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11.1 Introduction

In this lesson we make a beginning dealing with nouns. The Greek language has three declensions (ways of inflecting the endings). The first declension, the subject of this lesson, is the one of the α-roots. Words in this group usually end in an -η. We want to give you examples under 11.2 from the New Testament in which the various cases of a word of this declension are used. For the singular we employ examples with the word ἀρχή. This word means ‘beginning’ and can denote both the beginning of something in general and the beginning of the cosmos. Just take a look at the examples. For the plural we use the word ἐντολή. This word means ‘commandment’.

11.2 Examples from the New Testament with nouns of the first declension ending in -η

ἀρχή τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ	Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God. (Mark 1. 1)	ἀρχή- 1 st c. sing., εὐαγγελίου- 2 nd c. sing. < εὐαγγέλιον (neut.)- gospel, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ- 2 nd c. < Ἰησοῦς Χρισ- τός, υἱοῦ- 2 nd c. sing. < υἱός- son, θεοῦ- 2 nd c. sing. < θεός- God
ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς	He was a murderer from [the] beginning. (John 8. 44)	ἐκεῖνος-that (one) ,ἀνθρωποκτόνος- mur- derer (lit. human killer), ἀπό-(+ 2 nd c.) from, ἀρχῆς- 2 nd c. sing.
ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν	In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. (John 1. 1, 2)	ἀρχῇ- 3 rd c. sing., οὗτος -this

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ταύτην ἐποίησεν *ἀρχήν*
τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς

This beginning of signs
Jesus did (i.e. this was his
first sign). (John 2. 11)

ταύτην- 4th c. sing. f. <
οὗτος, ἐποίησεν- 3rd p.
sing. aorist < ποιέω-I do,
make (this tense will be
yet dealt with!) ἀρχήν-
4th c. sing., σημείων- 2nd
c. pl. < σημεῖον (neut.)-
sign

καὶ αἱ *ἐντολαί* αὐτοῦ
βαρεῖται οὐκ εἰσὶν

And His commandments
are not heavy. (1 John 5.
3)

ἐντολαί- 1st c. pl. <
ἐντολή (f.)- com-
mandment, βαρεῖται- 1st
c. pl. f. < βαρύς-
(adjective) heavy (N.B.
Remember that an
adjective takes on the
same case, gender and
number as the word it
belongs to!)

ἡ περιτομή οὐδέν
ἐστίν, καὶ ἡ ἀκρο-
βυστία οὐδέν ἐστίν,
ἀλλὰ τήρησις *ἐντολῶν*
θεοῦ

Circumcision is nothing
and the foreskin is
nothing, but keeping
God's commandments. (1
Cor. 7. 19)

περιτομή (f.)-circum-
cision (lit. the cutting
[τομή] about [περι]),
οὐδέν- nothing,
ἀκροβυστία (f.)-
foreskin, prepuce,
τήρησις (f.)- keeping,
ἐντολῶν- 2nd c. pl.

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ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν
ἐντολαῖς ὅλος ὁ νόμος
κρέματα καὶ οἱ
προφήται

On these two command-
ments hangs the entire
law and the prophets.
(Matt. 22. 40)

ταύταις- 3rd c. pl. <
οὗτος- this that, δυσὶν-
3rd c. pl. < δύο- two,
ἐντολαῖς- 3rd c. pl.,
ὅλος- 1st c. sing. m. <
ὅλος- (adjective) whole,
entire, νόμος (m.)- law,
κρέματα- 3rd p. sing.
pres. tense κρεμάννυμι- I
hang (this form is
different from the normal
simple pres. tense),
προφήται- 1st c. pl.<
προφήτης (m.)- prophet

ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτε με, τὰς
ἐντολάς τὰς ἐμὰς
τηρήσετε

If you love Me, you will
keep my commandments.
(John 14. 15)

ἐὰν-if, ἀγαπάω-I love,
ἐμὰς- 4th c. pl. f. < ἐμός-
(possessive pronoun) my,
τηρήσετε- 2nd p. pl. fut.
tense τηρέω- I keep, I
maintain

11.3 Overview of the inflexion of nouns of the first declension ending in -η.

We now list the forms of the first declension noun ending in -η. We use the two words from the examples given under 11.2. The endings are written *in bold italics*. Of other nouns ending in -η you can form the different cases by attaching these endings to the root (the word without the -η).

1 st	c. sin.	ἀρχή
2 nd	c. sin.	ἀρχῆς
3 rd	c. sin.	ἀρχῆ
4 th	c. sin.	ἀρχήν

1 st	c. pl.	ἐντολαί
2 nd	c. pl.	ἐντολῶν
3 rd	c. pl.	ἐντολαῖς
4 th	c. pl.	ἐντολάς

11.4 The fifth case

In Greek there is another case so far not mentioned. This is the fifth case or *vocativus*. This case is used when somebody is addressed directly. So in the sentence ‘brother, come here’ the word for brother is written in the fifth case. When discussing a particular declension we

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will treat the fifth case separately. In the first declension the fifth case takes on the same form as the first one, both in the singular and in the plural. Therefore the fifth case has as endings:

singular	-η
plural	-αι

11.5 Homework

a) Give the four cases plural of ἀρχή and the four cases singular of ἐντολαί.

b) Translate the following sentences.

1. οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖόν ἐστιν τῆς τροφῆς;
2. πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;
3. εἶπεν διὰ παραβολῆς...
4. ἤμεθα δὲ αἱ πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ διακόσιαι ἑβδομήκοντα ἕξ.
5. ἐτήρουν τὴν φυλακὴν.
6. τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ...;
7. οὔτε γὰρ περιτομὴ τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία...
8. καὶ σὺ, Βηθλέεμ, γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ..
9. πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν.
10. ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς...

οὐχί- certainly not, not at all (stronger negation than οὐ), πλεῖον- (+ 2nd c.) more, τροφή (f.)- food, μένω- I stay, εἶπεν- 3rd p. sing. aor.: 'he spoke', διὰ- (+ 2nd c.) through, διακόσιαι- two hundred, ἑβδομήκοντα- seventy (is not inflected), ἕξ- six (is not inflected), ἐτήρουν- 3rd p. pl. simple past tense < τηρέω: 'they guarded', χωρίζω- I separate, οὔτε- and not, οὔτε ... οὔτε- neither ... nor, τί=τι (The accent here has no bearing on the meaning, but is due to the following word!), Βηθλέεμ- Bethlehem, οὐδαμῶς- certainly not, not at all, ἐλαχίστη- least (the degrees of comparison will be treated later), ὡς- as, such as, ἄγκυραν- 4th c. sing. < ἄγκυρα (f.)- anchor

11.6 New words

ἀρχή (f.)	- beginning
εὐαγγέλιον (neut.)	- gospel (lit. good message (ἀγγέλιον) [go < good (εὐ); spel < to spell=speak])
ἐκεῖνος	- that (one)
ἀνθρωποκτόνος (m.)	- murderer
οὗτος	- this
σημεῖον (neut.)	- token, sign
ἐντολή (f.)	- commandment
βαρὺς	- (adjective) heavy
περιτομή (f.)	- circumcision
οὐδέν	- nothing
ἀκροβυστία (f.)	- foreskin
τήρησις (f.)	- keeping, maintaining

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δύο	- two
ὅλος	- (adjective) entire
νόμος (m.)	- law
κρεμάννυμι	- I hang (transitive)
προφήτης (m.)	- prophet
ἐάν	- if
ἀγαπάω	- I love (with godly/divine love)
ἐμός	- my (adjective)
τηρέω	- I keep, I maintain
οὐχί	- certainly not, not at all (stronger negation than οὐ)
πλείον	- (+ 2 nd c.) more
τροφή (f.)	- food
μένω	- I stay
διά	- (+ 2 nd c.) through
διακόσια	- two hundred
ἑβδομήκοντα	- seventy (is not inflected)
ἕξ	- six (is not inflected)
χωρίζω	- I separate
οὔτε	- and not
οὔτε ... οὔτε	- neither ... nor
Βηθλέεμ	- Bethlehem
οὐδαμῶς	- certainly not, not at all
ὥς	- (such) as
ἄγκυρα (f.)	- anchor

11.7 The background of the New Testament: The Greek Religion

In this lesson we broach the subject of Greek religion. The Greeks venerated many gods and goddesses. Zeus (Ζεὺς, 2nd c. Διός, 4th c. Δία) was the supreme god. The gods were depicted anthropomorphically, that is to say in human form. It was believed that certain gods and goddesses were married and had children. Also it was said that the gods had human emotions. Their acts could be motivated by feelings of envy, hatred or love. Sometimes the gods waged war among themselves. Also they were believed to take sides in human conflicts on earth. In fighting each other the gods could be wounded, but they could not die from their wounds. According to mythological accounts the gods sometimes entered into affairs with human women. The children from such relations were taken up into the pantheon as half gods. A well-known example of such a half god was Heracles, son of Zeus and a mortal woman named Alcmena.

The sanctuary of a god consisted of two parts, a large court with trees or fountains dedicated to him and the actual sanctuary. This was a building with rich decorations in the form of wrought pillars and depictions of mythological stories on the front. In the building there was place for a statue of the god and an altar. Rituals such as the sacrificing of animals or the pouring out of wine oblations were carried out to appease the deity. Oblations were also offered at home. At the beginning of the meal people would sprinkle a few drops of wine on the table while praying to the god. Prayers were usually standard formularies.

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The Greeks believed in the afterlife. Also they believed in a judgment over our acts here on earth and in reward and punishment in the hereafter. But by believing in the gods and serving them one could still never be sure of a good life after death. A solution to this was introduced by the mystery cults brought from the far East. Through initiation into a mystery cult one could enact a figurative death and so during one's life effect an eternal future.

Greek religion was also spread outside of Greece, for instance in the colonies. In the New Testament in Acts 14 it is described how at Lystra Paul and Barnabas were considered to be the gods Hermes and Zeus. In verse 12 is mentioned that they believed Paul to be Hermes (Mercurius in Latin [Zeus was called Jupiter by the Romans]), because he was the chief speaker. For Hermes was considered to be the messenger of the gods. In verse 13 the priest of Zeus is mentioned.

In the city of Ephesus the goddess Artemis (Ἄρτεμις) was celebrated widely, as legend had it that a statue had fallen from heaven there. The silver smiths at Ephesus earned a considerable sum of money from the manufacture and sale of silver templets dedicated to Artemis. Travelers to this metropolis bought this form of art (see Acts 19. 24- 28).

NOTES: