

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. περιπατῶν δὲ παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδεν δύο ἀδελφούς.

Jesus, walking beside the sea, saw two brothers.

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

e.g. ὁ Ἰωάννης βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον.

John sees Jesus coming.

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

e.g. καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ. (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."

ὁ Ἰησοῦς περιπατῶν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εἶδεν τὸν Πέτρον.

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."

ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδεν τὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ περιπατοῦντα Πέτρον.

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. τούτων δὲ πορευομένων ἤρξατο
ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις
περὶ Ἰωάννου. While those (men) were travelling, Jesus began
to speak to the crowds
about John. (Matt. 11:7)
2. αὐτῶν δὲ ἐξερχομένων ἰδοὺ
προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ
ἄνθρωπον κωφὸν δαιμονιζόμενον. While they were going out, behold,
they (*other people*) brought to him
a deaf mute possessed (man). (Matt. 9:32)
3. καὶ ὑστερήσαντος οἴνου λέγει ἡ μήτηρ
τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πρὸς αὐτόν,
Οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν. After the wine fell short, the mother of Jesus said
(says) to him,
They don't have (any) wine." (John 2:3)
4. καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἰεριχῶ
ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος. When they had gone (out) away from Jericho
a crowd followed him. (Matt. 20:29)
5. τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γενομένου ἐν Βηθανία
ἐν οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ,
προσῆλθον αὐτῷ γυνή. When Jesus was in Bethany,
in the house of Simon the leper
a woman came towards him. (Matt. 26:6)
6. ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἔρχονται ἀπὸ τοῦ
ἀρχισυναγώγου λέγοντες ὅτι
Ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἀπέθανεν. While he was still speaking, they come from
the president of the synagogue, saying (that)
"Your daughter died." (Mark 5:35)
7. καὶ ὄντος τοῦ Πέτρου κάτω ἐν τῇ
αὐλῇ ἔρχεται παιδίσκη τοῦ ἀρχιερέως. And while Peter is below in the courtyard, a
servant girl of the High Priest comes. (see Mark 14:66)
8. καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους
ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι. After he came down from the mountain
crowds followed him. (Matt. 8:1)
9. καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἱερόν
προσῆλθον αὐτῷ διδάσκοντι οἱ
ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ. After he had gone into the temple
the high priests and the elders of the people went
to him (while he was) teaching. (Matt. 21:23)
10. ταῦτα αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος αὐτοῖς
ἰδοὺ ἄρχων ἐλθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ. 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. εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος. (Matt. 8:5)
2. καὶ γενομένου σαββάτου ἤρξατο διδάσκειν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. (Mark 6:2)
3. καὶ γενομένης ἡμέρας εὐκαιροῦ ὅτε Ἡρώδης . . . δεῖπνον ἐποίησεν. (Mark 6:21)
4. καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν Ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ
κατ' ἰδίαν. (Matt. 24:3)
5. καὶ γενομένης ὥρας ἕκτης σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης.
(see Mark 15:33)
6. καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία . . . καὶ Σαλώμη ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα.
(Mark 16:1)
7. καὶ ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου εὐθὺς ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων
ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ. (Mark 5:2)
8. καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ.
(Matt. 27:19)
9. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς. (Luke 9:34)

10. ἔτι λαλοῦντος τοῦ Πέτρου τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα ἐπέπεσεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντας τὸν λόγον. (Acts 10:44)

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

μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῆ καρδία,	Happy are the clean in heart
ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.	for they shall see God.
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί,	Happy are the ones making peace
ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθῆσονται.	for they shall be called sons of God.
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης,	Happy are the ones "having been persecuted"
	<i>who have been persecuted</i> on account of righteousness
ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.	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.

Βηθανία	Bethany
ἡ νάρδος	spikenard (aromatic Indian plant, used for perfume)
πιστικός, -η, -ον	trustworthy - hence genuine, pure
πολυτελός, -η, -ον	costly, very expensive
συντρίψασα	having broken (<i>Aorist Participle Nom. Fem. of συντρίβω - I break</i>)
ἔδωκεν	he gave (<i>Aorist of δίδωμι - I give</i>)
λάβετε	take ! (<i>Second Person plural Aorist Imperative of λαμβάνω - I take</i>)
ἔπιον	they drank (<i>Aorist of πίνω - I drink</i>)
ἐκχυννόμενον	"being poured out" = shed (<i>Present Passive Participle of ἐκχύννω - a later form of ἐκχέω</i>)
γενήματος	produce (<i>Gen. of τὸ γέννημα - offspring, from γεννάω - I beget</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