

**Zeitschrift:** Theologische Zeitschrift  
**Herausgeber:** Theologische Fakultät der Universität Basel  
**Band:** 46 (1990)  
**Heft:** 3

**Artikel:** in the New Testament  
**Autor:** Elliott, J K.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-878371>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 11.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## τε in the New Testament\*

In the Koine τε was steadily falling into desuetude, but the various uses of τε did not become uncommon or obsolete at the same rate. Three such uses can be discerned. First is what may be called «free τε», where either a single τε is used in the sense of «and», or a series, τε...τε meaning «both...and». Next there is the phrase τε καί, or τὲ...καί «both...and» and thirdly, οὐτε, μήτε, εἴτε singly or repeated.

The word seems to have gone out of use in this order. Free τε is least common. There is one doubtful instance at Mt xxviii. 12 (*v.l. om. D et al.*), none in Mark, none in Luke and none in John. Acts has many, about 100 according to A. C. Clark<sup>1</sup>. There are a few instances in the Pauline Epistles: Rom. i. 26, ii. 19, vii. 7 (*v.l.*) xiv. 8 (4), 1 Cor. iv. 21, Eph. iii. 19. Hebrews has several: i. 3, vi. 2, 5, ix. 1, xii. 2. None of the other works have this usage.

τε...καί is commoner. It occurs at Mt. xxii. 10, xxvii. 48 (*v.l.*), Lk. ii 16 (*v.l.*), xii. 45 (*v.l.*), xv. 2 (*v.l.*), xxi. 11 (2) (*v.l.*), xxii. 66 (*v.l.*), xxiii. 12, xxiv. 20 (*v.l.*) and about 60 times in Acts. The Pauline Epistles have Rom. i. 12, 14 (2), 16 (*v.l.*), 20, 27 (*v.l.*), ii. 9, 10, iii. 9, x. 12, 1 Cor. i. 2 (*v.l.*), 24, 30 (*v.l.*), Phil. i. 7. The formulae of the type Ἰουδαῖος τε καὶ Ἑλλην are responsible for Rom. i. 16, ii. 9, 10, iii. 9, x. 12, 1 Cor. i. 24. Hebrews has ii. 4 (*v.l.*), 11, iv. 12 (*v.l.*), v. 7, 14, vi. 2, 4, 19, vii. 3, ix. 2, 9, 19, x. 33, xi. 32(2), fifteen instances in all. There are two examples at James iii. 7: Rev. xix. 18 is doubtful.

οὐτε and μήτε survive little better. Matthew has οὐτε at vi. 20, xii. 32, xxii. 30. Marcan examples are cited at v. 3, xii. 25, xiv. 68: all should probably be rejected as secondary. In Luke there is xiv. 35, xx. 35 and in John iv. 11, 21, v. 37, viii. 19, ix. 3. Acts has surprisingly few: ii. 31 (*v.l.*), xv. 10, xix. 37, xxiv. 12, xxv. 8, xxviii. 21, not more than six instances. The Pauline Epistles give Rom. viii. 38, 39, 1 Cor. iii. 7, vi. 9 (*v.l.*), 10 (*v.l.*), viii. 8, xi. 11, Gal. i. 12 (*v.l.*), v. 6, vi. 15, 1 Thess. ii. 5, 6, perhaps nine examples. Next there are James iii. 12 (*v.l.*) and 3 Jn. 10. Revelation gives iii. 15, 16, v. 4, ix. 20, 21, xxi. 4, six examples. For μήτε we have the following details: Mt. v. 34, 35, 36, xi. 18, Lk. ix. 3 (not vii. 33) Acts xxiii. 8 (*v.l.*), 12, 21, xxvii. 20, 2 Thess. ii. 2, 1 Tim. 1, 7, Heb. vii. 3, James v. 12, Rev. vii. 1, 3.

\* This note is based on discussion initiated by the late Professor S. D. Kilpatrick and is offered *in memoriam*.

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Clark, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Oxford 1933, 396f.

We can now draw up a comparative table:

	free <i>τε</i>	<i>τε...καί</i>	<i>οὐτε, μήτε</i>
Mark	—	—	—
John	—	—	5
Revelation	—	1?	8
Matthew	—?	1–2	7
Luke	—	1–8	3
Acts	c. 100	c. 60	8–10
Pauline epistles	8–9	10–14 + 6	9–13
Hebrews	5	13–15	1
James	—	2	1–2
3 John	—	—	1
Pastoral epistles	—	—	1

This table probably gives us a good picture of the use of this particle before Atticist influence began to affect Greek writers. Free *τε* was almost out of use even in writings like Luke, the Pastorals and James. If we leave Acts aside for the moment, it is rare in the Pauline Epistles and used more freely only in Hebrews...*τε...καί* is a little more common. For example, it occurs in Matthew, appears eight times in Luke and twice in James. The range of writings which use *οὐτε, μήτε* is even wider, including John, Revelation and 3 John, in addition to the books which have *τε...καί*.<sup>2</sup>

These data give us some indications about the style and the pretensions to style of the various writers. First it is clear that Acts is eccentric. In this book the use of *τε* has become an extravagant abnormality, and must be treated accordingly. It is noteworthy that *οὐτε* and *μήτε* have not shared in this extravagance, a feature perhaps comparable to the fact that Hebrews does not use *οὐτε* at all and *μήτε* only once. Apart from Acts, the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, James and Luke, make the most use of the word. Its appearance in John and Revelation is modest, and it is not part of the language of Mark, or, the Pastoral Epistles, except for *μήτε* once. Of all the writings concerned we would naturally rank John, Revelation, the Pastorals and Mark together, as making the slightest claim to a good Greek style, and this grouping is supported by the evidence of *τε*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Blass – Debrunner 443–5.

The New Testament reserve in the use of the word has one important consequence. More work is thrown on to καί and on to οὐ...οὐδέ. We have to remember for example that for most of the new Testament καί...καί is the only way of expressing «both...and», οὐ...οὐδέ is used where earlier οὐτε...οὐτε would have been preferable.

In looking through an apparatus we notice many passages where it is uncertain whether τε is to be read or not: *v.l.* in the above lists means some mss. avoid τε. Does our examination of the use of the word as a whole in the N.T. suggest any principle in dealing with doubtful cases? Apart from the fact that the particle is going out of use there is one other event to keep in mind. From the time of Hadrian onward, Greek writers and writings were subjected to an intensive Atticising influence. In keeping with this, Attic features were inserted into the New Testament writings where they were originally lacking. Information about the use of τε in Greek writers who were trying to Atticise, can be derived from the indices to Schmid, Atticismus, and details about the use of τε in Longus, from G. Valley, *Über den Sprachgebrauch des Longus*. We shall then be wise to reject doubtful instances of τε as being due to Atticist correction if other things are equal. To this there is one exception, *Acts*. Here the writer has carried his cult of τε to such an excess that the frequent presence of the particle must have been an irritant to any Greek reader, even if he were trained in Atticist schools. In this book the tendency seems to have been for scribes to cut down the author's exuberance at all costs.<sup>3</sup>

J. K. Elliott, Leeds

<sup>3</sup> No account is taken of εἴτε. It is frequent in the Pauline Epistles. Otherwise it occurs only at 1 Pet. ii 13, 14.