

New Testament Greek

5. Noun: Second Declension Forms and Paradigms

Date: 071007G

Duration: 1:36:36

1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ γέγονεν. 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

The last lesson was our first contact with the verb in Greek. But we cannot translate Greek from verbs only.

This week, we will be introduced to the other main element needed for a complete sentence, which is, of course, the noun.

Now, you might think, okay, we learn nouns, and now we can take a Greek sentence apart and figure out the English translation.

Well, before we think it is going to be too, too easy, let me tell you, up front, what we need to accomplish in this lesson.

1. Learn the declension; that is, learn the orderly listing of endings of the words, the proper spelling, the accent, and so on.

That will require learning some rules, and applying them, so that when we start translating, we'll know what we are seeing.

And, that is only learning the declension forms and names.

2. We still have to learn the significance of each form: its purpose and usage in a sentence, before we can translate properly.

Some forms are used as the subject of a sentence; some are used as possessive; others, direct objects; others, indirect objects.

To translate, you will need to look at a word, recognize whether it is a verb or a noun, and correctly determine what the ending of that particular form means, and then put it all together.

Not everyone will automatically be able to look at a sentence and see that a particular word is a direct object, or indirect object, or subject, of a sentence; or that a verb is not "we" but "he."

You'll need to develop some system, to make sense out of it all.

Maybe it doesn't sound like a lot. I hope it isn't too much, but I am prepared to stretch this chapter out over two classes, because if we lose anyone at this point, they will have a hard time getting caught up later.

As we go through the lesson, I want to remember to cross reference between the books, so everyone can follow along.

Actually, in this lesson, the first several sections at least are in sync.

But, holler at me if you don't know where I am in the chapter.

What I would like to do is first, go through the forms themselves.

We don't have to understand a thing about the significance of each form to learn the forms; in fact, just taking them as exercises to apply rules of accent will be good practice.

All we need to know is there are basically nine forms for each word in the vocabulary. But, we will only deal with eight of them.

Nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative, singular and plural, plus vocative singular. Vocative plural and nominative plural are identical. In any case, we will skip the vocative for now.

Don't worry what these mean at this point. They are just labels.

We need to learn the endings, and then, how the endings affect the accent of the word, so we can write out the declensions.

Let's start with general characteristics of substantives, compared to verbs, with regard to principles of accent.

The general rule for verbs is, accent is recessive. This means it goes as far from the end of the word as the rules of accent permit.

The lexicon form of the verb is first person singular present active indicative, but accent doesn't depend on the lexicon form.

Verb accent is always recessive, regardless of the lexicon form.

However, for the Greek substantive, the accent directly depends on the lexicon form of the word.

The lexicon form is nominative singular, regardless of declension.

The lexicon form also adds the definite article that is used with that word. The definite article determines the gender of the word.

The second declension is mostly masculine. For the masculine, the definite article is "ὁ." But some are neuter, where the article is "τό." When we come to feminine words, the article will be "ἡ."

But, there is no rule where the accent must come in the nominative singular of a substantive. That is actually part of the word itself.

We have to learn the position of the accent as part of the way a word is spelled.

So, here is another reason why accent is important. An accent may distinguish between two substantives with different meanings.

But, the basic principle for accenting substantives is that the lexicon form is the basis for the accent of the other cases.

The general rule is that the accent in any substantive will remain in as nearly the same position as it is in the lexicon form, as far as the general rules of accent will permit.

So, when we change the endings as we go through the declension, we must observe how the general rules of accent apply.

That being as it is, consider the options that are possible:

Accented on the ultima: ἀδελφός, ὁ; ἱερόν, τό; υἱός, ὁ
 Accented on the antepenult, with a long penult: ἄνθρωπος, ὁ;
 Accented on the antepenult, with a short penult:
 ἀπόστολος, ὁ; θάνατος, ὁ;
 Accented on the penult, with a long penult:
 δοῦλος, ὁ; δῶρον, τό; οἶκος, ὁ
 Accented on the penult, with a short penult:

λόγος, ὁ; νόμος, ὁ;

So, what we will do is go through an example of each one of these; then for your homework this week, you need to practice all the words in your vocabulary, writing out the declensions, learning how the accent behaves in these forms.

Let's begin where the 2nd Ed. begins. It's a good word from John 1!

Singular	Plural
N λόγος	λόγοι
G λόγου	λόγων
D λόγῳ	λόγοις
A λόγον	λόγους

See, all we do is take the λόγ- of λόγος, and add the endings. Then we can go back and see if any accent changes are required.

The rules of accent require no changes. The accent remains on the penult, and can always be the acute.

Now, let's do the one used in the 1st Ed. First, I will just change the endings, and we will see if any accent rules are violated.

Singular	Plural
N ἄνθρωπος	ἄνθρωποι
G ἄνθρωπου	ἄνθρωπων
D ἄνθρωπῳ	ἄνθρωποις
A ἄνθρωπον	ἄνθρωπους

Okay, let's look at each one and see if any rules are violated.

One rule we know is that if the ultima is long, the accent cannot be further back than the penult. And we have some long ultimas.

The genitive and dative singular, and also the genitive, dative, and accusative plural, all have long ultimas.

So, now we have to decide which accent to use to fix them.

The accent wants to stay as near the lexicon form as it can.

Where the ultima is long, the accent must move to the penult; and, in every case, the penult is long.

But, since the only reason we have to move the accent at all is that the ultima is long, we are accenting a long penult followed by a long ultima. So, what will the accent be? An acute.

Singular	Plural
N ἄνθρωπος	ἄνθρωποι
G ἄνθρώπου	ἄνθρώπων
D ἄνθρώπῳ	ἄνθρώποις
A ἄνθρωπον	ἄνθρώπους

So, that wasn't so very hard, was it?

Now, let's just think quickly here: any second declension noun that is accented on the antepenult will follow the same pattern.

It will not matter whether the penult is short or long.

Why? Because, the only time the accent must move is if the ultima is long, and in that case, the accent on the penult is an acute.

We have done a two-syllable word with an accented short penult.

Let's try a two-syllable word with an accented long penult. 2nd Ed. uses the neuter noun, δῶρον, τό, and this will let us apply rules of accent at the same time as we observe the neuter endings.

Again, I'll just replace the "-ον" of the nominative singular with the other endings, without touching the accent.

Singular	Plural
N δῶρον	δῶρα
G δῶρου	δῶρων
D δῶρῳ	δῶροις
A δῶρον	δῶρα

How does it look? The accent can always stay on the same syllable, since a penult can always be accented, one way or another.

But, now we have to consider the special rule for a long penult that is followed by a short ultima. This requires a circumflex, which, in fact, is the accent used in the nominative singular.

But, the genitive and accusative, singular and plural, are long.

So, in those forms, the circumflex must be changed to an acute.

This is a good point to notice also that the alpha of the nominative and accusative plural is short (Sections 38/42).

This is why the accent in the paradigm remains a circumflex.

Singular	Plural
N δῶρον	δῶρα
G δώρου	δώρων
D δώρω	δώροις
A δῶρον	δῶρα

Note: the distinction between the neuter and the masculine is seen in the nominative and accusative, singular and plural forms. The only option we have not covered yet is accent on the ultima. Here is ἀδελφός. The book uses υἱός, but the same rules apply. Again, I will just place the same accent on the same location as it is found in the nominative singular; the lexicon form.

Singular	Plural
N ἀδελφός	ἀδελφοί
G ἀδελφού	ἀδελφών
D ἀδελφῷ	ἀδελφοῖς
A ἀδελφόν	ἀδελφούς

Now, according to the general rules of accent, and the general rule for substantives, the accent stays as nearly as possible the same as it is in the lexicon form. So, we should not need to change a thing here. No general rules are violated.

Whether long or short, an acute is permitted on the ultima.

The general rule of noun accent only determines the location of the accent; not which accent is to be used.

In words where the lexicon form is accented on either the penult or the antepenult, as we change the endings, applying the general rules of accent, we always come down to only one option.

And, even if the ultima is accented, we only have one option if the ultima is short. It has to be the acute.

But, if the accented ultima is long, we are left with two choices.

The acute or the circumflex are both allowed by the general rules.

There is no rule to determine what is the accent of a long ultima.

So, we have a special rule to learn. And, it isn't that hard

The genitive and dative take a circumflex; all the rest get the acute.

So, all we have to do is remember it's acute, circumflex, circumflex, acute; acute, circumflex, circumflex, acute.

Singular	Plural
N ἀδελφός	ἀδελφοί
G ἀδελφού	ἀδελφῶν
D ἀδελφῷ	ἀδελφοῖς
A ἀδελφόν	ἀδελφούς

And, that really does cover all the options for second declension. You should practice them as part of your study this week. I will not tell you how many times, but you should write each vocabulary word out in all it's forms at least once or twice, I would think. Now, before we can do any translating, we need to understand the significance of these different ending we have just studied. Mechanically, it is a logic puzzle, and you can make a game of it. But, to translate, we need to understand the meaning. Here we go!

1. What is a declension?

A declension is an orderly listing of forms of a substantive.

A substantive is a noun, first of all.

Pronouns also are substantives.

But, in Greek, adjectives can also be used as substantives, even if they are not modifying a noun.

Also, definite articles, by themselves, can be used as substantives! These all follow similar patterns, called declensions, that are what help to make Greek the precise language that it is.

Our concern today is only nouns, and not all nouns, at that.

We had relatively few forms to learn, although, they had enough complexities that it did make an interesting puzzle.

2. The three declensions.

The substantives in Greek come under one of three declensions.

These are called, amazingly, first, second, and third declensions.

The first declension is characterized by endings using alpha.

They are mostly, but not exclusively, feminine nouns.

The second declension is characterized by omicron endings.

They are usually, but not exclusively, masculine.

The third declension is characterized by . . . well, it's just weird!

Since more nouns in Greek are second declension, these are first to be covered.

The principles of this lesson will cover both masculine and neuter nouns of the second declension.

3. There is no indefinite article in Greek.

In English, the indefinite article is "a" or "an," and only singular.

But there is a definite article, equivalent to "the" in English.

Therefore, if the definite article is not present in the Greek, we do not add a definite article in the English translation.

As of this lesson, we haven't learned definite articles, so they will not appear in the exercises, in any case. Nothing we translate in this lesson should have "the" in the translation.

But, we will have to deal with the question of indefinite articles.

When there is no definite article, then, in translating, an indefinite article should be inserted where we would use one in English.

Usually, this is done in the singular, but not in the plural: we say, "a brother," but we have no indefinite article for "brothers."

Nor should you use any other indefinite word, such as "some."

Say brothers. And, any other plural will follow the same pattern.

4. Gender: in English, we can't always determine whether a given noun is masculine, feminine, or neuter. We have pronouns: he, she, and it. But, for nouns, it's anyone's guess.

People: when you talk about a person, you use the pronouns, in either the masculine or feminine, if you know their gender.

In fact, this is such a compelling thing, that it is very hard if you are trying to conceal their gender.

Sometimes when I'm preaching, I want to illustrate something, and it may involve someone whose identity I don't want to make known. But, in some cases, even if I only reveal their gender, it would give them away.

I might try to say "this person," or even use "they," rather than he or she (but, that is almost certain to mean it's a she).

But, a lot of times, I lose! I try to hide it, but it just slips out!

I am just saying, our English custom is deeply ingrained, where it involves other people, if we know the person's gender.

Other than people, that is, when we do not know the gender of the object we are talking about, or gender is not important, how much distinction is made of gender in English?

We usually apply "it" to inanimate objects; but, even then, in many cases we apply what I call a "mythical gender":

A ship is often a "she"; the moon is "she" (regardless of "the man in the moon"); "mother earth" and "mother nature" are "she"; a nation may commonly be referred to as "the fatherland," but generally, feminine pronouns are used in referring to a nation.

I call these "mythical gender," since, the best I know, they've come down to us through mythical origins.

Other gender choices arise from associating behaviors with a particular gender.

Animals are often given a gender for a species, because their behavior seems typical of one gender or the other.

We also have specific words for the male or female gender of many kinds of animals; but, think about it: animals which have no special term for a male or female are confusing.

Is a cat masculine or feminine? Lots of people see dogs in the masculine, and cats in the feminine. But, in English, there just is no explicit gender for nouns in general. All we have are the gender specific pronouns, he, she, and it.

In fact, as soon as we get to the plural, we do not have gender in the pronouns, either; all we have is we, you, and they.

I have said all this to come around to the point that the Greek, in contrast, is always precise in gender, in the nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and articles, both singular and plural.

Every one of these is a specific gender, and they may or may not line up with what we seem right to us in English.

Just consider it arbitrary; but it's very important when it comes to matching a pronoun with the noun to which it is referring.

Even plural pronouns are masculine, feminine, or neuter.

It doesn't eliminate all possible problems; but it helps immensely. For today's lesson, we're only dealing with masculine and neuter.

All we have to know is that masculine is "he" and neuter is "it," if the translation requires using one or the other.

5. Number. Greek, of course, has singular and plural.

Every language has some means to distinguish number.

6. Case. Here is where we are mostly going to break new ground.

In English, the singular and plural, and perhaps, at times, an idea of gender, are about all we can identify in a noun.

Perhaps the possessive, with the "-s" ending, may be considered a special case spelling, if we stretch the point a little bit.

But, to make other distinctions, we have to add other words.

The English pronouns do have different forms, according to use.

I, me, my; you, your; he, him, his; she, her, hers; and so on.

We will compare those to the Greek when we come to them.

But, in all Greek nouns, there is this third element, called case.

Every noun you'll find in a Greek text can be identified precisely, as to gender, number, and specific use, which is called case.

The endings of the noun, which are what we've just learned, give us the key to how the word is being used in the sentence.

Needless to say, these endings are very important for translation.

The endings are added to the stem, which is the part that doesn't change — it works the same way as with the verb