

Chapter 42

The Genitive Absolute

42.1 In this chapter we will start by reviewing some of the uses of participles, and then meet a special use of participles.

As we have seen, participles can be used as adjectives to describe nouns.

For a review of previous uses :

The Nominative is used for the subject of a sentence or clause.

e.g. περιπατων δε παρα την θαλασσαν ο Ιησους ειδεν δυο αδελφους.

Jesus, walking beside the sea, saw two brothers.

The Accusative is used for the object of a sentence or clause.

e.g. ο Ιωαννης βλεπει τον Ιησουν ερχομενον.

John sees Jesus coming.

The Dative is used for the indirect object of a sentence or clause.

e.g. και προσεκυνησαν τω θεω τω καθημενω επι τω θρονω. (Rev. 19:4)

And they bowed down to God, (to the one) sitting on the throne.

42.2 The Genitive Absolute

A very common construction in Greek uses the Genitive to describe "concomitant circumstances".

Consider the sentences

1. *"While Jesus was walking in the temple he saw Peter."*

The core event is "Jesus saw Peter."

Greek would use a participle in the Nominative : "Jesus, walking in the temple, saw Peter."

ο Ιησους περιπατων εν τω ιερω ειδεν τον Πετρον.

2. *"Jesus saw Peter while he (Peter) was walking in the temple."*

Greek would use a participle in the Accusative. : "Jesus saw Peter walking in the temple."

ο Ιησους ειδεν τον εν τω ιερω περιπατουντα Πετρον.

3. *"While Jesus was walking in the temple, Peter saw Andrew."*

The core event is "Peter saw Andrew."

"Jesus" is neither the subject nor the object of the sentence.

The phrase "While Jesus was walking in the temple" tells us something about the circumstances of the core event - in this case, the timing at which it took place. However, it can be cut off from the rest of the sentence without affecting the statement of the core event.

What case can be used for the participle in this sentence?

To use the Nominative would imply that it was Peter who was walking.

To use the Accusative would imply that it was Andrew who was walking.

To use the Dative would lead us to think that it was the temple that was walking.

There is only the Genitive left, so Greek uses the Genitive.

What case can be used for the noun "Jesus" in this sentence?

To use the Nominative would imply that "Jesus" is the subject.

To use the Accusative would imply that "Jesus" is the object.

To use the Dative would lead us to think "Peter" was doing something "to Jesus".

There is only the Genitive left, so Greek uses the Genitive.

For both the participle and the noun there is only the Genitive left, so Greek uses the Genitive for this construction.

The description "absolute" is from the Latin "ab" (from) and "solutus" (free, loose, independent).

It tells us that the phrase can be completely cut off from the rest of the sentence without affecting the meaning of the core event.

A Present Participle implies circumstances happening at the same time as the main verb

An Aorist Participle implies circumstances happening prior to the time of the main verb.

42.3 Identification and Translation of Genitive Absolutes

Whenever we see a participle-noun pair with both participle and noun in the Genitive - we probably have a Genitive Absolute.

For beginners, it may be easiest to translate the main clause and the Genitive Absolute separately and then fit them together.

Remember

A present participle implies an ongoing event, an aorist participle implies a completed event.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. τουτων δε πορευομενων ηρξατο
ο Ιησους λεγειν τοις οχλοις
περι Ιωαννου. While those (men) were travelling, Jesus began
to speak to the crowds
about John. (Matt. 11:7)
2. αυτων δε εξερχομενων ιδου
προσηνεγκαν αυτω
ανθρωπον κωφον δαιμονιζομενον. While they were going out, behold,
they (*other people*) brought to him
a deaf mute possessed (man). (Matt. 9:32)
3. και υστερησαντος οινου λεγει η μητηρ
του Ιησου προς αυτον,
Οινον ουκ εχουσιν. After the wine fell short, the mother of Jesus said
(says) to him,
They don't have (any) wine." (John 2:3)
4. και εκπορευομενων αυτων απο Ιεριχω
ηκολουθησεν αυτω οχλος. When they had gone (out) away from Jericho
a crowd followed him. (Matt. 20:29)
5. του δε Ιησου γενομενου εν Βηθανια
εν οικια Σιμωνος του λεπρου,
προσηλθον αυτω γυνη. When Jesus was in Bethany,
in the house of Simon the leper
a woman came towards him. (Matt. 26:6)
6. ετι αυτου λαλουντος ερχονται απο του
αρχισυναγωγου λεγοντες οτι
Η θυγατηρ σου απεθανεν. While he was still speaking, they come from
the president of the synagogue, saying (that)
"Your daughter died." (Mark 5:35)
7. και οντος του Πιτρου κατω εν τη αυλη
ερχεται παιδισκη του αρχιερεως. And while Peter is below in the courtyard, a
servant girl of the High Priest comes. (see Mark 14:66)
8. καταβαντος δε αυτου απο του ορους
ηκολουθησαν αυτω οχλοι. After he came down from the mountain
crowds followed him. (Matt. 8:1)
9. και ελθοντος αυτου εις το ιερον
προσηλθον αυτω διδασκοντι
οι αρχιερεις και οι πρεσβυτεροι του λαου. After he had gone into the temple
the high priests and the elders went
to him (while he was) teaching. (Matt. 21:23)
10. ταυτα αυτου λαλουντος αυτοις
ιδου αρχων ελθων προσεκυνει αυτω. While he was saying these things to them, behold
a leader, having come, bowed down to him.
(Matt. 9:18)

42.4 Sentences for reading and translation

1. εισελθοντος δε αυτου εις Καφαρναουμ προσηλθεν αυτω εκατονταρχος. (Matt. 8:5)
2. και γενομενου σαββατου ηρξατο διδασκειν εν τη συναγωγη. (Mark 6:2)
3. και γενομενης ημερας ευκαιρου οτε Ηρωδης δειπνον εποιησεν. (Mark 6:21)
4. καθημενου δε αυτου επι του Όρους των Ελαιων προσηλθον αυτω οι μαθηται
κατ' ιδιαν. (Matt. 24:3)
5. και γενομενης ωρας εκτης σκοτος εγενετο επι την γην εως ωρας ενατης.
(see Mark 15:33)
6. και διαγενομενου του σαββατου Μαρια . . και Σαλωμη ηγορασαν αρωματα.
(Mark 16:1)
7. και εξελθοντος αυτου εκ του πλοιου ευθυσ υπηνητησεν αυτω εκ των μνημειων
ανθρωπος εν πνευνατι ακαθαρτω. (Mark 5:2)
8. καθημενου δε αυτου επι του βηματος απεστειλεν προς αυτον η γυνη αυτου.
(Matt. 27:19)
9. ταυτα δε αυτου λεγοντος εγενετο νεφελη και επεσκιαζεν αυτους. (Luke 9:34)

10. ἐπι λαλουντος του Πητρου τα ρηματα ταυτα ἐπεπεσεν το πνευμα το ἅγιον
ἐπι παντας τους ἀκουοντας τον λογον. (Acts 10:44)

42.5 Writing Practice : Write the Greek, while saying aloud (Matt. 5:8-10)

μακαριοι οἱ καθαροι τη καρδια,	Happy are the clean in heart
ὅτι αὐτοι τον θεον ὁψονται.	for they shall see God
μακαριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοι,	Happy are the ones making peace
ὅτι αὐτοι υἱοι θεου κληθησονται.	for they shall be called sons of God.
μακαριοι οἱ δεδιωγμενοι	Happy are the ones "having been persecuted"
ἐνεκεν δικαιοσυνης,	<i>who have been persecuted</i> on account of righteousness
ὅτι αὐτων ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεια των οὐρανων.	for theirs is the Kingdom of the heavens.

42.6 New Testament Passages for reading and translation : Mark 14:3, Mark 14:22-25

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.

Βηθανια	Bethany
ἡ ναρδος	spikenard (aromatic Indian plant, used for perfume)
πιστικος, -η, -ον	trustworthy - hence genuine, pure
πολυτελος, -η, -ον	costly, very expensive
συντριψασα	having broken (<i>Aorist Participle Nom. Fem. of συντριβω - I break</i>)
ἔδωκεν	he gave (<i>Aorist of δίδωμι - I give</i>)
λαβετε	take ! (<i>Second Person plural Aorist Imperative of λαμβανω - I take</i>)
ἐπιον	they drank (<i>Aorist of πινω - I drink</i>)
ἐκχυννομενον	"being poured out" = shed (<i>Present Passive Participle of ἐκχυννω - a later form of ἐκχεω</i>)
γεννηματος	produce (<i>Gen. of το γεννημα - offspring, from γινομαι - I become</i>)

42.7 Vocabulary to learn

δαιμονίζομαι	I am demon-possessed, "demonized"
διαγίνομαι	pass (time), spend time, elapse
ἐπισκιάζω	I overshadow, cast a shadow upon
κλάω	I break
το ἀλάβαστρον	alabaster, vessel made of alabaster
ἡ αὐλή	court-yard
ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος	president of a synagogue
το ἄρωμα	spice
ἡ παιδίσκη	servant girl, maidservant
ἕκτος, -η, -ον	sixth
ἕνατος, -η, -ον	ninth
εὐκαιρος, -α, -ον	well-timed, convenient
κωφός, -η, -ον	deaf, mute