

Elementary NT Greek (3351): Homework 4

Now that you've memorized the definite article and relative pronoun paradigms, you should take a few more minutes to think about how they work, what they do, and, more importantly, what they will signal to you in regards to substantives. Ingraining these concepts will be absolutely crucial (and beneficial) going forward.

Assignment:

a. Read the introduction on **Nouns** and the brief discussion of **Cases** which I've pasted below.¹

b. Decline the masculine forms of λόγος, the feminine forms of γυνή, and the neuter forms of ἔργον, separately (so, you should have 3 paradigms at the end). If you're unsure how to do this, look at the endings of the definite article and the relative pronoun as your guide. That is, take the stem of each word (e.g. 'λόγ-'), and then change the ending to match the various cases and number that you have in the def. article etc.

Also, see the 'News/updates' section of the class website for another discussion of cases and an example of an 'o-stem' word being declined.

- To save on ink/paper, you can write your answers on a separate piece of paper to turn in (so, no need to print out the text below, just write your answers out and turn that in).

Nouns:

In Greek, as in English, we consider that a noun has gender, but in English this depends upon its meaning; *man* is masculine, *woman* is feminine, *house* is neuter, and *he*, *she*, *it* are the pronouns we use when referring to these. The gender of a Greek noun is often arbitrary and does not necessarily indicate

¹ Gavin Betts; *Complete New Testament Greek: Teach Yourself*; Hodder Education (2010)

anything about what the noun denotes. For example, ἀνὴρ *man* is masculine and γυνή *woman* is feminine, but λόγος *word* is masculine, γλῶσσα *tongue* is feminine, though ἔργον *work* is, understandably, neuter. In most cases we cannot see any reason for the gender of a particular noun but it is often possible to identify a noun's gender by its ending in the nominative and genitive singular, and these endings also determine to which of the three classes or **declensions** it belongs. Each declension has a distinctive set of endings which indicate both **case** and **number**, just as in English we have *child* (nominative or accusative singular), *child's* (genitive singular), *children* (nominative or accusative plural), *children's* (genitive plural), but Greek distinguishes more cases. To list all possible forms of a noun is to **decline** it.

Basic uses of cases

The only case ending for nouns in English is that of the genitive (as in *girl's*, *men's*, etc.). Elsewhere, a noun's function is shown by its position in relation to the other words in its clause (the difference in meaning between *the peasant hit the tax collector* and *the tax collector hit the peasant* depends solely on the word order) or by a preposition, e.g. *the tax collector was hit by a stone* (here the part played by the stone is indicated by the preposition *by*). In Greek, however, the function of a noun is indicated by its **case**:

- (a) The subject of a clause must be put in the **nominative**.
- (b) When we address a person the **vocative** is used; this is sometimes preceded by ὦ O and followed by a mark of punctuation. The vocative is given for ἔργον because, although ἔργον itself does not occur in this case, we do find the vocative of other nouns of the same class, e.g. τέκνον *child*.
- (c) The direct object of a verb must be put in the **accusative**.
- (d) The **genitive** can express possession: *the Samaritan's donkey* (in English we can also say *the donkey of the Samaritan*). The genitive in Greek has other uses (e.g. to express separation).
- (e) With nouns denoting living things the **dative** expresses the indirect object after verbs of saying, giving and promising. In *the Samaritan gave a donkey to the teacher* the direct object is *donkey* (answering the question *gave what?*), which in Greek would be put into the accusative ὄνον; the indirect object is *the teacher* (*gave to whom?*), which would be put in the dative τῷ διδασκάλῳ with no preposition (we may also say in English *the Samaritan gave the teacher a donkey* but there is no alternative of this sort in

Greek). With nouns denoting living things the dative has other uses which can nearly always be translated by *to* or *for*.

With inanimate nouns (e.g. *Tyre, arrow, boat*) different uses are possible. The term **oblique cases** is used for referring to the accusative, genitive, and dative as a group. In addition to the uses given above, these cases are also used after **prepositions**, which perform the same function in Greek as in English, i.e. they define the relation between the word they govern and the rest of the clause in which they are used. In Greek the word governed is normally a noun or pronoun. The rules for prepositions indicating **motion** and **rest** are:

(f) Prepositions indicating **motion towards** govern (i.e. are followed by) the accusative, e.g. εἰς τὸν οἶκον *into the house*, πρὸς τὸν ἀγρόν *towards the field*.

(g) Prepositions indicating **motion away from** govern the genitive, e.g. ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου *from the throne*, ἐκ τοῦ ἀγροῦ *out of the field*.

(h) Prepositions indicating **rest** or **fixed position** govern the dative, e.g. ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ *in the field*. All the above prepositions, except πρὸς, take only the case given above.