CHAPTER 27
Comparatives, Conjunctions, Adverbs, and Clause Types

You will be able to—

1. recognize and translate comparatives;
2. recognize, classify, and translate conjunctions, adverbs and particles;
3. recognize, classify, and translate purpose, result, and other types of clauses;
4. gain more practice in translating and working with Greek;
5. translate John 1:1–10; and
6. master ten more high-frequency vocabulary words.

Introduction to Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

In this chapter we will examine four syntactic odds and ends. Comparative adjectives (e.g., greater) usually compare two items. Superlative adjectives (e.g., greatest) are used when comparing more than two items. The issue is more the number of items being compared than the inflection on the Greek form. A comparative may be used as a normal adjective or as a superlative. Likewise a superlative may be used as a normal adjective or comparative. Both may be used as an elative which is an intensification of the regular adjectival usage [the very big balloon] (Wallace, The Basics of New Testament Syntax, 132ff).

Comparative Adjectives

Greek uses either the endings -ιων or -τερος, -α, -ων, or the particle ἦ (than) to indicate a comparative.

For example:

- μέγας (great)  μείζων (greater)
- μικρός (small)  μικρότερος (smaller)
- ἀγαθός (good)  κρείσσων (better)

These are then declined like adjectives (μείζων, μείζονος, μείζων...).

Wallace notes a regular adjective may be used as a comparative:

1) Comparative: Mat. 18:8 καλόν soi ἔστιν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν κυλλὸν
   it is better to enter into life crippled.
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2) Superlative: Mt 22:38 αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη καὶ πρώτη ἐντολή

this is the greatest and first commandment

A comparative may function as a:

1) Regular adjective: Mat 12:6 λέγω ύμιν ὅτι τῶν ἱεροῦ μεῖζον ἐστὶν ὁ δείκτης

I tell you, [something] greater than the temple is here

2) Superlative: Luk 9:48 ὁ μικρότερος πάσιν ὑμῖν ... ἐστιν μέγας

the least among you ... is greatest

3) Elative (sense of the adj. is intensified): Acts 13:31 ὃς ὄφθη ἐπὶ ἡμέρας πλείους

who appeared for very many days

Superlative Adjectives

The superlative is rare in the New Testament. It is formed by suffixing either -τατός, -η, -ον or -στός, -η, -ον. There may be a change in the stem as seen in the following example. The most frequent is πρῶτος (first) and ἔσχατος (last). The superlative form may function as a regular adjective or as a comparative or elative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>μικρός (little)</td>
<td>ἐλάσσων (less)</td>
<td>ἐλάχιστος (least)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μέγας (great)</td>
<td>μείζων (greater)</td>
<td>μειζόνερος (greatest)</td>
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<td>νέος (new)</td>
<td>νεότερος (newer)</td>
<td>νεώτατος (newest)</td>
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Other superlatives are:

ὑψιστός, -η, -ον (highest) πρῶτος, -η, -ον (first)

πλείστος, -η, -ον (most) ἔσχατος, -η, -ον (last)

Superlative as an elative: Mk 4:1 συνάγεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὅχλος πλείστος

a very great crowd gathered before him. (adj. sense instensified: very)
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Superlative as comparative:

Mat 21:28 ἄνθρωπος εἶχεν τέκνα δύο. καὶ προσελθὲν τῷ πρώτῳ εἶπεν
a man had two sons. He came to the first and said...

(vid. Wallace, The Basics of New Testament Syntax, 132ff, for a more complete discussion)

Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Dana and Mantey’s classifications according to broader areas of meaning are helpful (Manual Grammar, 257).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
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<th>Causal</th>
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<th>Purpose</th>
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Adversative

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\textit{ἄλλα} & but & \textit{μέντω} & however \\
\textit{δὲ} & but & \textit{οὖν} & however \\
\textit{καὶ} & but & & \\
\end{tabular}

Particles

Perschbacher (New Testament Greek Syntax, 171–84) identifies particles as small indeclinable words that are not prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, or interjections. The following is a list of some of most frequently used particles:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{ἀμήν} so be it, truly, amen
  \item \textit{ἀν} (untranslated; occurs with the various moods and often with relative pronouns)
  \item \textit{ἄρα} therefore, then
  \item \textit{γέ} indeed (emphasizes the word it goes with)
  \item \textit{ἰδε} look! notice, behold
  \item \textit{ἰδού} look! notice, behold
  \item \textit{μέν} indeed (often with the relative pronoun), on the one hand
  \item \textit{ναί} yes, indeed
\end{itemize}

Adverbs

There are many ways in Greek by which the verb may be modified in an adverbial sense of time, manner or place. In English, an adverb is often designated by the addition of the –ly ending (he went quickly). We can often convert adjectives into adverbs by adding the –ly ending (he was an articulate [adj.] speaker; he spoke articulately [adv.]).

In Greek we are familiar with several ways the verb may be modified in time, manner and place already. One may use a participle in an adverbial manner (After leaving the store, he went home; vid. chs. 20/21 Translating Participles—adverbial sense). Secondly, the articular infinitive is also used in an adverbial manner (before Phillip called you, I saw you....; vid. ch. 22 Articular Infinitives). Thirdly, many prepositional phrases have an adverbial verb modifying function and indeed some adverbs actually became more prepositional in their function and are classed as “adverbial prepositions” (i.e. ἔξω outside). Indeed, some words are classified as both improper prepositions and adverbs and some are marked by the –θεν ending (ὁπίσω (prep. + genitive=after; ὁπισθεν adv. “from behind”) ).

Fourthly, as in English where an adjective can be converted into an adverb by changing the ending (articulate/articulately) so in Greek using the genitive plural form an adverb may be formed by shifting the –ων ending to an –ος (e.g. καλῶν [good] becomes καλος [well] (Stevens, 87f.). Finally, there are explicit adverbs which help develop the meaning of the verb in time, manner, and location.
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Time: αὔριον (tomorrow), σήμερον (today), ἔχθές (yesterday), νῦν (now) and τότε (then), πώποτε (ever, at any time)

Manner: οὕτως (thus/in this manner), ταχέως (quickly)

Location: ἄνω (above), ἄνωθεν (from above), κάτω (below), ἐκεῖ (there), ἐκείθεν (from there), ὅδε (here), ἐντείθεν (from there);
vid. Porter, Idioms, 125.

Clause Type Introduction

We have studied nouns, verbs, prepositions, and other parts of speech. After studying single words, we must move on to larger grammatical constructions. Clauses are a group of connected words that contain a verb. Clauses can function substantively (like a noun), adjectivally, or adverbially. We have already seen clauses in the four types of conditional clauses (if x then y). The following will be an initial exploration into several types of dependent clauses. For higher level analysis one will find wonderful resources in S. Porter’s Idioms of the Greek New Testament (Sheffield, 1999), S. Levinsohn’s Discourse Features of New Testament Greek (SIL, 2000) and Katharine Barnwell’s Introduction to Semantics and Translation (SIL, 1980).

1. Substantive

I do not have **what I need** (functions as the object)

2. Adjective

He bought the ball **that Coach Kessler had signed**.

3. Adverb

I will come **when I have finished playing with Elliott**.

The various clause types follow. The four types of conditional clauses were covered in chapter 23, on the subjunctive verb.

Purpose Clauses

A purpose clause gives an explanation of the object or goal that was pursued by the main verb. They are retrospective, looking back and giving an explanation for why something has occurred. I stopped quickly to avoid running over Zach’s bike. Greek expresses purpose in at least three ways (Dana and Mantey, Manual Grammar, 283–84):
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1. With an infinitive:

Μὴ νομίσῃτε ὅτι ἔλθον καταλύσαι τὸν νόμον.
Do not think that I came to destroy the law (Mat. 5:17).

2. With ἵνα or ὅπως + subjunctive:

ἦλθεν... ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.
He came that he might bear witness concerning the light (Jn. 1:7).

3. With εἰς or πρὸς followed by an articular infinitive:

ποιοῦσιν πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι τοῖς ἄνθρωποις.
They do [them] to be seen by men (Mat. 23:5).

Result Clauses

Result clauses describe the results that flow from the main verb. There are several ways in which result clauses are marked in Greek. The difference between purpose and result is often subtle in English.

1. The most common is ὥστε or ὥς + infinitive:

καὶ ἔαν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὁρὴ μεθιστάναι
And if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains (1 Cor. 13:2)

2. ὥστε or ὅτι + indicative:

ὡστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενὴ ἔδωκεν
So that he gave his unique Son (Jn. 3:16)

Cause Clauses

Cause clauses are prospective, looking forward to a goal with intention. They are often introduced with “because.” These types of clauses are generally introduced by conjunctions like ὅτι or ἐπεί. They can be formed by participles and infinitives as well (Porter, Idioms, 237).

For example:

Jn 14:19 ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε
because I live you shall also live.
Temporal Clauses

There are several ways to form clauses that indicate events taking place before, while, or after the time of the main verb (Dana and Mantey, Manual Grammar, 280–82):

1. With an indicative verb introduced by various prepositions and particles:

- when ὀτε, ἐπειδή, ὡς
- whenever ὄταν
- while ἐως, ἀχρι, οὖ
- until ἐως, ἀχρι
- since ὡς, οὖ

起了 ἐπέλεγεν ὅ Ἐρώτευσε τούς λόγους τούτους, μετήρεν.
When Jesus had finished these words, he departed (Mat. 19:1).

2. With the subjunctive and various prepositions or particles:

- whenever ὄταν, ἐπάν
- until ἐως, ἀχρι, μέχρι

起了 ἐκεῖ μένετε ἐως ἃν ἐξέλθητε ἐκεῖθεν.
Remain there [in that place] until you leave there (Mk. 6:10).

3. With πρὶν + infinitive indicating “before”:

εἰρήκα ὑμῖν πρὶν γενέσθαι.
I have told you before it comes to pass (Jn. 14:29).

4. With a participle:

καὶ ἐξελθὼν εἶδεν πολὺν ὀχλον.
And when he came forth, he saw the great crowd (Mat. 14:14).

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>δύο</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δώδεκα</td>
<td>twelve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εἷς, μία, ἕν</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἑκάτων</td>
<td>one hundred</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐπτά</td>
<td>seven</td>
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<tr>
<td>μηδεῖς, μηδεμία, μηδέν</td>
<td>no, no one</td>
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<td>three</td>
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<td>χιλιάς, -άδος, ἡ</td>
<td>thousand</td>
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</tbody>
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