

Chapter 17

Prepositions - Part 1

17.1 Prepositions

Prepositions tell us the relation between two words - they generally tell us where something is or takes place.

e.g. "The dog is **in** the street.", "John came **before** Jesus.", "I went **out**.", "He looked **at** me."

Greek uses prepositions very frequently, either as stand-alone words, or as prefixes to other words, to show direction, etc.

e.g. ἄγω - I lead, συνάγω - I gather together, εἰσάγω - I lead in(to), ὑπάγω - I go away

Greek prepositions are linked to particular grammatical cases.

For example,

Prepositions which imply "**motion towards**" something usually "take" (go with) the **Accusative**.

Prepositions which imply "**motion away from**" something usually take the **Genitive**.

Prepositions which imply "**something at rest**" usually take the **Dative**.

e.g. εἰς τὸν οἶκον - into the house, ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου - out of the house, ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ - in the house

The same general relations are found in Latin, German, and other inflected Indo-European languages.

Some prepositions can take more than one case, and their meaning may vary accordingly.

At first sight the dictionary and vocabulary lists can look intimidating and confusing. Don't worry about them, just keep on reading the Greek New Testament, and you will begin to see how the prepositions fit in the rest of the sentence.

17.2 "he/she/it went/came" - ἦλθεν

"we went/came" - ἦλθομεν

At this point it will be useful to learn how to say that someone came or went (a simple past tense).

In section 13.3 we met the simple past εἶπεν - "**he said**", and εἶπομεν - "**we said**".

Now we meet ἦλθεν - "**he came/went**", and ἦλθομεν - "**we came/went**"

English uses two verbs, "I come" and "I go", where Greek only uses one. The English "I come" implies movement towards an observer; "I go" implies movement away from an observer. The movement is the same in both cases, the only thing that changes is the position of the observer, so Greek logically uses the same verb. The rest of the sentence will indicate whether one should translate it as "come" or "go".

Several of the prepositions combine with verbs to form verbs which show the direction of movement.

e.g. προσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν οἶκον.	She/he/it came/went towards the house.
εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον.	She/he/it came/went into the house.
ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου.	She/he/it came/went out of the house.
ἀπήλθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου.	She/he/it came/went away from the house.

Note : Greek is not consistent in its use of compound verbs - you may find either a compound or the simpler ἦλθ- form in a sentence with a preposition.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ὁ Πέτρος προσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. | Peter came/went to(wards) Jesus. |
| 2. αὐτὴ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ. | She entered into Jerusalem. |
| 3. ἀπήλθομεν ἀπὸ τῶν Φαρισαίων. | We went away from the Pharisees. |
| 4. αὐτὸς ἦλθεν καὶ εἶπεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Ῥαββί! | He came and said to Jesus, "Rabbi!" |
| 5. εἰσῆλθομεν εἰς τὸν ἀγρόν. | We came into the field. |
| 6. εἰσῆλθεν ὁ γεωργὸς εἰς τὸν ἀγρόν ; | Did the farmer go into the field? |
| 7. ὁ Λουκᾶς ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ. | Luke went out of (left) the temple. |
| 8. ὁ νυμφίος ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν οἶκον. | The bridegroom went towards the house. |
| 9. ὁ δέσμιος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. | The prisoner went into the prison. |
| 10. ἐξῆλθομεν ἐκ τῆς κώμης. | We went out of (left) the village. |

17.3 Preposition which takes the Accusative : εἰς - into

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. τὸ παιδίον ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν ἀγρόν. | The child went into the field. |
| 2. ἦλθομεν εἰς τὴν κώμην. | We went into the village. |
| 3. ὁ Στέφανος βλέπει εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. | Stephen looks into heaven. |
| 4. εἰσῆλθεν ὁ Ἰωάννης εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν ; | Did John enter into the synagogue? |
| 5. Οὐ. ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. | No. He went into the desert. |
| 6. τὸ τέκνον βάλλει λίθους εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. | The child is throwing stones into the sea. |
| 7. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. | Jesus came (in)to Galilee. |
| 8. ἦλθομεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ; | Did we go into Judea? |
| 9. Ναί. ἦλθομεν εἰς τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ. | Yes. We went into Jerusalem. |
| 10. οὐκ ἦλθεν εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς
ἀλλ' εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν. | He did not go into the fields
but into the house. |

17.4 Prepositions which take the Genitive :

ἀπό - away from, ἐκ - out of, πρό - in front of

ἀπό becomes ἀπ' when followed by a vowel with a smooth breathing, and ἀφ' when followed by a vowel with a rough breathing.

In compound words, ἐκ- becomes ἐξ- if followed by a vowel.

πρό never drops its vowel.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ὁ κύριος ἀποστέλλει ἡμᾶς
ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἱερουσαλήμ. | The Lord sends us
(away) from Jerusalem. |
| 2. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπῆλθεν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας
καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. | Jesus went away from Judea
and entered (into) Galilee. |
| 3. ὁ μαθητὴς ἦλθεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς Ἰσραήλ. | The disciple went out of the land of Israel. |
| 4. ἐξῆλθομεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ ἀπῆλθομεν
ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἱερουσαλήμ. | We came out of the temple and went away
from Jerusalem. |
| 5. ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου
πρὸ προσώπου σου. | I am sending my messenger
before your face. (Matt. 11:10) |
| 6. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα
πρὸ τοῦ Πάσχα. | Jesus came to Jerusalem
before the Passover. |
| 7. ὁ Πέτρος ἀπόστολος ἦν πρὸ τοῦ Παύλου. | Peter was an apostle before Paul. |
| 8. ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ; | Did Jesus go away from Judea? |
| 9. Ναί. αὐτὸς ἀπῆλθεν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἱεροσόλυμα
καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. | Yes. He went away from Jerusalem
and entered into Galilee. |
| 10. ἐξῆλθεν ἡ χήρα ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου
καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐαὶ μοι. | The widow went out of the house
and said "Woe is me (to me)." |

17.5 Prepositions which take the Dative : ἐν - in, σὺν - with

When σὺν forms compounds, the ν may drop out or change to a μ, γ or λ depending on the following letter.

ζητέω - I seek, συζητέω - I argue, discuss	καλέω - I call, συγκαλέω - I call together
μαθητής - disciple, συμμαθητής - fellow-disciple	εἰμί - I am, σύνειμι - I am present with
λαμβάνω - I get, receive, συλλαμβάνω - I seize, arrest	ἐσθίω - I eat, συνεσθίω - I eat with

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ὁ μαθητὴς ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἦν ; | Was the disciple in Jerusalem? |
| 2. Ναί. αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἦν
σὺν τοῖς συμμαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ. | Yes. He was in the temple
with his fellow-disciples. |

3. ὁ δέσμιος ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ ἐστίν.	The prisoner is in the prison.
4. τὸ τέκνον ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐστὶν σὺν τῷ διδασκάλῳ αὐτοῦ.	The child is in the house with his teacher.
5. ὁ προφήτης σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐστίν.	The prophet is in the desert with his disciples.
6. ὁ Πέτρος συγκαλεῖ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον καὶ ὅτε αὐτοὶ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σύνεισιν σὺν αὐτῷ αὐτὸς διδάσκει αὐτούς.	Peter calls the brothers together into the house, and when they are together with him in the house he teaches them.
7. ὁ Μάρκος οὐ συνῆλθεν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ εἰς τὸ ἔργον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.	Mark did not accompany Paul in(to) the work of the Gospel.
8. ἡ Μάρθα καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαὶ σὺν αὐτῇ λέγουσιν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους.	Martha and the sisters with her talk to/with the apostles.
9. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.	Jesus went out of the Temple with his disciples.
10. ὁ χιλίαρχος πιστεύει τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ.	The officer believes in the Lord, with his whole household.

17.6 Prepositions which take several cases

ἀνά, διά, ἐπί, κατά, μετά, παρά, περί, πρό, πρός, ὑπέρ, ὑπό

For a start, learn just one meaning for each preposition, and increase the range of meanings as you read more and gain more experience by reading them in context.

ἀνά (upwards) and **κατά** (downwards) form a pair. The way to remember which is which is ἀνά and "up" both begin with a vowel. **κατά** and "down" both begin with a consonant. ἀνά and "up" are shorter than **κατά** and "down".

ὑπό (under) and **ὑπέρ** (above) form a pair. The way to remember which is which a **hyp**odermic needle goes "under" the skin, a **hyper**active child is swinging from the light fixtures.

διά, ἐπί, κατά, μετά, παρά and **ὑπό** drop their terminal vowel if followed by a vowel.

If followed by a vowel with a rough breathing, **κατά** and **μετά** become **καθ'** and **μεθ'** respectively, **ἐπί** and **ὑπό** become **ἐφ'** and **ὑφ'** respectively.

περί and **πρό** always keep their vowels.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily.

The phrases in bold type are common phrases or idioms which you should learn.

1. ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τὴν ἀλήθειαν, διὰ τοῦτο οἱ Φαρισαῖοι οὐκ ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.	Jesus speaks the truth, because of this , the Pharisees do not love him.
2. διήλθομεν διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ .	We went through the temple .
3. ὁ ἄγγελος βάλλει τὸν διάβολον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν .	The angel throws the devil onto the earth .
4. ὁ Ἰωάννης βλέπει τὸν κύριον ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ .	John sees the Lord upon the throne .
5. ἦλθεν ἐπὶ (τοῦ χρόνου) τοῦ θερισμοῦ.	He came at the time of the harvest.
6. ἀναγινώσκει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ τὸν Μάρκον .	He is reading the Gospel according to Mark .
7. οἱ Φαρισαῖοι λαμβάνουσιν συμβούλιον κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ .	The Pharisees get (make) a plan/plot against Jesus .
8. ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραλαμβάνει τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν εἰς Καφαρναούμ.	Jesus takes his disciples along with him privately to Capernaum.
9. ὁ Λουκᾶς ἦλθεν καθ' ἡμέραν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν.	Luke went (in)to the temple daily .
10. μετὰ ταῦτα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.	After these things , Jesus went into Galilee.

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| 11. τὸ παιδίον ἦλθεν μετ' αὐτοῦ. | The child went with him . |
| 12. ὁ Ἰησοῦς περιπατεῖ παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν. | Jesus is walking beside the sea . |
| 13. ὁ Ἰωάννης ἦν ἄνθρωπος παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ. | John was a man from God . |
| 14. αὐτοὶ ἦσαν παρὰ τῷ Πέτρῳ. | They were with Peter . |
| 15. ὁ νυμφίος ἦλθεν
περὶ τὴν τρίτην ὥραν. | The bridegroom came
at about the third hour . |
| 16. ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου. | Jesus speaks about John to the crowds. |
| 17. ὁ Ἰωάννης βλέπει τοὺς ἀγγέλους
περὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θεοῦ. | John sees the angels
around the throne of God. |
| 18. ὁ ἁμαρτολὸς ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. | The sinner went to(wards) Jesus . |
| 19. ἡ Μαρία εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν, Ῥαββί. | Mary said to him , "Rabbi!" |
| 20. ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν. | The Word was with God. (<i>John 1:1b</i>) |
| 21. οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητὴς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον
οὐδὲ δοῦλος ὑπὲρ τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ. | A disciple is not above (his) teacher ,
nor a slave above his master. (<i>Matt. 10:24</i>) |
| 22. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖ ταῦτα τὰ ἔργα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. | Jesus does these works on our behalf . |
| 23. οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον. | You are not under the Law. (<i>Gal. 5:18</i>) |

The main use of ὑπό is with passive verbs, to show the agent who acts upon the subject.

We will meet the Passive later. For now, we will use "he is being baptized" = βαπτίζεται.

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| 24. ὁ Ἰησοῦς βαπτίζεται ὑπο τοῦ Ἰωάννου. | Jesus is being baptized by John . |
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There are no Sentences for reading and translation, because you need to spend extra time learning the prepositions and their idioms.

17.7 Writing Practice

A. Review

Type with a word-processor and print out Matthew 6:9b-13 in a large font size (16-24 pt).

Keep the print-out to read aloud at the start of each lesson or study session.

B. : Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud (John 1:1)

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,

In (the) beginning was the Word

17.8 New Testament Passages for reading and translation

Matt. 3:13, 2 Corinth. 1:1-2, Gal. 1:1-5, Philemon 1-3

In your Greek New Testament, read the passages aloud several times until you can read them without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the translation helps to translate them.

παραγίνεται	(he) came	(from παραγίνομαι - I come, arrive, appear, come beside)
(τοῦ) βαπτισθῆναι	(in order) to be baptized	
θελήματος	will	(Gen. of τὸ θέλημα - will)
τῇ οὓσῃ	to the one being	(a feminine present participle of εἶμί, describing τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ)
πᾶσιν	to everyone	(Dat. plural of πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν - each, every)
οἷσιν	being	(Dat. plural participle of εἶμί)
χάρις	grace	(Nom. of ἡ χάρις - grace)
πατρός	father	(Gen. of ὁ πατήρ - father)
ἐγείραντος	the one having raised = the one who raised	(a Gen. participle of ἐγείρω - I raise)
πάντες	all, everyone	(Nom. masc. plural of πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν - each, every)
δόντος	having given	(a Gen. participle of δίδωμι - I give)
ὅπως	so that, in order that	
εξέληται	he might choose, select	(a Subjunctive of ἐκλέγομαι - I choose, select)
αἰῶνος	age, eternity	(Gen. of ὁ αἰών - age)
ἐνεστώτος	present, imminent	(Gen. participle of ἐνίστημι - to be impending, present)

συνεργῶ	fellow-worker	(<i>Dat. of ὁ συνεργός</i>)
συστρατιώτη	fellow-soldier	(<i>Dat. of ὁ συστρατιώτης</i>)

17.9 Vocabulary to learn

ὁ θερισμός	harvest	
τὸ συμβούλιον	plan, plot	(ἡ βουλή - council, plan)

Prepositions

	Accusative	Genitive	Dative
ἀνά	up, up onto, over, again	-	-
ἀπό ¹	-	away from	-
διὰ ²	because of, on account of	through, by means of	-
εἰς	into	-	-
ἐκ	-	out of, out from	-
ἐν	-	-	in, on
ἐπί ³	on, upon, against, concerning	in the time of, on, upon, over	on, upon, at, in, concerning
κατά ⁴	according to, just as	down, against	-
μετά	after, behind	with, in company with	-
παρά ⁵	beside, alongside	from, from beside	with, beside
περί ⁶	around, about	about, concerning	-
πρό	-	before (time or place)	-
πρός ⁷	toward, to, so that, with	for, for the sake of	at, on, near
σύν	-	-	with, along with
ὑπέρ ⁸	above, beyond	for, on behalf of	-
ὑπό ⁹	under, below	by, by means of	-

1. an apostate is someone who has fallen away from the faith.
2. one can see through diaphanous material
3. ἐπὶ τοῦ χρόνου τοῦ . . . = "at the time of" often omits "χρόνου" and writes "ἐπὶ τοῦ . . ."
4. κατά as a prefix has the sense of "down"
5. parallel lines run alongside one another
6. περί - hence the "perimeter" of a circle
7. the most common use of πρὸς in the New Testament is πρὸς + Acc.
 πρὸς + Genitive is used once in the New Testament, Acts 27:34
 πρὸς + Dative is used 5 times in the New Testament
8. ὑπέρ may be used as an adverb = even more
9. a hypodermic needle goes under the skin