



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A SUMMARY SKETCH OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK BY THOMAS HALE

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

NOTES TAKEN FROM "THE MINISTER AND HIS GREEK NEW TESTAMENT" BY A.T. ROBERTSON

SOME KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK POSSIBLE TO ALL

It ought to be taken for granted that the preacher has his Greek Testament. This statement will be challenged by many who excuse themselves from making any effort to know the Greek New Testament...There is no sphere of knowledge where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended. Indeed, the Englishman's Greek Concordance almost makes it possible for the man with no knowledge of Greek to know something about it, paradoxical as that may sound.

THE REAL NEW TESTAMENT

The real New Testament is the Greek New Testament. The English is simply a translation of the New Testament, not the actual New Testament. It is good that the New Testament has been translated into so many languages. The fact that it was written in the koine, the universal language of the time, rather than in one of the earlier Greek dialects, makes it easier to render into modern tongues. But there is much that cannot be translated. It is not possible to reproduce the delicate turns of thought, the nuances of language, in translation. The freshness of the strawberry cannot be preserved in any extract.

TRANSLATION NOT ENOUGH

The preacher cannot excuse himself for his neglect of Greek with the plea that the English is plain enough to teach one the way of life. That is true, and we are grateful that it is so. The Bible is in the vernacular and has entered into the very life of the modern man. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of the King James Version upon the language and life of the English-speaking world. Prof. William Lyons Phelps of Yale will have nothing to do with recent translations because of the literary charm of the Authorized Version. But words are living things and, like all life, are constantly changing. Dictionaries run out of date quickly, not merely because

of new ideas and new words, but because the old words change their meanings. The Psalmist said that he would “prevent” the morning, not stop the light from coming as one wishes he could do in the short summer nights, but get up before the morning. So “let” is even used in the Authorized Version for “hinder” instead of “allow.”

It was for this reason among others that the revisers undertook to make a new translation of the English Bible. The American Revisers have revised that. Then we have Weymouth’s Translation of the New Testament, The Twentieth Century New Testament, and Moffatt’s brilliant New Translation of the New Testament. We shall have many more. They will all have special merit, and they will all fail to bring out all that is in the Greek. One needs to read these translations, the more the better. Each will supplement the others. But, when he has read them all, there will remain a large and rich untranslatable element that the preacher ought to know.

THE PREACHER A BIBLE SPECIALIST

We excuse other men for not having a technical knowledge of the Bible. We do not expect all men to know the details of medicine, law, banking, railroading. But the preacher cannot be excused from an accurate apprehension of the New Testament. This is the book that he undertakes to expound. It is his specialty, and this he must know whatever else he does or does not know. Excuses for neglecting the New Testament are only excuses after all.

ENRICHMENT OF ONE’S OWN MIND

The trouble with all translations is that one’s mind does not pause long enough over a passage to get the full benefit of the truth contained in it. The Greek compels one to pause over each word long enough for it to fertilize the mind with its rich and fructifying energy. The very words of the English become so familiar that they slip through the mind too easily. One needs to know his English Bible just that way, much of it by heart, so that it will come readily to hand for comfort and for service. But the minute study called for by the Greek opens up unexpected treasures that surprise and delight the soul.

SECTION ONE

Thoughts On the Importance of Understanding New Testament Greek

Thankfully, with the amazing tools available to us today via the internet, computers, and personal devices, one does not have to be a Greek scholar to grasp the amazing revelations of the Greek language that delight one's soul when one learns to read under the English translation to the original Greek words of the New Testament, the REAL Word of God. Most of the Body of Christ has never read the genuine Word of God, only a translation of it!

I am not a Greek scholar and do not speak the language or desire to do so. I rely on the wonderful tools available to me to "get at" the Greek text. There are key elements of the Greek language that are necessary for us to master in order to grasp the deeper meanings of the Greek words the Holy Spirit chose to use in our New Testament.

I use two essential tools to study the Bible. One of those tools that I use and recommend is The Blue Letter Bible (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/>). One ought not to teach or preach any verse in the Bible without reviewing the "interlinear" tab!

The other best tool is the Logos Bible (<https://www.logos.com/>) application. I have invested hundreds, probably thousands of dollars into this tool of study. There is simply nothing available to a student of the scriptures that compares to it. Logos describes itself as "Logos is the world's leading Bible platform. Its massive networked libraries, fast searches, original language tools, and helpful Bible-knowledge features help you draw insight from the Word."

Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, wrote the following in regard to the importance of understanding Greek and Hebrew when studying the Bible: "The languages are the sheath in which the sword of the Spirit is contained." God sovereignly chose to have His Word written in Hebrew (the Old Testament) and Greek (the New Testament). God forbid that we are unacquainted with the sword of the Spirit.

Thomas Hale

SECTION TWO

The Greek Alphabet

α	A	alpha	a	f <u>a</u> ther
β	B	beta	b	<u>b</u> ig
γ	Γ	gamma	g, n	<u>G</u> od, an <u>k</u> le
δ	Δ	delta	d	<u>d</u> oor
ε	E	epsilon	e	me <u>t</u>
ζ	Z	zeta	z, dz	<u>z</u> eal, kud <u>z</u> u
η	H	eta	ē	obe <u>y</u>
θ	Θ	theta	th	<u>th</u> ing
ι	I	iota	i	pi <u>t</u> , poli <u>c</u> e
κ	K	kappa	k	<u>k</u> ee <u>p</u>
λ	Λ	lambda	l	<u>l</u> aw
μ	M	mu	m	<u>m</u> othe <u>r</u>
ν	N	nu	n	<u>n</u> u <u>m</u> ber
ξ	Ξ	xi (ksee)	x	fo <u>x</u>
ο	O	omicron	o	no <u>t</u>
π	Π	pi	p	po <u>o</u> r
ρ	P	rho	r, rh	<u>r</u> o <u>d</u>
σ	Σ	sigma	s	<u>s</u> ave
τ	T	tau	t	<u>t</u> ime
υ	Υ	upsilon	u, y	German ü
φ	Φ	phi	ph	<u>ph</u> one
χ	X	chi	ch	German <u>ich</u>
ψ	Ψ	psi	ps	<u>tip</u> sy
ω	Ω	omega	ō	<u>v</u> ote

SECTION THREE

A New Testament Greek Primer

GREEK NOUNS

This group includes nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and the definite article (“the”). Greek has a system of endings for noun-type words that gives you the following pieces of information:

1. **Number** – how many? Possibilities: Singular or plural
2. **Case** – how is it used in the sentence? Possibilities: **Nominative** - subject of sentence (“George saw Timothy.”); **Genitive** - possession (“the word of God”); **Dative** - indirect object (“I gave him the ball.”); **Accusative** - direct object (“George saw Timothy.”); **Vocative** (on a few nouns) – direct address (Sam! I’m glad to see you.”)
3. **Gender** – Each Greek noun has been labeled either masculine, feminine or neuter. This information is helpful when you are trying to decide which words in a sentence are connected to each other.

GREEK VERBS

Greek has a highly developed system for verbs. All Greek verbs have at least two parts: a base and an ending. Sometimes, the Greeks added extra letters to the beginning or end of the base. You can figure out the exact form used by looking at the combination of endings and extra letters. When you do that, you will have the following information:

1. **Subject** – Who is doing the action that the verb describes?
 - I/We (1st Person)
 - You (2nd Person)
 - Him/Her/They (3rd Person)

2. **Tense** – When and how does the action happen? There are six tenses, three having to do with time of action, three having to do with type of action. They are:

- **Present** (time) – action happening now: “I baptize”
- **Future** (time) – action that will happen later: “I will baptize”
- **Imperfect** (time) – action that happened continually or repeatedly in the past: “I was baptizing”
- **Aorist** (type) – a simple action that happened in the past: I baptized”
- **Perfect** (type) – action completed in the past, with results continuing up to the present: “I have baptized”
- **Pluperfect** (type) – action completed in the past, with results that continue up to some more recent time in the past: “I had baptized”

3. **Voice**: Is the subject doing the action or being acted upon? There are three possible voices in Greek:

- **Active** – the subject does the action: “I hit Joe.”
- **Middle** – the subject does it to himself: “I hit myself,” or there is a double emphasis on the fact that the subject does the action: “I myself hit Joe.”
- **Passive** – someone else did the action to the subject: “I was hit by Joe.”

4. **Mood**: How certain am I that this action is reality? There are four moods (modes) to choose from:

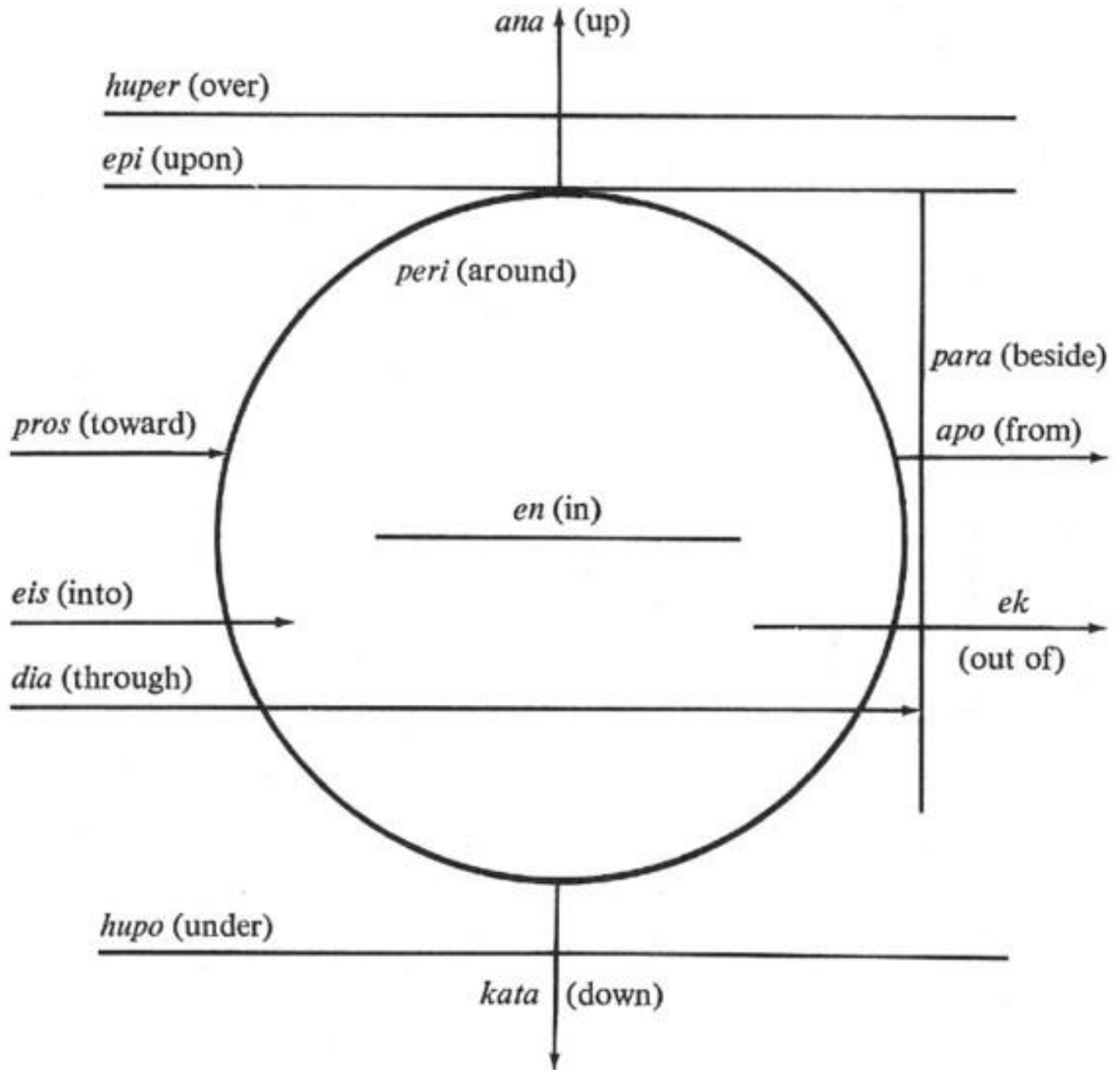
- **Indicative** – used for a statement of fact
- **Subjunctive** – used for a statement of probable fact
- **Optative** (rare) – used for a remotely possible fact
- **Imperative** (command) – used for something that is not a fact yet, but I want it to become a fact.

5. **Other**

- **Deponent** – occurring with passive or middle voice forms (inflection) but with active voice meaning.

SECTION FOUR

Koine Greek Prepositions



(From Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*)