

New Testament Greek  
7. Second Declension Review and Exercises

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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.

Over the last two classes, we introduced Greek nouns.

We first considered how different uses of the noun require different endings, and then how the endings effect the accent of nouns.

After going through the endings as a logical exercise, we then went through the general characteristics of nouns in Greek.

We said that there are three declensions in Greek.

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 weird! Some third declension words can be found in the back of the book, starting at page 290/227.

The ones given there are νύξ, σὰρξ, ἄρχων, ἐλπίς, χάρις, ὄνομα, γένος, πόλις, βασιλεύς, πατήρ, μήτηρ, ἀνὴρ, χεῖρ, γυνή

We talked about the fact that there is no indefinite article in Greek.

We went over the “moveable ν,” and I trust you noticed that in the exercises, it was totally unpredictable where it appeared or not.

We went over the fact that every Greek noun has a specific gender, number, and case.

Now, on that point, on the translation sheets I gave you, I put the columns in that order; but, actually, that is a mistake.

Almost any breakdown of substantives will list case and number, then gender. It is embarrassing to make that kind of mistake, but really, from now on, we ought to speak of nouns in terms of case, number and gender.

Instead of saying, for example, “masculine singular nominative,” in the future we should say “nominative singular masculine.”

Eventually, we will get to the place where we won't not even give the gender, unless there is a special reason that requires it.

I covered the cases in detail.

Nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, and vocative.

The nominative is the case of the subject of a verb.

I also told you that not every verb will have a stated subject. And this was evident in several of the exercises.

If the verb is a first or second person singular, or first or second person plural, the subject is contained in the verb itself.

Taking “say” as an example, “I say, you say, we say, you say,” will not take an explicit noun in the nominative case as the a subject. There were several exercises of that kind.

The genitive is the case of the possessive, although, possessive is not necessarily the best way of putting it. See § 35/35.

For example, #9, English to Greek, “a word of death” is hardly what we would normally think of as a possessive.

Maybe it is better to say, when a Greek noun is used to modify another Greek noun, it is in the genitive case.

“A word of death,” is not a word belonging to death, but it is a word characterized by its reference to death.

Here is a good point to give you a wonderful Greek nugget.

Mark 11:22 is often debated by people who do not understand the Biblical concept of faith in God.

The Greek sentence is one we can almost understand already: ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. We know ἔχετε. What is it? ἴσπαι. Later, we will learn that form could also be imperative, but, really, it hardly affects the meaning at all: “ye have” or “have ye.”

The Greek word for faith is third declension: πίστις, for which the accusative singular is πίστιν.

The Greek word for God is θεός, which is declined exactly the same as υἱός or ἀδελφός; so θεοῦ is the genitive singular.

The mistake made by many who do not understand faith (or the Greek, either one) is thinking the genitive is, pure and simple, possessive. That is one use, but we can see, from the example of “a word of death,” possessive is not quite the right idea.

The correct understanding of the genitive in Mark 11:22 is so simple: it is faith characterized by its reference to God.

The only other possibility would be “Have faith which comes from God,” which also lines up with Scripture in general.

But, it can't be, “Have God's faith.” That is a mistranslation. So, the King James translation is right: “Have faith in God.”

Or we could say, “Have faith that comes from God.”

But, of course, if it comes from God, it is not going to be faith in some other source to provide for our needs.

In any case, you can safely translate the genitive using “of.”

The dative case is used for the indirect object.

It is not always clear what is the direct or indirect object, so, for the purpose of this lesson, we assumed that if the word “to” is used, it is the indirect object, at least most of the time.

In our English to Greek exercises, there were no indirect objects which did not use the word “to.”

In the Greek to English, I said if you can translate without using “to,” it was fine, but I honestly only found one where it was possible, and even then, I thought it was better to use “to.”

But, one thing I need to mention on the paradigms you turned in: most of you forgot to put the iota subscript on the dative singular. This is a critical point. It has to be there, or it is not a dative singular.

While I am on the subject of the paradigms, there was only one other common error, and that was the accent of nouns that are accented on the ultima. The pattern there is consistent: “acute, circumflex, circumflex, acute,” singular or plural.

Anyway, so the dative case, at least for now, is translated using the word “to” with whatever the noun is.

The accusative is the case of the direct object.

Again, this is not always clear cut, especially with some verbs.

When I say, “I teach,” it seems to me that who I am teaching is the indirect object, whether what I am teaching (that is, the direct object) is stated or not.

The problem is in connection with the nature of the verb itself. A transitive verb is a verb that can take a direct object. But, not all transitive verbs always require a direct object. These are the ones that give the trouble. I can say, “I teach” without a direct object, and it isn’t a problem. Other verbs, such as, “I throw,” or “I hit” can hardly be used without a direct object at all, and there is no confusion between a direct or indirect object used with them.

So, for the present time, here is what I suggest: if you can use a “to” without changing the meaning, it’s an indirect object.

If inserting “to” makes it sound weird, it’s a direct object.

“I teach a man” can’t be replaced with “I teach to a man,” and in that case, “a man” is the direct object.

But, if I say, “I teach a word to a man,” there is a clear indirect object as well as a direct object.

However, I could also say, “I teach a man a word.” Now, try to put in a “to,” and what do you get? You can say, “I teach a word to a man,” but not, “I teach a man to a word.”

I think that will basically sort it out for the present time, at least. The vocative is only for direct address: “Lord, I believe.”

There was a question on Paltalk about the Latin liturgical term, “Kyrie eleison.” It is found in Catholic and Anglican liturgy, and it means, “Lord, have mercy.”

In fact, it is directly transliterated from the Greek. The word for Lord is κύριος, for which the vocative is κύριε. The word for “show mercy,” or “have mercy,” is ἐλέεω, for which ἐλέησον is, in fact, a command form.

I also covered order of words, and we will comment as we work on the exercises when we come to appropriate examples.

[ Exercises ]