

## Introduction to Biblical Greek

### **Acts 2:5 ff. Pentecost/Shavuot on Mount Zion:**

“Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred (the descent of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire), they all came together and were bewildered, because each one of them heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and marveled, saying, “What? Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that we each hear them in our own language?...We hear them in our own tongues, speaking of the mighty deeds of god!”

This miraculous event recognizes the power and correctness of translation of the words and stories of the bible, new and old. The New Testament itself was as multi-lingual as the environment of the followers of Jesus: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, reflecting the languages of the Roman Empire as a whole as described at the Pentecost on Mount Zion. So, the Holy Spirit is expressed in whatever language is needed. This understanding really began when the first five books of the Jewish bible, the Pentateuch, had been translated, supposedly by Seventy sages (hence the LXX =Septuagint) from Hebrew into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt (where people were also speaking demotic Egyptian) in the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, and read aloud to the public. When the gospels quote from the Jewish bible, they are generally relying upon this Greek version, a direct translation of the Hebrew, which, by the time of Jesus, included the whole Hebrew Bible, including the prophets, psalms, etc., in several editions and versions. In fact, the writers themselves may have known both Hebrew and Greek versions by heart! Going even further back the Greek alphabet itself was adapted from that used by the Phoenicians in the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC as they scurried back and forth in ships on their trading missions all over the Mediterranean.

The term "new testament" or "new covenant" (Hebrew בְּרִית הַדְּבָרִים *berîṭ ḥădāšâ*) first occurs in Jeremiah 31:31 (Greek LXX καινή διαθήκη *kainē diathékē*, cited in Hebrews 8:8). In this course, we will begin the study the language of this “New” covenant together with the Greek version of the “Old” covenant from which it is inseparable. Sometimes we will actually read the same verses in the Septuagint version as they re-appear in the gospel; sometimes the readings reflect the same understanding, but in different words; or stories, such as that of Noah and the ark, which are re-interpreted centuries after they were handed down. May the Spirit be with you!

### Syllabus – Course Greek A

No.	Unit Name	Unit Summary
1	<b>The Greek Alphabet</b>	Why is studying Greek essential for students of the bible, both Old and New Testament? Why were these texts, more than 200 years apart in time, written in Greek? Is it a “sacred language” or one of several languages spoken in Palestine at the time? We will learn what an “alpha-bet” is and how the Greek, Hebrew and Latin alphabets are related. Then we will start studying the <b>uncial</b> , capital forms of the Greek letters from Alpha to Omega, and how we will pronounce them in this course.
2	<b>The Greek Alphabet Continued</b>	Review of the capital letters and some additional issues of pronunciation. On the way, we look again at the opening of the Gospel of John and learn some geographical names relevant to the Bible. We study in detail the trilingual sign which Pilate affixed to the cross: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ Ο ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ, Ev. John, 19:19-20. We learn the names of the Five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch, as they appear in the Septuagint.
3	<b>The Minuscule Alphabet</b>	The cursive, or minuscule form of the letters. The “breathing marks” and a few other details of orthography and pronunciation. Reading out loud.
4	<b>Readings from the Bible in Greek</b>	Reading texts out loud, the Lord’s Prayer and the passage from Genesis describing the Seventh Day of Creation. Review, some new vocabulary.
5	<b>The Foundations of Greek Grammar</b>	Foundations of Greek grammar – the structure of the sentence. The morphology of nouns, stems + endings. Review of grammatical terms in English grammar, definitions of parts of speech.
6	<b>Characteristics of Greek Nouns; the Definite Article and the Principle of Agreement</b>	Characteristics of Greek nouns: declension of the definite article and the principle of agreement, gender number and case.
7	<b>The Adjective</b>	The adjective. Review of the definite article; the forms of the first and second declension adjective. Three different uses of the adjective: attributive, predicate and substantive. The

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		importance of word order in the Greek sentence.
8	<b>The Good Shepherd</b>	Review and reading. The common depiction of Jesus as the “Good Shepherd”, in the previous text taken from John 10. Images and texts about the Good Shepherd in the pagan and Jewish traditions. Some new vocabulary, but no new grammar.
9	<b>The Second Declension Noun &amp; Prepositional Phrases</b>	The second declension noun and prepositional phrases. Two classes of nouns in the second declension, masculine and neuter. Discussion of the use of prepositional phrases and the nouns which follow the prepositions.
10	<b>The First Declension Noun</b>	The first declension noun. The three categories of the first declension feminine noun, those ending in $-\alpha$ , $-\eta$ , and the mixed type. Examples of second declension nouns which are feminine.
11	<b>Personal Pronouns</b>	Personal Pronouns: declension of first and second person pronoun. The third person pronoun is discussed separately, along with its special adjectival uses.
12	<b>Review and Reading: The Good Samaritan</b>	Reading and Review: The Good Samaritan. Review of nouns and pronouns, adding the form of masculine first declension nouns. Reading about “what are the greatest commandments” and the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke.
13	<b>The Greek Verb Introduced</b>	Introduction of the verb. The conjugation of the present, active, indicative form of the verb. The main characteristics of Greek verbs: tense, mood and voice.
14	<b>The Verb “to be”</b>	The verb “to be” in the present and past tenses. The concept of “linking”, predicate adjectives and predicate nouns (the complement).
15	<b>Voice: Middle/Passive Verbs, Deponents</b>	Voice: conjugation and use of middle/passive verbs in the present; deponents. The root of the verb and its appearance in other parts of speech.
16	<b>General Review</b>	Reading and Review: Review of definite article, first and second declension nouns and adjectives, personal pronouns, prepositional phrases, present indicative verb active and

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		middle/passive, the verb "to be". The story of the Centurion's slave from Matthew.
17	<b>The Demonstrative Pronoun/Adjective</b>	The demonstrative pronoun/adjective; compound verbs.
18	<b>Dependent and Independent Clauses; Relative Pronouns</b>	Dependent and independent clauses, relative pronouns.
19	<b>The Third-Declension Noun</b>	The third declension noun.
20	<b>Review and Reading</b>	Review and Reading. Review of the demonstrative pronoun and adjective, the relative pronouns and the forms of the third declension noun.
21	<b>Third Declension; Indefinite and Interrogative Pronouns/Adjectives</b>	Third Declension: Indefinite and Interrogative Pronouns/Adjectives.
22	<b>Imperfect Indicative Tense, Active and Middle/Passive Voice</b>	Imperfect Indicative Tense, Active and Middle/Passive Voice
23	<b>Imperfect tense continued, augment and prefix; ε- and α-contract verbs</b>	Imperfect Tense Continued, Augment and Prefix, epsilon and alpha contract verbs
24	<b>Review &amp; Reading</b>	Review and Reading; the indefinite pronoun/adjective, the imperfect tense, and the rules for contract verbs.
25	<b>The Future Tense: Active &amp; Middle</b>	The Future Tense, Active and Middle Voice
26	<b>Continuing the Future Tense</b>	Continuing the Future: consonant stems and phonetic change; future of the verb "to be"
27	<b>Prepositions up, down and around</b>	The Prepositional Phrase
28	<b>Reading and Review</b>	A review of the future tense and the use of prepositions, especially their significance in translation, and including their

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		use as the prefix in compound verbs.
29	<b>General Review and Reading</b>	General review and reading. Jesus the wondermaker – for what end?
30	<b>Final Reading: From Luke to Isaiah</b>	<p>Final Reading: From Luke to Isaiah.</p> <p>Continuation of the discussion of acts of healing, with more texts from the LXX. Review of basic forms.</p>