

Texts and Tools: Mowing the New Testament Lawn

Supplemental Materials

Of the four sections offered here, the first three deal with textual criticism; the fourth one gives some practice in thinking about the implications of grammar. For this reason, it is not easy to make these sections readily useful to students who do not have access to Greek. This is less of a problem in exercises for subsequent chapters. Users who do not read Greek (yet!) are nonetheless invited to follow along as well as they can. I have made an effort to make things as clear as possible.

Section one provides opportunity simply to list the textual problems in a particular text (John 1:1-6) as they appear in a particular edition (NA²⁷), and to list the variant readings assembled by the edition for those textual problems. This will give some experience in identifying alternative readings, which is the first step in the process recommended in chapter two of the textbook. Users should answer the sample questions before comparing their answers with those provided later on.

Presupposed in this exercise, as well as in the next two, is some familiarity with the introduction to NA²⁷, where the various symbols and signs used in the textual apparatus are described. By “some” familiarity, I mean the ability to flip back to the introduction and find whatever information is needed.

Section two takes the process one step further. Expanding on sidebar 2.2 in the textbook, it lists all the variant readings for Philippians 3:12-21 (NA²⁷) and asks the user to determine for each whether it has exegetical significance, translational significance, both, or neither. Again, students should answer the practice questions before consulting the provided answers.

Section three uses simple tables developed by David Black in his little handbook, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (see the bibliography in the textbook). With these tables, we are able to sort out the external witnesses to the nest of eight variants available for Philemon 12. The point of these three exercises is to give practice in determining whether a textual problem is worth our attention as “pastoral exegetes,” and if it is, to give practice in “solving” the problem.

Section four changes the subject from textual criticism to grammatical analysis. Using Philemon 8-12 and Romans 3:21-22, it proposes a series of ten grammatical problems of the sort a New Testament exegete encounters routinely. As in sections one and two, students should attempt to answer the questions on their own before consulting the answers provided on the following pages. Access to Daniel Wallace’s *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* is presupposed (see bibliography in the textbook).

It is worth pointing out that the “answers provided” by me for these many problems are by no means the last word that could be said on them. All these “answers are open to

criticism, no less from beginning exegetes than from seasoned interpreters of the New Testament.

I. Identifying Preferred and Alternative Readings: John 1:1-6 (NA²⁷)

Using the NA²⁷ text, study the textual apparatus for the title (*inscriptio*) and the first six verses of John's Gospel. Answer the following questions or follow the instructions, before comparing your answers with those provided on the next page of this exercise.

1. According to the way NA²⁷ has edited the text (including the title), how many "textual problems" are there in it?
2. How many total "variant readings" are there for all of these textual problems? (Don't forget to include the "preferred" text as one of the variants.) Then, how many are there for each textual problem?
3. List the "preferred text" for each textual problem and translate it. Then, under it, list each "alternative reading" for that problem and translate it, or otherwise explain briefly the difference, if any, made by each alternative reading.

Answers to problems in section one:

1. There are seven textual problems in John 1:1-6 and the title.
The title has one.
Verses 1, 2 and 5 have none.
Verses 3, 4 and 6 each have two.
2. There are sixteen total variant readings among the seven textual problems in this text.
The title has three variants.
The two problems in verse 3 and the two in verse 6 each have two variants.
The first problem in verse 4 has three variants; the second has two variants.
3. The preferred and alternative readings in John 1:1-6 and title (according to NA²⁷):

Title:

Preferred: ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ “According to John”

Alternative (a): εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Ἰωάννην “*Gospel* According to John”

Alternative (b): ἅγιον εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Ἰωάννην “*Holy Gospel* According to John”

Verse 3a:

Preferred: ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν “*not even one [thing]* was made”

Alternative: ἐγένετο οὐδέν “*nothing* was made”

Verse 3b (punctuation):

Preferred: full stop after οὐδὲ ἓν, making ὃ γέγονεν begin verse 4

Alternative: no stop after οὐδὲ ἓν, but a full stop after ὃ γέγονεν.

Difference: (a) “not one *thing*. *That which came in to being* (in him was life),”
versus (b) “not one *thing that had come into being*.”

Verse 4a:

Preferred: ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν “in him *was* life”

Alternative (a): ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἐστίν “in him *is* life”

Alternative (b): ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ [omit ἦν] “in him *is* life”

Verse 4b:

Preferred: τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων “the light of *human beings*”

Alternative: τὸ φῶς [omit τῶν ἀνθρώπων] “the light”

Verse 6a:

Preferred: ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ “sent from *God*”

Alternative: ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ κυρίου “sent from [*the*] *Lord*”

Verse 6b:

Preferred: ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης “his name [*was*] John”

Alternative: ἦν ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης “his name *was* John”

II. Determining Exegetical Significance of Textual Variants: Philippians 3:12-21 (based on NA²⁷ and NRSV)

- 12a Before “or have already reached the goal” (ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι) add “or am already justified” (ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι).
- 12b Omit “and/even” (καί) before “to make it my own.” [Note: NRSV does not reflect the presence of καί.]
- 12c Omit “Jesus” after “Christ.”
- 13 For “not” (οὐ), substitute “not yet” (οὐπω): “I do not *yet* consider that.”
- 14a For “I press on” (διώκω), substitute “*pressing* on” (διώκων).
- 14b For “toward the goal” (εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον), substitute “unto the goal” (ἐπὶ τὸ βραβεῖον).
- 14c For “heavenly [=upward] call” (ἄνω κλήσεως), substitute “blamelessness” (ἀνεγκλησίας).
- 14d For “of God in Christ Jesus” (τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), substitute
- “of God” (θεοῦ)
 - “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)
 - “in the Lord Jesus Christ” (ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ)
 - “of God in the Lord Jesus Christ”
- 15 For “let . . . us . . . be of the same mind” (τοῦτο φρονῶμεν), substitute “we are of the same mind” (τοῦτο φρονοῦμεν).
- 16a For “we have attained” (ἐφθάσαμεν), substitute “you [pl.] have attained” (ἐφθάσατε).
- 16b For “let us hold fast to the same thing [i.e., to what we have attained]” (τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν), substitute
- “let us hold fast to the same rule; let us think the same thing” (τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν)
 - inverted version of (a)
 - “let us think the same thing; let us hold fast to the same thing”
 - “let us think the same thing; let us *together* hold fast to the same thing” (. . . τῷ αὐτῷ συνστοιχεῖν)
- 18 Before “the enemies of the cross” (τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ) add “beware of” (βλέπετε).
- 21a Before “conformed to the body of his glory” (σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ) add “that it may be” (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτό). [Note: NRSV supplies “that it may be” since English requires it, or at least likes it, for the sense of the passage.]

21b For “[all things subject to] him[self]” (αὐτῷ), substitute “himself” (ἑαυτῷ). [Note: NRSV already translates αὐτῷ “him” as “*himself*”, since it is required in English for the sense of the passage.]

Judgments (therefore debatable!) regarding exegetical and translational significance of alternative readings in Philippians 3:12-21:

- 12a Both exegetically and translationally significant; implies that Paul does not consider himself as already justified.
- 12b Exegetically (and apparently translationally) insignificant, based on the NRSV, but the presence of καί “even” may place emphasis on the attainment (“making it his own”) that Paul has in mind.
- 12c Small translational difference; no exegetical significance.
- 13 Small translational difference; no exegetical significance, since Paul’s earlier statement in verse 12 already implies that he has not yet laid hold of the goal.
- 14a No significant translational difference; no exegetical significance.
- 14b No significant translational difference; no exegetical significance.
- 14c Both exegetical and translational significance.
- 14d All of the alternatives present translational differences; the first three imply minor exegetical differences. Is Christ, or is he not, presented here as the locus of our calling? [Note, however, that even if we were to decide that Christ is not presented that way in this verse—that is, if we choose to favor alternative reading (i)—that would not mean that Paul did not consider Christ in this way; it would only mean that he did not mention it here.]
- 15 Both exegetical and translational significance; the choice of readings puts a different definition of what it means to Paul to be “mature” (τέλειοι).
- 16a All four alternatives imply both exegetical and translational differences, but alternatives (i) and (ii) are especially significant. What “rule” is Paul presumably referring to?
- 18 Apart from the added warning, this alternative presents little exegetical significance. But it would require some rewording of the NRSV translation.
Current NRSV: “For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears.”
Possible revision: “For many live [otherwise], of whom I have often told you and now tell you with tears. Beware of the enemies of the cross of Christ.”
- 21a, b No exegetical significance or translational significance in either 21a or 21b, since in both cases the NRSV simply does in English what the alternatives do in Greek, making the sense explicit.

III. Considering External Evidence for Textual Variants: Philemon 12 (based on NA²⁷)

ὄν ἀνέπεμψα σοι, αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχθνα

Literally: "...whom I have sent back to you, him, that is, my own bowels"

[Italics mark the disputed segment.]

Variant readings (including the preferred reading, "g"):

a. σοι αὐτ., τοῦτ' ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλαβοῦ [C*]

b. σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τ. ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλ. [S² D (Ψ) 0278. 1739. 1881 Majority lat (sy)]

c. σοι, σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τ. ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλ. [C² D* pc]

d. σοι, σὺ δὲ αὐτ. προσλ., τ. εσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ. [048 g]

e. σὺ δὲ αὐτ. προσλ., τ. ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ. [pc Thret^{lem}] (NOTE: Thret^{lem} refers to the commentary by Theodoret of Cyrillus † c. 466 and is deduced from the *lemma*, the running biblical text in the commentary; it is to be taken with a degree of caution, since the *lemmata* were often "edited" in later issues of a commentary.)

f. σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχθνα [F G]

g. *text* (as it stands, preferred, in NA²⁷) [S* A 33 pc]

Black's Charts Applied to Philemon 12, According to NA²⁷

variant readings	type of variation	translation
a. σοι αὐτ., τοῦτ' ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλαβοῦ	addition	to you, that is, him [who is] my very heart, receive
b. σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλαβοῦ	substitution and addition	But you, receive him [who is] my very heart
c. σοι, σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ., προσλαβοῦ	addition	to you. But you, receive him [who is] my very heart.
d. σοι, σὺ δὲ αὐτόν προσλαβοῦ, τ. εσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ.	addition and transposition	same as (c), but with less emphasis on "receive"
e. σὺ δὲ αὐτόν προσλαβοῦ, τ. ἔσ. τ. ἐμὰ σπλ.	addition, transposition, omission	same as (b), but with less emphasis on "receive"
f. σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχθνα	substitution? omission/addition?	unintelligible
g. σοι, αὐτόν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχθνα	preferred text	to you, him [who is] my very heart

This first chart sorts out the various readings in much the same way as we did for John 1:1-6, above in section one. The one difference is that the chart identifies the way an alternative reading varies from the presumed original (here, identified as reading "g").

There are four main types of variation: *addition* of text, *omission* of text, *substitution* of

text and *transposition* of text. The exercise in section two applies these descriptions to the alternative readings in Philippians 3:12-21.

Readings	Byzantine	Alexandrian	Western	Others
a.		C*		
b.	Majority (sy) 1881	Σ ² (Ψ) 1739	D lat	
c.		C ²	D*	
d.		048	g	
e.			Thret ^{lem}	
f.			F G	
g.		Σ* A 33		

The second chart sorts out the manuscript and other external evidence into general families. Getting a feel for the significance and relative evidential value of each family and of the individual witnesses belonging to them is a long process of accumulated experience. Guidance for beginning exegetes is available in the following places: in the introductions to NA²⁷; UBS⁴; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*; and in the little book by David Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism*. More detailed treatments can be found, for example, in Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, and in B. Aland and K. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*. See the bibliography in the textbook.

Alexandrian texts are generally regarded as more trustworthy than Byzantine or Western texts (though some scholars dispute that point). This, together with considerations of the internal evidence, suggests that reading (g), the preferred text in NA²⁷ and UBS⁴, has the strongest claim to originality among the options. It is supported by two of the most important uncials and one of the most important minuscules. It is also the simplest reading of the seven that have survived, even though it reads somewhat awkwardly. If it is the original, then it is easy to explain the others as arising from an attempt to “fix” the awkward syntax of (g) in various ways, or as arising from one or another of these presumably secondary readings.

IV. Grammatical Analysis

Examine the grammar in Philemon 8-16, and try answering the following questions. Beware of “over-exegesis.”

1. What is the function or force (semantic value) of the participial phrase in verse 8: πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν ἔχων ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνήκον (literally: “having much boldness in Christ to command you [to do] the proper thing”)?
2. What is function or force (semantic value) of the participial phrase in verse 9: τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς Παῦλος πρεσβύτης . . . (literally: “being such a person as Paul an old man”)?
3. Why is ἐπιτάσσειν “to command” (v. 8) a *present* infinitive rather than an *aorist* (ἐπιτάξει)?
4. Why is ἐβουλόμην “I wished” in the *imperfect* tense and κατέχειν “to keep” a *present* infinitive (v. 13)? Similarly, why is διακονῆ “[that] he might minister [to me]” a *present* subjunctive (v. 13)?
5. Why are ἠθέλησα “I wanted” and ποιῆσαι “to do” (v. 14) both aorist? Contrast verse 13.
6. What is the force of the genitive (“of”) in δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου “chains of the gospel” (v. 13)?
7. What is the significance of the pronoun in τῆς σῆς γνώμης “[without] your consent” (v. 14)?
8. Why is ἀπέχης present “you might have [him] back” (v. 15)?
9. What is the force of ἐν “in” (twice) in verse 16: ἐν σαρκί “in [the] flesh” and ἐν κυρίῳ “in [the] Lord”?
10. With the help of Wallace (use the index), determine what the optional interpretations are for these two genitive constructions in Romans 3:21-22. How would you decide among the possibilities *for this context*?
 - a. δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (literally: “righteousness of God”)
 - b. πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (literally: “faith of Jesus Christ”)

Answers (always up for discussion) to grammatical questions on preceding page:

1. The participle ἔχων “having” is most likely concessive: “although.” The participial phrase sets up a backdrop to Paul’s “urging” (παρακαλῶ), suggesting that Paul urges *in spite of* having enough boldness to command Philemon. See Wallace, p. 634.
2. This may also be a case of a concessive participle: “instead, because of love, I urge you, *though I am only Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner*”). Perhaps Paul is being coy or ironic about the respect due him from Philemon.
3. The present infinitive (which has nothing to do with present *time*) portrays the action of the verb as ongoing or habitual. The aorist would not carry that extra element of meaning. Here Paul may be emphasizing his perpetual authority over Philemon.
4. Both the imperfect tense in the indicative mood and the present “aspect” in the infinitive emphasize, once again, an ongoing, habitual, behavior (even if only for a short time). Perhaps this verse should be rendered, “I *was thinking* about *keeping* him for myself.” The same principle holds for the present subjunctive: “that he might *keep on* ministering to me.”
5. Probably in contrast to his ongoing enjoyment of Onesimus’ help, Paul drops the element of “imperfection” or “incompleteness” belonging to habitual behavior, and speaks simply of his unwillingness to act without Philemon’s consent.
6. The genitive case can be used to represent a wide variety of relationships between ideas. Here we might “unpack” the implication of the genitive as one of *cause*. The chains Paul finds himself in are *a result of* [his preaching] the gospel: “chains of the gospel.” This may be what Wallace calls a “genitive of producer or production” (pp. 104-6): the gospel has “produced” imprisonment for Paul. See Wallace, p. 72, for an overview of the uses of the genitive.
7. This phrase could have been written τῆς γνώμης σου “your consent”; the use of the possessive adjective σῆς “your” instead of the pronoun σου (literally, “of you”) suggests greater emphasis on Philemon as consenter.
8. Once again, the *present* subjunctive emphasizes the continuous nature of the “having back” Paul has in mind. This emphasis is picked up also in the adverb αἰώνιον “forever.”
9. By saying “both X and Y,” Paul implies that X and Y are different from each other. Onesimus is now a brother to Philemon in two complementary respects: “in the flesh” and “in the Lord.” It seems quite likely that the latter refers to their relationship as fellow Christians, on equal footing before God. The other probably means that they are both human beings, again on equal footing before their

Creator. In this context, then, the word ἐν “in” functions not so much to “localize” as to establish a “relationship.”

10. Using the Scripture index in Wallace brings us to pages 114-16 for Romans 3:22. There Wallace discusses the so-called subjective and objective genitives. For (b) a subjective genitive would imply that the faith Paul is talking about is the faith Jesus demonstrates, that is his faithfulness (to something). An objective genitive would imply the faith that believers place in Jesus.

Similarly, for (a) the subjective genitive would mean that God himself is righteous, or that he *confers* righteousness (on someone). It could also refer to the righteous that God *requires* of human beings. An objective genitive would likely not make sense in this case. No one *makes* God righteous.

The context in which Romans 3:21-22 occurs helps us determine which of the various options for these two phrases is most likely correct. The fact that this passage comes directly after the scathing condemnation of humanity in Romans 1—3 suggests that the righteousness in view is the one God requires of humanity. But what Paul now says about it also suggests that it is a righteousness that comes through the faith of Christ, that is, a righteousness God bestows.

It may be that he bestows that righteousness through, or on the grounds of Jesus Christ’s faithfulness to him. But the fact that it is bestowed on all who believe (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας) suggests strongly that the “faith of Jesus Christ” should be interpreted as “faith that people have in Jesus Christ,” that is, as an objective genitive. Still, considering the other option raises the question whether there are other instances of this phrase used as a subjective genitive.

And none of this answers another question that arises now: what in fact is righteousness?