

Greek Syntax Notes: Introduction

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These notes are intended to assist those wishing to read the Greek New Testament using *The UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition*. The footnotes in the *Reader's Edition* provide contextual glosses for words occurring less than 30 times, as well as parsing of irregular forms. My notes pick up where the *Reader's Edition* leaves off. My goal is to provide concise notes enabling you to make sense of the text at the syntactical level. In so doing, I have sought to streamline your experience of reading the Greek New Testament by eliminating the need to stop and look up intermediate, advanced, or unusual grammatical features. If you have the *Reader's Edition* and these notes, in theory you should be able to read large chunks of text at a time. The justification for these notes is that the best way to improve your Greek is to read the text “continuously and synthetically” with minimal interruption (as Philip H. Towner says in the Preface to the *Reader's Edition*).

These notes assume that you have had the standard year of introductory New Testament Greek or the equivalent. Although I do provide some additional lexical information and parsing beyond that found in the footnotes of the *Reader's Edition*, vocabulary and parsing are not my focus here. I aim primarily to provide concise explanations of syntactical features that are not immediately obvious. Such features may be something as simple as the genitive absolute, which occurs frequently in the Greek New Testament. When dealing with common constructions of this sort, I only note them for the first several occurrences and assume that you will be able to spot them on your own after that. In other instances I provide suggested translations of difficult phrases and clauses. In addition, it is surprising how the various particles, prepositions, and common utility words like *καί* are used in unusual ways. Rather than spending ten or fifteen minutes looking up such non-standard usages in a lexicon or grammar, I have done that for you and provided a citation for further study.

Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations for the reference works that I cite in my notes. If you choose to have any of the following tools at hand as you read, I would recommend BDAG and BDF as these are the ones I cite most often. However, none of these tools is strictly necessary if your goal is simply to get on with the task of reading the Greek New Testament.

- BDAG Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Third Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- BDF Blass, Debrunner, and Funk. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Moule Moule, C. F. D. *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- Wallace Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.