Chapter 13

Pronouns

There are 16,202 pronouns in the Greek Testament, but for the most part they are easy to translate.

ENGLISH

13.1   A **pronoun** is a word that replaces a noun. In the sentence, "It is red," "It" is a pronoun referring back to something.

A personal pronoun is a pronoun that replaces a personal noun, which is a noun referring to a person. In the sentence, "My name is Bill; I will learn Greek as well as possible," "I" is a personal pronoun referring to me, Bill.

The word that a pronoun refers back to, "Bill," is the **antecedent**.

13.2   **Person**. Pronouns can be first, second, or third person. We saw this same thing with verbs and their personal endings.

- First person refers to the person speaking ("I," "we").
- Second person refers to the person being spoken to ("you").
- Third person refers to that which is spoken about ("he," "she," "it," "they"). All nouns are considered third person.

As you can see on the next page, English personal pronouns are highly inflected.

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person		
			masculine	*feminine*	*neuter*
subjective sg	I	you	he	she	it
possessive sg[1]	my	your	his	her	its
objective sg	me	you	him	her	it
subjective pl	we	you	they		
possessive pl	our	your	their		
objective pl	us	you	them		

There's no easy way to distinguish between second person singular and plural ("you"). Sometimes I'll use the southern American expression "y'all" for the plural (although technically it's not plural) especially in doing the homework.[2]

13.3 Like the relative pronoun, the number and person of a personal pronoun are determined by its antecedent.

- The **number** of the pronoun is determined by the antecedent. Because "Bill" is singular, you would use "I" and not "we."

- The **person** of the pronoun is also determined by the antecedent. If the antecedent were the person speaking (first person), you use "I," not "you."

- There is no gender in the first and second person. "I" or "you" can be either a woman or a man. The third person pronoun has gender in the singular.

13.4 The **case** of a pronoun is determined by its function in the sentence. For example, if the pronoun is the subject of the sentence, you would use "I" and not "me" since "I" is in the subjective case. You would not say, "Me would like to eat now," because "me" is objective.

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[1] If the possessive forms are used substantivally, they are translated "mine," "yours," and "ours."

[2] In older English, "thou," "thee," and "thy, thine" were singular, and "ye," "you," and "your, yours" were plural.

GREEK FIRST AND SECOND PERSONAL PRONOUNS

13.5   The Greek personal pronouns function as they do in English. Number and gender are determined by the antecedent, and case by function.

13.6   You should memorize the first and second person personal pronouns. They are extremely common, occurring 11,139 times in the New Testament. The forms in parentheses are called the "emphatic" forms, but they have the same basic meaning as the nonemphatic.

	first person			*second person*	
nom sg	ἐγώ		I	σύ	you
gen sg	μου (ἐμοῦ)	my	σου (σοῦ)	your
dat sg	μοι (ἐμοί)	to me	σοι (σοί)	to you
acc sg	με (ἐμέ)	me	σε (σέ)	you
nom pl	ἡμεῖς	we	ὑμεῖς	you
gen pl	ἡμῶν	our	ὑμῶν	your
dat pl	ἡμῖν	to us	ὑμῖν	to you
acc pl	ἡμᾶς	us	ὑμᾶς	you

The Greek pronouns do not have gender in the first and second person, just like English.

As was the case with the article, my preference is that you memorize the paradigm, but at a minimum remember its GK number, #1609 (first person) and #5148 (secondperson). If you use Strong's numbers, as you will see in 13.8, every form has its own number, making it extremely difficult to memorize.

13.7   **Emphatic forms**. In the first person singular, the genitive, dative, and accusative cases will sometimes include an epsilon and an accent (ἐμοῦ, ἐμοί, ἐμέ). The second person singular pronoun will not add an epsilon but can add an accent (σοῦ, σοί, σέ). These accented forms are called the emphatic forms.

The emphatic and unemphatic forms have the same basic meaning. The emphatic form can be used when the author wants to be emphatic, often in contrasting one person with another.

ἐμοὶ μαθηταί ἐστε, ἐὰν ἀγάπην ἔχητε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.
to me disciples   you are   if   love   you have   to   one another
You are *my* disciples, if you have love for one another *(John 13:35)*.

Emphatic forms also tend to be used after prepositions without any emphasis in meaning.

ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ.
Thing   for   good   she has done   to   *me*
For she has done a beautiful thing to *me (Matt 26:10)*.

13.8   **Strong's numbers**. Strong assigned a different number for each inflected form, and separate numbers for the emphatic first person forms (in parentheses below) but not for the second person. Logos follows suit.

	first person	*Strong's*		*second person*	*Strong's*
nom sg	ἐγώ	1473		σύ	4771
gen sg	μου (ἐμοῦ)	3450	(1700)	σου (σοῦ)	4675
dat sg	μοι (ἐμοί)	3427	(1698)	σοι (σοί)	4671
acc sg	με (ἐμέ)	3165	(1691)	σε (σέ)	4571
nom pl	ἡμεῖς	2249		ὑμεῖς	5210
gen pl	ἡμῶν	2257		ὑμῶν	5216
dat pl	ἡμῖν	2254		ὑμῖν	5213
acc pl	ἡμᾶς	2248		ὑμᾶς	5209

Accordance connects all singular and plural forms of the first person to ἐγώ (GK #1609), and all the second person forms to σύ (GK #5148). Obviously, if you do not use Accordance or my interlinears, it is easier to memorize the Greek forms than nineteen Strong's numbers.

13.9   When the genitive of these pronouns is used to show possession, they generally follow the noun they modify.

ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου
Lord   *my*   and   God   *my*
My Lord and *my* God *(John 20:28)*.

This will not be visible in my reverse interlinear.

My	Lord		and	my	God	
μου	ὁ	κύριός̣	καὶ	μου	ὁ	θεός̣
r.gs.1	d.vsm	n.vsm	cj	r.gs.1	d.vsm	n.vsm
3836	3261	2779	1609	3836	3261	2536

THIRD PERSON PRONOUN

13.10 The Greek third person pronoun has gender in both the singular and plural. You may want to memorize this paradigm as well, or at least the word's GK (#899) or Strong's (#846) number.

	masc	*fem*	*neut*	*translation*		
nom sg	αὐτός	αὐτή	αὐτό	he	she	it
gen sg	αὐτοῦ	αὐτῆς	αὐτοῦ	his	her	its
dat sg	αὐτῷ	αὐτῇ	αὐτῷ	to him	to her	to it
acc sg	αὐτόν	αὐτήν	αὐτό	him	her	it
nom pl	αὐτοί	αὐταί	αὐτά	they		
gen pl	αὐτῶν	αὐτῶν	αὐτῶν	their		
dat pl	αὐτοῖς	αὐταῖς	αὐτοῖς	to them		
acc pl	αὐτούς	αὐτάς	αὐτά	them		

13.11 There are three uses of αὐτός. The most common is as the **third person personal pronoun**, which will be translated by some form of "he, she, it; they, them, etc."

13.12 **Natural and grammatical gender**. If αὐτός is referring to a person, it will be masculine or feminine, i.e., it follows natural gender. If it's referring to something else, it will be masculine, feminine, or neuter depending on the grammatical gender of its antecedent.

This can give us the somewhat unusual situation (for the English reader) in which the grammatical gender of the pronoun does not match up with natural gender. For example, if the antecedent is πνεῦμα, which is grammatically neuter, the pronoun will be neuter (e.g., αὐτό). But if the πνεῦμα is the Holy Spirit, then we translate the neuter pronoun αὐτό as "he," not "it."

πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ οὗ εἴνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθα
spirit   lord   upon me *who* because he anointed me to preach
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because *he* anointed me to
preach *(Luke 4:18).*

οὗ is neuter because its antecedent πνεῦμα is neuter, but we refer
to the Spirit of the Lord as a "he" (meaning a person).

It is the same situation with the relative pronoun.

τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν
the Spirit   of truth   *who* the world not able   to receive
ESV: The Spirit of truth, *whom* the world cannot receive *(John
14:17).*
NIV: The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept *him*.

Or how about ἀγάπη? The noun is feminine, so the pronoun refer-
ring back to it must be feminine (e.g., αὐτῇ), but in English we
refer to "love" as "it," not "she."

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη … ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατῆτε.
and *this* is   the love   in order that in *it* walk.
And *this* is love … that you should walk in *it* (2 John 6).

13.13 **Translation**. In translation, αὐτός is sometimes replaced by its
antecedent, usually for one of two reasons.

- There might be confusion in reading the text if the translator
  simply writes "he." For example, in Matthew 8:24, who was the
  "he" who was sleeping?

  > Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the
  > waves swept over the boat. But *Jesus* was sleeping [αὐτὸς δὲ
  > ἐκάθευδεν] (NIV).

  The Greek only has "he (αὐτός) was sleeping," and the NIV
  replaces the pronoun αὐτός with its antecedent "he."

- Sometimes at the beginning of a paragraph, the simple transla-
  tion of αὐτός as "he" might also be confusing. This is especially
  true if the translators think the reader will be working with this

one paragraph and not in the context of the preceding paragraphs. On Matthew 9:10 the ESV writes,

> And as Jesus [αὐτοῦ] reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

The footnote on the first "Jesus" reads, "Greek *he*."

13.14* **Other uses of αὐτός**. The most common use of αὐτός is as the third person pronoun. However, it does have two other secondary uses: the intensive and the identical uses.

13.15* **Intensive**. αὐτός can function intensively when used adjectivally. In this usage, αὐτός modifies another word and is usually in the predicate position. There is no antecedent. It can be translated with the reflexive pronoun.

αὐτὸς   γὰρ   ὁ Ἡρῴδης   ἀποστείλας   ἐκράτησεν   τὸν Ἰωάννην.
himself   For   Herod   sending   seized   John.
For Herod *himself* had sent for and arrested John *(Mark 6:17)*.

13.16* **Identical adjective**. αὐτός is sometimes used as the identical adjective meaning "same."

καὶ   πάλιν   ἀπελθὼν   προσηύξατο   τὸν   αὐτὸν   λόγον
And   again   after going away   he prayed   *the*   *same*   *word*.
And again, after going away, he prayed the *same* prayer *(Mark 14:39)*.

If you want more details on these usages, see the handout in the online lesson for this chapter.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

13.17   The demonstrative pronouns in Greek are οὗτος ("this/these") and ἐκεῖνος ("that/those"). They function the same way as the demonstratives do in English, both as pronouns and as adjectives.

13.18   **Adjectival**. If a demonstrative is functioning as an adjective, it will be anarthrous. In other words, it will be in the predicate position just like πᾶς.

εἰπὲ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται.
say that stones *these* bread become
Tell *these* stones to become bread *(Matt 4:3)*.

ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς
in but days *those* appeared John the Baptist
Now in *those* days, John the Baptist appeared *(Matt 3:1)*.

13.19 **Pronoun**. If a demonstrative is functioning as a pronoun, translators will sometimes add in words to make proper English.

τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, οὗτος βλασφημεῖ.
some of the scribes said to themselves *this* blasphemes
NRSV: Some of the scribes said to themselves, "*This man* is blaspheming" *(Matt 9:3)*.
NIV: Some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "*This fellow* is blaspheming!"

13.20 **Personal Pronoun**. Sometimes the demonstrative pronoun weakens in its force and functions as a personal pronoun.

οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται
this will be great and son of Most High he will be called
He will be great and will be called "Son of the Most High" *(Luke 1:32)*.

ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται.
to those but not is given
But *to them* it's not given *(Matt 13:11)*.

ANTECEDENT

13.21 The antecedent for a pronoun does not have to be in the same sentence as the pronoun. Sometimes the antecedent will be in a previous verse, and other times it will be quite a few verses back, and sometimes followed by a series of pronouns, all referring back to the same antecedent.

For example, Paul introduces both "Christ Jesus" and "God" in Rom 1:1, and in v 2 he refers to "his (αὐτοῦ) prophets" and in v 3 "his (αὐτοῦ) Son" in v 3.

In some cases, there is no expressed antecedent and you will have to determine it from context. This is especially true of relative clauses that function substantivally.

ACCENTS*

13.22* Generally, there is one accent per Greek word. However, there are times you may have seen where a word has two accents and another has no accent. What's happening?

13.23* An **enclitic** is a word that is pronounced so closely with the *pre-ceeding* word that it moves its accent back to that word, which can result in the first word having two accents and the enclitic with none.

τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου.
the for in her conceived by spirit *is* holy
For that which has been conceived in her *is* by the Holy Spirit
(Matt 1:20)

ἐστιν loses its accent to πνεύματός.

Common enclitics you know are μοῦ, μοί, μέ, σοῦ, σοί, σέ, τις, and most forms of εἰμί.

13.24* A **proclitic** is a word that connects itself to the *following* word, and is only accented when that word pushes its own accent back to the proclitic.

ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ   τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει ἀγαθά.
the good man *out of* the good treasure brings good things
NRSV: The good person brings good things *out of* a good treasure
(Matt 12:35).

Common proclitics you know are are ὁ, ἡ, οἱ, αἱ, εἰς, ἐκ, ἐν, εἰ, and οὐ.

VOCABULARY

Pronouns you already know

ἐγώ (ἡμεῖς)	I (we)
σύ (ὑμεῖς)	you
αὐτός	he, she, it (they, them)
οὗτος	this (these)
ἐκεῖνος	that (those)

New vocabulary

οὐδείς	no one (nothing) (225)
ἑαυτοῦ	himself/herself/itself (319)
ἁμαρτία	sin (173)
νόμος	law (193)
χάρις	grace (155)
ἔργον	work, deed (169)
δόξα	glory (166)
καρδία	heart (156)
χείρ	hand (175)

90,503 word occurrences out of 137,663 (66%)
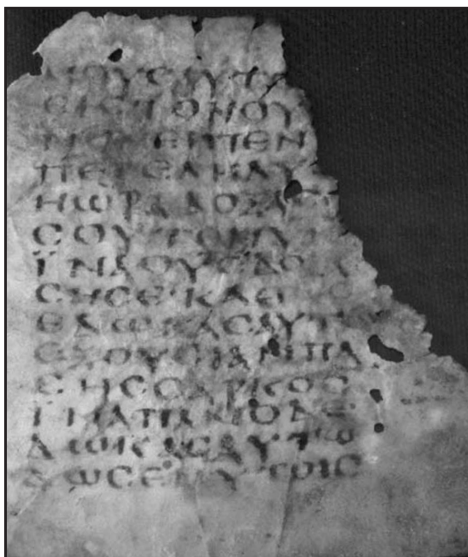
This fifth-century uncial manuscript, labeled 0301, contains John 17:1–4. It's located in Münster, Germany. The photo is provided by the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org). Used by permission of Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung.

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