be obtained by keeping commandments, by the works of the law.” (A.C.Gaebelin, The Annotated Bible (available online at http://www.biblecentre.org/commentaries/acg_70_revelation.htm.)

Pastor Saxe likewise says “it becomes clear that an alternate reading to the majority [i.e., ‘washed their robes] is accepted by many” because it “upholds the Biblical [sic: Pauline] view [of salvation without obedience].”

However, the Trinitarian Bible Society correctly critiques using doctrine to make the decision on the right text:

The substitution of ‘wash their robes’ for ‘do his commandments’ was adopted by textual critics of the 19th and 20th centuries and is now found in many modern versions. It has proved attractive to many conservative evangelicals because of a mistaken [?] fear

that the old reading savoured of justification by works.  

This use of doctrine to dictate picking a rare, isolated and late variant is specious. A professor who works on translating confessed this dilemma, and that a professional must resist temptation. When there are two choices — one errant text and one true, a quandary of decision presents itself: “I am unceasingly exposed to the temptation of retrenching, modifying, or adding something to the Scriptures.” (Gaussen: 115.) The “foolhardy” response is to use dogma as a guide, telling the Lord that this “is worthy of thee, [but] this [other text] is not worthy of thee!” Gaussen means the true text drives doctrine, not doctrine determines the true text.

Here, there is thus no secret what has impelled the acceptance of a corrupt text. The corruption subtracts words inimical to cheap grace. Faith alone doctrine ends up crushed if the earliest and obviously most reliable text is retained.

This episode involving Revelation 22:14 is just one more proof that the greatest weapon of Satan today to keep Christians in the dark is the use of compilations of the Greek New Testament. For the compilers hide in anonymity and are shielded by presumed scholarly-purpose and detachment.

There is no doubt the fate of these compilers absent repentance. They have removed words from this book of prophecy and added new ones. God warns them in Revelation 22:18-19 that such a “person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city” will be removed.

There was never any excuse in the face of Tertullian’s and Cyprian’s quotes from 208 A.D. and 251 A.D. Hence, it is long overdue to now fix the Nestle Aland text of Revelation 22:14 which has influenced the NIV, RSV, etc.