

## A Little Bit of Greek

Session 6: Pronouns and Conditionals

In person at Wai 'ālae Baptist Church

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### Introduction to the Pronoun

A pronoun is a noun that takes the place of another noun. English uses pronouns extensively. Pronouns are the only English nouns that have case, gender, and number. Greek pronouns are much more extensive, but much more regular than English pronouns. If you did not speak English, how could you predict the following?

	Singular			Plural		
	Subject	Object	Posses	Subject	Object	Possess
First person	I	me	mine	we	us	our
Second person	you	you	your	you	you	your
Third person	he	him	his	they	them	their
	she	her	her	they	them	their
	it	it	its	they	them	their

There does not appear to be any pattern in how they are formed. How do you know which form to use? You just know. With our third person pronouns, we have another problem – Ambiguity.

*John brought some soup to Bill at the house. He was sick.*

According to English grammar, who in the sentence is “sick”? Was this a compassionate act by John bringing soup for a sick friend? Or was it a sick man heroically bringing soup to his friend? The English is not clear, because the rules give to different answers.

- Pronouns refer to closest noun preceding them.
- Pronouns refer to the most prominent noun preceding them.

Greek is different. Like the rest of the nouns in Greek, pronouns have endings that indicate gender, case, and number. Greek also has multiple words that would be rendered in English as pronouns.

Stem	Basic meaning of the word
Gender	-Grammatical gender, personal pronouns refer to biological gender
Case	Indicates how the word is used in the sentence
Number	How many – one or more than one

Αὐτ- +ending

Εκεῖν- +ending

Οὗτ - +ending

A pronoun can also be indicated in Greek with an article (which has gender, case, number) or it can be implied (like in English). What this means is that Greek can be more precise than English.

“I do not ask for **these** only, but also for **those** who will believe in me through **their** word, <sup>21</sup> that **they** may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that **they** also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Οὐ περὶ **τούτων** δὲ ἐρωτῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ **τῶν** πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου **αὐτῶν** εἰς ἐμέ, <sup>21</sup> ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν σοί, ἵνα καὶ **αὐτοὶ** ἐν ἡμῖν ᾧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. 1 John 17:20-21

**Τούτων - these**

**αὐτῶν - their**

**αὐτοὶ - they**

One of the other differences between Greek and English is in the second person plural. In English, it is the same word. What's more, English uses plural verb forms with the singular pronoun.

“You are ... “ How many people are we talking about?

English used to have different forms for singular and plural second person pronouns. Do you know what they were?

Remember that Greek has gender, case, and NUMBER.

Here's a passage from Ephesians 1 in which multiple pronouns are used. Note how the first letters are often the same and the endings are different. The endings show gender, case, number. The beginning part is the stem that indicates what the word means.

<sup>3</sup> Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου **ἡμῶν** Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλογήσας **ἡμᾶς** ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, <sup>4</sup> καθὼς ἐξελέξατο **ἡμᾶς** ἐν **αὐτῷ** πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, εἶναι **ἡμᾶς** ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον **αὐτοῦ** ἐν ἀγάπῃ, <sup>5</sup> προορίσας **ἡμᾶς** εἰς υἱοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς **αὐτόν**, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος **αὐτοῦ**, <sup>6</sup> εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν **ἡμᾶς** ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, <sup>7</sup> ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος **αὐτοῦ**, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος **αὐτοῦ** <sup>8</sup> ᾧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς **ἡμᾶς** ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει <sup>9</sup> γνωρίσας **ἡμῖν** τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος **αὐτοῦ**, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν **αὐτοῦ** ἣν προέθετο ἐν **αὐτῷ** <sup>10</sup> εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· ἐν αὐτῷ, <sup>11</sup> ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος **αὐτοῦ**, <sup>12</sup> εἰς τὸ εἶναι **ἡμᾶς** εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης **αὐτοῦ** τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ· <sup>13</sup> ἐν ᾧ καὶ **ὕμεῖς** ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας **ὕμῶν**, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, <sup>14</sup> ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας **ἡμῶν**, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης **αὐτοῦ**.

ἡμ – depending on ending – we or us

αὐτ – depending on ending – he, his, or him

ὕμ – depending on ending – you (pl.) or your (pl.)

*There are also relative pronouns, which we will not discuss here.*

In verse 4, the word αὐτῷ appears. From the first part of the word αὐτ, we know it is the third person singular pronoun. From the last part of the word ῷ we know the pronoun is masculine, singular, and dative. We can then look at the words that precede it to find out who or what is being referenced. In this case, the reference is Jesus.

When we get to the second person plural pronoun ὑμεῖς, we have to translate it in English to “you.” But we do not know from the English if the word is plural or singular. Even after looking at the Greek in which we see the word is plural, we still need to ask if the word means:

- Each of you individually
- All of you together

All we know for sure is that it refers to more than one person. Which of the two options is meant in these verses and how do you know?

*<sup>13</sup> In him **you** also, when **you** heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

### Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences usually start with the word “if” in English. The “if” clause establishes the condition upon which what is communicated in the main clause will be true or occur.

**If you give me a hamburger, I will eat it.**

The mood of the verb implies different things in the condition.

Subjunctive – “**If I were a hamburger, ...**” Is the person a hamburger or not? Is the person likely to become a hamburger?

Indicative – “**If this is the way to hamburgers ...**” Is this the way? Is it more likely this is the way to hamburgers than the person in the previous sentence is a hamburger?

The subjunctive could be used to indicate a wish. The indicative does not really do that.

Greek can form conditional sentences in the same way – often beginning with the word εἰ (if). Classical Greek had five types of conditional sentences. In Koine Greek, the number of types reduced to two. In New Testament Greek (which includes Koine and Classical Greek forms), the number reduced to four.

Different scholars will classify these in different ways, but there is typically significant overlap. A chart is attached that summarizes these forms. It is okay if you do not understand the chart. The main thing is to understand how much can be meant in sentences that look the same in English.

Let's look at verses from the attached chart to see what each conditional communicates.

#### First Class

καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβοῦλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν. <sup>28</sup> εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

And if **I cast out demons by Beelzebul**, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But **if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Mt. 12:27-28

#### Second Class

<sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." Luke 7:39

<sup>39</sup> ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Φαρισαῖος ὁ καλέσας αὐτὸν εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ λέγων· Οὗτος εἰ ἦν προφήτης, ἐγίνωσκεν ἂν τίς καὶ ποταπὴ ἡ γυνὴ ἣτις ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστίν.

#### Third Class

And this we will do **if** God permits. Hebrews 6:3

καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν **ἐάνπερ** ἐπιτρέπη ὁ θεός.

#### Fourth Class

<sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 1 Peter 3:14

ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ ταραχθῆτε,

## Greek Conditional Sentences in the New Testament (Classified by Structural Formation)

Type of Condition	Possibility of Being Realized	Protasis (“if”)				Apodosis (“then”)				N.T. Examples
		Conditional Word	Mood	Tense	Conditional Word	Mood	Tense			
<b>First Class</b> <i>‘Simple Condition’</i> – <i>‘Presumed True for the Sake of Argument’</i> *(pp. 690-694)	Assumes the reality of premise for the sake of argument, whether actually true or not.	εἰ (negative: οὐ) (Not accurate to translate as ‘since’)	indicative	any tense		any mood	any tense	Matt.12:27-28 Luke 4:3 Romans 6:5 Galatians 5:18 Colossians 3:1		
<b>Second Class</b> Presumed <i>‘Contrary to Fact Condition’</i> a) in present time b) in past time (pp. 694-696)	Assumes the premise as untrue for the sake of argument, whether actually untrue or not.	εἰ (negative: μὴ)	indicative	past tense: a) imperfect b) aorist	(ὅν) (usually)	indicative	past tense: a) imperfect b) aorist	a) <u>Present Time</u> : Luke 7:39 John 5:46 b) <u>Past Time</u> : Mark 13:20 1 Cor. 2:8		
<b>Third Class</b> <i>‘More Probable Future Condition’</i> a) <i>‘Future Likely’</i> <i>‘Probable’</i> , or <i>‘Hypothetical’</i> <i>Condition</i> b) <i>‘Present General Condition’</i> <i>Condition’</i> (5 <sup>th</sup> Class Condition) (pp. 696-698)	Fulfillment is uncertain, but still likely. a) Specific situation in future time, OR b) Only hypothetical Generic situation in present time	εἰ (negative: μὴ)	subjunctive	a) any tense b) present		any mood	any tense	a) <u>Future More Probable</u> : Matt. 4:9 Mark 5:28 Hebrews 6:3 <u>Hypothetical</u> : 1 Cor. 13:2 b) <u>Present Gen</u> : Matt.6:22-23 John 11:9 2 Timothy 2:5		
<b>Fourth Class</b> <i>‘Less Probable Future Condition’</i> Only partial formations in NT. (pp. 699-701)	Possible fulfillment; “if perhaps this should occur, then ...”	εἰ	optative	present or aorist	ὅν	optative	present or aorist	1 Peter 3:14, 17 Luke 1:62 Acts 17:18		

\* Page numbering refers to the major section where this topic is discussed in “Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics” by Daniel B. Wallace.