

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE NIV? # 6

Wayne Dunaway

Note: If you have not read the previous articles, you should read them first.

VI. I also unjustly criticized the NIV for using the word “shall” not perish in John 3:16. I said that this teaches the impossibility of apostasy (or falling away).

A. The NIV has:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him **shall** not perish but have eternal life.

Actually the NIV may be better than the KJV in saying “**shall** not” rather than “**should** not” – because he who believes in him “**shall** not” perish. In fact, if you put both translations together you can really stress the point: The **believer should** not and he **shall** not perish as long as he remains a believer.

And the KJV version is just as clear as the NIV in teaching that the believer “**shall**” not perish.

1. In John 5:24 the KJV says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and **shall not** come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

*What is the difference in saying “whosoever **believeth** in him **shall not** perish” in John 3:16 in the NIV, and in saying “He that...**believeth** on him.....**shall not** come into condemnation” in John 5:24 in the KJV? The answer is... there is none.*

*If the word “shall” not perish in the NIV in John 3:16 teaches the impossibility of apostasy, then the KJV teaches it in John 5:24 when it says “**shall** not come into condemnation”?*

2. In John 6:35 the KJV says: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that **believeth** on me **shall** never thirst.” (KJV)

*Does the KJV teach the impossibility of apostasy by saying that he that **believeth** on me “**shall** never thirst”? Why criticize the NIV when the KJV does the exact same thing in other passages?*

3. In John 11:26 according to the KJV, Jesus said: “And whosoever liveth and **believeth** in me **shall** never die. Believest thou this?” (KJV)

Does the KJV teach in this verse that the one who "believeth" can never become an unbeliever and be lost because it uses the word "shall" never die? I think not. And neither does the NIV in John 3:16.

B. The truth is that both the KJV and the NIV teach that he who "believeth" (KJV) or "believes" (NIV) **SHALL** not perish, or come into condemnation, as long as he remains a believer.

Revelation 2:10: "Be **faithful**, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (NIV)

Revelation 2:10: "Be thou **faithful** unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (KJV).

Therefore, both translations teach that the believer must be faithful even unto death (remain a believer even if it costs us our very lives) if he is to receive the crown of life.

C. But both translations also teach that a believer can become an "unbeliever" and, as an unbeliever, he will perish or come into condemnation. Notice:

Hebrews 3:12: "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, **unbelieving** heart that **turns away from** the living God." (NIV)

Hebrews 3:12: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief, in departing from** the living God." (KJV).

D. *The truth is that both translations teach what we believe to be the truth about the believer who maintains his faith. He "**shall**" not perish (Jn. 3:16, NIV) and he "**shall**" not come into condemnation (Jn. 5:24, KJV). And I, for one, "**shall** not" criticize the NIV on this point again! (And I "**should** not" have done so in the first place).*

Wayne Dunaway
G&P Ministries
www.ohatcheechurchofchrist.org