

Chapter 5

The Verb εἰμι - "I am" (part 1)

5.1 In chapter 3 we met the basic pattern for the majority of Greek verbs. However, Greek, like most languages, has some irregular verbs which do not abide by the rules. The verb "to be" is irregular in nearly all Indo-European languages.

5.2 The pattern for the Present Indicative of εἰμι is

I am	εἰμι	ἐσμεν	we are
you are	εἶ	ἐστε	y'all are
he/she/it is	ἐστιν	εἰσιν	they are

NOTE that "you are" - εἶ - is written with a circumflex accent.

This is one of the few times in which it is important to write the accent.

εἰ with no accent is a different word, meaning "if"

REMEMBER :

$$\begin{array}{lll} \tilde{\epsilon}\imath\text{ with a hat} & = & \text{"you are"} \\ \epsilon\imath\text{ without a hat} & = & \text{"if"} \end{array}$$

Depending on the font you use for viewing and printing, the circumflex may look either like a tilde, or like the (more conventional) arc above the vowel and the breathing.

When writing by hand, make the circumflex like an arc.

Practice until you can read aloud and translate easily

1. εἰ νίος εἶ του θεου . . . If you are the Son of God . . . (*Matt. 4:6*)
2. αὐτος ἐστιν ὁ Χριστος. He is (the) Christ. (*Matt. 16:20*)
3. καὶ αὐτοι ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ εἰσιν And they are in the world. (*John 17:11*)
4. ἐγώ δύκ εἰμι ὁ Χριστος. I am not the Christ. (*stress on "I"*) (*John 1:20*)
5. θεου εἰμι νίος . . . I am the Son of God. (*stress on "God"*) (*Matt. 27:43*)
6. ἐστε ἀποστολοι ; Are you (plural) apostles?
7. ἐσμεν νυν νίοι του θεου. Now we are sons (children) of God.
8. ἐγώ ἀνθρωπος εἰμι . . . I am a man . . . (*Matt. 8:9*)
9. ὁ Ἰησους ἐστιν ὁ κυριος του κοσμου. Jesus is the Lord of the world.
10. ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεος του Αβρααμ I am the God of Abraham, and the God (of) Isaac
και ὁ θεος Ἰσαακ και ὁ θεος Ἰακωβ. and the God (of) Jacob. (*Matt. 22:32, Exodus 3:6*)

5.3 It will be useful here to learn how to express something that took place in the past.

For now, we will learn just the Third Person Imperfect Indicative of εἰμι

he/she/it was ἤν ήσαν they were

Practice until you can read aloud and translate easily

1. ὁ ἀνθρωπος ἤν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ. The man was in the house.
2. οἱ ἄγγελοι ήσαν ἐν τοις οὐρανοις. The angels were in the heavens.
3. ὁ Πετρος ἀποστολος ἤν. Peter was an apostle.
4. αὐτος ἤν διακονος, και νυν ἐστιν πρεσβυτερος. He was a deacon and now he is an elder.
5. αὐτοι ήσαν δουλοι, ἀλλα νυν εἰσιν ἀδελφοι. They were slaves but now they are brothers.
6. ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ ἤν. He was in the world. (*John 1:10*)
7. Ἰωαννης και Ἰακωβος ἀδελφοι ήσαν. John and James were brothers.
8. Ἀνδρεας ἤν ὁ ἀδελφος του Πετρου. Andrew was the brother of Peter.
9. οἱ ἀποστολοι ήσαν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ του Πετρου. The apostles were in Peter's house.

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| 19. ὁ Ἰωαννῆς ἦν δουλος ; | Was John a slave? |
| Οὐ. ὁ Ἰωαννῆς ἦν ἀποστολος. | No. John was an apostle. |

5.4 As you probably noticed in the practice sentences, the verb "to be" acts similarly to an equals sign. It does not take an accusative, but links two or more words both of which are in the nominative. The verb "to be" (and a few others, such as "to become") is not transitive - it does not have a subject and an object, but a subject and a **Predicate Nominative**. It is classed as a "**copula**" - a linking verb.

Greek word-order is more variable than English.

English word-order is dictated by the sequence Subject - Verb - Object.

"The dog chased the cat." and "The cat chased the dog." describe two very different events.

Because the endings of the Greek nouns and pronouns indicate the subject (nominative), the object (accusative), and the indirect object (dative), Greek can move words around within a sentence without changing the sense.

e.g. οἱ δουλοι εἰσιν ἀνθρωποι.
 οἱ δουλοι ἀνθρωποι εἰσιν.

Both sentences state that the slaves are human beings.

ἀνθρωποι εἰσιν οἱ δουλοι.

also states that the slaves are human beings, but by positioning ἀνθρωποι at the start of the sentence, the speaker is probably stressing their humanity.

The first word(s) of a Greek sentence are usually what is uppermost in the speaker's mind.

However, when a Greek sentence starts with ἔστιν, εἰσιν, ἦν, or ἦσαν, it is usually best translated by the equivalent English "There is . . ." , "There are . . ." , "There was . . ." or "There were . . ."

e.g. ἦν δουλος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ There was a slave in the house.

There is sometimes a question of how to distinguish between the subject e.g. οἱ δουλοι and the predicate nominative e.g. ἀνθρωποι.

5.5 How to find the Subject

In the example above, although the verb links both slaves and men, it is not exactly equivalent to an equals sign - "The slaves are men.", but it is not true to say that "Men are slaves." Some, but not all, men are slaves.

Greek has a set of rules of precedence for dealing with two nominative nouns or their equivalents.

1. If one of the nominatives is a pronoun, it is always the subject.

This is also the rule if the pronoun is "hidden" in the verb - ἔστιν contains the pronouns he/she/it.

e.g. αὐτος ἔστιν δουλος. He is a slave.
 δουλος ἔστιν. He is a slave.

2. If one of the nominatives is a proper noun (someone's name), or has a definite article, and the other is a common noun (name of a thing, etc.) the proper noun or the noun with the article is the subject.

e.g. Πέτρος ἀποστολος ἔστιν. Peter is an apostle.
 ὁ ἀνθρωπος ἀποστολος ἔστιν. The man is an apostle.

3. If both are proper nouns or have definite articles, or if neither is a proper noun or has a definite article, the first in word order is the subject.

e.g. ἀποστολος ἀνθρωπος ἔστιν. An apostle is a man.

In John 1:1 we read "καὶ θεος ἦν ὁ λογος."

From the rules above, the subject is "ὁ λογος", so the sentence should be translated "The Word was God."

5.6 Sentences for reading and translation

1. ὁ πρεσβυτερος ἦν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ, νῦν δε ἐν τῷ ἀγρῳ ἔστιν.
2. εἰσιν οἱ Φαρισαιοι και οἱ Σαδδουκαιοι ἐν τοις οὐρανοις ;
3. εἰμι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ, ὁ δε λεπρος ἐν τῷ ἀγρῳ ἔστιν.
4. οὐκ εῖ δουλος ἄλλ' εῖ διακονος των πρεσβυτερων.
5. ὁ διακονος ἔστιν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ και λαμβανει τους παραλυτικους και τους λεπρους.

6. ὁ ἥλιος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἔστιν ἀλλ' οἱ ὄφθαλμοι τῶν τυφλῶν οὐ βλεπουσιν αὐτὸν.
7. ἐσμεν δούλοι του θεού ἀλλ' οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι δούλοι του νομού εἰσιν.
8. Φαρισαῖοι, ἔστε ἀδελφοί των Σαδδουκαίων;
9. οἱ ὄφθαλμοι του θεού ἐπὶ τοῖς τυφλοῖς εἰσιν.
10. Στεφανος διακονος ἡν, Πετρος δε και Ἰακωβος πρεσβυτεροι ἡσαν.

5.7 Writing Practice : Write the Greek several times, while saying aloud (Matt. 6:9-10)

<p>πατερ ἡμών ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου, ἐλθετω ἡ βασιλεία σου,</p>	<p>Our Father, the (one) in the heavens, let your name be sanctified, let your kingdom come,</p>
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πατερ is the Vocative singular of πατηρ "father"

The -ητω and -ετω endings are third person imperatives - "Let someone do something" or "Let something happen" or "It must happen." with the sense of giving an order, rather than just permission.

5.8 New Testament Passages to read and translate: Matthew 4:5-6a, Revelation 1:8, John 1:1-2
In your Greek New Testament, read the passages aloud several times until you can read them without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the translation helps to translate them.

παραλαμβανει	he/she/it takes along
εἰς τὴν ἀγιαν πόλιν	into the holy city
ἔστησεν	he stood (something), placed
το περυγιον	the wing, corner
του ἱερού	of the temple
βαλε	throw!
σεαυτον	yourself
κατω	downwards
το	the (<i>used with a neuter noun</i>)
ὁ ὁν	the (one) being, i.e. "he who is"
ὁ ἐρχομενος	"he who is coming"
παντωκρατωρ	all-powerful, Almighty
ἐν ἀρχῃ	in (the) beginning
ούτος	this (one) (<i>masculine</i>) - "he"

5.9 Vocabulary to learn

εἰμί	I am	ἡν	he/she/it was	ἡσαν	they were
ὁ ἄγρος		field		(hence agriculture)	
ὁ διάβολος		devil		(hence diabolic)	
ὁ ἥλιος		sun		(the element Helium was discovered in the sun)	
ὁ Ἰουδαῖος		Jew			
ὁ λεπρός		leper			
ὁ νόμος		law	(Deuteronomy recounts the second - δευτερος - giving of the Law)		
ὁ οἶκος		house	("Oeconomy" - now "economy" was how one ran a household)		
ὁ ὄφθαλμος		eye		(hence the English words beginning ophtha-)	
ὁ παραλυτικός		paralytic			
ὁ Σαδδουκαῖος		Sadducee			
ὁ τυφλός		blind (man)	(losing one's sight is a "tough loss")		
ὁ Φαρισαῖος		Pharisee			
εἰ		if			
νῦν		now			
τότε		then			