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**NOUN CLAUSES IN THE**

**GREEK NEW TESTAMENT:**

**A STATISTICAL STUDY**

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*This second in a series of studies dealing with subordinate clauses*

*in the Greek NT will look at noun clauses which are introduced by*

*conjunctions. They will be classified as to the function they fill in*

*the sentence and statistical counts will be given for each group. The*

*structure of the noun clauses will be explored, summarizing the*

*conjunctions used and the moods employed with each. Alternative*

*forms of noun clauses will be examined.*

\* \* \*

INTRODUCTION

SUBORDINATE clauses in the Greek NT structurally are of two main

groups, those introduced by relative words and those introduced

by conjunctions. We have previously looked at the relative clauses1

and found that 473 or 28% of them functioned as noun clauses. In

this article we begin our study of clauses introduced by subordinating

conjunctions. Of these, 1220 function as noun clauses, the largest

category of all the subordinate clauses.

Several designations are used for this type of clause. Simplest is

the term "Noun Clause", the one that will be used in this paper. It

indicates a clause which functions in the sentence as a noun, and can

be used almost anywhere a noun can; usually as subject or object of

the verb. Other designations are "Nominal" or "Substantival", with

no distinction in meaning.

CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO NOUN FUNCTION

This classification of noun clauses is based on what functional

part of the sentence is filled by the clause. Noun clauses are used in

1 See my article, "Relative Clauses in the Greek New Testament: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 9 (1988) 233-56.

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three primary ways; they are either subject, or object, or epexegetic,

with sub-classifications based on the structure of each. It should be

noted that in this matter they conform to a pattern similar to that

found in the use of the verbal noun-substitute, the infinitive.2

Noun Clause as Subject of Sentence

In these sentences the clausal subject always stands after the verb

in Greek, as it usually does also in English, except that there is in

Greek no equivalent to the English "it" which stands before as a sign

of the delayed subject. This English structure is a most natural one to

translate these Greek sentences. Example: I Cor 4:3 ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς  
ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ, "But to me it is a very

small thing that I should be examined by you."

Subject of Copulative Verb, Εἰμί

A relatively small number of these are found. Sometimes the

verb is expressed (6 examples), more commonly it is left to be

supplied (14 times). In two instances3 the clause seems to function as

subjective complement rather than subject, but it is difficult to tell

which is which.

Few as they are, a couple patterns appear. In seven instances4 the

sentence opens with οὐκ ὅτι without a verb, and the sense seems to be

a dis-avowal of something: "It is not that," "I do not mean that,"

"The situation is not such that."

Another recurring pattern involves the predicate adjective δῆλον,

with the verb ἐστίν to be supplied. Twice δῆλον is expressed,5 once it

is found in the variant readings.6 In another passage, to assume that

δῆλον ἐστίν should be supplied furnishes, in the judgement of some

commentators7 and of the present writer, a preferable explanation to

a very difficult problem of interpretation.

2 See my article, "Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 6 (1985) 4-6.

3 John 4:34; 2 Cor 11:10. Lists of all these classifications, together with much other

coded information, has been placed in a Supplemental Manual of Information. It is

available to those interested through their local library by interlibrary loan from the

Morgan Library, Grace Theological Seminary, 200 Seminary Dr., Winona Lake, IN

46590. Similar manuals are available for the other grammatical studies published in

this journal by the same author.

4 John 7:22; 2 Cor 1:24; 3:5; Phil 3:12; 4:11,17; 2 Thess 3.9. The NASB in the first

and last of these translates "because", elsewhere they use simply, "Not that. . . ".

5 1 Cor 15:27; Gal 3.11.

6 1 Tim 6:7. Cf. the critical apparatus.

71 John 3:20. Cf. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Longmans, Green,

and Co., 1894) 477-80.

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Subject of Impersonal Verbs

Only eight instances occur.8 Example: John 11.50 συμφέρει ῦμὶν

ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἀποθάνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ

, "it is expedient for you

that one man should die for the people.”9 Again, the noun clause

takes the place of the impersonal "it" used in English with such verbs,

except that it stands after the verb. In five of these the verb is one

which elsewhere uses an infinitive subject.

Subject of Passive Verbs

There are 37 of these. In every case the clause would be the

object of the verb if it were in the active voice, but becomes subject in

the passive transform. Interestingly, in 21 instances the clause is a

direct or indirect quotation from OT scriptures; 18 of them using

γέγραπται, "it is written that. . ." An example not involving the

quoting of scripture is Mark 2:1: ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἔν οἴκῳ ἐστίν. "It was

heard that he was at home."

Noun Clause as Object of Verbs

Again the use of a clause as a substitute for a noun parallels the

use of the infinitive, with the same type of verbs and many of the

same individual verbs showing both constructions. Our classification

of the object clauses will therefore parallel our classification of object

infinitives.

Object of Verbs Taking an Objective Complement

Many verbs are of such a nature that they take another verbal

idea to complete their meaning. Such verbs I have dealt with at length

in another place10 and will only briefly touch them here. They com-

monly use an infinitive as complement, but there are 42 examples in

the NT where a noun clause serves as complement. Example: 1 Cor

14:1 ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικᾶ, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε. "yet

desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy."

These verbs include those expressing (1) wish or desire (θέλω\*

has a noun clause complement 8 times with the verb expressed, 3

times where it is understood from the context); (2) an activity to the

end that something may or may not be done (βοθλεύω\*, συμβουλ-

έυω\*, συμβούλιον λαβεπιν, συμβούλιον διδόναι 7, ποιέω 7\*, ἑτοιμάζω

3, ἀγγαρεύω 2, and βάλλω, διατίθεμαι, τίθημι, ζηλόω\*, ζητέω\*, one

8 Matt 5:29, 30; 18:6; Mark 4:38; Luke 10:40; 17:2; John 11:50; 16:7.

9 Unless otherwise stated, NT translations will be given from NASB.

10 See my article, "Infinitives" *GTJ* 6, 7.

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each); (3) to permit, allow (ἀφίημι\*, δίδωμι one each); (4) ability,

sufficiency (ἀρκέω, ἔχω\*, εὑρίσκω, one each); (5) need or obligation

(δίδωμι\* one); and (6) emotion (ἀγαλλιόω, one11). Those marked

with an asterisk (\*) are used elsewhere in the NT with the objective

complement supplied by an infinitive. It is significant that the NASB

uses an infinitive to translate 22 of these 42 noun clauses in the NT.

Object in Direct Discourse

Direct discourse usually stands as a complete unit without need-

ing to be introduced by a subordinate conjunction, therefore the

majority of them lie outside the scope of this study. However, in the

Greek NT there is a tendency to introduce direct discourse by using

the same conjunction as is used for indirect, ὅτι. This ὅτι *recitatuvum*

as it is called by grammarians12 cannot be translated and is the

equivalent of our English quotation mark. The category is included to

call attention to this phenomenon. There are 171 instances so desig-

nated, although there is sometimes ambiguity as to whether such a

quote is direct or indirect. An example of this ambiguity is Mark

3:21: ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη "for they were saying, 'He has lost his

senses.'" It could be understood, "they were saying that he had lost

his senses."

Object in Indirect Discourse

By far the largest category of noun clauses is their use in indirect

discourse, 750 instances. The clause stands as object of a verb of

mental perception or communication and expresses the content or

substance of the thought or of the communication. Again, the classi-

fication of this group is patterned after that used with infinitives in

indirect discourse.13

*Verbs of Recognizing, Knowing, Understanding*. This sub-class

alone accounts for almost half (372) of the whole group. Example:

1 John 5.2 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ

"By this we know that we love the children of God."

The verbs involved, with the number of occurrences and in the

order of frequency, are: οἶδα 156\* (+ one where it is to be under-

stood), γινώσκω 60\*, ἀκούω 3, εἶδον 28, ἐπιγινῶσκω 14, βλέπω 7,

ἐπιίσταμαι 7, ἀγνοέω 6, μιμῄσκω 6, μνημονεύω 6\*, θεωρέω 6\*,

ἀναγινώσκω 5, νοέω 3\*, θεάομαι 3, φανερόω 2, καταλαμβάνω 2\*,

11 Perhaps this should be listed under verbs of wishing and desiring, cf. F. Blass

and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Chris-*

*tian Literature,* trans. and rev. by Robert Funk (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1961) 199.

12 Cf. BDF, *Grammar* 205, 246-47.

13 See my article "Infinitives" *GTJ* 7-9.

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and once each ἐπέχω, ἐξομολογέω, γεύομαι, γνωρίζω, γνῶστον εἶναι,

γράφω, ὁράω, παραλαμβάνω, προεἶδον, προγινώσκω, πυνθάνομαι,

σφραγ΄ζω, σύμφημι, συνίημι, ὑπομιμνῄσκω. Those marked with the

asterisk (\*) also use the infinitive of indirect discourse, but the noun

clause seems to be preferred with this category of verbs.

*Verbs of Thinking, Believing, Feeling, Deciding*. 102 noun

clauses belong to this group. Example: Gal 1:6 θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως  
ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς . . . "I am amazed that

you are so quickly deserting Him who. . ."

Verbs using this construction are πιστεύω 25\*, δοκέω 15\* (once

where it is to be understood), πείθω 12\*, μεριμνάω 5, διαλογίζομαι 4,

λογίζομαι 4\*, νομίζω 4\*, θαυμάζω 4, ζητέω 4, ἔχω 3\*, μιμνῄσκω 3,

σθνίημι 2, and once each, ἀγαλιάω, ἀναμιμνῄσκω\*, βουλεύω,

χαίρω, εἶπον, ἐμβλέπω, καταμανθάνω, κατανοέω, κρίνω, μνημονεύω,

οἴομαι\*, πληροφορέω, συλλαβλέω, συμβιβάζω, συντίθεμαι, ὑπολαμ-  
βάνω. The infinitive is common with these verbs.

*Verbs of Hoping, Expecting*. There are only six examples in

this category, all involving the same verb, ἐλπίζω. Example: Luke

24:21 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν   
Ἰσραήλ: "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to

redeem Israel." This verb also uses the infinitive.

*Verbs of Indirect Statement.* The three previous classes involved

mental activity; the three following involve the communication of

that mental activity. The first group expresses a simple statement of

the content of that activity; in direct discourse it would be a declara-

tive sentence. Example: John 5:36 . . . μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι ὁ πα-

-τήρ με ἀπέσταλκεν. “ . . . bear witness of Me, that the Father has

sent Me." The idiomatic expression used by Jesus, λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι,

"for I say to you" and ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι, "truly I say to you"

accounts for 32 of the total 164 so classified.

The verbs used are verbs of saying, speaking, reporting, wit-

nessing, etc.; λέγω 58, εἶπον 24, μαρτθρέω 12, εὐχαριστέω 7, ἀπαγ-

γέλλω 6\*, διηγέομαι 5, ὁμολογέω 5\*, μαρτύρομαι 4\*, προλέγω 4,

γράφω 3, ἀναγγέλλω 2, ἀποκρίνομαι 2\*, διδάσκω 2, ἐμφανίζω 2,

ἐξηγέομαι 2, λαλέω 2, παρατίθημι 2, once each ἀνασείω, ἀποδείκ-

νθμι, ἀρνέομαι, δείκνθμι, διαμαρτύρομαι, εὐαγγελίζω, γνωρίζω,  
κατηχέω, κηρύσσω, μηνύω, ὀμνύω\*, προεῖπον, προφητεύω, συμβι-

βάζω, συμμαρτυρέω. The verb is left to be supplied, the context

pointing to φημί (3 times), εἶπον once, and three times it is uncertain.

*Verbs of Indirect Question.* Of those clauses introduced by

conjunctions identified in the GRAMCORD schedule as SN (Sub-

ordinating Nominal) I found no example where the indirect quote

would have been a question in the direct. However there is another

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group of conjunctions labelled by GRAMCORD as SG (Subordi-

nating Interrogative) which also produce noun clauses. When this

group is included there are at least 14 examples of indirect quotations

which would have been questions if quoted directly.

Verbs introducing these questions are: ἐπερωτάω 5\*, and one

each δέομαι\*, εἶπον, ἐρωτάω\*, λέγω\*, προδέχομαι, πυνθάνομαι,  
θαυμάζω.

*Verbs of Indirect Command or Entreaty* In these the noun

clause expresses the content of the command or request. In direct

discourse they would probably be in the imperative mood. Here they

become potential clauses, usually with ἵνα or ὅποως and the subjunc-

tive mood. They are appeals to the will. Example of a command:

Mark 7:36 διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν "He gave them

orders not to tell anyone." Example of an entreaty: John 17:15 οὐκ  
ἐρωτῶ ἵνα ἅρῃς αὺτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἀλλ' ἵνα τηρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ  
τοῦ πονηροῦ. "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but

to keep them from the evil one."

Arbitrarily I have divided them into two groups, commands and

entreaties. The basis for the division is two-fold: (1) the meaning of

the verb used to introduce them; verbs speaking of commanding

introduce commands, verbs speaking of asking, pleading, etc., intro-

duce entreaties; (2) where this distinction is not explicit the context is

made to decide. Obviously there are instances of uncertainty.

Verbs of commanding followed by noun object clauses are: εἶπον   
6\*, ἐπιτιμάω 6, διαστέλλω 4, λέγω 3\*, βλέπω 3, γράφω 2\*, and one

each, ἀκούω, ἀπαγγέλλω, διαμαρτύρομαι\*, ἐντέλλομαι\*, ἐξορκἰζω,  
κηρύσσω\*, λαβεῖν ἐντολήν, παιδεύω\*, παραγγέλλω, ὑποδείκνυμι, and two instances where the verb is not expressed; The total is 35.

Verbs of entreaty found with this construction are: παρακαλέω

20\*, ἐρωτάω 14\*, προσεύχομαι 10\* (+ 3 where it is probably to be

supplied), δέομαι 6, κάμπτω τὰ γόνατα 3, αἰτέω 1 \*, and another

where the word to be supplied is uncertain; total, 57.

Object of Verbs of Fearing, Apprehension

After some verbs which express fear or warning the cause of the

apprehension is expressed by a noun clause. Example: Matt 24:4

βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ "See to it that no one misleads you."

31 instances are so classified. They involve the verbs, βλέπω 11,

φοβέω 10, ἐπισκοπέω 3, ὁράω 2, σκοπέω 2, προσέχω 1; twice the

verb is left to be understood.

*Object of Other Verbs*

Three noun clauses involving the verb ἔχω have been grouped

simply as direct object of that verb. In each case a simple noun object

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could easily be substituted for the noun clause. For example: Luke

9:58 ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἔχει ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνῃ. "The

Son of Man has nowhere [i.e., no place] to lay His head." This of

course sacrifices the dramatic force of the indirect interrogative ποῦ,

which points to some such meaning as "He does not have a place

where an answer can be found to the question, 'Where shall I lay my

head?'" The other two are similar (Matt 8:20; Luke 12:17).

*Noun Clause as Epexegetic of or in Apposition*

*to Another Substantive*

To a noun

Very often the noun clause stands as an explanation of or in

apposition to a noun, 70 instances. Example: Matt 18:14 οὕτως οὐκ  
ἕστιν θέλημ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατροὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἵνα  
ἀπόληται ἓν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων. "Thus it is not the will of your

Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish." A great

variety of nouns (37 by count) have such amplifying clauses. 13 of

them also are used with an epexegetic infinitive, and six more are

cognate with words which use this infinitive.

To an adjective

This construction is less common with adjectives, only 10 in-

stances. Example: John 1:27 οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αύτοῦ τὸν  
ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδύματος. "the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy

to untie," Again four of the ten also use an epexegetic infinitive.

To a pronoun

Most frequently the noun clause stands in apposition to a pro-

noun, usually a demonstrative (59 times), sometimes a relative (9

times) or an interrogative (8 times). But since a pronoun refers back

to an antecedent, it follows that the appositional clause also repre-

sents the antecedent noun. Thus these clauses in effect have a double

identity; in structure they stand in explanation of or in apposition to

the pronoun, in function they represent that part of the sentence

occupied by the antecedent.

In this secondary sense these clauses function like the various

classes of noun clauses already described. Some (18) are explanatory

of a noun present in the sentence. Example: John 15:12 Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ  
ἐντολἢ ἡ ἐμή, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, "This is My commandment,

that you love one another." Sometimes the antecedent of the pronoun

is left to be supplied from the context. Example: Luke 1:43 πόθεν μοι  
τοῦτο ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου πρὸς ἐμέ; "how has it

happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

(the antecedent of τοῦτο is left to be supplied--"this event", "this that

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is happening"; the noun clause supplies a description of what that

event was). In five instances the demonstrative is in a phrase which by

context expresses purpose and the noun clause states the content of

that purpose. Example: Col 4:8 ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο,  
ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ . . . "For I have sent him to you for this

very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and. . ."

By these secondary identifications, there are 6 instances where these

clauses might be considered also as subject of the copulative verb.

The same verbs which we have already seen may take a noun

clause as object may also use an intervening pronoun, the pronoun

being the object and the noun clause in apposition to it explaining its

content. Example: Rom 6:6 τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν  
ἅνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη . . . , "knowing this, that our old self was

crucified with Him. . ." 29 of them are with verbs taking indirect

discourse, and one with a verb of fearing.14

Noun clauses in apposition with relative and interrogative pro-

nouns show a similar doubling of the construction. Example: 1 Cor

11:23 Ἐγὼ γὰρ παέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι  
ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς . . . "For I received from the Lord that which I also

delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus. . ." The noun clause is ex-

planatory of the relative clause introduced by o! which is the object of

the verb παρέλαβον, but it also gives the content of that which was

delivered; there are not two objects of the verb, but one. It is de-

scribed by two statements, the relative clause identifies it and the

noun clause gives its contents.

Another recurring pattern is the expression τί ὅτι;15 The inter-

rogative pronoun τί introduces a question and the noun clause with ὅτι

states what the question consists of. The expression is much com-

pressed; the antecedent of τί must be supplied by the sense of the

context, also the verb ἐστίν is probably to be understood. The full

statement would probably be "For what reason is it that. . . ?" or

“Why is it that . . . ?” or simply “Why . . . ?”

CLAUSE STRUCTURE

The conjunctions used in noun clauses and the mood of the verbs

appearing in them is considered next. Remember that we are not in this

study dealing with all noun clauses, but only those introduced by

conjunctions. There are 1220 of these in the NT.

14 In indirect discourse, with verbs of knowing: Matt 24:43; Luke 10:11; 12:39;

Rom 6:6; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:9; 2 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 2 Pet 1:20; I John 3:16, 19; with verbs of

thinking: Mark 4:41; Luke 10:20 (twice); John 16:19; 1 Cor 7:26; 2 Cor 5:14; 10:7,

Phil 1:6; 2 Pet 3:3; 5, 8; with verbs of saying: I Cor 1:12; 15:50; 1 Thess 4:15; with verbs

of commanding and entreaty: John 15:17; Phil 1:9; with verbs of fearing: 2 Cor 8:20.

15 Luke 2:49; John 14:22; Acts 5:4, 9; Phil 1:18; Heb 2:6 (twice).

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Ὅτι With Noun Clauses (855)

The most frequently used conjunction with noun clauses is ὅτι.

Such clauses are found as subject, as object, and as epexegetic, and in

almost every sub-classification of these outlined in the preceding part

of this article.

Ὅτι Introducing Direct Discourse

This group has been described above. The direct discourse is a

subordinate clause within the main sentence. The ὅτι actually is not

needed and most often is not used. When it is used it serves to

introduce a noun clause which consists of the direct discourse. It is

different, however, from other ὅτι clauses, in that the ὅτι does not

govern the verb of the clause. The direct discourse has its own verb

relationships; it can be in any mood, and the ὅτι has no effect

whatever on it. 20% or 168 of the 855 occurrences of the conjunction

ὅτι in noun clauses belong here.

Ὅτι with the Indicative Mood

ὅτι almost always governs a verb in the indicative mood. Of the

remaining 687 places where ὅτι introduces a noun clause there are

only three exceptions16 and even these are only apparent exceptions,

not real (see next paragraph). There are 34 places where the ὅτι

clause has no verb expressed, it is left to be supplied from the sense

or the context. In each instance the verb supplied would be indicative.

Ὅτι with the Subjunctive Mood

There are three instances where the verb is subjunctive in a

clause introduced by ὅτι.17 Each of these is an example of the "em-

phatic negation" construction, οὐ μή with the subjunctive,18 a con-

struction which can stand anywhere an indicative can and is the

equivalent of an indicative.

Ἵνα With Noun Clauses (194)

Second in order of frequency of noun clauses are those intro-

duced by ἵνα. Again they are included in almost all of the classes

already discussed, though not as widely as ὅτι. When ἵνα is found in

16 While this statement is dealing with ὅτι in noun clauses, it also is true with causal

clauses ( ὅτι = because), the subject of a later study.

17 Matt 5:20; John 11:56; 1 Thess 4:15.

18 For a discussion of this construction, its meaning and its structure, see my

article, "The Classification of Subjunctives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 7 (1986) 6.

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a noun clause it of course is not to be translated "in order that" (its

most familiar translation as a final clause), but rather, simply "that",

or frequently by an infinitive.

Ἵνα with the Subjunctive Mood

The normal mood in a ἵνα clause is subjunctive and the noun

clauses with ἵνα follow that rule, 187 times out of 194 or 96%.

Ἵνα with the Future Indicative

The ambivalence between future indicative and aorist subjunctive

has been examined in considerable detail elsewhere.19 All examples of

ἵνα with the indicative in noun clauses are futures, and interestingly

all are in the book of Revelation, a book with displays a great variety

of unusual grammatical features. If, as we have attempted to demon-

strate in the earlier study, there is no distinction in meaning between

the two constructions, then these seven future indicatives with ἵνα are

simply variant forms of the subjunctive.

Πῶς With Noun Clauses (37)

Πῶς with the Indicative Mood

Πῶς in noun clauses is almost limited to indirect discourse after

verbs of knowing, thinking, saying, etc. Since πῶς is an interrogative

the original which is being stated indirectly is always a question,

asking "How?" It normally uses the indicative mood, and 26 of the 37

NT examples are indicative.

Πῶς with the Subjunctive Mood

In 11 instances πῶς is followed by a subjunctive verb. The reason

is quickly obvious; in every case the question being indirectly quoted

was originally a deliberative question, already a subjunctive.

Μή and Μήποτε With Noun Clauses (34)

In final clauses μή often represents ἵνα μή, the negative of ἵνα,

but in noun clauses there is no ἵνα μή. The conjunctions μή and

μήποτε are most commonly (31 out of 34) found introducing the

object of a verb expressing fear, warning, or apprehension, in the

sense "lest, that not," with the indefinite ποτέ adding a sense of

uncertainty, "lest perhaps." One of the other three (2 Cor 8:20) also

secondarily belongs to the same category, although structurally it is

19 See my article, "Subjunctives" *GTJ* 7 (1986) 16-19.

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listed as epexegetic of a pronoun that stands as the object of such a

verb.

The other two (Luke 3:15; 2 Tim 2:25) are objects in indirect

discourse where the direct would be a question.

Μή, μήποτε with the subjunctive mood

The normal mood expected would be subjunctive as indicated by

the potential quality of the construction; the count is 25, plus 3 where

the verb is unexpressed and presumably would have been subjunctive.

Μή, μήποτε with the indicative mood

Three of the five indicatives are future and should be considered

as equal to a subjunctive. Two are seemingly irregular or unusual and

we look for some reason. Perhaps they are representing something

actual rather than potential. Luke 11:35, σκόπει οὖν μὴ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν  
σοὶ σκποτος ἐστίν. "Then watch out that the light in you may not be

darkness." may by the indicative be implying that, in the case under

consideration (namely, that the eye is bad), the light in them is

actually darkness. In Gal 4:11, φοβοῦμαι ὑμπας μή πως εἰκῇ κεκοπί-

ακα εἰς ὑμπας, "I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in

vain," certainly the apprehension has to do, not with what might

happen, but what already has happened.

Μήποτε with the optative mood

Luke 3:15 is the only example: καὶ διαλογιζομένων πάντων ἐν  
ταῖς καρτίαις αὐτῶν περὶ τοῦ Ἰωάννου, μήποτε αὐτὸς εἴη ὁ χριστός

"and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he

might be the Christ." Again, the verb would already have been

optative in the direct question and normally retains its mood when

quoted indirectly.

Εἰ *With Noun Clauses* (33)

Εἰ with the Indicative Mood

Like πῶς, εἰ is an interrogative word. When it introduces a noun

clause that clause is always an original question now being quoted. In

at least two instances20 there is doubt whether they should be con-

sidered as direct or indirect quotations; NASB translates them as

direct quotes, with quotation marks. If they are direct then theconjunction εἰ is functioning like the ὅτι *recitatuvum*. If they are

20 Acts 7:1; 19:2

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indirect the εἰ becomes "whether," or even "if" since English permits

the word "if" to be used sometimes in that sense.

Almost always the mood in the noun clause is indicative, 30

times.

Εἰ with the Subjunctive Mood

One example shows a subjunctive verb, Phil 3:12: διώκω δὲ εἰ  
καὶ καταλβω . . ."if I may even lay hold. . ." (NASB margin). This

admittedly is a difficult sentence to translate, but it seems clear that

the question being indirectly quoted was originally a deliberative

question (note the first person), thus the subjunctive simply carries

through to the quote.

Εἰ with the Optative Mood

Two passages have optative verbs after εἰ in indirect questions,

Acts 17: 11 and 25:20.21 The potential quality is clear in both passages

and the optative should be considered as belonging to the original

question, not to the conjunction εἰ.

Ποῦ *With Noun Clauses* (18)

Ποῦ with the Indicative Mood

Ποῦ is another interrogative word pointing to an original ques-

tion being indirectly quoted. When it represents a simple question the

mood is indicative, 13 times.

Ποῦ with the Subjunctive Mood

The three examples all involve the verb ἕχω in a very compressed

statement; Matt 8:20 (cf. also Luke 9:58; 12:17) ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώ-

που οὐκ ἔχει ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλῖνῃ. "The Son of Man has nowhere

to lay His head." The original question was "Where shall I lay my

head?"--a deliberative question expressed in Greek by the subjunc-

tive mood and thus is retained in the indirect discourse. Ἕχω here

may be expanded in sense to "have [the answer to the question]:

"Where shall I sleep?"

Ὡς *With Noun Clauses* (16)

These occur with verbs of mental perception, expressing the

object by using "how" instead of "that". Example: Luke 24:35 καὶ  
αὐτοὶ ἐξηγοῦντο . . . ὡς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου.

21 For a rather full treatment of the optative mood and its use in indirect questions,

see my article, "The Classification of Optatives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 9 (1988) 134.

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"And they began to relate. . . how He was recognized by them in the

breaking of bread." The "how" is not interrogative (as if answering a

question "in what manner?") but descriptive. All are indirect dis-

course, although five of them are listed as epexegetic since they stand

in apposition to another word which is the grammatical object.

All of the 16 examples use the indicative mood.

Ὅπως *With Noun Clauses* (15)

Ὅπος like ἵνα is more often final, but like ἵνα it can serve with a

noun clause.22 In the NT it usually is used with verbs of asking anddeciding, never with verbs of commanding.

Ὅπως with the Subjunctive Mood

In every instance except one the mood is subjunctive, as is

normal with this conjunction and often is appropriate with verbs of

asking.

Ὅπως with the Indicative Mood

In one example the mood is indicative, where unquestionably the

content of the clause is actual, historical, and in no sense potential;

Luke 24:20. The clause introduced by ὅπως is in answer to the

question ποῖα; (v. 19), which itself is governed by οὐκ ἔγνως (v. 18).

Πόθε With Noun Clauses (12)

Πόθεν is an interrogative and in each instance it is an indirert

quote of a question. The mood is indicative.

Πότε With Noun Clauses (4)

The interrogative πότε occurs only four times in noun clauses;

each is an indirect question, in indirect discourse. Three have an

indicative verb. The other, Luke 12:36 is an indirect question, but the

clause does not appear to be object; rather it seems to depend on

some implied verb. The mood is subjunctive; Robertson calls it an

indirect deliberative question.23

Καθώς With Noun Clause (2)

Only two are found (Acts 15:14 and 3 John 3), objects in indirect

discourse with the sense of "how", cf. ὡς and ὅπως. The mood is

indicative.

22 “More and more replacing the info after verbs of asking *that*" BAG 580.

23 A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of*

*Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1044.

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Other Nominal Structures

It may be helpful to conclude this consideration of subordinate

conjunctive noun clauses by a brief review of other structures which

are used in place of nouns. The nominal relative clauses, already

mentioned, have been treated at length in the preceding article in this

series.24

Another group of noun clauses not included within the scope of

this paper needs to be brought to attention here; those introduced by

interrogative pronouns, τίς and πόσος. Most are direct questions and

main clauses, but about 116 out of a total of 540 are quoted indirectly

and are thus subordinate noun clauses, though not introduced by a

subordinating conjunction.

One of the commonest substitutes for a noun is a substantival

participle, usually with the article, occasionally without it. Techni-

cally this is not a "clause" since it contains no finite verb. But it has a

verbal sense in the participle, it identifies the "doer" of the action

involved in that verbal sense, it can take direct or indirect objects like

any other verb form, as well as adverbial modifiers. In English almost

the only way it can be translated in most cases is by a noun or a

nominal relative clause. These have been dealt with in a previous

article in this series.25

Another similar structure which functions as a noun is the infini-

tive "clause". Again, it is not technically a clause but it relates to it

much as the participle does; with "subject", verbal action, objects,

and modifiers. It serves as subject of a sentence, as object, as comp-

lement. It sometimes takes the place of clauses, as in indirect dis-

course. In fact, almost every type of noun function seen in noun

clauses has its parallel and pattern in infinitive structures. These too

have been studied in depth in a previous article in this series.26

Much less frequent but characteristically Greek is the structure

which places the article τό before a clause, with the effect that the

clause becomes a noun. This "substantivizing" use of the article is

more familiar when it is used with adjectives and participles, also with

adverbs (e.g., ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν), with prepositional phrases (e.g., τὰ περὶ

ἡμῶν), with genitive phrases (e.g., οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), even with verbs

(e.g., τὸ ἀνέβη; Eph 4:7).

The same construction occurs occasionally with whole clauses.

Among the clauses included in the present study four of those intro-

24 Please see footnote #1.

25 See my article, "The Classification of Participles: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 5

(1984) 165-67.

26 See my article, "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 6

(1985) 4-10.

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duced by πῶς have this article preceding.27 Six of the noun clauses

introduced by an interrogative pronoun show it.

But especially is this noun-making effect of the article worth

noting in some passages where whole sentences, or even groups of

words which are not even a clause, are, as it were, put in quote marks

and treated as a single word by an article preceding. Examples: Rom

13:9 τὸ γὰρ οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐκ ἐπιθυμή-

σεις καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν  
τῷ ἀγαπύσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν "For this, 'You shall not

commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You

shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed

up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (cf. also,

Matt 19:18; Gal 5:14). In Mark 9:23 the article τό before εἰ δύνῃ

(quoted from the lips of the supplicant) calls attention to the element

of doubt it reflects, as if to say "Watch out for that expression "If you

can." In 1 Cor 4:6 Paul takes an incomplete clause (there is no verb,

but one is implied by the μή) and by putting an article before it

makes it a policy-setting principal which he admonishes the Corin-

thians to learn, the "not-beyond-what-is-written" rule.

27 Luke 22:2, 4; Acts 4:21; 1 Thess 4:1.

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