

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: *Greek New Testament*
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: *King James Version*
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: *Septuagint*
m. Mishnah
MT: *Masoretic Text*
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*
OT: *Old Testament*
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*
v(s). *verse(s)*
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

Textual Criticism

I have heard you use the term “textual criticism” before. What is this?

Textual criticism, also known as lower criticism,

“is the restoration of the wording of a document when alterations have been introduced (deliberately or inadvertently) in the course of copying and recopying. Before the invention of printing, when each copy of a document had to be written out separately by hand, scribal errors were especially apt to occur” (F.F. Bruce, *ISBE*).¹

Textual criticism is employed to determine what the original reading of a Biblical text was, taking into account the oldest available texts and textual fragments of Scriptures, ancient translations of Scriptures available, and quotations of Scripture in ancient literature—among various factors. The *ISBE* entry by F.F. Bruce goes on to state,

“If the autograph or original document survives, scribal errors can be corrected by reference to it. But if it has long since disappeared (as has happened with all the original emplers of biblical books), and the surviving copies differ from one another here and there, the original wording can be determined only by comparative study of these copies. The scribal habits of individual copyists, and the remoteness of proximity to individual MSS to the original...must be investigated” (Bruce, *ISBE*).²

As a conservative ministry, we do believe that the Holy Scriptures are inspired of God and that they are not myths, borrowed or copied from pagan stories or the contemporary religions around Ancient Israel. However, textual errors have occurred in the copying and transmission of the Scriptures over the centuries, be they in the Hebrew Tanach (OT) or Greek Apostolic Writings (NT). The significant majority of these errors were unintentional human mistakes, although a few may have been intentional for doctrinal reasons. These sorts of issues can only be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

The two most commonly employed Biblical texts today which cannot be considered “critical texts,” because they **have not** been compared against textual discoveries, are the Masoretic Hebrew text (MT) for the Tanach and the Textus Receptus for the Greek Apostolic Writings. Biblical scholars largely use critical texts such as the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*³ and the *Greek New Testament, 4th Revised Edition*⁴ (widely the same as the *Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th ed.*⁵), both produced by United Bible Societies. These editions have the variant manuscript readings in their footnotes.⁶ Committees on large Bible translation projects, tend to jointly decide which reading is best, when controversies might arise.

¹ F.F. Bruce, “Criticism,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 1:818.

² *Ibid.*

³ Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, et. al., eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977).

⁴ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998).

⁵ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993).

⁶ Additional resources to consider, include Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998); Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008).