

## A Little Bit of Greek

Session 8: Using Greek without Knowing Greek

In person at Wai 'alae Baptist Church

Online via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82863271187?pwd=TnVHK2ZGNkFqY28wa0lxV3hpQ1h5UT09>

**Meeting ID: 828 6327 1187**

**Passcode: 494627**

The purpose of this course has been to help people understand the importance of Greek to understanding the New Testament. What now? Do we study the Bible with the fear that something really important is hidden by the English? Do we have to learn Greek to really understand the Bible? Will we just have to trust the teachers and scholars who know Greek? What do we do if they disagree with each other?

If a course provides some answers but leads to many more questions, it has done its job. Maybe some of you are inspired to learn Greek or to review the Greek you forgot. But some of you know that you will not have the time or opportunity to do that. This last session is especially for you.

### A Working Knowledge of Greek

Much of what we have covered in this class touches on the “working knowledge.” For example, we have looked at

- How Greek words are formed
- The case system for nouns and adjectives
- The tenses of verbs
- The use of prepositions
- The use of pronouns
- Conditionals

The next step would be to have a general understanding of these – for example, the different cases and how Greeks uses them or the different basic sense of the tenses.

#### *Uses of Greek cases*

Nominative	ὁ λόγος	οἱ λόγοι
Genitive	τοῦ λόγου	τῶν λόγων
Dative	τῷ λόγῳ	τοῖς λόγοις
Accusative	τόν λόγον	τούς λόγους
Vocative	λόγε	

#### *Greek tenses*

Present	Ongoing action in present time		
	<i>He is running.</i>	<i>He runs</i>	<i>He does run.</i>
Imperfect	Ongoing action in past time		
	<i>He was running.</i>		

Future              Ongoing action in future time

*He will run.*

Aorist              Completed action in past time

*He ran.*

Perfect              Completed action in the past with ongoing effect into the present

*The door has been open. And according to the tense still is.*

Pluperfect          Completed action in the more distant past with ongoing effect into the past.

*The door had been opened. According to the tense still was in the established past time.*

#### *Greek verbal mood*

Indicative          Realized, actual

Imperative          Command

Subjunctive          Not realized

Optative            Wished for

#### *Greek voice*

Active              Subject of the sentence is doing the action of the verb.

***The dog bit the boy.***

Passive             Subject of the sentence is receiving the action of the verb.

***The dog was bit by the boy.***

Middle              Subject of the sentence is doing and receiving the action of the verb.

***The dog bit itself.***

#### **Dos and Don'ts**

- Always keep in mind that the original language of the Bible is not English and that there is no direct correspondence between languages.
- Do not force definitions or grammatical rules into sentences.
- Instead, consider the range of definition or the different grammatical possibilities within the various contexts.
- Do not think that an English equivalent of a Greek word shares all the same range of meaning, especially the connotations. *For example, Zeus's wife, Hera, was described as cow faced.*
- Syntactical structures like chiasms and parallelism can often be better seen in Greek.

#### **Greek and biblical tools**

Living in the computer age means that we have much more powerful tools on our computers, tablets, and phones than scholars have had access to except in the greatest libraries. Powerful tools need to be used by skilled students. While these tools can greatly reduce the time needed to find important information, it also gives access to information that could be wrong or that the student could misinterpret.

If you do not have good Bible software, it is good to have the following:

- An interlinear Greek New Testament
- A Greek-English lexicon
- Intermediate to scholarly commentaries

Here are some excerpts from the Word Biblical Commentary on the Gospel of John

n. τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ Θεοῦ. Is the genitive objective—“love *for* God,” or subjective—“love that God exercises”? The latter is in harmony with the entire NT, but such love naturally is the spring of love within man; “the love that corresponds to God’s love” is near the mark (cf. 1 John 3:17; 4:7–12). (Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 70). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

“Son of perdition (υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας) is a Hebraism in which the genitive is ambiguous. It can denote the person’s character, as in Ps 57:4, where “children of unrighteousness” is rendered in the LXX τέκνα ἀπωλείας; or the person’s destiny, as in Isa 34:5, where “the people I have doomed” appears in the LXX as τὸν λαὸν τῆς ἀπωλείας (in 2 Sam 12:5 “a son of death,” i.e., one doomed to be put to death, is rendered lit. as υἱὸς θανάτου). The same expression, “the son of perdition,” ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, is applied to the Antichrist in 2 Thess 2:3 in parallelism with “the man of lawlessness,” presumably to denote his evil nature, but it may also include the thought of his sure destruction, which is mentioned in 2 Thess 2:8. A similar duality of meaning could attach to the expression in our passage. (Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 299). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

The opening phrase is ambiguous because our earliest mss frequently do not employ the iota subscript, and so leave it uncertain whether a nominative or dative is intended, and there is on any interpretation a word missing. (Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 69). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

### One final look at the importance of Greek

θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν