

The Language Components

As with any language, Koine Greek contains letters, words, grammar, and syntactical rules which govern its operation.

The Koine Greek alphabet contains 24 characters which have phonetic expressions similar to those found in English. A Koine Greek alphabet and pronunciation guide is provided in the Appendix of this writing.

The words of Koine Greek range from simple to extremely complex. In a single Koine word one may say a paragraph of information. Koine Greek words may contain a root word, a suffix, a prefix, a prepositional compound, a double compound and various augments. With each additional component the word gets more complex and more meaningful.

Grammar is utilized in order to make sense of it all. When one follows the grammar he is able to accurately understand the meaning of words and thus sentences. This can be both an art form and a nuisance. Parts of speech are identified in this grammatical category.

Syntactical rules govern the relationship between words and sentences to other words and sentences. Proper syntax keeps the words and grammar in their proper order. Syntax is the framework which the words and sentences must fit into in order to make sense. Without syntax there is no order to the language.

The primary focus of the Grammatical and Morphological portion of Tools for Biblical Studies is on teaching the grammar's effects upon the words of Scripture. In doing so, the Bible student is able to understand the meaning of the New Testament more clearly and accurately. The exact detail of Koine Greek allows for the Bible student to understand in exact detail the Word of God. However, the rules of grammar and the rules of syntax must be properly maintained in order for this objective to be accomplished.

Verbs

Koine Greek verbs express action and states of existence. It is through verbs that Koine Greek expresses the movement or state of an individual or object. Verbs have 5 basic aspects of grammar in Koine Greek:

1. Tense: Identifies the type of action.
2. Voice: Identifies the relationship of the subject of the verb to the action.
3. Mood: Identifies the setting of the verb in one of four specific settings.
4. Person: Identifies the relationship of the speaker to the subject of the verb.
5. Number: Identifies the number of subjects relating to the verb.

The verb is an amazing part of Koine Greek. Through the verb the Christian is able to identify who is doing the action, to whom the action is being accomplished, how the action occurred, whether the action is ongoing or completed, and the person or object which is the subject of the verb.

One verb provides a plethora of information. Accurately understanding the verb's grammar allows the Bible student to understand a great deal of truth from God's Word.

Nouns

Nouns express the people, places, things, and beings in Koine Greek. Through the noun subjects and objects are identified. Nouns have three basic aspects of grammar in Koine Greek:

1. Case: Identifies the way the noun is used.
2. Number: Identifies the number in relationship to the noun (Singular/Plural)
3. Gender: Identifies how the noun relates to the verb and other nouns.

Adjectives

The way Koine Greek ascribes characteristics or attributes to nouns is by using an adjective to modify the noun. The adjective's grammar matches the grammar of the noun which it modifies. Adjectives have the same 3 basic aspects of grammar that nouns do:

1. Case
2. Number
3. Gender

Adverbs

The primary function of adverbs in Koine Greek is to modify verbs. Adverbs can, however, modify adjectives or other adverbs. Primarily, though, an adverb modifies the way in which a verb is used. While an adjective describes a noun, an adverb modifies the way the verb is used. Adverbs assist in understanding with better clarity the action or state of existence of the verb's subject. Adverbs have various aspects of grammar which are understood through syntax and word definitions. There are three basic types of adverbs:

1. Adverbs of Time: Describes the time when the action took place.
2. Adverbs of Place: Describes the place wherein the action occurred.
3. Adverbs of Manner: Describes the manner in which the action occurred.

Participles

Koine Greek uses participles in both adjectival and adverbial roles as a hybrid between an adjective and a verb. Participles possess the case, gender, and number aspects of adjective grammar and the voice and tense aspects of verb grammar. The case, gender, and number of the participle must match the case, gender, and number of the noun to which it relates. Often the noun will be implied rather than supplied by Koine Greek. Thus participles have:

1. Case
2. Gender
3. Number
4. Tense
5. Voice

The case, gender, and number of the participle must match the case, gender, and number of the noun to which it relates.

Prepositions

Prepositions are the unsung heroes of Koine Greek. They assist in carrying out the case function of the noun. Prepositions primarily identify the “how” and “where” of the noun case in relationship to other words in the sentence. Prepositions pick up the case of the noun to which they relate.

Conditional “If’s”

Koine Greek, like English, makes conditional statements. These conditional statements begin with the word “If” and identify four different classes of conditional statements:

1. First Class: If, and it is the case
2. Second Class: If, and it is not the case
3. Third Class: If, maybe it is the case, maybe it isn’t the case
4. Fourth Class: If, and I wish it is the case but it is not

Conditional “If” statements create a statement that possesses a condition (*If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ then you will be saved.*) The condition which must be met is called the protasis. The result of the condition being met is called the apodosis.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that join together different constructs. A construct is a phrase, clause, statement, or any words that are syntactically joined together. Conjunctions have a number of aspects of grammar including:

1. Connective: Joins two constructs together with equivalent emphasis.
2. Logical: Joins two constructs together in a logical relationship.
3. Causal: Joins two constructs by identifying the cause of the main construct.

Verbs

The verb of Koine Greek expresses action or state of existence. It accomplishes this through five parts of speech which provide many aspects of information regarding the verb. Verbs have:

1. Tense
2. Voice
3. Mood
4. Person
5. Number

The subject of the verb is inherent within the verb. This is something which the English lacks. From the verb alone the Koine Greek student can identify who it is that is being referred to by the verb, and thus the subject of the verb.

Tense

In English, tense identifies when an action occurs (past, present, future). However, its primary function in Koine Greek is to define the type of action which occurred (progressive or punctiliar).

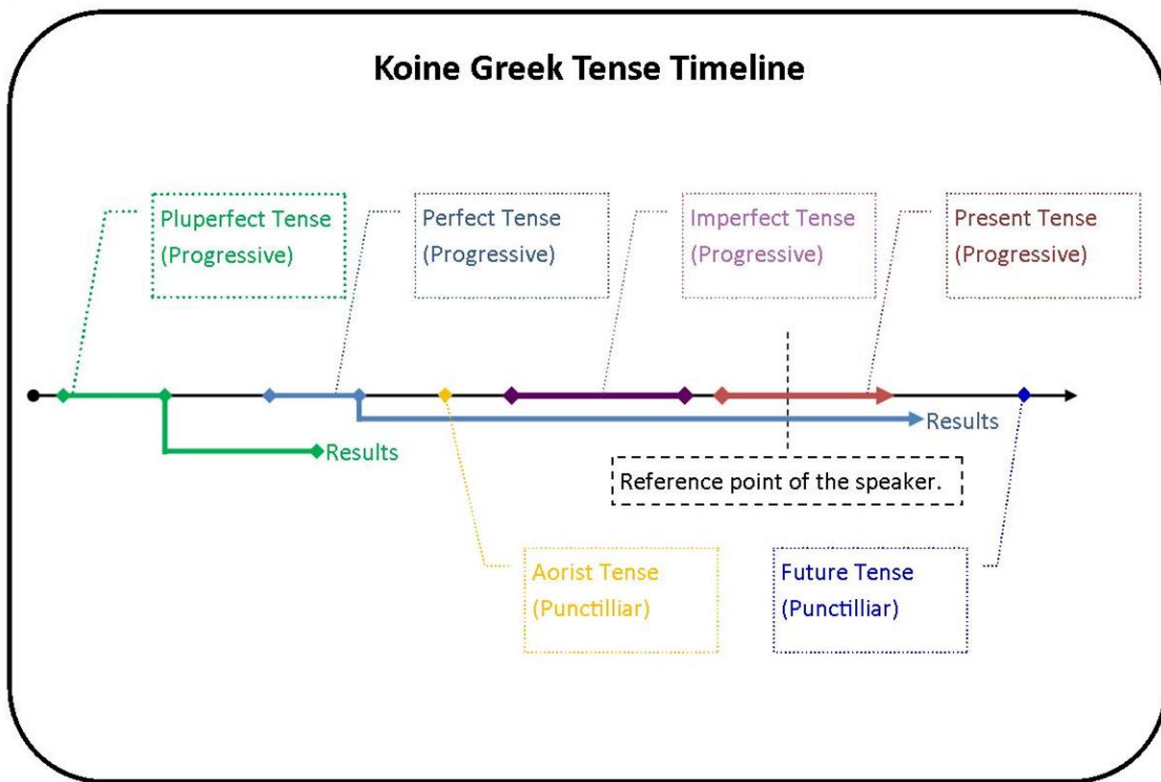
Progressive action is action which is in motion. That is, progressive action is action which was continuous, is continuous, or will be continuous.

Punctiliar action is action which is not in motion. It is by nature a point in time, a snapshot on a timeline.

There are six basic tenses in Koine Greek:

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| 1. Present: | Identifies a continuous type of action. |
| 2. Perfect: | Identifies a completed action in the past which produced results that continue on after the action has been completed. |
| 3. Imperfect: | Identifies a continuous action in the past. |
| 4. Aorist: | Identifies action which occurred in a point in time. |
| 5. Future: | Identifies an action which will occur at a point in time in the future. |
| 6. Pluperfect: | Identifies a completed action in the past which produced results that continued but then stopped in the past. |

The focus of tense is on the type of action primarily, while the time of the action in relationship to the speaker is the secondary concern.



Voice

The use of voice in Koine Greek is to identify how the subject relates to the action. There are three basic voices:

1. Active Voice: Identifies that the subject performs the action.
2. Middle Voice: Identifies that the subject participates in the action and is affected by the action.
3. Passive Voice: Identifies that the subject is acted upon. The subject does not produce the action, but rather the action is done to or upon the subject by an outside party.

Mood

Mood identifies the setting of the action. There are four moods of Koine Greek:

1. Indicative Mood: Identifies an action which is a part of reality.
2. Imperative Mood: Identifies an action which is commanded.
3. Optative Mood: Identifies an action which is desired.
4. Subjunctive Mood: Identifies an action which is possible.

The most frequently utilized mood by the writers of Scripture is the indicative mood.

Person

The person aspect of the verb identifies the relationship of the subject to the speaker. There are three aspects to the person of the verb:

1. First Person: Identifies the speaker or a group of people of which the speaker is a member.
2. Second Person: Identifies the person or group to whom the speaker is speaking.
3. Third Person: Identifies the person or group of whom the speaker is referring.

The person aspect of the verb combines with the number aspect in order to identify the singular or plural attributes of the first, second, or third person.

Number

The use of number in Koine Greek is similar to that of the number in English. Number identifies that the subject is either:

1. Singular: There is only one individual referred to as the subject.
2. Plural: There is more than one individual referred to as the subject.

Person & Number Chart

In that the person and number aspects of Koine Greek work together to reveal information about the subject a chart has been developed which identifies the effect of person and number to the verb.

	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	I	We, Us
2 nd Person	You	You All/Y'all
3 rd Person	He, She, It	They, Them

Verbs provide a great amount of information within them and allow for precise insights into the actions of the subject. From the Koine Greek verb the Bible student is able to create an entire sentence containing a paragraph or more of information.

Nouns

Without nouns languages would have no real substance. The noun represents the person, place, thing, or being which is identified in the sentence. Nouns have three aspects of grammar: case, gender, and number.

Case

The case of the noun identifies the way the noun is used in the sentence. Nouns can be subjects, direct objects, or indirect objects. They can also be the possession of a person or being, be the source from which something came, be the location of something, or be the instrument used to accomplish something. There are 8 cases in Koine Greek, but there are only 5 inflected forms. As a result, most modern grammars identify that there are 5 cases, but allow that there are 8 functions of the case aspect. The 8 cases are:

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| 1. Nominative Case: | Identifies the subject of the sentence. |
| 2. Vocative Case: | Identifies the audience being addressed by the sentence. |
| 3. Accusative Case: | Identifies limits and boundaries around the noun for the purpose of distinguishing the limitations of the verb upon the noun. Also identifies the direct object of the verb to which it relates. |
| 4. Dative Case: | Identifies reception and can identify advantage or disadvantage to the recipient. Also identifies the indirect object of the verb to which it relates. |
| 5. Locative Case: | Identifies the location in which the verb to which it relates occurs. |
| 6. Instrumental Case: | Identifies the instrumentality of the noun in relationship to the verb to which it relates. The distinction is that the noun is the instrument through which the verb was accomplished. |
| 7. Genitive Case: | Identifies possession or ownership through description. |
| 8. Ablative Case: | Identifies the source from which something came. |

The case has a variety of functions and each case possesses its own set of sub-functions. The Bible student should keep in mind that a little bit of Greek is dangerous so as not to fall victim to a presumptive conclusion.

Number

Number in the Koine Greek noun functions the same as the number in the verb. It identifies whether the noun is one person, place, thing, or being or whether the noun is more than one person, place, thing, or being.

1. Singular: Identifies one person, place, thing, or being.
2. Plural: Identifies more than one person, place, thing, or being.

A plural noun may represent two persons, places, things, or beings, or it may represent two hundred. Context dictates the total amount and often times the amount is indefinite.

Gender

In modern languages gender represents the biological makeup of a noun. However, in Koine Greek the gender identified the role of the noun in relationship to action. There are three genders in Koine Greek:

1. Masculine Gender: Identifies an initiator of action or a thing which is based upon initiation.
2. Feminine Gender: Identifies a responder to action or a thing which is based upon response.
3. Neuter Gender: Identifies an instrument used to accomplish an action.

The following chart will assist the Bible student in understanding which application applies in translating a noun:

	A Person or Being Noun	A Place or Thing Noun
Masculine Gender	An Initiator	Based on Initiation
Feminine Gender	A Responder	Based on Response
Neuter Gender	A Tool or Instrument Used to Accomplish Something	A Tool or Instrument Used to Accomplish Something

Grammatical instruction about the role of gender in Koine Greek is nearly completely decayed in today's seminaries and Greek Grammars. This loss is a tragic loss to those studying the language from such institutions. The information contained within the gender of the noun reveals phenomenal insight into the relationships of nouns and subjects in the pages of Scripture. It should also be noted that current research is underway to attempt to rebuild this decay through scholarly resources that are necessary to provide foundation to the impact of grammatical gender upon its nouns and adjectives.

Adjectives

Adjectives ascribe qualities or characteristics to the nouns which they modify. The noun which is modified is identified by matching the case, number, and gender of the noun to the case, number, and gender of the adjective. Koine Greek demands that the case, number, and gender of the adjective match the noun which it modifies.

There are three uses of the adjective:

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| 1. Attributive: | Attributes a quality to describe the noun. |
| 2. Predicative: | Declares an assertion about the noun. |
| 3. Substantive: | Emphasizes the quality of a noun by acting as a noun. |

Examples:

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| 1. Attributive: | ο | αγαθος | λογος |
| | (ha | ah-gah-thos | lo-gos) |
| | The | good | word |

Result: The good word.

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|-----------------|--------------|-----|---------|
| 2. Predicative: | αγαθος | ο | λογος |
| | (ah-gah-thos | ha | lo-gos) |
| | Word | the | good |

Result: The word is good.

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| 3. Substantive: | ο | αγαθος |
| | (ha | ah-gah-thos) |
| | The | good |

Result: The good (person, place, thing, or being which is determined by context).

Adverbs

The adverb of Koine Greek is primarily used to modify a verb, although it can modify other adverbs or adjectives in context specific situations. Adverbs describe the time, place, or manner in which a verb occurred.

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|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Adverbs of Time: | Describes the time when the action took place. |
| 2. Adverbs of Place: | Describes the place wherein the action occurred. |
| 3. Adverbs of Manner: | Describes the manner in which the action occurred. |

They also have a degree component which identifies the extent in which the adverb is used to modify the verb. There are four basic degrees:

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| 1. Positive Degree: | States a simple characteristic about the verb. |
| 2. Negative Degree: | States a characteristic of negation about the verb. |
| 3. Comparative Degree: | States a characteristic of comparison about the verb. |
| 4. Superlative Degree: | States an ultimate characteristic about the verb. |

Adverbs can also be used as prefixes for Koine Greek words. There are five basic rules to remember when handling adverbs in Koine Greek:

1. An adverb usually, but not always, modifies the verb closest to it in the construct.
2. Adverbs of time and manner usually, but not always, precede the verbs they modify.
3. Adverbs of place usually, but do not always, follow the verbs they modify.
4. Adverbs can modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.
5. Adverbs can function as a noun (substantively).

Participles

Of great benefit to the Bible student are Koine Greek participles. The Koine Greek participle is a verb and adjective hybrid. It is comprised of portions of verb and adjective aspects of grammar. The Koine Greek participle is used to describe a noun by action.

Participles are used in two ways:

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| 1. Verbal Usage: | Emphasizes the action and identifies a principle or rule of action (there are 10 different types of verbal participles). |
| 2. Adjectival Usage: | Emphasizes the quality described by the action and shows a characteristic of a person or thing (there are 3 different types of adjectival participles), and has a principle associated with it. |

The participle possesses two of the five verbal aspects of grammar in form and meaning (tense and voice). All of the adjective aspects of grammar are possessed by the participle (case, number, and gender).

When a participle is used there is a principle of operation or a rule of action being identified.

When an adjectival participle is used there is one of three characteristics (Attributive, Predicative, Substantive) being described by the action. The adjectival participle must match in case, number, and gender to the subject.

Participles also identify when the action of the participle occurs in relationship to the main verb. There are three possibilities available:

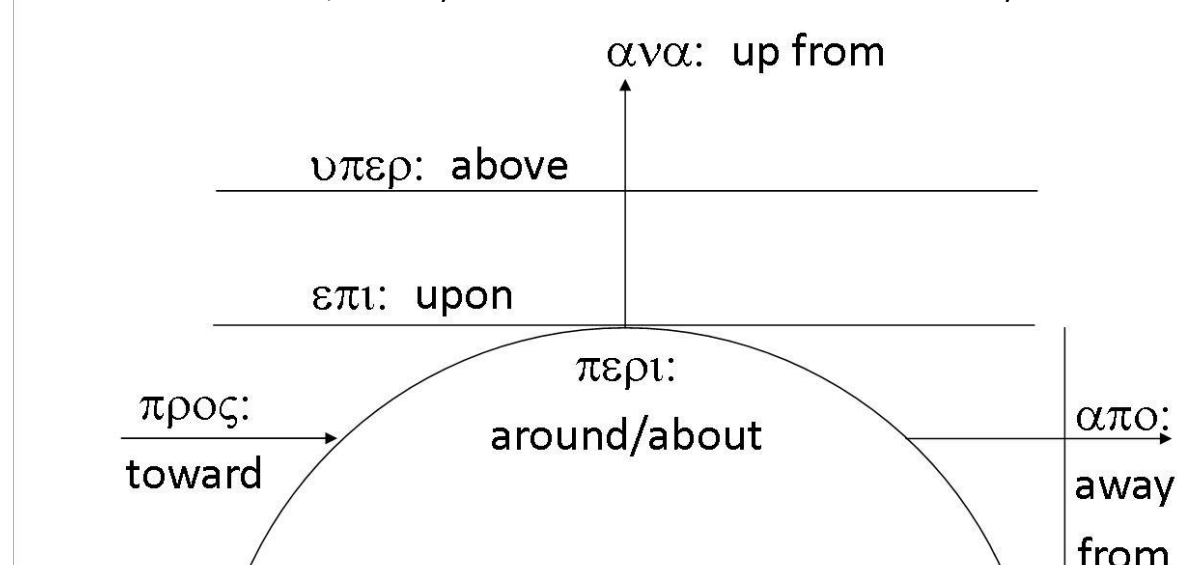
1. Antecedent: Prior to the action of the main verb (aorist and perfect tense participles).
2. Simultaneous: At the same time as the action of the main verb (present tense participles).
3. Subsequent: At a time following the action of the main verb (future tense participles).

Determining whether the participle is adjectival or verbal depends on the presence of the definite article ο (ha).

When the article is present the participle is adjectival. When the article is not present the participle is verbal in usage.

Prepositions

Within prepositions Koine Greek hides precious gems of discovery concerning the location and manner in which the case function of the noun is carried out. Prepositions identify how the case of the noun functions in relationship to the other words in the sentence. Prepositions do not have a case of their own, but they assume the case of the noun to which they relate.



Conditional Statements

Koine Greek uses four types of statements utilizing the conditional word “if.” Each usage is distinct and produces a distinct understanding of the text. Conditional “if” statements are used to introduce a condition by the speaker. The condition yields an effect upon being met. Linguistically conditional types of statements are broken down into two parts:

1. Protasis: The condition demanding to be met.
2. Apodosis: The result of meeting the condition.

In English these are known as “If/Then” statements. The “if” introduces the condition, the protasis, while the “then” introduces the result of that condition being met, the apodosis.

Koine Greek utilizes four classes of Protasis/Apodosis statements:

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Dr. Todd Bounds

1. First Class: If, and it is the case
2. Second Class: If, and it is not the case
3. Third Class: If, maybe it is or maybe it is not the case
4. Fourth Class: If, and I wish it were the case but it's not

Each of these conditional statements makes an assertion about the condition yielding valuable insight into the reality of that condition being met.

The first, second, and fourth class conditional “if” statements utilize the same Greek word εἰ (pronounced like the “ei” in “height”). The third class conditional “if” statement utilizes the word εἰν (een) which makes the third class conditional “if” statement easy to identify. The Bible student must use syntax to distinguish between the first, second, and fourth class conditional “if” statements. Rules of grammar govern the boundaries of each class of statement. Those rules of grammar must be ascertained by studying the language from grammar books.