

Mastering New Testament Greek Textbook

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CHAPTER 6

Prepositions

You will be able to—

1. understand English prepositions and the various ways they connect words,
2. translate the various Greek prepositions and how they relate to the noun inflectional system,
3. recognize and predict when prepositions will have a letter elided,
4. identify and translate prepositions when they are compounded with other word forms,
5. master ten more high-frequency vocabulary words, and
6. memorize Jn. 1:1 in Greek.

Definition of Preposition

Prepositions are usually small words that link or relate two words together. Often they tell position in space or time. They often work in conjunction with the cases extending and clarifying the use of a particular case. Wallace notes prepositions that are found with the accusative and dative often function adverbially and the genitive functions adjectivally (Wallace, 160).

I saw the book on the table (adjectival use—modifies the noun, book).
Tells of the spatial relationship of the book to the table.

He went after the game (adverbial use—modifies the verb, went)..
Connects the person's going to the time of the game.

Prepositional Phrase

A phrase is a string of closely connected words. A clause is a string of connected words and/or phrases, including both a subject and a verb.

A prepositional phrase is usually composed of a preposition followed by a noun, which is called the object of the preposition.

Prep. + noun = in + the car (“the car” is the object of the preposition “in”)

Preposition and Case

In English, the object of the preposition is usually in the objective case. Thus, we would say, “Send the disk with him (accusative),” and not “with he (nominative).”

Greek prepositions may be followed by nouns in the genitive, dative, or accusative inflectional forms. Each preposition will have a particular case(s) that usually inflects the following noun or pronoun.

Introduction to Greek Prepositions

Like English prepositions, Greek prepositions are connecting or linking words. Each preposition will take a noun/adjective/pronoun in a certain case (genitive, dative, or accusative). This case must be learned along with the preposition's main meaning(s). The most common meanings are listed with each preposition, but it is important to observe the context because many other meanings are possible. Note that the genitive often has the idea of separation, the dative the idea of location, and the accusative the idea of motion toward.

Prepositions Used with One Case

The following prepositions are used with only one case:

ἀπό = “from” (with the genitive)—also may mean “because of,” “by,” “of”

Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ
Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth (Jn. 1:45)

ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου
from the law (Mat. 5:18)

ἀφ’ ὑμῶν (ἀφ’ is a form of ἀπό when it is followed by a word with a rough breathing mark, the vowel drops and the consonant shifts upward before a rough breathing mark)
from you (Jn. 16:22)

εἰς = “into,” “to,” “in” (with the accusative)—also may mean “among,” “for”

εἰς τὴν ζωὴν
to life (Mat. 7:14)—notice the article is not translated

εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου
into Peter's house (Mat. 8:14)—notice the article is not translated

εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν
into the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 19:23)—first article is translated the second is not

ἐκ = “from,” “out of” (with the genitive)—also may mean “of,” “because of”

ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων
from the Pharisees (Jn. 1:24)

ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας
out of the kingdom (Mat. 13:41)

ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (ἐξ is a form of ἐκ when it is followed by a word that begins with a vowel)
from heaven (Mat. 28:2)

ἐν = “in,” “on,” “at” (with the dative)—also may mean “among,” “when,” “by,” “with”

ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις
in the hearts (Mat. 9:4)

ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ
in the man (Jn. 2:25)

ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως
on the day of judgment (Mat. 10:15)

πρός = “to,” “toward” (with the accusative)—also may mean “with” [see page 44]

ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγει πρὸς Φίλιππον
(because a great crowd) came to him, he said to Philip (Jn. 6:5)

πρὸς τοὺς μαθητάς
to the disciples (Mat. 26:40)

πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον
to the crowd (Mat. 17:14)

σύν = “with” (with the dative)

σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς
with the disciples (Mk. 8:34)

σὺν τῷ ἀγγέλῳ
with the angel (Lk. 2:13)

σὺν τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις
with the elders (Lk. 20:1)

Prepositions Used with Two Cases

The following prepositions are used with two cases:

διὰ (with the genitive) = “through,” “by,” “during”

διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου
through Jeremiah the prophet (Mat. 2:17)

διὰ τῶν προφητῶν τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
by the prophets about the Son of Man (Lk. 18:31)

διὰ (with the accusative) = “because of”

διὰ τὸν λόγον
because of the word (Mat. 13:21)

κατὰ (with the genitive) = “down,” “against”

κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
against the Son of Man (Mat. 12:32)

κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ
against the people (Acts 21:28)

κατὰ (with the accusative) = “according to,” “during”

καθ' ἡμέραν (form of κατὰ before a rough breathing mark—drops the vowel
and the consonant is shifted upwards before a rough breathing mark)
during a day (Mat. 26:55)

μετά (with the genitive) = “with”

μετὰ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῆς
with her sons (Mat. 20:20)

μετὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου
with Jesus of Nazareth (Mat. 26:71)

μετά (with the accusative) = “after”

μεθ' ἡμέρας ἕξ
after six days (Mat. 17:1)

περί (with the genitive) = “for,” “concerning”

περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν
concerning the two brothers (Mat. 20:24)

περὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
concerning the temple (Lk. 21:5)

περί (with the accusative) = “around,” “about”

περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν
about the truth (2 Tim. 2:18)

Prepositions Used with Three Cases

A few prepositions are used with three cases:

ἐπὶ (with the genitive) = “on,” “over”

ἐπὶ γῆς
on earth (Mat. 6:10)

ἐπὶ (with the dative) = “on,” “at,” “on the basis of,” “against”

πατὴρ ἐπὶ υἱῷ καὶ υἱὸς ἐπὶ πατρί
father against son and son against father (Lk. 12:53)

ἐπὶ (with the accusative) = “on,” “to,” “toward,” “against” (motion implied)

ἐπὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ
to his disciples (Mat. 12:49)

παρά = (see chapter 8 vocabulary or Greek-English glossary at back of this book)

πρός = (see Greek-English glossary; the genitives and datives are rare)

A Case Perspective on the prepositions

Genitive

ἀπό from
ἐκ out of, from
διά through, by
κατά down, against
μετά with
περί for, concerning
ἐπὶ on, over

Dative

ἐν in
σύν with
ἐπὶ on, at, against

Accusative

εἰς into
πρός to, toward, with
διά because of
κατά according to, during
μετά after
περί around, about
ἐπὶ on, to, toward

Elision

Prepositions ending in a vowel often drop the final vowel when it comes before a word that begins with a vowel.

δι' ἐμοῦ = through me (Jn. 14:6)

(διά + ἐμοῦ)

If there is a rough breathing mark on the next word, the final consonant may be shifted:

μεθ' ἡμέρας after days (Mat. 17:1)
(μετά + ἡμέρας)

Proclitics

A proclitic is a word that has no accent because it is joined so closely with the accented word that follows it.

ἐν, εἰς and ἐκ are proclitics.

They come before (pro) the word with the accent.

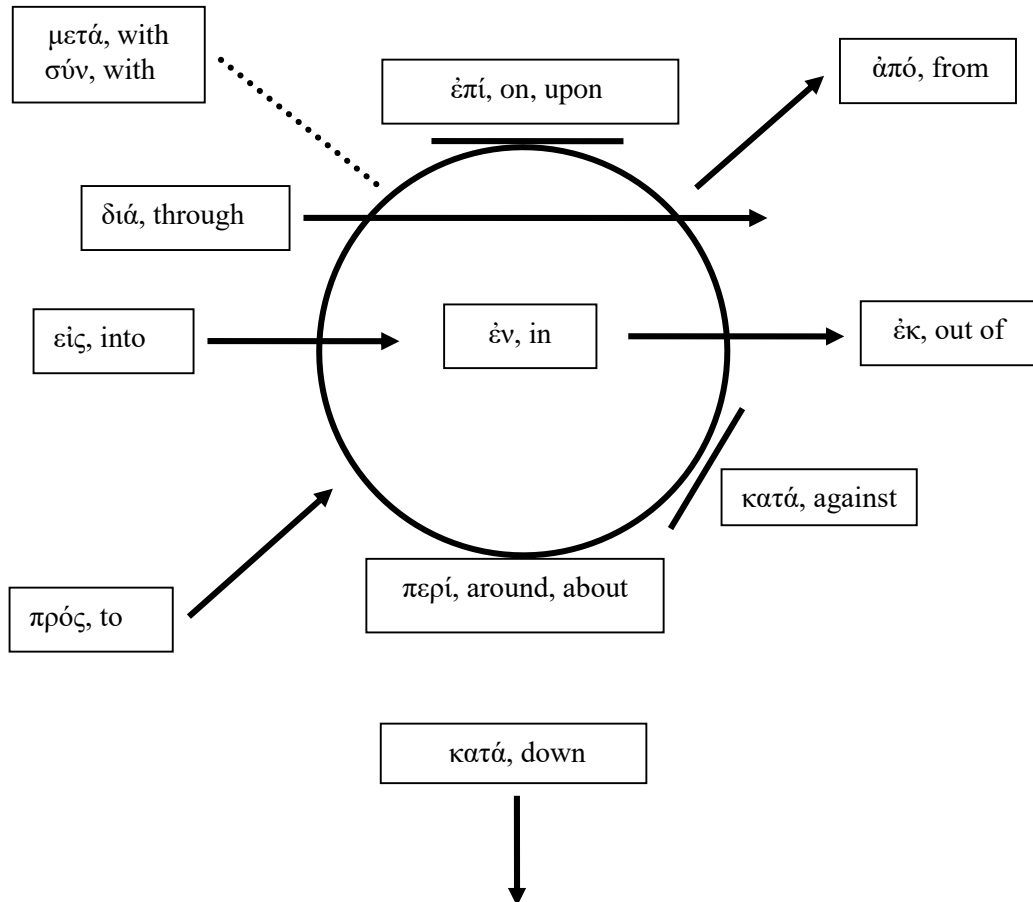
Enclitics are accentless words that follow the word with the accent. Personal pronouns are frequently enclitics.

Compounds

Prepositions are often found compounded with a verb in Greek. Sometimes the meaning of the compound may be determined by combining the meaning of the preposition with the meaning of the verb. Other times, however, the preposition affects the meaning of the verb in other ways, most frequently intensifying it.

διά + βλέπω through + I see
διαβλέπω I see clearly

Chart of Prepositions



Prepositions Chant: 11 Prepositional Moves

ἐπί	(hands patting on head)
περί	(right hand finger extended circle head)
πρὸς	(finger pointing in “to” heart)
εἰς	(hands “into” heart—collapse chest)
διὰ	(finger pushing again “through” the back)
ἐν	(arms “in” hugging self)
ἐκ	(hand push “out” from heart finger pointing out, close)
ἀπό	(fingers pointing “out” both front arms extended out)
κατά	(hands push against each other in front)
σύν	(right arm around shoulder wave of invisible buddy--with)
μετά	(two arms extend around shoulders of invisible buddies--with)

Vocabulary

It is difficult learning the prepositions as vocabulary items. They are short, but the cases must be learned with each definition. They also have many more meaning possibilities than “normal” words. In Greek, you need to pay particular attention to the small words. Take extra time to master these well. Learn each case of the word almost as a separate item for those that come in more than one case.

ἀπό	from (with gen.) (646)
διά	through (with gen.) (667) on account of (with acc.)
εἰς	into (with acc.) (1,768)
ἐκ	out of (with gen.) (914)
ἐν	in (with dat.) (2,752)
ἐπί	on, over (with gen.) (890) on, at, on the basis of, against (with dat.) on, to, toward, against (with acc.)
κατά	down, against (with gen.) (473) according to (with acc.)
μετά	with (with gen.) (469) after, behind (with acc.)
περί	about, concerning (with gen.) (333) around, near (with acc.)
πρός	to (with acc.) (700)

Memory Verse: John 1:1

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,

In beginning was the Word,

καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

and the Word was with God.