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.
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 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Letter to the Hebrews</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Letter of James</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Letter of Peter</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Letter of Peter</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Letter of John</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Letter of John</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third Letter of John</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Letter of Jude</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Revelation to John</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

1.7-8  'Ασάφ, 'Ασάφ {B}

It is clear that the name “Asaph” is the earliest form of text preserved in the manuscripts, for the agreement of Alexandrian (B) and other witnesses (f1 f13 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 'Ασάφ 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 'Ασάφ, Lagrange demurs and in his commentary prints 'Ασάφ 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 'Ασάφ 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  Ἄμως, Ἄμως {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 'Ασάφ in verses 7 and 8.

¹In the genealogy in 1 Chr 3.10 most Greek manuscripts read Ἀσάφ, though ms. 60 reads Ἀσάβ. In Antiq. viii.xi.3–xii.6 Josephus uses Ἀσάφος, though in the Latin translation Asaph appears.
In 1 Chr 3.14 most manuscripts present the correct Ἀμών (or its near equivalent Ἀμμων), but Ἀμώς is read by Α B C (Β* 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 Ἀμώς.

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 Ἀμώς.

1.11 ἐγέννησεν {Α}

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 (Μ U Θ Σ), as well as a variety of other witnesses (including f¹ 33 209 258 478 661 954 1354 1604 syrᵇ 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 ([…]) most minuscules it vg syrᶜ s, p copˢᵃ, 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 ἀνδρὰ Μαρίας, ἐξ ἥς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός {Α}

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 Π¹ Ρ B C W vg syrᵇ h, pal copˢᵃ, (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 f¹² 1 547 ipᵃ, 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 dispensata fuit virgo 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; *Joseph, 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) 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, *ΔΙΑΚΩΒ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν μνηστευσάμενον Μαρίαν, ἐξ ἦς ἐγεννήθη ὁ Χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* (“And Jacob begot Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, from whom was born the Christ the Son of God”). The second quotation, which stands at the close of a rapid recapitulation of the genealogy, is *ΔΙΑΚΩΒ δὲ τὸν Ἰωσήφ, ὃ μνηστευθεῖσα Μαρίαν ἐξ ἦς ἐγεννήθη Ἡσοῦς ὁ λέγομενος Χριστός* (“And Jacob [begot] Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called Christ”).

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 Ἡσοῦς ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἡσοῦν τὸν λέγομενον Χριστὸν, περὶ οὗ νῦν ὁ λόγος, φησίν, ἐγέννησεν ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας* (“And [so] Joseph begot Jesus who is called

---


Christ, about whom we are talking, it says, he begot [him] from Mary”). Despite the protestations of Conybeare to the contrary, 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.

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 syrs. 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. 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.
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).
12 So Marmardji, op. cit., p. 533, note.
and the second instance of the verb ישרו will be construed as a passive
(was born), agreeing with the reading of the Peshitta version.\footnote{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.}

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 μνημευεσθαι 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).

\section{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
ΔΙΣΟΥ or ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ by the addition of the other word. The Western reading ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ in Old Latin and Old Syriac witnesses seems to have a certain appropriateness, but it may be an assimilation to ἔως τοῦ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ 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 ΔΙΣΟΥ 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 ΔΙΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ appears to be overwhelming, the reading is intrinsically improbable, for in the New Testament the definite article is very rarely prefixed to the expression ΔΙΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ (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 γεννάω used so frequently in the previous genealogy.

1.22 τοῦ προφήτου

Before τοῦ προφήτου a variety of witnesses (including D 267 954 1582*vid itab c, d vg mss syrc, s, h, pal arm Irenaeus1/2) insert Ἡσαίου. 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  νί oppon {A}

The Textus Receptus, following C D* K W Δ Π most minuscules al, inserts τὸν before νι oppon 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*) 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 syriimg (ms) copboms) add Μιχαῖον, and ita 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  αὐτὸν (2)

Between verses 15 and 16 two Latin manuscripts (ita vgms) describe the baptism of Jesus as follows: *Et cum baptizaretur Iesus* (om. Iesus ita), *lumen magnum fulgebat* (lumen ingens circumfulsit ita) *de aqua, ita ut timerant omnes qui congregati erant* (advenrarent ita) ("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 Ιορδάνῃ*, *Dial. c. Tryph. 88*), and Epiphanius, after the voice came from heaven, “immediately a great light shone around the place” (*εὐθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα*, *Panarion haer. xxx, xiii, 7*).

3.16 *{C}*

The joining of ε *{C} B, the Old Syriac, and Irenaeus 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 αὐτῶ, omitted the word as unnecessary. In order to show this balance of possibilities the Committee enclosed αὐτῶ within square brackets.

3.16 *{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 καί. On the strength of the diversity of textual groups that support καί 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 (\textit{A} B it\textsuperscript{a}, b, c, h Irenaeus\textsuperscript{lat} \textit{al}), may not have been part of the text originally, enclosed it within square brackets.

4.10  \textit{úpago} \{A\}

If the words \textit{ópísw mou} 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, \textit{úpago} \textit{ópísw mou}, \textit{Sataná} (Mt 16.23, where there is no variation of reading), would have been likely to supply them here.

4.17  \textit{μετανοεῖτε, ἡγηκέν γάρ} \{A\}

Despite the absence of \textit{μετανοεῖτε} and \textit{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  \textit{μακαρίοι} ... παρακληθήσονται. (5) \textit{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 \textit{πτωχοὶ} and \textit{πραεῖς} into closer connection.

5.11  \textit{ψευδόμενοι} \{C\}

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