Phrases and Clauses

Thoughts are more generally expressed in groups of words and not just a single word. In Bible study and phrasing, we need to think in larger chunks of words.

ENGLISH

12.1 A **dependent** construction is one that can't grammatically stand on its own. In other words, it doesn't make sense by itself. It isn't a sentence. Do any of the following form a sentence?

> after the rain stops

> which I read to you

No they don't, and therefore they are **dependent** or **subordinate** clauses. Normally, the author's main thought is in the independent clause, and the dependent clause modifies a main thought. This distinction will be especially important for Phrasing.

12.2 An **independent** clause is a clause that can stand on its own as a sentence.

> After the rain stops, *I will dry the car.*

> *Please give me the book,* which I read to you.

12.3 A **phrase** is a group of related words that don't have a subject or a finite verb. It is a dependewnt construction.

> *After going home,* the rain stopped.

> *Because of love,* I will serve God.

12.4 **Clauses** are like phrases except that they have a finite verb and its subject.

> *After I went home,* the rain stopped.

Clauses can be either dependent (as above) or independent (i.e., a sentence).

12.5 A phrase or clause is often categorized by the type of word it begins with, such as a preposition phrase. Other times a phrase is categorized by its function, such as "adverbial" or "temporal."

12.6 A **relative pronoun** is a noun substitute: who(m); whose; that; which; what(ever).

> The man *who* is sitting at the table is my pastor.

The relative pronoun introduces a **relative clause**, which is comprised of the relative pronoun, a verb and its subject, and possibly other modfiers.

> The disciple *whom Jesus loved* was not martyred.

The **antecedent** is the word replaced by the pronoun. The antecedent of "whom" in the preceding example is "disciple."

In the sentence above, the relative pronoun is the direct object of the verb "loved." If you are unsure of the function of the relative pronoun, replace it with its antecedent.

> "Whom Jesus loved" → "disciple Jesus loved" → "Jesus loved disciple"

12.7 The relative clause can function as a noun ("substantival") or as an adjective ("attributive").

> *Who is not against us* is for us.

> Those *who are not for us* are against us.

GREEK NOUN PHRASES

12.8 By "noun phrases" I am thinking of phrases that are not preposi-
tional or participial but nonetheless have an internally consistent
meaning. It's important to view them as units of thought when
phrasing.

12.9 Dative noun phrases can stand somewhat on their own.

Οὐαὶ   τῷ   κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν   σκανδάλων.
woe   *to the world*   from   the   enticements
Woe *to the world* because of the things that cause people to sin!
(Matt 18:7)

12.10 Genitive noun phrases are generally modifying something.

δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ   πάσας τὰς βασιλείας   τοῦ κόσμου
he showed   him   all   the kingdoms   *of the world*
He showed him all the kingdoms *of the world (Matt 4:8).*

RELATIVE CLAUSES

12.11 The Greek **relative pronoun** is ὅς. Here is its paradigm (compared
to the article). Memorization is recommended. In most cases, the
pronoun is like the article but the τ is replaced by a rough breath-
ing.

	relative pronoun			*article*		
nom sg	ὅς	ἥ	ὅ	ὁ	ἡ	τό
gen sg	οὗ	ἧς	οὗ	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ
dat sg	ᾧ	ᾗ	ᾧ	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ
acc sg	ὅν	ἥν	ὅ	τόν	τήν	τό
n/v pl	οἵ	αἵ	ἅ	οἱ	αἱ	τά
gen pl	ὧν	ὧν	ὧν	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
dat pl	οἷς	αἷς	οἷς	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
acc pl	οὕς	ἅς	ἅ	τούς	τάς	τά

12.12 **Antecedent**. The relative pronoun must agree with its antecedent
in number and gender. So, for example, if the pronoun is mascu-
line plural, look for an antecedent that is masculine plural. This is

the linkeage that ties a pronoun to its antecedent. In phrasing, always connect the relative pronoun to its antecedent.

ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ

> ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ

in the Beloved.

> In him we have received redemption through his blood

ἠγαπημένῳ is singular masculine, so the relative ponoun ᾧ must also be singular masculine.

12.13 **Relative clauses** are comprised of the relative pronoun, a verb and its subject, and possibly other modifiers. The clause always starts with a relative pronoun.

καὶ ἔλεγεν· ὃς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω.
and he said *who has ears to hear* let him hear
And he said, "*Whoever has ears to hear*, let him hear" *(Mark 4:9).*

12.14 Two factors determine the form of the relative pronoun.

- Gender and number are determined by its antecedent.

- Case is determined by its function *inside the relative clause*. This is an important difference from the adjective. What the relative clause may (or may not) be modifying does not affect the case of the relative pronoun. Its case is determined by how it's used *inside* the relative clause.

  Think of the relative clause as its own sentence. If necessary, replace the relative pronoun with its antecedent, and then ask yourself, what function the relative pronoun is performing inside the relative clause. If it's the direct object of the verb, then it will be accusative. If the relative pronoun is the subject of the verb, it will be nominative.

  ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν … ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων
  the only having immortality *whom* saw *no one* of men
  who alone has immortality … whom *no one* has ever seen *(1 Tim 6:16)*

The relative pronoun ὅν is masculine singular because its ante-
cedent ὁ … ἔχων is masculine singular. ὅν is accusative because it
is the direct object of εἶδεν.

12.15 Relative clauses can be adjectival (*attributive*).

κατὰ   τὸν χρόνον ὃν   ἠκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων.
according to the   time   which he had learned from   the   wise men
according to the time *he had learned from the wise men (Matt 2:16)*

κατὰ τὸν χρόνον
            ὃν ἠκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων.

according to the time
            he had learned from the wise men

12.16 Relative clauses can also act as parts of speech, like a noun (*sub-
stantival*). What functions do the relative clauses perform in the
following sentences?

ὃς δ᾽ ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ,   οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται
who but ever he does and   he teaches this   great   he will be called
But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the
kingdom of heaven *(Matt 5:19).*

προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἤθελεν   αὐτός
he called   whom he wished   himself
He called those *whom he himself wanted (Mark 3:13).*

12.17 Indefinite. Relative pronouns can be changed to indefinite rela-
tive pronouns (e.g., to "whoever, whichever, whatever") when
they are followed by ἄν (or an alternate form such as ἐάν).

Matt 5:19 says, "Therefore *whoever* (ὃς ἐάν) relaxes one of the least
of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be
called least in the kingdom of heaven; but *whoever* (ὃς ἐὰν) does
them and teaches others, this person will be called great in the
kingdom of heaven."

Translation

12.18 **Add in words**. When Greek relative clauses function substanti-
vally, it's often necessary for the translator to add a word to the
clause to make better sounding English. For example, in the sen-
tence "Who will be first will be last," the relative clause "Who
will be first" is the subject of the verb "will be." To make the
translation smoother you could add a word such as a personal
pronoun, "*He* who will be first will be last," or, "the one who ...."

μέσος   ὑμῶν   ἕστηκεν   ὃν   ὑμεῖς   οὐκ   οἴδατε
midst   of you stands   whom you   not   know
NRSV: Among you stands *one* whom you do not know *(John 1:26).*

In this verse, the antecedent of ὅν is not expressed but only
implied. This is not that unusual.

12.19 **Substitution**. Because Greek is an inflected language, Greek writ-
ers are comfortable separating pronouns from their antecedents
by quite some distance. The linkage of the gender and number
would allow the Greek reader to identify the pronoun's anteced-
ent. However, English requires pronouns to be much closer to
their antecedent. Because of this difference, translators sometimes
substitute the antecedent for the pronoun if they think that the
English reader might not be able to identify the pronoun's ante-
cedent.

ὃ   γὰρ   ἀπέθανεν,   τῇ   ἁμαρτίᾳ   ἀπέθανεν   ἐφάπαξ
which for   he died,   to the sin   he died   once for all
ESV: The death he died, he died to sin once for all *(Rom 6:10)*

For the relative pronoun ὅ, the ESV substitutes "death."

12.20 **Long sentences**. Sometimes a Greek sentence is too long and
must be broken into smaller units for the sake of English style.
When this is done, the break often is made at the relative pronoun
and the pronoun is replaced with its antecedent. A word-for-
word translation of Romans 2:5b-6 reads like this:

ἀποκαλύψεως	δικαιοκρισίας	τοῦ θεοῦ	ὃς	ἀποδώσει
revelation	of righteous verdict	of God	who	he will give judgment

ἑκάστῳ	κατὰ	τὰ ἔργα	αὐτοῦ
to each	according to	the works	of him

There is no question as to the identity of the "who" (ὅς), especially since it immediately follows "God" (θεοῦ). However, if the translators feel that the sentence is too long and they decide to start a new sentence at ὅς, the "who" becomes separated from its antecedent.

- The NASB does not start a new sentence,

  who will render to each person according to his deeds.

- The ESV starts a new paragraph at v 6 and so it can't say "who."

  He will render to each one according to his works.

- The NIV supplies the antecedent of the relative pronoun.

  God "will repay each person according to what they have done."

12.21 Sometimes the pronoun refers back to an idea in general, or to a group of words. In Colossians 2:23, the antecedents of the pronoun ἅ translated "such regulations" are those specifically mentioned in v 21. "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" The NIV translates,

> *Such regulations* indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

12.22* **Attraction**. Greek, as is the case with any language, does not always follow its own rules. All spoken languages are in a constant state of flux, so nice, neat grammatical rules often break down.

This is the case with the relative pronoun. Its case is supposed to be determined by its function inside the relative clause, but some-

times the relative pronoun is the same case as its antecedent, as if it were modifying it. This is called "attraction."

Attraction usually happens when the relative pronoun occurs in the immediate proximity to the antecedent, when the antecedent is dative or genitive, and when the relative pronoun normally would be accusative.

ἤγγιζεν ὁ χρόνος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἧς ὡμολόγησεν ὁ θεὸς τῷ Ἀβραάμ
drew near the time of the promise *that* assured God to Abraham
The time of the promise *that* God assured to Abraham was drawing near *(Acts 7:17).*

The relative pronoun ἧς should have been the accusative ἥν because it's the direct object of ὡμολόγησεν, but it was attracted to the genitive case of its antecedent ἐπαγγελίας.

TYPES OF SENTENCES

12.23 There are different types of sentences, grammatically. Knowing the differences will help you in phrasing.

12.24 A **simple** sentence has one subject and one verb.

> I love Greek!

The subject and/or the verb can be compound.

> Hayden and I love Greek and Hebrew.

Hayden
   and   love Greek and Hebrew.
I

12.25 A **compound** sentence has two or more independent clauses connected with a coordinating conjunction or punctuation.

> Tyler loves Greek and Hayden loves Hebrew.

> Tyler loves Greek; Hayden loves Hebrew.

Tyler loves Greek
    and
Hayden loves Hebrew.

12.26 A **complex** sentence has one independent clause and one (or more) dependent clauses.

      Whenever I think back to Hebrew class, I start to sweat.

    Whenever I think back to Hebrew class,
I start to sweat.

12.27 A **compound-complex** sentence has two (or more) independent clauses and one (or more) dependent clauses.

      I went to class and Hayden went home because he was tired.

I went to class
    and
Hayden went home
         because he was tired.

12.28 Greek is a **hypotactic** language. This means that it tends to have a main clause with a series of dependent phrases or clauses phrases modifying it. Paul writes withg a hypotactic style.

English, and to a greater degree Hebrew, are **paratactic**. They are more linear, tending to link one independent clause to the next with coordinating conjunctions such as "and" and "but." Greek narrative in general and the Gospel of John in particular tend to be more paratactic.

The difference is important to note when phrasing.

VOCABULARY

εἰ	if (502)
ἄν	Untranslatable. Makes a word contingent (166)
ἐάν	if (348)

τότε	then (160)
ἤ	or; than (343)
τε	and (215)
μέν	on the one hand (178). Often left untranslated.
καθώς	as, even as (182)
οὕτως	thus, so; in this manner (208)
ὅς	who (whom) (1,398)

xxx total word occurrences out of 137,660 (xx%)