

Fundamentals of New Testament Greek

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2 Nouns (Second Declension); Adjectives (First and Second Declension)

In this chapter you will learn:

- the features (gender, number, and case) and formation of a large group of nouns and adjectives;
- the three parts of these words: the *root*, which conveys the content, or lexical meaning; the *stem*, which indicates the type of word (e.g., noun or verb); and the *ending*, which indicates the word's function and relation to other words in the clause.

2.1 Concepts

| | |
|--|---|
| DECLENSIONS | <i>Groupings of nouns on the basis of their word formation. Greek has three declensions, based on the letters used in the endings of the word. (Declensions have nothing to do with meaning.)</i> |
| DECLENSION PATTERNS | <i>Groupings of adjectives on the basis of which declension endings they have. We distinguish four such patterns.</i> |
| INFLECTIONS | <i>Sets of endings attached to words that distinguish various meanings and syntactic relations.</i> |
| ADJECTIVES | <i>Words with inflectional endings (i.e., inflected words) used primarily to modify nouns; they can also be used as substantives (i.e., nouns or noun-like words).</i> |
| FIRST AND SECOND DECLENSION ADJECTIVES | <i>One declension pattern of adjectives: those that use a- and o-class vowels in their endings.</i> |
| SECOND DECLENSION, OR O-CLASS, NOUNS | <i>Nouns that use o-class vowels in their endings.</i> |

2.2 Vocabulary

As we introduce each type of word or formal identifying part, we give in square brackets the shorthand term to be used in parsing. Here we have [NON] for nouns, [ADJ] for adjectives.

NOTE Glosses, or rough translational equivalents, are provided for all vocabulary words. These glosses are not definitive, for in some contexts a different translation may be more appropriate.

2.2.1 Nouns [NON]

(Here and throughout, noun entries list the nominative singular lexical form, the genitive singular ending, and the article.)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| ἄγγελος, -ου, ὁ | messenger, angel |
| ἀδελφός, -οῦ, ὁ | brother |
| ἄνθρωπος, -ου, ὁ | human being, humanity |
| δοῦλος, -ου, ὁ | slave, servant |
| ἔργον, -ου, τό | work |
| εὐαγγέλιον, -ου, τό | good news, gospel |
| θάνατος, -ου, ὁ | death |
| θεός, -οῦ, ὁ, ἡ | God, god/goddess |
| Ἰησοῦς, ¹ -οῦ, ὁ | Jesus |
| καρπός, -οῦ, ὁ | fruit |
| κύριος, -ου, ὁ | lord, Lord |
| λαός, -οῦ, ὁ | people |
| λόγος, -ου, ὁ | word |
| ὁδός, -οῦ, ἡ | way, road |
| οἶκος, -ου, ὁ | house |
| οὐρανός, -οῦ, ὁ | heaven |
| ὀφθαλμός, -οῦ, ὁ | eye, sight |
| ὄχλος, -ου, ὁ | crowd, multitude |
| σάββατον, -ου, τό | Sabbath |
| υἴος, -οῦ, ὁ | son |
| Χριστός, -οῦ, ὁ | Christ, Messiah |

1. The noun Ἰησοῦς has the form Ἰησοῦ for both genitive and dative; Ἰησοῦν is the accusative.

2.2.2 Adjectives [ADJ] — here, all adjectives of the first and second declension [1/2ADJ]

(Here and throughout, adjective entries list the masculine nominative singular lexical form, then the feminine and neuter endings.)

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ἀγαθός, -ή, -όν | good |
| ἅγιος, -α, -ον | holy, pure |
| ἄλλος, -η, -ο | other, another (of a similar kind) |
| ἕτερος, -α, -ον | other, another (of a different kind) |
| ἴδιος, -α, -ον | one's own |
| κακός, -ή, -όν | bad, evil |
| καλός, -ή, -όν | beautiful, useful, good |
| μόνος, -η, -ον | only, alone |
| νεκρός, -ά, -όν | dead |
| ὅλος, -η, -ον | whole, entire |
| πονηρός, -ά, -όν | evil, bad |
| πρῶτος, -η, -ον | first |

2.2.3 Other Words²

| | |
|---------------|--|
| γάρ | for, truly (this word is a “postpositive,” one that appears after the first word or element of its clause) |
| διά | (gen.) through, by, during; (acc.) because of ³ |
| δύο | two |
| εἰμί, ἐστί(ν) | I am, he/she/it is |
| ἐν | (dat.) in, in the realm of; by means of |
| ἰδοῦ | behold, lo |
| καί | and; even, also |
| καὶ . . . καί | both . . . and (e.g., “both [καὶ] Jesus and [καὶ] his disciples”) |
| ὅτι | because, that, so that |
| πρός | (gen.) to, toward; (dat.) to, toward, at; (acc.) to, toward, with, at |

2. We introduce various types of words here to enable the student to begin to use real Greek in examples and exercises, even though fuller explanations appear later in this textbook. For example, prepositions (here **διά**, **ἐν**, and **πρός**) link prepositional phrases to the rest of a clause. As noted in the translations, prepositions precede substantives in the genitive, dative, or accusative case, the specific case sometimes determining their meaning.

3. Case abbreviations — gen., dat., and acc. — before the glosses for prepositions show the case(s) of substantives that follow the preposition. The gloss shows the meaning of the preposition when it preposes (precedes) a substantive in the case specified.

2.3 Introduction to Nouns and Adjectives

This chapter introduces Greek nouns and adjectives. Nouns and adjectives are inflected words — that is, they have various forms, depending on their meaning (e.g., singular or plural) and their function in the sentence (e.g., subject or object). Verbs also are inflected in Greek (see ch. 4). Inflection may at first seem difficult for English speakers, since English has only limited inflection (e.g., “boy/boys,” “sing/sang/sung,” and pronoun sets such as “I/me/mine,” “she/her/hers,” “he/him/his,” “we/us/ours,” and “who/whom/whose”).⁴ But once you learn the various endings and study longer and longer stretches of Greek text, you will discover that even when the vocabulary is new, you will be able to quickly recognize the endings and thereby start to analyze and understand whole clauses.

Each noun and adjective is inflected (i.e., adds inflectional endings) for three grammatical categories: **gender**, **case**, and **number**.

The genders are:

- masculine (masc.) [M]
- feminine (fem.) [F]
- neuter (neut.) [N]

The cases are:

- nominative (nom.) [N]
- vocative (voc.) [V] [in the sg. only]
- genitive (gen.) [G]
- dative (dat.) [D]
- accusative (acc.) [A]

The numbers are:

- singular (sg.) [S]
- plural (pl.) [P]

We discuss each of these categories below.

2.3.1 Formation of Second Declension Nouns

This chapter concentrates on second declension nouns.

- ▶ A **noun** is a word that is used to indicate some thing or concept, whether as a particular instance or as a class of items.

4. Those who speak and write more richly inflected languages such as German attest to the fact that, for them, inflection is simply an unnoticed feature of their language, something they instinctively learn. The same is (and was) true of native Greek speakers.

| Second Declension (ο-Class) Nouns [2NON] | | |
|--|---|--|
| Noun stem | + | 2nd decl. endings (gender, case, number) |

| SECOND DECLENSION NOUN ENDINGS | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|------------|-------|
| | | Masc./Fem. | Neut. |
| SINGULAR | Nom. | -ος | -ον |
| | Voc. | -ε | -ον |
| | Gen. | -ου | -ου |
| | Dat. | -ω | -ω |
| | Acc. | -ον | -ον |
| PLURAL | Nom. | -οι | -α |
| | Gen. | -ων | -ων |
| | Dat. | -οις | -οις |
| | Acc. | -ους | -α |

EXAMPLE: SECOND DECLENSION NOUN λόγος

| Parsing ⁵ | Components | | Inflected Forms | Gloss ⁶ |
|----------------------|------------|---|-----------------|-------------------------|
| [2NON-MNS] | λογ+ος | > | λόγος | <i>a word (subject)</i> |
| [2NON-MVS] | λογ+ε | > | λόγε | <i>O word!</i> |
| [2NON-MGS] | λογ+ου | > | λόγου | <i>of a word</i> |
| [2NON-MDS] | λογ+ω | > | λόγω | <i>in/to a word</i> |
| [2NON-MAS] | λογ+ον | > | λόγον | <i>a word (object)</i> |
| [2NON-MNP] | λογ+οι | > | λόγοι | <i>words (subject)</i> |
| [2NON-MGP] | λογ+ων | > | λόγων | <i>of words</i> |
| [2NON-MDP] | λογ+οις | > | λόγοις | <i>in/to words</i> |
| [2NON-MAP] | λογ+ους | > | λόγους | <i>words (object)</i> |

2.3.2 Inflection

Greek is an inflected (or “fusional”) language. This means that words in the same class, such as all verbs, all nouns, and all adjectives, add inseparable parts (usually endings) to the basic form of the word. A useful distinction can be made between the *root* of the word, or its most basic part; the *stem* of the word, which places it in a broad category, such as noun or verb; and the *ending*, or *inflection* — the part added to indicate its gram-

mathematical relation to other elements. For example, the noun **ἀπόστολος** (**ἀπο** + **στολ** + **ος**), “messenger,” shares the same root with the verb **στέλλω**, a root that has something to do with sending. The stem **ἀποστολ** (preposition **ἀπό** + the root **στολ**) identifies this form as a noun. The set of nine various endings that can be attached — **-ος**, **-ε**, **-ου**, **-ω**, **-ον**, etc. (see above) — gives the word its inflected forms. Greek is highly inflected, with parts being attached to almost every class of word, with most of the parts attached at the end but some also at the beginning, or some even at both ends of the word.

Nouns are classified by declensions, or groupings, according to the formation of the words. First declension nouns end in a syllable with an *a*-vowel (**α** or **η**); second declension nouns, with an *o*-vowel (**ο** or **ω**); and third declension nouns have stems that typically end in a consonant. Declensions are simply a means of classifying words in terms of their formation, especially the major vowel sounds of their endings, not in terms of their meaning or function in the sentence.

We classify adjectives by “declension pattern,” based on the declension(s) of the endings they take (see p. xvii in “Guide to Parsing”). Many adjectives have endings that belong to both the first and the second declensions [1/2ADJ], others have endings from both the first and third declensions [1/3ADJ]. In both cases, the first declension endings are used when the adjective modifies a feminine noun, and second declension (or third declension) endings are used when modifying masculine and neuter nouns. Another group of adjectives has endings of the second declension only [2ADJ], and a final group has endings of the third declension only [3ADJ]. These latter two groups have a single set of endings for use with masculine and feminine nouns, and a second set of endings only for neuter nouns.

2.3.3 Function of Adjectives

- ▶ An **adjective** is one of a class of words that are primarily used to modify other words — in particular, nouns and certain forms of verbs that are used like nouns.

Almost every adjective appears in various forms that correspond to the gender of the noun it is used with, whether masculine, feminine, or neuter, although a particular adjective may not have a separate form for each gender. In chapter 7 we discuss adjectives that use third declension endings — some that have both first and third declension endings [1/3ADJ], and others that use only third declension endings [3ADJ]. The largest number of adjectives are [1/2ADJ], that is, their endings include both *a*- and *o*-class vowels.

- ▶ **Attribution** occurs when an adjective modifies a noun. To modify a noun, an adjective must agree with the noun in gender, case, and number.

Notice the threefold agreement in the phrases **ἀγαθός ἀδελφός** (“good brother”) and **ἀγαθὴ ἀδελφὴ** (“good sister”), with the adjectives differing in gender because of the difference in the nouns but, with the noun they modify, showing agreement in gender, case, and number:

ἀγαθός [1/2ADJ-MNS] **ἀδελφός** [2NON-MNS]
ἀγαθὴ [1/2ADJ-FNS] **ἀδελφὴ** [1NON-FNS]

In the phrase **ἀγαθὴ ὁδός** (“good way”), which is an exception to the common pattern of adjectives and nouns having comparable endings spelled virtually the same, we have a feminine noun of the second declension:

ἀγαθὴ [1/2ADJ-FNS] **ὁδός** [2NON-FNS]

2.3.4 Grammatical Case

- ▶ **Grammatical case** indicates the basic relationship of a noun, pronoun, or adjective to other elements of a sentence. (Other words such as participles, which indicate case as well, will be learned later.) In discussing the cases, one must begin with the meaning of the case itself, which is shaped by its use in a given sentence and by the larger context.

There are five cases in Greek:

- ▶ **Nominative** — the case of designation or naming. The nominative case is often used to indicate the subject in a sentence (“The slave [**δοῦλος**] bought . . .”) or to serve as the predicate with a linking verb (“It is the slave [**δοῦλος**]”).
- ▶ **Vocative** — the case of direct address (“slave!” [**δοῦλε**]). The vocative appears only in the singular.
- ▶ **Genitive** — the case of restriction. The genitive case is often used as a means of defining or describing another substantive, or of indicating possession, ownership, origin, or source (“of the slave” [**δούλου**]).
- ▶ **Dative** — the case of relation. The dative case is often used to indicate the indirect object of a sentence or the person receiving advantage or disadvantage from an action (“to/for the slave” [**δούλῳ**]).
- ▶ **Accusative** — the case of extent. The accusative case is often used to express the extent or limitation of an action and hence is used as the direct object (“He kissed the slave [**δοῦλον**]”).

These definitions are not absolute, but they do provide a basic guide to what the cases mean and how they function. Later chapters will consider their various nuances. The following English sentence includes a rough equivalent of each Greek case: “Robert, the teacher returned the student’s books to the librarian.” In Greek, “Robert” would be in the vocative case, since he is being addressed directly; “the teacher” is the subject and would be in the nominative case; “the... books” is the direct object and would be in the accusative case; “to the librarian” indicates who is receiving the books and would be in the dative case; and “student’s” is possessive and would be in the genitive case.

2.3.5 Formation of First and Second Declension Adjectives

| First and Second Declension Adjectives [1/2ADJ] | | |
|---|---|--|
| Adjective stem | + | 1st and 2nd decl. endings (gender, case, number) |

| FIRST AND SECOND DECLENSION ADJECTIVE ENDINGS | | | | |
|---|------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | Masc. | Fem. | Neut. |
| SINGULAR | Nom. | -ος | -α/η | -ον |
| | Voc. | -ε | -α/η | -ον |
| | Gen. | -ου | -ας/ης | -ου |
| | Dat. | -φ | -α/η | -φ |
| | Acc. | -ον | -αν/ην | -ον |
| PLURAL | Nom. | -οι | -αι | -α |
| | Gen. | -ων | -ων | -ων |
| | Dat. | -οις | -αις | -οις |
| | Acc. | -ους | -ας | -α |

2.3.6 Grammatical Gender

“Grammatical gender” refers to the differentiation of nouns and adjectives into three groups, or patterns, labeled *masculine*, *feminine*, and *neuter*. There is some correlation between grammatical gender and sex, or natural gender (e.g., **ἄνθρωπος**, “man,” is masculine, and **γυνή**, “woman,” is feminine — but **παιδίον**, “small child,” is grammatically neuter!), but this category is primarily one of grammar. Greek, like many other languages, divides each of its nouns into one of these three categories, which is part of what students must learn about nouns. In rare cases such as **θεός**, which can be used of male and female deities, a noun may have more than one gender.

2.3.7 Grammatical Number

“Grammatical number” refers to the distinction that most Greek words make between singular and plural. Earlier Greek had endings for three different numbers — singular, plural, and dual (for two items) — but New Testament Greek has only singular and plural. Although these categories usually correlate with actual numbers, this is not always true. For example, even though the word **ὄχλος** (“crowd”) refers to a group with a number of people in it, it occurs with both singular and plural verb forms, sometimes even with both in the same sentence (e.g., in Mark 5:24 and John 7:49)!

2.4 Paradigms

2.4.1 First and Second Declension Adjectives (adjective stem + 1st and 2nd decl. endings)

The following paradigms (i.e., models or patterns of the various inflected forms of a given type of word) show stems with first and second declension endings, the most common declension pattern of adjectives.

NOTE The masculine and neuter forms use second declension endings, and the feminine forms use first declension endings. The declension is determined on the basis of the predominant vowel used in the ending, with the first declension being the *a*-class and the second the *o*-class declension.

PARADIGMS FOR FIRST AND SECOND DECLENSION ADJECTIVES

| | | ἅγιος, α, ον <i>holy</i> | | | ἀγαθός, ή, όν <i>good</i> | | |
|----------|------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | | Masc. | Fem. | Neut. | Masc. | Fem. | Neut. |
| SINGULAR | Nom. | ἅγιος | ἁγία | ἅγιον | ἀγαθός | ἀγαθή | ἀγαθόν |
| | Voc. | ἅγιε | ἁγία | ἅγιον | ἀγαθέ | ἀγαθή | ἀγαθόν |
| | Gen. | ἁγίου | ἁγίας | ἁγίου | ἀγαθοῦ | ἀγαθῆς | ἀγαθοῦ |
| | Dat. | ἁγίῳ | ἁγία | ἁγίῳ | ἀγαθῷ | ἀγαθῇ | ἀγαθῷ |
| | Acc. | ἅγιον | ἁγίαν | ἅγιον | ἀγαθόν | ἀγαθήν | ἀγαθόν |
| PLURAL | Nom. | ἅγιοι | ἁγίαι | ἅγια | ἀγαθοί | ἀγαθαί | ἀγαθά |
| | Gen. | ἁγίων | ἁγίων | ἁγίων | ἀγαθῶν | ἀγαθῶν | ἀγαθῶν |
| | Dat. | ἁγίοις | ἁγίαις | ἁγίοις | ἀγαθοῖς | ἀγαθαῖς | ἀγαθοῖς |
| | Acc. | ἁγίους | ἁγίας | ἅγια | ἀγαθοῦς | ἀγαθάς | ἀγαθά |

Note the variations in accent. The final alpha in the feminine forms is long. When the ultima of nouns and adjectives is accented, it takes the circumflex on the long vowels and diphthongs of the genitive and dative cases (e.g., ἀγαθοῦ is genitive case, ἀγαθῷ is dative), but the acute on short vowels (e.g., ἀγαθόν is accusative). In the vocabulary list, the masculine, feminine, and neuter forms of the adjective are given. For adjectives with only two forms, the first is used with both masculine and feminine nouns, the second with neuter nouns.

- When a feminine singular stem of the adjective ends in ε, ι, or ρ, the ending takes long α; otherwise, the ending vowel is η.
- Take special note of certain features of the formal pattern. The nominative, vocative, and accusative of the neuter adjective is the same in the singular and the same in the plural. The dative in singular and plural is associated with the iota. The dative singular form usually ends simply in the long vowel with iota subscript. The accusative singular

case is distinguished by the final **v**. The genitive plural always ends in **ων**. The masculine and neuter genitive singular ends in **ου**, which, as noted above, is a typical sign of a contracted vowel, often following the deletion of a sigma. The sigma ending of the feminine genitive singular (and the endings of third declension nouns; see ch. 7) confirms the contraction. The accusative plural has a long vowel, either **ου** or long **α**. This long ending is formed from the singular ending **ον** or **αν** having a **σ** added, with the **v** then dropping out and the vowel contracting or lengthening (**ον+σ > ουσ**; **αν+σ > ας** [long **α**]).

2.4.2 Second Declension (*o*-Class) Nouns (noun stem + 2nd decl. endings)

PARADIGMS FOR SECOND DECLENSION NOUNS

| | | (ὁ) κύριος <i>lord/Lord</i> | (ὁ) δοῦλος <i>slave</i> | (ὁ) ἀδελφός <i>brother</i> | (ἡ) ὁδός <i>way</i> | (τὸ) ἔργον <i>work</i> |
|----------|------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| SINGULAR | Nom. | κύριος | δοῦλος | ἀδελφός | ὁδός | ἔργον |
| | Voc. | κύριε | δοῦλε | ἀδελφέ | ὁδέ | ἔργον |
| | Gen. | κυρίου | δούλου | ἀδελφοῦ | ὁδοῦ | ἔργου |
| | Dat. | κυρίῳ | δούλῳ | ἀδελφῷ | ὁδῷ | ἔργῳ |
| | Acc. | κύριον | δοῦλον | ἀδελφόν | ὁδόν | ἔργον |
| PLURAL | Nom. | κύριοι | δοῦλοι | ἀδελφοί | ὁδοί | ἔργα |
| | Gen. | κυρίων | δούλων | ἀδελφῶν | ὁδῶν | ἔργων |
| | Dat. | κυρίοις | δούλοις | ἀδελφοῖς | ὁδοῖς | ἔργοις |
| | Acc. | κυρίους | δούλους | ἀδελφούς | ὁδοῦς | ἔργα |

Second declension, or *o*-class, nouns are usually masculine nouns (as **ὁ κύριος**), although there is a significant number of neuter nouns (**τὸ ἔργον**) and a small number of feminine nouns (**ἡ ὁδός**) in this declension. What distinguishes them is the presence of the *o*-vowel of the ending. In the vocabulary list, the genitive form of the noun, as well as its nominative case article, is given for reference. The article form listed is key to identifying the gender of the noun.

NOTE The endings of the *o*-class noun match the endings of the masculine and neuter adjective. For second declension nouns with accent upon the ultima, the genitive and dative cases take the circumflex accent. The alpha ending of the neuter nominative and accusative plural is short.

2.5 Summary

After studying this chapter, you should be familiar with:

The following concepts:

- declensions (2.3.2)
- declension patterns (2.3.2)
- inflections (2.3.2)

Definitions for

- noun (2.3.1)
- adjective (2.3.3)
- attribution (2.3.3)
- grammatical case (2.3.4)
- nominative (2.3.4)
- vocative (2.3.4)
- genitive (2.3.4)
- dative (2.3.4)
- accusative (2.3.4)

Formulas for

- second declension (o-class) nouns (2.3.1)
- first and second declension adjectives (2.3.5)