

A TEXTUAL COMMENTARY ON THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Second Edition

A Companion Volume to the
UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES'
GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

(Fourth Revised Edition)

by

BRUCE M. METZGER

on behalf of and in cooperation with the Editorial Committee
of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament

DEUTSCHE BIBELGESELLSCHAFT
UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

*This volume is intended to be used with the fourth revised edition of the
United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament.*

The German Bible Society is a not for profit religious foundation.
Its mission, in collaboration with other members of the United Bible Societies,
is to promote biblical research and worldwide Bible translation work in order
to make the Bible available to everybody in their own language.

First Edition

© 1971 United Bible Societies, U.S.A.

Second Edition

© 1994 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, D–Stuttgart

2nd to 8th printing 1998–2007

9th printing 2012

ISBN 978-3-438-06010-5

Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament

Second Edition, 1994

© 1994 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, Stuttgart

www.dbg.de/en

www.academic-bible.com

Printed in Germany

All rights reserved

The SSuperGreek font used to print this work is available from
Linguist's Software, Inc, PO Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580 USA
tel (425) 775-1130 fax (425) 771-5911

CONTENTS

Preface to the Second Edition	v
Preface to the First Edition	vii
Abbreviations	xi
Introduction	1*
The Gospel According to Matthew	1
The Gospel According to Mark	62
The Gospel According to Luke	108
The Gospel According to John	167
The Acts of the Apostles	222
The Letter of Paul to the Romans	446
The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians	478
The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians	505
The Letter of Paul to the Galatians	520
The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians	532
The Letter of Paul to the Philippians	544
The Letter of Paul to the Colossians	552
The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians	561
The Second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians	567
The First Letter of Paul to Timothy	571
The Second Letter of Paul to Timothy	579
The Letter of Paul to Titus	584
The Letter of Paul to Philemon	588

The Letter to the Hebrews	591
The Letter of James	608
The First Letter of Peter	616
The Second Letter of Peter	629
The First Letter of John	639
The Second Letter of John	652
The Third Letter of John	655
The Letter of Jude	656
The Revelation to John	662
Appendix	693

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

1.7-8 Ἀσάφ, Ἀσάφ {B}

It is clear that the name “Asaph” is the earliest form of text preserved in the manuscripts, for the agreement of Alexandrian (Ⲡ B) and other witnesses (*f*¹ *f*¹³ 700 1071) with Eastern versions (cop arm eth geo) and representatives of the Western text (Old Latin mss. and D in Luke [D is lacking for this part of Matthew]) makes a strong combination. Furthermore, the tendency of scribes, observing that the name of the psalmist Asaph (cf. the titles of Pss 50 and 73 to 83) was confused with that of Asa the king of Judah (1 Kgs 15.9 ff.), would have been to correct the error, thus accounting for the prevalence of Ἀσά in the later Ecclesiastical text and its inclusion in the Textus Receptus.¹

Although most scholars are impressed by the overwhelming weight of textual evidence supporting Ἀσάφ, Lagrange demurs and in his commentary prints Ἀσά as the text of Matthew. He declares (p. 5) that “literary criticism is not able to admit that the author, who could not have drawn up this list without consulting the Old Testament, would have taken the name of a psalmist in place of a king of Judah. It is necessary, therefore, to suppose that Ἀσάφ is a very ancient [scribal] error.” Since, however, the evangelist may have derived material for the genealogy, not from the Old Testament directly, but from subsequent genealogical lists, in which the erroneous spelling occurred, the Committee saw no reason to adopt what appears to be a scribal emendation in the text of Matthew.

1.10 Ἀμώς, Ἀμώς {B}

The textual evidence for the reading “Amos,” an error for “Amon,” the name of the king of Judah, is nearly the same as that which reads Ἀσάφ in verses 7 and 8.

¹In the genealogy in 1 Chr 3.10 most Greek manuscripts read Ἀσά, though ms. 60 reads Ἀσάβ. In *Antiq.* viii.xi.3–xii.6 Josephus uses Ἀσανος, though in the Latin translation *Asaph* appears.

In 1 Chr 3.14 most manuscripts present the correct *Ἀμών* (or its near equivalent *Ἀμμών*), but *Ἀμώζ* is read by A B^c (B* and one minuscule read *Ἀμνών*). In the narrative account concerning King Amon in 2 Kgs 21.18-19, 23-25; 2 Chr 33.20-25 several Greek witnesses erroneously read *Ἀμώζ*.

Despite Lagrange's preference for *Ἀμών* (see his argument quoted above on verses 7-8), the Committee was impressed by the weight of the external evidence that attests *Ἀμώζ*.

1.11 *ἐγέννησεν* {A}

In order to bring the text of Matthew into harmony with the genealogy in 1 Chr 3.15-16, several of the later uncial manuscripts (M U Θ Σ), as well as a variety of other witnesses (including *f*¹ 33 209 258 478 661 954 1354 1604 syr^h with ^{*}, pal geo), have added *τὸν Ἰωακίμ, Ἰωακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν*. Although it is possible to argue that the clause had accidentally fallen out during transcription, the external evidence in its favor is not as weighty as that which supports the shorter text (Ⲛ B C E K L S V W Γ Δ Π most minuscules it vg syr^{c, s, p} cop^{sa, bo} arm eth). It should be noted also that when the clause is present there are fifteen generations in the second tesseradecade (compare ver. 17).

1.16 *τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός* {A}

There are three principal variant readings: (1) “and Jacob begot Joseph *the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ,*” is supported by a wide representation of textual families in early Greek and versional witnesses, including Ⲫ¹ Ⲛ B C W vg syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{sa, (bo)} geo.

(2) “and Jacob begot Joseph, *to whom being betrothed the virgin Mary bore Jesus, who is called Christ,*” is supported by several Greek and Old Latin witnesses (Θ *f*¹³ l 547 it^{a, (b), c, (d), g¹, (k), q}). Similar to this are the readings of the Curetonian Syriac manuscript, “Jacob begot Joseph, *him to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, she who bore Jesus the Christ,*” and of the Armenian version, “Jacob begot

Joseph the husband of Mary, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, from whom was born Jesus who was called Christ.” In the more complete form of the *Liber generationis* incorporated by Hippolytus in his *Chronicle* (completed about A.D. 234), the genealogy from Adam to Christ closes with the words *Ioseph, cui dispomsata fuit uirgo Maria, quae genuit Iesum Christum ex spiritu sancto* (ed. by Rudolf Helm, 1955, p. 126; “Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, who [fem.] bore Jesus Christ from the Holy Spirit”).

(3) “Jacob begot Joseph; *Ioseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ,*” is attested by the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript.

Other witnesses have sometimes been supposed to support reading (3). Thus, in the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, an anonymous treatise (dating perhaps from the fifth century)² that presents a debate between a Christian and a Jew, Mt 1.16 is referred to three times. The third of these is a loose quotation of the commonly received text, *Ἰακῶβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν μνηστευσάμενον Μαριάμ, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* (“And Jacob begot Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, from whom was born the Christ the Son of God”).³ The second quotation, which stands at the close of a rapid recapitulation of the genealogy, is *Ἰακῶβ δὲ τὸν Ἰωσήφ, ᾧ μνηστευθεῖσα Μαρία· ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστὸς* (“And Jacob [begot] Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called Christ”).⁴ The first time that Mt 1.16 occurs in the *Dialogue*, the Jew quotes it in exactly the form given in (1) above and then follows it with his own inference, namely *καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν, περὶ οὗ νῦν ὁ λόγος, φησίν, ἐγέννησεν ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας* (“And [so] Joseph begot Jesus who is called

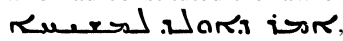
²For the text see F. C. Conybeare, *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and of Timothy and Aquila* (Oxford, 1898), pp. 65–104, and E. J. Goodspeed, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xxv (1905), pp. 58–78. A. Lukyn Williams (*Adversus Judaeos* [Cambridge, 1935], pp. 67–78) thinks that the main section of the treatise dates from about A.D. 200.

³*Op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 76.

Christ, about whom we are talking, it says, he begot [him] from Mary”).⁵ Despite the protestations of Conybeare to the contrary,⁶ it seems clear that these words are not a second citation added to the first, but are a Jewish interpretation of the commonly received text of Mt 1.16.⁷

Another witness that is sometimes thought to support the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac is a twelfth century Jacobite Syrian writer, Dionysius Barsalibi, bishop of Amida. Hermann von Soden, for example, cites in his apparatus for Mt 1.16 the name of Barsalibi as patristic attestation entirely parallel with that of syr^s. The evidence, however, is far from being so clear-cut, as the following account of the principal points will make obvious.

In his Commentary on the Gospels Barsalibi discusses the syntactical difference between the ways in which the Greek and Syriac languages express “from whom” in Mt 1.16, but both the Greek and the Syriac, he declares, explicitly attest that Jesus was born of Mary and not from Joseph.⁸ The critical point concerns Barsalibi’s comment on Mt 1.18, which reads as follows: “Here the manner of his [Jesus’] corporeal birth [the evangelist] teaches. When therefore you hear [the word] ‘husband’ [i. e., in ver. 19], do not think that he was born according to the law of nature – he who had constituted the law of nature. And when it comes to Joseph , and therefore afterwards it says, ‘Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah was thus,’ that is, not as the rest of men was he born, but a new thing is the manner of his birth, and higher than the nature of those who are

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ F. C. Conybeare, “Three Early Doctrinal Modifications of the Text of the Gospels,” *Hibbert Journal*, 1 (1902–03), pp. 96–102.

⁷ See also F. Crawford Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, II (Cambridge, 1904), p. 265, and Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, II (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 565, who agree in taking the words as a Jewish interpretation, and not as a Greek witness supporting the text of the Sinaitic Syriac.

⁸ Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī, *Commentarii in Evangelia*, ed. by Sedlaček and Chabot in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Series Secunda, Tom. xcviII (Paris, 1906), p. 46, lines 23 ff. (of the Syriac text), and pp. 35 ff. (of the Latin translation). For a discussion of the passage, see Wm. P. Armstrong, “Critical Note (Matt. 1.16),” *Princeton Theological Review*, xIII (1915), pp. 461–468.

born."⁹ The words cited in Syriac can be translated either (a) "it says, 'Who begot the Messiah,'" or (b) "it says that he begot the Messiah." According to rendering (a), Barsalibi appears to be quoting from some manuscript or author, not identified here or elsewhere, whose text of Mt 1.16 paralleled the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac. On the other hand, according to rendering (b), Barsalibi is making his own summary exposition of Matthew's account of Joseph's relation to the Messiah. In either case, however, it is obvious that so far as Barsalibi is concerned he intends his quotation (if it be a quotation) or his summary exposition to be perfectly in accord with his earlier discussion of ver. 16 and his immediately following declaration that Jesus' birth was unique. In other words, it appears that Barsalibi fully accepted the Peshitta text of ver. 16 (i. e. the reading designated (1) above).

A third witness that has been thought to support the Sinaitic Syriac reading is one manuscript of the Arabic Diatessaron. Although Theodoret explicitly states that Tatian did not utilize the Matthean and Lukan genealogies in his Diatessaron, the mediaeval Arabic Diatessaron does contain them (ms. A includes the Matthean genealogy after I,81, and the Lukan genealogy after IV,29, but mss. B and E give them as an appendix after the close of the Diatessaron). At Mt 1.16 ms. A, which dates from the twelfth century, reads يعقوب ولد يوسف رجل مريم الذي منها ولد يسوع المسيح, "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, who [masc.] of her begot Jesus the Messiah."¹⁰ (The other two manuscripts employ the correct feminine form, التي.) That ms. A should in its special reading somehow reflect the text of a Greek manuscript of Mt 1.16 is, as Burkitt declares,¹¹ most unlikely. On the contrary it is altogether likely that the use of the masculine *who* is either a blunder of a careless copyist or the dialectal usage of the masculine relative for the feminine.¹² If then the relative is corrected, *who of her* will become *of whom* (fem.),

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70, lines 9 ff. (of the Syriac text), and p. 53 (of the Latin translation).

¹⁰ A.-S. Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatien* (Beyrouth, 1935), p. 532.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 265.

¹² So Marmardji, *op. cit.*, p. 533, note.

and the second instance of the verb **ἔγεννησεν** will be construed as a passive (*was born*), agreeing with the reading of the Peshitta version.¹³

There appears to be, therefore, no substantial evidence to add in support of the singular reading of the Sinaitic Syriac (reading (3) above).

What now are the relative merits of the three principal readings?

The external evidence in support of (1) is extremely good: it is read by all known Greek uncial manuscripts except Θ, and by all other manuscripts and versions except the limited number that support (2) and (3). Transcriptional probabilities suggest that reading (2) arose (perhaps at Caesarea) because the expression “the husband of Mary” was thought to be misleading in a genealogical context. Lest the hasty reader assume that Jesus was the physical son of Mary and her husband Joseph, the text was altered to bring it into conformity with ver. 18 where the verb *μνηστεύεσθαι* is used to describe the relationship of Mary to Joseph. On the other hand, if reading (2) be supposed to be original, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine why any scribe would have substituted reading (1) for such a clear and unambiguous declaration of the virginity of Mary.

There is no evidence that reading (3) ever existed in a Greek manuscript of the first Gospel. The Committee judged that it arose either as a paraphrase of reading (2) – this was Burkitt’s view – or as a purely mechanical imitation of the preceding pattern in the genealogy. Since every name in the genealogy up to Joseph is written twice in succession, it may be that the scribe of the Sinaitic Syriac (or an ancestor of this manuscript) carelessly followed the stereotyped pattern and in ver. 16, having made the initial mistake of repeating the word “Joseph,” went on to produce reading (3).

1.18 *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* {B}

It is difficult to decide which is the original reading. On the one hand, the prevailing tendency of scribes was to expand either

¹³ For a fuller discussion of the readings, see B. M. Metzger’s contribution to *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, ed. by David E. Aune (Leiden, 1972), pp. 16–24.

Ἰησοῦς or *Χριστός* by the addition of the other word. The Western reading *Χριστοῦ* in Old Latin and Old Syriac witnesses seems to have a certain appropriateness, but it may be an assimilation to *ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ* of the preceding sentence. It can also be argued that in the narrative of his birth one would expect to find the personal name “Jesus,” yet *Ἰησοῦ* in W may have been conformed to the following command by the angel (ver. 21).

On the other hand, though the external evidence in support of *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* appears to be overwhelming, the reading is intrinsically improbable, for in the New Testament the definite article is very rarely prefixed to the expression *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* (only in inferior manuscripts in Ac 8.37; 1 Jn 4.3; and Re 12.17).

In the face of such conflicting considerations, the Committee judged that the least unsatisfactory course was to adopt the reading that was current in many parts of the early church.

1.18 *γένεσις* {B}

Both *γένεσις* and *γέννησις* mean “birth,” but the former also means “creation,” “generation,” and “genealogy” (compare 1.1), whereas the latter means more strictly “engendering” and therefore became the customary word used in patristic literature to refer to the Nativity. At the same time it is understandable that scribes very often confused these two words, which orthographically and phonetically are so similar.

In the present passage not only do the earlier representatives of several text-types support *γένεσις*, but the tendency of copyists would have been to substitute a word of more specialized meaning for one that had been used in a different sense in ver. 1, particularly since *γέννησις* corresponds more nearly with the verb *γεννᾶν* used so frequently in the previous genealogy.

1.22 *τοῦ προφήτου*

Before *τοῦ προφήτου* a variety of witnesses (including D 267 954 1582*^{vid} it^{a?} b, c, d vg^{mss} syr^{c, s, h, pal} arm Irenaeus^{1/2}) insert *Ἡσαΐου*. The name is clearly a scribal explanation, for if it had been present

originally there is no adequate reason that would account for its absence from the mass of Greek witnesses.

1.25 *υἰόν* {A}

The Textus Receptus, following C D* K W Δ Π most minuscules *al*, inserts *τόν* before *υἰόν* and adds *αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον* (“*her firstborn son*”) from Lk 2.7.

The reading of the Sinaitic Syriac (“she bore *to him* [to Joseph] a son”) is in conformity with the singular reading of this manuscript in ver. 16 (see the discussion above) and its reading (shared with syr^c) in ver. 21 (“shall bear *to thee* a son”).

2.5 *διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*

Not content with merely the mention of *τοῦ προφήτου* several witnesses (4 syr^{hmg} (ms) cop^{bo}ms) add *Μιχαίου*, and it^a reads *per Esiam prophetam dicentem* (“through Isaiah the prophet saying”).

2.18 *κλαυθμός* {B}

The longer reading, *θρήνος καὶ κλαυθμός*, appears to be a scribal assimilation to the Septuagint text of Jr 31.15 (LXX 38.15). It entered the Textus Receptus and lies behind the rendering of the AV, “lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning.”

3.15 *αὐτόν* (2)

Between verses 15 and 16 two Latin manuscripts (it^a vg^{ms}) describe the baptism of Jesus as follows: *Et cum baptizaretur Iesus* (om. *Iesus* it^a), *lumen magnum fulgebat* (*lumen ingens circumfulsit* it^a) *de aqua, ita ut timerant omnes qui congregati erant* (*advenerant* it^a) (“And when Jesus was being baptized a great light flashed (a tremendous light flashed around) from the water, so that all who had gathered there were afraid”). According to Isho‘dad of Merv (ninth century) and Dionysius Barsalibi (twelfth century), Tatian’s Diatessaron also

contained a reference to the light. The passage from Isho'dad's *Commentary on the Gospels* is as follows:

“And straightway, as the Diatessaron testifies, a great light shown, and the Jordan was surrounded by white clouds, and many troops of spiritual beings were seen singing praises in the air; and the Jordan stood still quietly from its course, its waters not being troubled, and a scent of perfumes was wafted from thence; for the Heavens were opened” (M. D. Gibson's translation, p. 27).

How much of this extract should be regarded as Tatianic, and how much may have been taken from other sources (perhaps an early hymn), is not known, but it is thought that, in view of Ephraem's remark about “the shining of the light upon the waters” (*Com.* iv.5), at least the reference to the light on the Jordan was present in the Diatessaron.

Several other writers refer to the tradition of the light, including Justin Martyr, who says that after Jesus had gone down into the water “a fire was kindled in the Jordan” (*πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*, *Dial. c. Tryph.* 88), and Epiphanius, after the voice came from heaven, “immediately a great light shone around the place” (*εὐθύς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα*, *Panarion haer.* xxx, xiii, 7).

3.16 [ἀύτῳ] {C}

The joining of \aleph^* B, the Old Syriac, and Irenaeus^{lat} in support of the shorter reading makes a very strong combination, which might well be regarded as the original text. On the other hand, however, it is possible that copyists, not understanding the force of ἀύτῳ, omitted the word as unnecessary. In order to show this balance of possibilities the Committee enclosed ἀύτῳ within square brackets.

3.16 [καὶ] ἐρχόμενον {C}

No transcriptional or dogmatic considerations seem to have been at work here, and the parallels offer no assistance in deciding between the readings with or without καὶ. On the strength of the diversity of textual groups that support καὶ ἐρχόμενον, the Committee retained the words in the text, but, in order to reflect the possibility that καί,

being absent from early representatives of both Alexandrian and Western text-types (Ⲭ* B it^{a, b, c, h} Irenaeus^{lat} *al*), may not have been part of the text originally, enclosed it within square brackets.

4.10 ὕπαγε {A}

If the words *ὀπίσω μου* were originally in the text, no satisfactory reason can be found to account for their omission. On the other hand, if they were originally absent, copyists who recalled the words of Jesus to Peter, *ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου, Σατανᾶ* (Mt 16.23, where there is no variation of reading), would have been likely to supply them here.

4.17 μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γάρ {A}

Despite the absence of *μετανοεῖτε* and *γάρ* in the Old Syriac and one manuscript of the Old Latin, and although it could be argued that the words are a later assimilation of the text to 3.2, the unanimity of the Greek evidence, as well as the overwhelming testimony of the rest of the versional and patristic witnesses, seemed to the Committee to require that the words be retained in the text.

5.4-5 μακάριοι ... παρακληθήσονται. (5) μακάριοι ... τὴν γῆν. {B}

If verses 3 and 5 had originally stood together, with their rhetorical antithesis of heaven and earth, it is unlikely that any scribe would have thrust ver. 4 between them. On the other hand, as early as the second century copyists reversed the order of the two beatitudes so as to produce such an antithesis and to bring *πτωχοί* and *πραεῖς* into closer connection.

5.11 [ψευδόμενοι] {C}

It is uncertain whether *ψευδόμενοι* should be included or omitted from the text. On the one hand, the absence of the word in the Western tradition (D it^{b, c, d, h, k} syr^s geo Tertullian *al*) can be accounted