



**Wilson, Walter T.**

***Pauline Parallels: A Comprehensive Guide***

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

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In *Pauline Parallels: A Comprehensive Guide* Walter T. Wilson builds on the work of Fred O. Francis and J. Paul Sampley's volume [\*Pauline Parallels\*](#) (2nd ed.; Fortress, 1984). In distinction from Francis and Sampley's work, Wilson bases his parallels on the "similarity of specific terms, concepts, and/or images between passages." (ix) The title is a bit deceptive though since every text recorded isn't properly a parallel. A more appropriate title would have been *Pauline Parallels, Allusions, Echoes, and Other Related Texts*, but of course the alliteration would have been sacrificed with such a cumbersome title. Another point of departure from F&S is Wilson's decision to include all of the letters attributed to Paul, a decision that I particularly appreciate since I believe that the so-called deutero-Pauline material was actually authored by Paul the Apostle.

The format of the book is pretty straightforward. Following the canonical order:

1. A passage from Paul is listed (not being limited by the standard versification in our English translations) and the parallels (I use the term to encompass all that I included in my made up title above) from that specific letter immediately follow (if there are any at all).
2. If applicable then parallels from the other Pauline letters follow.
3. Following that are the parallels from the rest of the Bible.
4. If applicable non-canonical literature (e.g., Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha, Marcus Aurelius, et al.) round out the parallels.

The translation of choice for the Biblical text is the NASB which is a bit disappointing only for the fact that I don't particularly care for how it sounds when read aloud. Interestingly enough Wilson says in the introduction that "it is important to bear in mind that the parallels are based on the NASB and not the original text." (xiii) He suggests consulting commentaries to "gain a clearer sense of the Greek upon which the English translation is based." (xiii) This suggests to me that some of the parallels could possibly be forced or weaker than one might originally think.

It also cries out for a Greek version or a Greek-English diglot. Such a project would be beneficial for sure.

In the end this is a helpful reference that will save you a lot of page turning in your favorite reference Bible and also eliminate the need to have multiple books scattered about to compare Paul's writing with those of other ancients, but this is the place to begin your study, not to end it. Consider this an index of sorts that can lead you to other sources. The parallels that are listed are all much too brief to get a sense of the context in which they are set which of course leaves in question their overall usefulness or applicability to the text at hand. I think that this resource would have also benefited from some commentary from Wilson, even if it were brief. As it stands he lists texts and nothing else which at times leaves the reader wondering exactly where or how he saw significance in some of the parallels he lists. My final assessment is that I think that students of Paul would be able to use this volume with plenty of success but those less interested in the Apostle won't miss much by skipping it.