

Introduction to Biblical Texts

1. Attitude of Research

We must start our research with the testimony of the Word itself: Ps 12:6, 119:40; Prov. 30:5; Ps. 33:4,6; Ps. 119:160, 89

2. Languages in Palestine

Gen. 11:1-9, 26-32; 12:1-7 – Tower of Babel, Abram

II Kings 18:26-29 (Isa. 36:11-14) – “Speak, I pray thee, in Aramaic”

Dan. 2:4 (70 years of Babylonian captivity – Jer. 25:8-11, 29:10-12)

Ezra 4:6-7 – The letter was written in Aramaic

Neh. 8:8 – Gave the sense, caused them to understand

John 19:20 (cf. Luke 23:38 – interlinear) – Hebrew (Aramaic), Latin, Greek

Acts 21:37-22:2 – Paul spoke Greek & Aramaic.

Acts 26:14 – Jesus spoke to Paul in Aramaic

3. Old Testament Manuscripts

- Standard Hebrew (Masoretic) Text
 - Standardized about 100 AD
 - Masoretic “fence” added 7th-8th centuries AD
 - Oldest manuscripts – 9th-11th centuries AD
- Septuagint (LXX) – translated third to second century BC. Same manuscript patterns as the New Testament Greek MSS (cursives/uncials/papyri – see next section)
- Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) – in use first centuries BC & AD.
- Aramaic Targums – oral translations, later written down
- Syriac (Aramaic Peshitta) – developed 2nd-5th century AD

4. New Testament Manuscripts

- Greek Cursives – ninth century onward. Most are of the Byzantine/Majority text type, containing numerous additions

- Greek Uncials – fourth to ninth/tenth centuries. Most prominent fourth century uncials:

- Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲭ) – discovered 1844
- Codex Vaticanus (B) – discovered 1481/1868

Greek Papyri – second to fourth centuries. Mostly fragmentary.

- Critical Greek Texts

- 16-17th centuries (Erasmus, Stephens, Elzivir, Beza) based on cursives
- 18-20th centuries (GTTTrLAW, UBS, Nestle-Aland), based on uncials (& papyri)

- Syriac (Aramaic) – Peshitta (fifth century AD) & Old Syriac Gospels (developed second-third century, MSS are fourth-fifth century AD). Later Aramaic dialect (from northern Syria) than that spoken by Jesus and the apostles in Galilee/Palestine.

- Other versions – Old Latin, Latin Vulgate, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Old Church Slavonic, Arabic, Nubian, Persian, Sogdian, Anglo-Saxon, High German

- Patristic Quotations – Writings of Early Church Fathers

5. Greek-English Interlinear

Rom 8:1 “... who walk not ... spirit” omitted in all texts

Eph. 1:1 “at Ephesus” considered doubtful by TA.

Eph. 3:9 “fellowship” → administration; “by Jesus Christ” omitted in all texts

I John 3:1 “and we are” added by LTTrA.

I John 5:7,8 “in heaven ... in earth” omitted in all texts

6. English/Greek case structure

George Subject Nominative	throws (verb)	Fred Dative	Herman's Indirect Obj. Genitive	football Possessive Accusative	Direct Obj.
He		him	his	him	
She		her	her	her	
They		them	their	them	

7. Uses of the Genitive case

Genitive of Possession

Luke 5:3	Which was Simon's (of Simon)
Mat. 26:51	Servant of the high priest (his ear)

Genitive of Material

Gen. 3:21	Coats of skins
Gen. 6:14	Ark of gopher wood
Judges 7:13	Cake of barley bread
Ps. 2:9	Rod of iron
II Sam. 7:2	House of cedar

Genitive of Contents

I Sam. 16:20	Bottle of (filled with) wine
Mat. 10:42	Cup of cold water
Mat. 26:7	Box of ointment

Genitive of Origin

Num. 24:4, 16	Words of (from) God, knowledge of (from) most high
Ezra 3:7	Grant of (from) Cyrus king of Persia
Ezek. 1:1	Visions of (from) God
John 12:43	Praise of (from) God
Eph. 2:8	Gift of (from) God
I Thess. 1:3	Work of faith, labour of love, patience of hope

Genitive of Relation

Gen. 27:41	Days of (pertaining to) his mourning
Prov. 1:7	Fear of (pertaining to) the Lord
Isa. 55:3	Sure mercies of (pertaining to) David
Mat. 14:1	Fame of (pertaining to) him
Titus 2:14	Zealous of (with reference to) good works

Genitive of Apposition

John 2:21	The temple of (that is to say) his body
II Peter 2:6	The cities of (that is to say) Sodom and Gomorrah

8. Some Variations of *Metonymy* - The change of one noun for another related noun:

- The cause is put for the effect:

Ex. 5:2	Israel put for the nation he produced
Num. 24:17	Jacob put for the nation he produced
Luke 16:29	Moses and prophets put for the writings they produced
Deut. 34:5	Word: "mouth" (lit.) put for that which it produced – words
Jer. 18:18	Tongue put for the words it produced
Ps. 128:2	Labor put for the fruits of labor

- The effect is put for the cause:

Gen. 25:53	Nations are put for that which produce them
II Kings 4:40	Death is put for that which causes death
Luke 3:20	Salvation is put for the one who bring salvation
I Cor. 14:3	Edification, exhortation, comfort put for the words that produce them