We dedicate this book to the glory of God
and with love to our children:

Caleb & Kara, Jordan, and Ally Mathewson
Peter and Alex & Mackenzie Emig
CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix
Abbreviations xi
Introduction xv

1. The Cases 1
2. Pronouns 35
3. Adjectives and Adverbs 57
4. The Article (ὁ, ἡ, τό) 72
5. Prepositions 89
6. The Greek Verb System 111
7. The Verb: Voice, Person, and Number 142
8. Mood 160
9. Infinitives 192
10. Participles 205
11. Clauses, Conditional Clauses, and Relative Clauses 227
12. Dependent Clauses and Conjunctions 248
13. Discourse Considerations 270

Appendix: Principal Parts of Verbs Occurring Fifty Times or More in the New Testament 291
Index of Scripture References 297
Index of Subjects 305

David L. Mathewson and Elodie Ballantine Emig, Intermediate Greek Grammar
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# Abbreviations

## General and Bibliographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>accusative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>before the Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>chap(s.)</td>
<td>chapter(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dat.</td>
<td>dative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>gen.</td>
<td>genitive case</td>
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### Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JSNTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint, Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNTC</td>
<td>Pillar New Testament Commentary</td>
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### Abbreviations

#### Old Testament

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<td>Lev.</td>
<td>Leviticus</td>
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<td>Num.</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
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<td>Nehemiah</td>
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<td>Esther</td>
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<td>Job</td>
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<td>Ps(s).</td>
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<td>Prov.</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
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<td>Eccles.</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song</td>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
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<td>Isa.</td>
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<td>Mal.</td>
<td>Malachi</td>
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#### New Testament

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<td>John</td>
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<td>Romans</td>
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<td>1–2 Cor.</td>
<td>1–2 Corinthians</td>
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<td>Galatians</td>
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<td>Philippians</td>
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<td>Colossians</td>
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<td>1–2 Thess.</td>
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<td>Hebrews</td>
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<td>Jude</td>
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<td>Rev.</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Why This Book?

1.1. We love Greek. We want our students to love Greek or, falling short of that, to be committed to using it (and Hebrew) in life and ministry. Loving a language and teaching it, however, are insufficient reasons to write a new intermediate Greek grammar. After we started this project, we became aware that Andreas Köstenberger, Benjamin Merkle, and Robert Plummer were working on *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* (B&H, 2016) and perhaps doing so for reasons similar to ours. The last substantial intermediate grammar, Dan Wallace’s *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Zondervan), was published in 1996, preceded in 1994 by Richard Young’s *Intermediate New Testament Greek* (Broadman & Holman) and followed in 1998 by Black’s much shorter offering, *It’s Still Greek to Me* (Baker). All of these were preceded by Stanley Porter’s grammar, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield, 1992), which is closest in perspective to what we have attempted to write. And while we acknowledge again our incalculable debt to all of them and the many others who have paved our way, much has shifted or changed in the world of NT Greek studies since the 1990s. The vastly increased availability of Accordance, BibleWorks, and Logos software along with modern linguistic developments and advances in specific areas of Greek grammar have necessitated some reassessments of our approach to grammar.¹ One specific area yet to be integrated sufficiently into grammars is verbal aspect theory (the exception being Porter’s work mentioned above). These advances make

¹ For some of these advances, see Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).
the time ripe for an intermediate-level grammar that integrates them. We have written this grammar to be an accessible textbook for students and professors alike but also to be useful to pastors and anyone involved in teaching the NT. In short, it is intended for all who need an intermediate-level Greek grammar that incorporates insights from some of the most recent developments in the study of NT Greek.

1.2. What are the distinctive features of this grammar? First, as already mentioned, without trying to be comprehensive we have attempted to incorporate some of the most recent linguistic insights into the study of Koine Greek. We have particularly endeavored to make accessible to students advances in the areas of verbal aspect theory, the voice system, conjunctions, as well as linguistic and discourse studies. In a number of areas, we think that we are unique in the way we have categorized or “labeled” grammatical constructions. Second, we have attempted to keep grammatical categories and labels to a minimum, focusing on the most important or the most common usages. Third, we have tried to illustrate the different grammatical points with examples taken from across the entire spectrum of NT texts. That is, where possible, we have culled illustrations of each grammatical feature from the Gospels, Acts, the Pauline Letters, the General Epistles, and Revelation to expose the student to different literary genres and the Greek styles of various authors. We have also made a point of locating fresh examples, whenever possible, that have not been used by other grammars, though some conventional examples are just too good to pass up. Fourth, we have intentionally avoided writing an exegetical grammar; however, we often include discussion of illustrative texts to demonstrate the exegetical value of the application of Greek grammar. A final feature is the use of larger chunks of text for practice. Rather than following the custom of many grammars in choosing verse-length examples isolated from their contexts, in most instances we have chosen to include larger stretches of NT text. These come at the end of the discussion of each major grammatical point, or sometimes at the end of the chapter, and are labeled “For Practice.” Our hope is that students will be encouraged to move beyond looking at isolated grammatical features to considering their function within a larger context.

Though we would be thrilled if all Bible students shared our passion for reading Scripture in the original languages, we count it a blessing to live in an age of multiple translations. We affirm that God’s words should be made available to all people in every possible language. (We acknowledge that not everyone is called to study Hebrew and Greek and that among the great cloud of witnesses are multitudes who are not.) As any of us who have ever tried to learn a foreign language know, translation involves varying degrees of interpretation. There is no one-to-one correspondence between any two
languages, and it is not always possible to bring out the fullest, most nuanced meaning of a particular text in translation. Therefore, in this grammar we do not rely on translation to bring out all the subtleties of the grammatical features that are illustrated with Greek examples. Our English translation may or may not fully capture the grammar being illustrated; that is, the goal of exegesis is not to produce an ideal translation. Rather, the focus should be on grammatical analysis and on knowing the importance of grammatical analysis for interpreting the biblical text.

The following reflect some of the broader and most basic commitments of this grammar. We have tried to keep these commitments firmly in mind as we have written each section. One important insight that has emerged from the application of linguistics to Greek grammar is the realization that Greek should be treated like any other language. Many mistreatments of NT Greek come down to a misunderstanding of how language actually works. The point is, we do not write and speak in our own language the way we often treat NT Greek.

### Minimalistic Grammar

1.3. A very common approach, which gives unwarranted attention to individual grammatical units and their meanings, is what could be called a **maximalist** approach to grammar, or the “exegetical nuggets” approach.\(^2\) The goal of maximalist NT grammar and exegesis is to uncover the most meaning possible in each grammatical form or construction. This is often accompanied by the multiplication of categories, labels, and rules for their usage. The focus is on individual words and grammatical forms, often at the expense of sensitivity to the broader context in which they occur. Such individual elements of NT Greek are thought to be “rich” in meaning. This can be seen, for example, in approaches that read theological significance out of verb tenses. So we are told that the perfect tense (ἐγήγερται) in 1 Cor. 15:4 is theologically significant because it portrays Christ’s resurrection as a reality based on a past action that continues into the present. This theological insight may be valid (in fact, we would insist that it is!), but it is not dependent on a single linguistic unit, the perfect tense-form (nor are we convinced that this is a correct understanding of the perfect tense-form itself). Rather, such insight comes from the broader context of Paul’s discussion of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15. Or how often

have we heard the aorist tense, or the genitive case, or prepositions “milked” for theological purposes? We think here of the weight that has sometimes been given to the debate between the “objective” and “subjective” genitive in the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is not that it is unimportant whether we think in terms of faith placed in Jesus Christ or of Jesus’ own faithfulness; it is just that our decision in many cases is primarily theological rather than grammatical and should not be based solely on isolated elements such as tenses, cases, or prepositions. Once more, our focus should be on the larger context as the bearer of theology. Any major theological points worth affirming and arguing for will certainly not be nuanced in small grammatical subtleties or fine distinctions between case uses. Rather, they will be clear from their entire contexts. At the heart of this is the failure to recognize how language actually works. According to Rodney Decker, too much grammatical analysis is characterized by the efforts of preachers or teachers to find nuggets that support an emphasis that they want to make in the text, . . . even in some commentaries that attempt to focus only on the Greek text. We do not understand our own language in this way even though a grammarian can dissect such texts and assign appropriate taxonomical labels to the individual elements. Grammatical study of ancient texts in “dead” languages (i.e., those no longer spoken by a community of native speakers) is of value. It helps us understand what is being said and enables us to grasp the alternative possibilities in a written text. More often it facilitates eliminating invalid possibilities of meaning. But when all is said and done, all the grammatical and syntactical data are important only in that they enable us to grasp the meaning of the statements in their context.

A maximalist approach to Greek grammar is often an outgrowth of a view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God. Certainly if the NT is God’s Word, each grammatical expression must be semantically weighty and bursting with import! As Moisés Silva describes this perspective, “Surely an inspired text must be full of meaning: we can hardly think that so much as a single word in the Bible is insignificant or dispensable.” We agree with Silva that this overlooks that God has spoken to his people in normal language. As authors,
we are committed to the authority and inspiration of Scripture. However, this
does not necessitate taking the Greek language in an unnatural or artificial
way. Inspiration does not somehow transform the language into something
more than it was before. Therefore, we are committed to a minimalistic view of
grammar, where maximal meaning is not attributed to the individual linguistic
units but is found in their broader context. Also, we have kept categories and
labels to a minimum. This does not mean that grammar is unimportant or that
precise grammatical analysis should be avoided, but we must understand the
role it plays in contributing meaning to the overall context. There is danger in
reading far more from the grammar than is justified. A minimalist approach
also has an andragogical benefit: it relieves the student from the burden of
learning an unwieldy list of case or tense labels. It greatly streamlines the
choices and the categories for which students are responsible, thereby freeing
them up to focus on entire texts instead of isolated details.

Realistic View of Language

I.4. In a similar vein is the assessment of the overall character of the Greek
language, especially as it relates to other languages. Many maintain a superior
status for Greek. In their grammar Dana and Mantey claim that in comparison
with others, “the Greek language, with scarcely an exception, proves to be the
most accurate, euphonious, and expressive.” More recently, Chrys Caragounis
has concluded that in its history and development Greek is “unique” and
“unparalleled.” He also states that in the Classical (Attic) period

the Greek language reaches its highest degree of perfection: the verb attains
1,124 forms, expressing 1,602 ideas; the noun signals fifteen meaning-units,
the great variety of subordinate conjunctions, along with the infinitive and
participle, facilitate an almost infinite diversity of hypotactical clauses, the
wealth of particles makes possible the expression of the finest of nuances, and
the sentence becomes the paragon of complete thought expressed in balanced
grammatical relations.

However, such an assessment surely overestimates Greek as a language and
its place within the development of language. Moreover, it can easily lead to

6. Decker, Mark 1–8, xxii.
7. Dana and Mantey 268.
8. Chrys Caragounis, The Development of Greek and the New Testament (Grand Rapids:
9. Ibid., 33.
the grammatical maximalism referred to above. In our view, Greek should be treated just like any other language. This means that it is not more precise, more expressive, more wonderfully accurate and intricate than any other language, as if it were the only language in which God could have possibly revealed his Second Testament. Greek is no better or worse than any other language. All languages have their unique features, but a general principle of linguistics is that what can be said in one language can be approximated (since we have said that there is no one-for-one correspondence) in any other. No one language is or was more suitable to communicate God’s revelation of himself to his people than any other. Greek has strengths and limitations, just like any other language.

Descriptive Grammar

1.5. Almost the opposite of the previous observation is found in many older grammars, such as BDF, that compared the Koine Greek of the NT to earlier Classical Greek. NT Greek grammar was judged by how well it measured up to Classical Greek standards. The general consensus was that the Greek of the NT was poorer or deficient, or that its users were less competent, or the like. Even today one still hears or reads statements such as, “the writers were careless in their use of Greek,” or claims that this or that construction is “sloppy,” “bad,” or “improper” Greek. Instead, throughout the pages of this grammar we have avoided making judgments as to the correctness or incorrectness of the grammar used by NT authors. It is our conviction that the job of grammar is to be descriptive of how language is actually used, not to be prescriptive and make judgments about how it “ought to be” used. Languages change and evolve, so it is illegitimate to hold up one period of the Greek language’s use as superior to another and then to judge a given usage to be “poor” or “incorrect.” The “correct” grammar is that upon which language users agree. A corollary of this approach to grammar is that the study of language should be primarily *synchronic* (describing the use of language at a given point in time) rather than *diachronic* (describing the historical development of a language through time). Therefore, although we occasionally make some diachronic observations, our study of Greek grammar has as its primary goal the (synchronic) description of usage at the time of the writing under consideration, the Koine Greek used in the NT, though the focus

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will be on the Greek of the NT. For example, an overreliance on diachronic (historical) study was partly responsible for the use by some grammarians of an eight-case system for Greek nouns. Based on a descriptive and synchronic approach to grammar, we will side with those who advocate a five-case approach (see chap. 1, on the cases).

Semantics versus Pragmatics

I.6. One important principle that this grammar has tried to keep in mind is the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. That is, there is a difference between the semantics (meaning) of a given grammatical unit and its pragmatic function in various contexts. For example, a participle is a specific grammatical form with specific meaning, but it can function in a variety of ways in a sentence: as adjective, substantive, adverb, or main verb. This distinction can be seen especially in the discussion on verbal aspect. Each aspect has a distinct meaning (semantics) but can function in a variety of temporal and “kind-of-action” contexts (pragmatics).

Realistic View of Software

I.7. Biblical language software (e.g., Logos, BibleWorks, and Accordance) is a boon to just about everyone, from serious scholars to interested laypeople. Word and grammar searches can now be conducted in seconds, saving us valuable time and energy. Statistics for a given grammatical feature are easier to compile accurately and effortlessly. Corpus studies can be executed with greater facility and thoroughness.\(^\text{11}\) We have relied heavily on such software in writing this grammar. From our perspective, though, the greatest software in the world still lacks the ability to ensure that people use it sensibly. Access to Hebrew and Greek versions (with every word parsed) and almost countless translations does not guarantee that one understands these texts.

We find ourselves at a pivotal point in history; at least in the West, theological education is in decline in terms of both duration and scope. There is a growing trend among seminaries either to discontinue courses in the biblical languages altogether or to replace them with courses on how to use Bible software. We believe that students need to develop a solid working knowledge of and feel for the biblical languages if they are to have any chance of using

the tools well. We seem to be facing the opposite but equivalent problem to what was on Martin Luther’s mind when he penned his famous (at least among teachers of the biblical languages) letter on education to councilmen in Germany. In the sixteenth century the access problem was the reverse of ours: Greek and Hebrew manuscripts were available to very few, and the reformers were just beginning to displace Latin in favor of Hebrew and Greek. Nearly half a millennium later, biblical manuscripts are almost universally accessible, the two standard Greek texts by Nestle-Aland and the UBS are in their 28th and 5th editions respectively,¹² standard lexical tools continue to be updated, biblical language computer programs continue to increase and develop, and Greek grammars are now plentiful. Yet the study of Greek has fallen on hard times in current theological education. With Martin Luther, we believe there is a spiritual battle underway.

For the devil smelled a rat, and perceived that if the languages were revived a hole would be knocked in his kingdom which he could not easily stop up again. Since he found he could not prevent their revival, he now aims to keep them on such slender rations that they will of themselves decline and pass away.

. . . Although the gospel came and still comes to us through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it came through the medium of languages, was spread abroad by that means, and must be preserved by the same means. . . . In proportion then as we value the gospel, let us zealously hold to the languages.

. . . And let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. . . . The Holy Spirit is no fool. He does not busy himself with inconsequential or useless matters. He regarded the languages as so useful and necessary to Christianity that he oftentimes brought them down with him from heaven. This alone should be a sufficient motive for us to pursue them with diligence and reverence and not to despise them. . . . When our faith is held up to ridicule, where does the fault lie? It lies in our ignorance of the languages; and there is no other way out than to learn the languages. . . . Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book. . . . The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or

¹². Although the two standard editions differ in format (the UBS edition presents only a small selection of the textual variants presented in the Nestle-Aland edition), they represent the same edited Greek text. The SBLGNT, edited by Michael W. Holmes, represents an alternative edition of the Greek text that differs from the Nestle-Aland / United Bible Societies text in more than 540 variation units.
Introduction

inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong. But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages; it cannot be done any other way.  

We believe Martin Luther’s words need to be heard again in our seminaries, colleges, and Christian universities today!

1. As an inflected language, Greek uses a system called “case” to mark a group of words, nominals (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adjectival participles, and articles), in order to indicate their grammatical function and relationship to other words within a sentence (e.g., subject, predicate nominative, direct object, indirect object). In English we primarily follow word order to determine grammatical function. If we change the order of “The player hit the ball” to “The ball hit the player,” the grammatical function (subject, object) of “player” and “ball” changes. In Greek it is the inflected endings, not word order, that indicate such things. If we follow the formal endings of the Greek case system, there are at most five cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, vocative.¹

The choice of a case ending by an author communicates a specific meaning, which is refined by how it relates to its broader context. A common approach to the cases is to create multiple labels (such as nominative of appellation, possessive genitive, instrumental dative) to name the various ways they function in representative contexts. So, for example, Wallace (72–175) provides

¹ An eight-case system was argued for by several older grammarians. See Robertson 446–543; Dana and Mantey 65–68. There are still some supporters of the eight-case system for Koine Greek (i.e., nominative, genitive, ablative, dative, locative, instrumental, accusative, vocative): see Brooks and Winbery 2–3. However, based on the formal evidence that at most there are only five case endings and that advocates of the eight-case system rely too much on a historical approach to the cases (diachronic) rather than on the evidence from Koine Greek (synchronic), this view is becoming less common in grammars and will not be discussed any further.


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1.2. It is helpful to distinguish, as Porter (81–82) does, between (a) the meaning contributed by the semantics of the case itself, (b) the meaning contributed by other syntactical features, and (c) the meaning contributed by the broader context. Thus the interpreter must consider all three of these in arriving at the meaning of a given case construction: the case (e.g., a genitive), other syntactical features (e.g., the genitive follows a noun that semantically communicates a verbal process), and the broader context (e.g., this construction occurs in a given context of one of Paul’s Letters).

1.3. This grammar will follow a “minimalist” approach to the cases. That is, it focuses on the basic, more common, or exegetically significant usages of the cases rather than multiplying numerous categories with their respective labels. This is not to suggest that there are no other valid usages or categories than those listed below. But it is important to remember that “these names are merely appellations to distinguish the different contextual variations of usage, and that they do not serve to explain the case itself.”

than the trees, we acknowledge our great debt to those who have created and refined case labels. Labels help us think logically and systematically about language. There is obvious value in the discipline of considering the many ways in which one might understand, for example, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ (subjective genitive, objective genitive, possessive genitive, or genitive of source come to mind for τοῦ θεοῦ). Problems can and do arise, however, when we think language usage is always logical and systematic rather than intuitive—as if case endings were themselves inflected for further meaning, or as if the authors worked from a list of genitive usages. Perhaps for the majority of students of biblical Greek, labels are both intimidating and seen as ends in themselves. Our goal is to encourage students to make their goal the explanation of entire texts, not just to pick the right label for individual elements in those texts.

The Nominative Case

1.5. Defining the Greek nominative case has posed a challenge for grammars. Sometimes it is described in terms of one of its primary functions, to indicate the subject of a sentence (Dana and Mantey 68–69). Though this is one of its common uses, the description is too narrow and does not account for all of the nominatives. As frequently recognized, the Greeks themselves designated it as the “naming case” (Robertson 456). The nominative is the case that designates, or specifies, a nominal idea. It simply names or designates an entity rather than specifying a relationship (as with the genitive or dative). The various syntactic functions explained below may be understood in this light. Furthermore, in relation to the other cases, the nominative is the unmarked case and carries the least semantic weight (but perhaps sometimes more marked than the accusative; see below), although at times it can have important functions in a discourse.

Subject

1.6. One of the most common functions of the nominative case is to designate or name the grammatical subject of a verb in any voice (S + V). The nominative subject often indicates the topic of the sentence.

1.6

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee.

And Peter and John went up into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer.

But the law came in, in order that trespass might increase. But where sin increases, grace increases more.

Since Greek verbs indicate person and number through their inflected endings and therefore do not require the mention of an explicit subject, “when the subject is expressed it is often used either to draw attention to the subject of discussion or to mark a shift in the topic, perhaps signaling that a new person or event is the center of focus” (Porter 295–96). Sometimes an expressed subject is needed to indicate a change of speakers in a dialogue or to reintroduce a character who has been offstage for some time (see chap. 13, on discourse considerations).

And another of the disciples said to him. . . . And Jesus said to him. . . . (a change of speakers in a dialogue)

And an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying. . . . (introduces a new subject)

Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called.

In a discourse in which the author has already identified himself, as here (Eph. 1:1), the explicit first-person reference to the author is emphatic.

Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name above every name. (a switch to a new subject; from Christ to God)

In Phil. 2:6–7 the subject of the finite verbs is Jesus Christ.
1.7. Another frequent usage of the nominative case is to complete a “linking verb” (S + LV + PN) that links it to the subject. The most common verbs are εἰμί and γίνομαι (and ὑπάρχω).

Answering, Peter said to him, “You are the Christ.”

This is Moses, who spoke to the children of Israel.

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink.

Become doers of the word and not hearers only.

These who are clothed with white robes, who are they and from where did they come?

One problem emerges with the predicate use of the nominative: since this construction often involves two substantives in the nominative case, one the subject and the other the predicate nominative (S + LV + PN), and since word order cannot be the deciding factor in Greek for grammatical function, how is the reader of Greek to distinguish the subject from the predicate nominative?
The main issue is with third-person examples. With first- or second-person pronouns or verbs (e.g., ἐστέ) the decision is not difficult: “I,” “we,” “you” will be the subject. The following guidelines may prove useful for third-person examples. They are also arranged in order of importance (that is, 1 trumps all the others), though 2 and 3 seem to operate on the same level (in that case, 4 comes into effect).

1. If only one of the words in the nominative is a pronoun, it will be the subject.

αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή
(John 17:3)

And this is eternal life.

2. If only one of the words in the nominative has an article, it will be the subject.

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο καὶ έσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (John 1:14)

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

3. If only one of the words in the nominative is a proper name, it will be the subject.

Ἑλίας ἀνθρωπός ἤν ὡμοιοπαθής ἡμῖν (James 5:17)

Elijah was a man with the same nature as ours.

4. If both have the article or are proper names, the one that comes first will be the subject.

ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιὰ ἐστίν ὁ λόγος ὅν ἠκούσατε. (1 John 2:7)

The old commandment is the word that you heard.

5. See Wallace 42–45 (Wallace calls this the “pecking order”); Porter 109. The standard work on this is Lane McGaughy, Toward a Descriptive Analysis of EINAI as a Linking Verb in New Testament Greek, SBL Dissertation Series 6 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972).


7. Ibid., 55–56.
With Names (Appellation)

1.8. Sometimes names or titles in Greek will occur in the nominative case, even when another case might be expected (BDF §143). Many of these have a grammatical explanation, such as being a subject or predicate nominative of a verbless clause or being in apposition to a noun in the nominative case.

'Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης'.

(John 1:6)

There came a man, sent from God; his name [was] John.

Ἰωάννης·

It is possible to understand this as an example of an elided verb: "His name was John."

Ἑγεῖς φωνεῖτε μὲ Ὁ διδάσκαλος καὶ Ὁ κύριος

(John 13:13)

You call me teacher and Lord.

It is possible to treat this example as a direct quotation of what they called him: "Teacher and Lord."

καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἰδρυκτός τῶν βασιλεῶν τῆς γῆς

(Rev. 1:5)

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. (three titles in the nominative in apposition to the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)

καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

(Rev. 9:11)

And in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Here we might expect the accusative case. This could also be understood as the predicate nominative of a verbless parenthetical clause: "He has a name—[it is] Apollyon."

Independent

1.9. A word in the nominative case can sometimes form its own clause. This is consistent with its meaning: to designate or specify a nominal idea. The usage is common in titles or salutations of letters, for example, and may sometimes explain its use with names above.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.

(Col. 1:2)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
1.10. Here the nominative is grammatically unrelated to the clause to which it is linked, though it is connected conceptually. This use of the nominative often occurs with a participle or a relative clause, which then gets picked up by a pronoun in another case in the following main clause (Zerwick 10). This is also known as a “left dislocation,” whereby an entity is detached from and placed outside and in front of the main clause (see chap. 13, on discourse considerations). The “dislocated” nominative then is usually resumed in the main clause with a pronoun.8 Such a construction often draws attention to the element in the nominative or serves to introduce or shift to a new topic (Porter 86).

πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως· (Matt. 12:36)

Here the nominative ῥῆμα is picked up with the genitive pronoun αὐτοῦ in the main clause.

δοσι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτὸι ἔξουσιαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι (John 1:12)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God.

ὁ γὰρ Μωϋσῆς οὗτος, δὲς ἔξηγαγεν ἡμᾶς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, οὐκ οἴδαμεν τί ἐγένετο αὐτῷ. (Acts 7:40)

For this Moses, who led us out of Egypt, we do not know what happened to him.

καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἀχρὶ τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν (Rev. 2:26)

And the one who overcomes and who keeps my works until the end, I will give to him/her authority over the nations.

Apposition

1.11. As with all the other cases, a substantive in the nominative case can stand in apposition to another nominative substantive. Both substantives sit side by side, “residing in the same syntactic slot in the clause,” and refer to the same entity.⁹

Ἰωσὴφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρᾳ ἀπολῦσαι αὐτήν. (Matt. 1:19)

But Joseph, her husband, being righteous and not wanting to expose her publicly, decided to divorce her in secret.

Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς (2 Cor. 1:1)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy, the brother.

Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισέδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ υψίστου (Heb. 7:1)

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God...

καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, μυστήριον, Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς. (Rev. 17:5)

And upon her forehead was a name written: Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

The Vocative Case

1.12. The vocative case is utilized when someone (e.g., the reader) or something is addressed directly. There is some debate as to whether the vocative should be considered a separate case from the nominative, since it has separate forms.

only in the singular. Its function was being taken over by the nominative case. The presence of the vocative seems to be emphatic, since it directly brings the addressees into the discourse. It is often used to draw attention to upcoming material and to indicate breaks in the discourse.

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφεὶς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν θάρσει, θύγατερ. (Matt. 9:22)

Ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν; (Gal. 3:1)

This is a rare occurrence (17× in the NT) of Ὦ before the vocative.

μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί. (James 1:16)

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε. (1 John 2:1)

For Practice

1.13. Analyze the nominatives (in bold) in the following texts, paying attention to the function of each as well as to how you determine the function.

11. Moule 32; Turner 34.
12. See Zerwick 35–36, who notes that Ὦ before the vocative was usual in Classical Greek, and that when it occurs in the Greek of the NT, “one is justified in supposing that there is some reason for its use” (36). BDF §146.1.b says that it expresses emotion, and Dana and Mantey (71) say that it carries more force.

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1.14. A syntactically versatile case, the genitive has a broad range of usage, including uses that we often express with the English prepositions of and from. (Please note that of is not the meaning of the genitive case; it is the English preposition used sufficiently variously, and often ambiguously, to represent some but not all of the case’s uses in translation.) Traditional grammars refer to the genitive case as descriptive, defining, specifying, or even adjectival; more linguistically orientated grammars prefer the term “restrictive.” The genitive is most often employed in constructions in which one substantive (in the genitive, N_{gen}) particularizes, or restricts, another (the head noun, or substantive, N). Regardless of the genitive subcategory chosen in a given context to fine-tune one’s understanding of a phrase like ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ (“the love of God”), θεοῦ restricts “love” to love associated with God. Moreover, “restriction” is definitely the preferable term to account for uses such as genitives that modify verbs or function as direct objects. We agree with Porter, then, that “the essential semantic feature of the genitive case is restriction.” The common order is for the noun in the genitive to follow its head term, the noun it modifies. When this is reversed, more prominence is given to the word in the genitive.

Moisés Silva provides a partial analogy to the Greek genitive case from English usage. Instead of the gloss “of,” a better aid is a specialized construction found in English where, like Greek, two nouns are juxtaposed but, unlike typical Greek, the first one modifies the second:

- spring picnic
- stone wall
- fire rescue
- tree removal

In each of these English examples, the first noun describes or restricts the second noun. Upon closer inspection, we can even describe the relationship between them based on our understanding of the contexts in which they are used. The first one indicates a temporal relationship, the time when the picnic.

13. Porter 92; Wallace 78; Long, Grammatical Concepts, 52.
15. Porter 92, italics original.
occurs. The second exemplifies a relationship of content or makeup of the wall. In the third example the first noun describes the setting of the second, or it may carry the sense of “rescue from fire.” In the fourth example the first noun is the object of the action implied in the second noun (“I remove the tree”). Greek does something similar to this, but rather than relying on word order, it indicates which noun is doing the restricting by placing it in the genitive.

Because of the versatility of the genitive case, there are scholars who understand it as having upward of thirty distinct uses (Wallace 72–136). Some of these seem to have more to do with the vagaries of English translation than with anything inherent in Greek (either encoded in the genitive formal ending or obvious from context); others split already-fine theological hairs. Therefore, we will limit our discussion to a manageable number of uses of the genitive that helpfully illustrate the most common or most exegetically significant uses of the case in the NT. We also encourage our readers not to assume that every use of the genitive will fit neatly into a given subcategory. In other words, it is not always clear just how a genitive restricts. Some NT genitives are rather clear as to their function in given contexts; some are too ambiguous to be labeled; others are strung together in chains for emphasis; still others are probably intended to be understood in a particular way that, because of the passage of time and our distance from the original context, will not be obvious to today’s interpreter. The genitive’s function is to restrict, and only context can indicate exactly how it does so. Our task is to consider interpretive options as well as their theological and practical implications, not necessarily to arrive at the one “correct” label. Even in the study of grammar, the journey can be the destination.

**Genitive Constructions Restricting Substantives**

Below are genitives in constructions in which they restrict substantives (N + N\textsubscript{gen}).

1.15. **Descriptive** (attributive, qualitative). As mentioned above, some grammars view the genitive case as being essentially descriptive. In such systems the term *descriptive genitive* is almost redundant; hence the category “descriptive genitive” has been used as a catchall of “last resort” for genitive uses that cannot be otherwise classified (Wallace 79). We will consider descriptive genitives to be those (N + N\textsubscript{gen}) that restrict the head noun as an adjective (“a thing of beauty,” i.e., a beautiful thing) or another noun (“ant farm”) might. The genitive of description “might well be considered the essential *use* of the genitive case.”\(^{17}\)

17. Porter 92, italics added.
άποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως. (Matt. 12:36)

They will give an account for it on judgment day.

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Ἕνεκεν σοῦ θανατοῦμεθα δλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν ως πρόβατα σφαγῆς. (Rom. 8:36)

Just as it is written, “For your sake we are put to death the whole day, we are counted as sheep for slaughter.”

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν· ἀμήν. (Rom. 15:33)

And the God of peace [be] with you all. Amen.

Wallace (106) calls this a genitive of product, which may be an unnecessary refinement. God does produce peace, but nothing in the genitive case itself or the context of Romans requires that we see more than a description of God here.

ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ μετ’ ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ ἐν φλογὶ πυρός. (2 Thess. 1:7–8)

At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in fiery flame.

τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς. (Rev. 2:7)

To the one who overcomes, I will grant to him/her to eat from the tree of life.

1.16. Possessive and source (relationship, origin). We will examine these functions of the genitive together because they are semantically related. The fact that we often pair possession with the preposition of and source with from in our translations obscures that relationship; moreover, it focuses our attention more on English than on Greek. The genitive may be used to indicate possession, source/origin, or relationship because in all of these instances a head noun is restricted by a genitive noun or pronoun in terms of “some sort of” dependence or derivation (Porter 93). In the phrase ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου (John 1:19), “John’s testimony,” we may correctly understand John as the source or origin as well as the possessor of his own testimony.

Τοῦ δὲ Ιησοῦ χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν. (Matt. 1:18)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this.

Note that the genitives precede the head noun for emphasis.
Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, James the [son] of Zebedee and John his brother.

Here we see four genitives that are all basically possessive; the third could also be labeled a genitive of relationship, a subcategory in which a particular relationship between the head noun and the genitive is assumed rather than stated.

And after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the good news of God.

How should we understand τοῦ θεοῦ? Is it possessive, source, or does it belong in the section below ("Subjective and Objective")?

And let peace from Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were indeed called in one body, and be thankful.

And they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

1.17. Subjective and objective. When a genitive restricts a noun that can be construed to indicate a verbal process (often it has a cognate verb, e.g., ἀγάπη and ἀγαπάω), it may be subjective or objective. If the genitive is the agent of the verbal process, we can label it as subjective. If the genitive is the object or patient of the verbal process, we can label it as objective. In some biblical contexts both categories, and perhaps others, make good sense and we must entertain the possibility that the author was purposely ambiguous, and/or that we just don’t know enough to make the correct call.
διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται. (Matt. 12:31)

Because of this I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Πνεύματος is objective; that the Holy Spirit does not blaspheme goes without saying, and the presence of κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου in Matt. 12:32 makes the conclusion unassailable.

τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ; (Rom. 8:35a)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Here the context makes clear that Paul has Christ’s love for us in mind, since any or all of the items on the list in 8:35b might be misconstrued by some as contradicting his love for us. Because love is a verbal process, most would label Χριστοῦ a subjective genitive, but it would not be incorrect to think of love as being either an attribute or a possession of Christ. Nor would it be misleading to speak of Christ as being the source of love. In other words, Χριστοῦ is considered to be subjective (context makes it subjective rather than objective) because of the verbal nature of ἀγάπης, not because Christ isn’t the source or possessor of love. There is sometimes considerable overlap between the standard genitive subcategories. We do well to keep this in mind when debating fine shades of meaning.

ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν· ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· (2 Cor. 5:14)

For the love of Christ compels us, having decided this: that one died for all; therefore, all died.

Most take this instance of Χριστοῦ as being subjective also, but the context is not as definitive. Héring argues that the genitive is objective, and a few think that Paul might have intended it to do double-duty. In order to account for unclear instances such as this, Wallace (119–20) has included the category “plenary genitive” (both objective and subjective), which seems only to compound the problem. This is more a matter

19. Zerwick is representative. Of 2 Cor. 5:14 he says, The objective genitive (Paul’s love for Christ) does not suffice for, apart from the fact that Paul usually renders the objective-genitive sense by εἰς (cf. Col. 1:4), the reason which he adds speaks of the love which Christ manifested for us in dying for all men; nor is the subjective genitive (Christ’s love for us) fully satisfactory by itself, because the love in

of ambiguity in the context than a legitimate grammatical category. It is not that we have too few categories for the genitive or even, as we think, too many, but that we sometimes treat them as objective and inviolable realities rather than mere tools of our trade that should not obscure our focus on the biblical text itself. In 2 Cor. 5:14 Χριστοῦ could be either subjective or objective, but not both. We should probably avoid the “plenary” category and simply admit ambiguity.

οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἀνάφηγον ἀνέν πετειν τον ἤντο Χριστοῦ (Gal. 2:16) A person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in/of Jesus Christ.

Much ink has been spilled over the use of the genitive Χριστοῦ here and in Rom. 3:22, where Paul uses the same prepositional phrase. (Each should, of course, be considered separately in its own context, as nothing requires the conclusion that the same word or group of words is always used the same way.) The debate centers on whether Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive (faith in Jesus Christ) or a subjective genitive (faithfulness of [i.e., produced by] Jesus Christ). Both are certainly coherent in the context. Paul could be affirming that Christian Jews have realized that their right standing before God is based not on their keeping of the law but on Jesus’ faithfulness in fulfilling all of its demands and their full trust in him (subjective gen.). Paul could also be stating quite emphatically (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν) that Christian Jews know that their right standing with God is based solely on faith in Jesus Christ (objective gen.). Grammar and lexical range alone cannot solve the problem. Any solution must depend on broader contextual and theological considerations.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what things must happen quickly.

Given the chain of command, most commentators think Χριστοῦ is subjective or source: God gave the revelation to Jesus, who in turn gives it to his servants.20

1.18. Epexegetical/appositional. Although simple apposition can occur in any case (the nominal and the appositive must be in the same case; e.g., Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, “Paul, an apostle” [1 Tim. 1:1]), the genitive in particular may be used to restate, define, or explain a nominal that is usually in a different case.

Πέτρος δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· Metanôıste, καὶ βαπτισθῆτω ἔκατος ὑμῶν ἐπί τῷ ὄνοματι Ἰησοῦ· Χριστοῦ εἰς ἀφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν, καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος · (Acts 2:38)

And Peter [said] to them, “Repent and each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Among the many intriguing elements of this verse is the final genitive. There is agreement among modern commentators that the genitive is

21. See Mathewson, Revelation, 263:

It is possible that this should be understood as a subjective genitive (the testimony that Jesus bore). However, the fact that the testimony is something that they have (ἐχόντων) along with the clear references elsewhere (6:9; 11:7; 12:11; 17:6) to the saints as testifying/having testimony as a cause for their death, suggests that the genitive Ἰησοῦ here should be taken as objective (the testimony about Jesus). G. K. Beale opts for both a subjective and objective genitive reading (The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 947; see also Stephen S. Smalley, The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005], 487). However, this confuses grammatical ambiguity with semantic “fullness” of interpretation.

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epexegetical; baptized believers will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift (“the gift that is the Holy Spirit” is clearer than “the gift of the Holy Spirit”). However, there may be options other than taking ἁγίου πνεύματος as epexegetical. Δωρεάν is after all a verbal noun, so ἁγίου πνεύματος could be construed as subjective or source (the gift given by the Holy Spirit). Few would dispute that the Holy Spirit gives gifts, but the focus of Acts 2:38 seems to be not on the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives but on the Holy Spirit himself as the gift that believers receive. The decision comes down primarily to context and theology.

καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν περιτομῆς, ὁ σφραγῖς τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ (Rom. 4:11)

And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith that he had while uncircumcised.

Although the genitives τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως might be debated, περιτομῆς is a straightforward example of an epexegetical genitive: the sign is circumcision.

tὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; (Eph. 4:9)

But what is “He ascended” if not that he also descended to the lower [parts] of the earth?

How should we understand the genitive γῆς? Is it possessive, is it epexegetical, or does it belong in the next section (partitive)?

γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς. (Rev. 2:10)

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (the crown that is life)

1.19. Partitive. The noun in the genitive indicates the whole of which the noun it modifies is a part: “some [i.e., a part] of our students [i.e., the whole].” The label of this category may be counterintuitive, but partitive genitives are common in Greek and English. In English we might say that a bite of chocolate is rarely enough. “Of chocolate” is the whole of which “a bite” is a part. Once we get past the fact that the whole, not its parts, is in the genitive, the idiom is easily recognized.

22. Peter is making a momentous theological statement that can only be fully grasped in the context of both Testaments of Scripture.
Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

And calling out, he said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue.”

“In water” (ὕδατος) may also be loosely construed as partitive but is taken as a genitive with a verb of filling (in this case, dipping: the object dipped is in the accusative, and the entity into which it is dipped is in the genitive) in BDF§172.

On the first day of the week each of you individually should put something aside, saving as you prosper, so that there be no collections when I come.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were finished.

**Genitive Constructions Restricting Adjectives or Verbs**

Below are genitives in constructions in which they restrict adjectives or verbs (\(A + N_{gov}\) or \(V + N_{gov}\)).

1.20. With adjectives (and occasionally adverbs). Genitives that restrict the comparative forms of adjectives or adverbs often express comparison and require “than” in English translation. There are also some adjectives and adverbs whose meanings are fine-tuned or restricted by the genitive case.

μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἄβρααμ, ὅστις ἀπέθανεν; (John 8:53)

You aren’t greater [comparative adjective] than our father Abraham who died, are you?
1.21. With verbs. Genitive nouns can directly modify or restrict verbs and thus function as adverbs. Truly adverbial genitives are not widely used in the NT. Under this category we would include two functions of the genitive that are often treated separately by other grammars: time and price.

1. Genitive expressing time

νυκτός τὸ πρῶτον

And Nicodemus, who had first come at night, also came.

Functioning as an adverbial genitive of time, νυκτός restricts Nicodemus's previous visit to the nighttime. Temporal genitives are most often employed to designate the time within which something occurs as opposed to a specific point, short or long, at which something occurs (dative, e.g., "Nicodemus came on that night"), or an extent of time (accusative, e.g., "Nicodemus came for the night").
2. Genitive expressing price

τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δούλοι ἄνθρωπων. (1 Cor. 7:23)

You were bought for a price; do not become people’s slaves.

Here the genitive answers the question “How much?” and thus restricts the meaning of the verb “bought.”

1.22. As objects of verbs. Some verbs, especially those expressing perception/sensation (e.g., ἀκούω, ἀπτω, κρατέω), volition/acquisition (e.g., ἐπιθυμέω, τυχάνω), emotion (e.g., ἀνέχω, ἐπιμελέομαι), memory (e.g., ἑπιλανθάνομαι, μιμνῄσκομαι, μνημονεύω), and governing (e.g., ἀρχω, κυριεύω), as well as certain verbs with prepositional prefixes (especially verbs prefixed by ἀπό, ἐκ, and κατά), may take their direct objects in the genitive case (S + V + DOgen). If you are unsure whether a particular verb can take a complement (direct object) in the genitive case, consult BDAG.

ἀκούσας δὲ ὄχλου διαπορευομένου ἐπυνθάνετο τί εἴη τοῦτο· (Luke 18:36)

And having heard a crowd passing by, he asked what this might be/mean.

There is some debate concerning the fact that ἀκούω can take either the accusative or genitive as its direct object. The traditional understanding is that ἀκούω with the genitive means to hear without understanding, while ἀκούω with the accusative means to hear with comprehension (Robertson 506). This distinction is not always observed in the NT, however. We agree with Wallace (133) that Koine Greek writers did not follow strict rules when deciding to use the genitive or accusative case with ἀκούω.

οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως, ἀλλὰ συνεργοί ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν (2 Cor. 1:24)

Not that we rule your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy.

1.23. Genitive absolute. This genitive construction will be covered in chapter 10, on participles.

For Practice

1.24. Analyze the genitives (in bold) in the following texts from Rom. 8 and 2 Pet. 2, identifying their various possible functions. We have not included genitive objects of prepositions.
1.25. The dative case is often described as the case of personal interest, location, and means. However, this does not necessarily convey its meaning. More comprehensively, the dative case may be defined as conveying relation. This seems to account for its various usages. A very common use of the dative is to indicate the indirect object, though this is only one of its functions. Also common is the function of the dative as an adjunct modifying the verb.

Indirect Object (Advantage, Disadvantage)

1.26. A substantive in the dative case may be used to specify the indirect object in a sentence, that is, the person or thing toward which the action of a verb form is directed (“I gave authority to him”). This also includes what grammarians label the dative of advantage or disadvantage: the dative indicates the person or thing for whose benefit (advantage) or detriment (disadvantage) the action occurs, depending on the broader context.


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The Cases

1.27. In this use, an action is done more generally “with reference to” or “with respect to” something or someone, indicated by the dative. This usage may be closest to the dative’s fundamental meaning. We have also included the dative of possession here.

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**Reference or Respect (Possession)**

- Truly I say to you that there are some of those who stand here who will not taste death. (Mark 9:1)
- Just as you gave to him authority over all flesh. (John 17:2)
- Show to me your faith without works, and I will show to you my faith by my works. (James 2:18)
- So then, you witness against yourselves, that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. (Matt. 23:31)
- I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:2)
- Blessed are the poor in spirit / with respect to spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (limiting an adjective)
- They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (possession)

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We who have died [with respect] to sin, how shall we still live in it?

This is a classic example of reference or respect cited by most grammars.

Has not God chosen the poor in [with respect to or in the world’s view] the world to be rich in faith?

Instrumental (Agent, Cause, Manner, Means)

1.28. Though most grammars tend to separate these usages, they are frequently difficult and/or unnecessary to distinguish.25 In the sentence “She killed him with a sword,” is “sword” the means, the instrument, or the manner (the way) in which the killing takes place? (English “with” is itself ambiguous.) The dative specifies that someone brings about an action in relation to something else (e.g., a sword).

And now you glorify me, Father, in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world was. (Is this instrument or manner?)

They were cut off on account of their unbelief, but you stand on account of your faith. (causal; BDF §196)

By faith we know that the universe was created by the word of God.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a great voice.

25. Porter 98–99. For the distinction between these usages, see Wallace 158–69; Dana and Mantey 89–91; Brooks and Winbery 42–49.


**Association**

1.29. This usage could easily fall under the instrumental dative or even the dative of respect. The dative indicates that an action is performed in association with someone or something else.

καὶ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτω- 
λοι συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ 
τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ (Mark 2:15) 

And many tax collectors and sin-
ers sat at the table with Jesus 
and his disciples.

Association is suggested by the verb with the συν- prefix.

διὸ καὶ πυκνότερον αὐτόν μετα- 
πεμ πόμενος ὡμίλει αὐτῷ. (Acts 
24:26) 

Therefore, also summoning him 
very often, he conversed with 
him.

εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν 
ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν 
καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι 
αὐτοῖς. (Rom. 15:27) 

For if the nations shared in their 
spiritual blessings, they ought to 
mind minister to them also in material 
things.

**Location (Place, Sphere)**

1.30. The dative case specifies the location, either physical (place) or metaphorical (sphere or realm), where an action takes place. “Sphere” could also fit under the dative of respect.

καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες 
στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν 
αὐτοῖς τῇ κεφαλῇ (John 19:2) 

And the soldiers, having woven 
together a crown of thorns, 
placed it on his head. (physical 
location)

τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθείς 
(Acts 2:33) 

Therefore, having been exalted to 
the right hand of God. (spatial 
location)

εἶ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει (Col. 1:23) 

If indeed you remain in faith. 
(sphere)

---

1.31. In order that he might offer you to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit.

The dative πνεύματι seems to indicate metaphorical location (sphere), though it could also be classified as respect or manner (again showing how difficult it sometimes is to sharply distinguish these functions of the dative).

Time

1.31. As an extension of the category of location, the dative also indicates a particular place or point in time (cf. the genitive and accusative of time).²⁶

δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν καὶ . . . ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι. (Matt. 16:21)

καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐπιστᾶσα ἀνθωμολογεῖτο τῷ θεῷ (Luke 2:38)

Οὐαὶ οὐαί, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, Βαβυλὼν ἡ πόλις ἡ ἰσχυρά, ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἥλθεν ἢ κρίσις σου. (Rev. 18:10)

It is necessary for him to depart into Jerusalem and . . . to be put to death and to be raised on the third day.

And at that very hour she came and was praising God.

Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon the strong city, for in one hour your judgment has come.

Direct Object

1.32. Some verbal processes are completed (i.e., take a direct object) not with a noun in the accusative case but with one in the dative case (S + V + DO₃). That is, the meanings of some verbs seem to lend themselves to the notion of relation communicated by the dative.²⁷

²⁶ This is irrespective of the actual duration of the action, whether short or long. The dative simply indicates a specific time.

²⁷ The following are some verbs that can take an object in the dative case: ἀκολουθέω, ἀνίστημι, ἀπείθέω, βοηθέω, διακοινέω, διατάσσω, δουλεύω, ἐξομολογέω, ἐπιτάσσω, ἐπιτιμάω, εὐχαριστέω, λατρεύω, ὀργίζω, παραγγέλλω, πείθω, πιστεύω, προσκυνέω, συμβουλεύω, ὑπακούω, ὑπηρετέω, χαρίζω. 

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οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὰ δίκτυα ἥκολούθησαν αὐτῷ. (Matt. 4:20)
καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεόν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ (1 Thess. 1:9)

And immediately leaving their nets they followed him.
And how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

The verb προσκυνέω (to worship) frequently takes the dative case (e.g., Matt. 2:11; 4:9; John 4:21; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 4:10), but it also can take the accusative (Matt. 4:10; Rev. 9:20; 13:8; 14:9, 11).

After Certain Adjectives

1.33. Some adjectives, especially belonging to the word group of “likeness” (e.g., ὁμοιός), or adjectives compounded with συν- (e.g., σύμμορφος) are commonly accompanied by a noun in the dative (BDF §194[2]). Some examples might be classified as datives of reference (Wallace 174).

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a mustard seed.
Who will transform our humble bodies in conformity to his body of glory.
And the one seated on the throne [was] like in appearance to a jasper and ruby stone, and [there was] a rainbow around the throne like in appearance to an emerald.

The dative ὁράσει (appearance) in both instances is probably a dative of means or manner (“in appearance”) or respect (“with respect to appearance”).
1.34. Analyze the datives (in bold) in the following texts from Rom. 8, identifying their various possible functions. We have not included datives that occur with prepositions.

1.34.1. For Practice

διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθραίες θεόν, τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπότασσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται. . . .

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὑποτάσσεσθε τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται. . . .

οὔτε γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὐτοὶ οὖν εἰσὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. . . .

οὗτοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὐτοὶ οὖν εἰσὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. . . .

αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι θεοῦ. . . .

οὕτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται ἡμῖν. . . .

2. The Accusative Case

1.35. In Classical Greek the accusative case, thought by some to be the oldest case (Robertson 466), was employed more than any other, including the nominative. By the Koine period, though the accusative still was the most used of the oblique cases, its range had diminished. Its predominant uses in the NT are as the object of verbs and prepositions and as the “subject” of infinitives. Some grammars call it the case of limitation or extent; Louw labels it “the indefinite case.” Porter says that it “expresses an idea without defining it.” Since the meanings of limitation (as expressed by the accusative case) and restriction (as expressed by the genitive) significantly overlap, it might be helpful to repeat that the accusative frequently limits the action of verbs as the default case for their direct objects, whereas the genitive more often restricts substantives. Verbs in general take accusative direct objects; verbs of specific types or with particular nuances can take their objects in the genitive or dative cases. Adverbial accusatives are more frequent and flexible than adverbial genitives.

28. For example, Dana and Mantey 91; Young 9; Zerwick 23; Wallace 178.
30. Porter 88, italics original.
Direct Object

1.36. Most verbs take their direct object in the accusative case: \( S + V + \text{DO}_{\text{acc}} \)

- Ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (Mark 1:3) Prepare the Lord’s way.
- ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν (Heb. 1:9) You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.
- Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγῖδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἤκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος "Ἐρχομαι" (Rev. 6:3) And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”

Cognate

1.37. This is really just a type of direct object. As the label suggests, the construction involves a verb taking its cognate (same-root) noun as an object or as an adverbial modifier. In English we also have cognate direct objects (we can sing songs, pray prayers, and fight good fights) and adverbs (we can pray prayerfully and rejoice joyfully). In both languages cognate constructions are sometimes used for emphasis.

- καὶ μὴ δυνάμενοι προσενέγκαι αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην ὅπου ἦν (Mark 2:4) And being unable to bring [him] to him [i.e., to Jesus] because of the crowd, they unroofed the roof where he [i.e., Jesus] was.
- εἰ οὖν τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν πιστεύσασιν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, ἐγὼ τίς ἤμην δυνατός κωλύσαι τὸν θεόν; (Acts 11:17) Therefore if God gave them the same gift as [he gave] also to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could hinder God?

This time the cognates “gave” and “gift” work well in English.
Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and [about which] you confessed your good confession before many witnesses.

If anyone sees his/her brother or sister sinning a sin not [leading] to death.

Who testifies to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, as much as he saw.

Double

1.38. Some verbs may have two objects in the accusative case that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction such as καί. In these cases we can have (1) a personal (remote/indirect) and impersonal (direct) object (e.g., Alex gave Mack a book) or (2) an object (direct) and predicate complement (e.g., Peter also gave a book as a present). At first glance, all of the examples below seem to involve objects that are personal (ὑμᾶς, τοὺς προφήτας, and αὐτόν refer to persons) and impersonal (ἀ, γάλα, ὑπόδειγμα, and στῦλον are things). The distinction between the two types of double accusative depends not solely on the personal nature of one of the accusatives but rather on whether or not both accusatives in a doublet refer to the same person or entity. If they do, they make up an object/complement double accusative (in the English example above, “book” and “present” have the same referent). If they do not, they make up a personal/impersonal double accusative (“Mack” and “book” have different referents).

For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what things are necessary to say. (personal/impersonal)
γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα (1 Cor. 3:2)  
I gave you milk to drink. (personal/impersonal)

ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε, ἀδελφοί, τῆς κακοπαθίας καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας τοῦς προφήτας, οἳ ἐλάλησαν ἐν τῷ ὅνοματι κυρίου. (James 5:10)  
Take the prophets, brothers and sisters, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and endurance. (object/complement)

In this example, we reversed the word order in English translation so that the articular τοὺς προφήτας is the direct object and the anarthrous (without the article) ὑπόδειγμα is the predicate complement.

ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου (Rev. 3:12)  
The one who overcomes, I will make him/her a pillar in the temple of my God. (object/complement)

The personal pronoun αὐτόν is the direct object, and the impersonal noun στῦλον is the predicate complement. We could add “to be” (“I will make him/her to be a pillar”) to our English translation, but it is not necessary.

Adverbial

1.39. As the label suggests, nominals or adjectives in the accusative case can function as adverbs. An accusative can indicate how and how long, how far or to what extent (manner/measure), when (time), and with respect/reference to what an action occurs.

1. Manner

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς παρακούσας τὸν λόγον λαλούμενον λέγει τῷ ἀρχισυναγώγῳ· Μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε. (Mark 5:36)  
But Jesus, overhearing what was being said, said to the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; only believe.”

The adjective μόνον cannot modify anything but the verb in this sentence. We have an unambiguous adverbial accusative here, which answers the question “To what extent . . . ?”

οὔδε δωρεάν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρὰ τίνος (2 Thess. 3:8)  
Neither as a gift [i.e., without paying] did we eat bread from anyone.
καὶ ἐκαυματίσθησαν οἱ ἄνθρω-ποι καθαμα μέγα· (Rev. 16:9)
And the people were scorched with great heat. (this could also be an example of respect/reference)

2. Measure
καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπεσπάσθη ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν ὡσεί λίθου βολήν, καὶ θεὶς τὰ γόνατα προσηύχετο (Luke 22:41)
And he drew away from them about a stone’s throw, and, having gotten to his knees, he prayed.

Here the extent (“How far . . . ?”) of Jesus’ withdrawal is indicated by accusative βολήν, which is further restricted by the genitive λίθου.

3. Time
λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ἔρχεσθε καὶ ὀψεσθε. ἦλθαν οὖν καὶ εἶδαν ποῦ μένει, καὶ παρ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔμεινα τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην· (John 1:39)
He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying and stayed with him that day.

In this example, extent of time, rather than extent of space, is indicated by the accusatives τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην.

4. Respect/reference
ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσω-μεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλή, Χριστός (Eph. 4:15)
But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in all respects into him who is the head, Christ.

With Infinitives

1.40. Infinitives can take both a subject and direct object in the accusative case. When, as is often the case, the subject of the infinitive is different from that of the main verb, the infinitive’s subject will be in the accusative case. Some older grammars explained the accusative subject of the infinitive as the accusative of general reference.31 We will simply refer to the accusative functioning as the subject of the infinitive. And although infinitives have a

31. E.g., Robertson 490; Dana and Mantey 93; Brooks and Winbery 56.
wider range of usage in Greek than in English, we do have at least a partial equivalent for accusatives functioning as subjects. In the sentence “God enables us to love them,” the word *us* is both the direct object of “enables” and also the functional subject of “to love.” Subjects and complements of *infinitives of being* in Greek will also usually be in the accusative case (but note an exception below). When a Greek infinitive has both a subject and an object in the accusative case, word order or context almost always clarifies which is which.

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λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι; (Matt. 16:15)
```

He said to them, “But *whom* do you claim *me* to be?”

This translation preserves the somewhat awkward infinitive clause and takes *με* as the subject and *τίνα* as the predicate accusative of *εἶναι*, despite the Greek word order.

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Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο (Rom. 11:25)
```

For I do not want *you* to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, of this *mystery*.

In this instance, sense and word order point in the same direction: *ὑμᾶς* is the subject of the infinitive and *τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο* is its object.

```
καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρείαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τινά τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ γεγόνατε χρείαν ἔχοντες γάλακτος, οὐ στερεᾶς τροφῆς. (Heb. 5:12)
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For [although] you ought to be *teachers* by now, you have need for *someone* to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God again, and you have become ones having need of milk, not solid food.

Both the participle *ὀφείλοντες* and the predicate noun *διδάσκαλοι* are nominative (rather than accusative) around the first infinitive, *εἶναι*, because they agree with “you,” the subject of the main verb *ἔχετε*. With the shift in subject from “you” to “someone,” we also see a shift in case from the nominative to the accusative *τινά* used with the second infinitive *διδάσκειν*. Additionally, *διδάσκειν* is complemented by a double accusative: the personal object is *ὑμᾶς* and the impersonal object is *τὰ στοιχεῖα*. The presence of three accusatives with one infinitive demonstrates at least that the author thought his readers had mastered the elementary principles of grammar!
ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμοὺς δούλους πορνεύσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα. (Rev. 2:20)

But I have against you that you permit the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat offered to idols.

The first accusative is the subject of both πορνεύσαι and φαγεῖν, and the second is the object of φαγεῖν alone.

For Practice

1.41. Analyze the accusatives (in bold) in the following texts, identifying their various possible functions. We have not included accusatives that occur with prepositions.

21κάκειθεν ἠτήσαντο βασιλέα, καὶ ἐδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς τὸν Σαοὺλ υἱὸν Κίς, ἐνδρά εὐφ. Βενιαμίν, ἔπη τεσσεράκοντα· 22καὶ μεταστήσας αὐτὸν ἔγαγεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν ις ις, ἀνδρα  ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, ἔτη τεσσεράκοντα· 23τούτου ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος κατ᾽ ἐπαγγελίαν ἔδησεν αὐτὸν εἰς βασιλέα, ᾧ καὶ εἶπεν μαρτυρήσας· Εὗρον Δαυὶδ τὸν τοῦ Ἰεσσαί, ἀνδρα  κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν μου, ὃς ποιήσει πάντα ἰσθήματα μου. 24τούτων ὁ θεός ᾧ ἀποκρίσατος κατʼ ἐπαγγελίαν ἔδησεν τῷ Ἰσραήλ σωτῆρα Ἰησούν. (Acts 13:21–23)

1Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα τὴν κλεῖν τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ ἅλυσιν μεγάλην ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ. 2καὶ ἐκράτησεν τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὃς ἦστε Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν χίλια ἔτη, 3καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἀβύσσον, καὶ ἔκλεισεν καὶ ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἔτι τὰ ἔθνη, ἄχρι τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη μετὰ ταῦτα· 4καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη. (Rev. 20:1–4)