

Third Edition

# Greek for the REST of US

Learn Greek to Study the  
New Testament

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# Preface

When people learn that I'm a Greek teacher, one of the more common responses is, "I've always wanted to learn Greek." I always ask them why they want to learn Greek. To date, only one person has said he wanted to actually learn the language. Everyone else wanted to understand the Bible better, and especially to know the meaning of the Greek words behind the English translation.

In a perfect world, we would have studied Greek for years and be able to understand the Bible better. But the world is not perfect, and many people are not able to spend the years required to fully learn Greek, even those who have a seminary education.

As I thought about how I might help the situation, I came to the conclusion that if people knew a little about Greek and a lot about how to use good biblical study tools, they could in fact glean much from the Greek Bible and from other resources that are otherwise beyond their grasp. This includes:

- making sense of the information that Bible software shows;
- finding what the Greek words behind the English translation mean;
- seeing the author's flow of thought and his central message;
- understanding why translations are different;
- reading good commentaries and using other biblical tools that make use of Greek.

Several years ago I wrote *The Interlinear for the Rest of Us: The Reverse Interlinear*, and *The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear New Testament*. These two interlinears help people get to the Greek behind the English, and the data I created to make these interlinears is also used by some Bible software programs. I am now writing this book to help you learn how to use interlinears and other such tools.

There are, of course, many dangers in relying on tools rather than fully learning Greek, and I expressed those concerns in the preface to the interlinears. My fear is that people will think they know Greek well enough to come up with their own interpretations without commentary support. However, this is the same concern I have for all my first-year Greek students who are learning Greek in the traditional manner.

Alexander Pope once said, “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” But as I indicated in *The Interlinear for the Rest of Us*, I think it’s a little bit of arrogance that is dangerous. So I offer this book, trusting that you will recognize the limits of the approach.

*Greek for the Rest of Us* is divided into two sections.

- **Foundational Greek** teaches you enough Greek so you can use Bible study software, understand a Strong’s Bible and a reverse interlinear, and do Greek word studies.
- **Church Greek** teaches you more Greek so you can understand Greek-English interlinears, use better reference works, especially commentaries, and learn my exegetical method, “phrasing.”

The greatest challenge of the book was to find good examples of what I am teaching, especially for the homework assignments. I have relied quite heavily on the work of my friend Daniel Wallace and his grammar (with permission), *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*. Many of the grammatical categories and examples I use are from his work, and this should prove an easy transition for you to move from *Greek for the Rest of Us* to his book. If you are especially adventurous, you should use his full grammar, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*.

Be sure to get the accompanying workbook so you can take the theoretical teachings in this book and apply them practically. Keep an eye on my online class, [www.billmounce.com/biblestudygreek/class](http://www.billmounce.com/biblestudygreek/class). Go to the lesson you are currently studying to see what is available. You will find encouraging blogs, downloads, and helps for memorizing vocabulary. Also, please subscribe to my YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/billmounce](http://www.youtube.com/billmounce)) for videos in the playlists Greek Word of the Day, Greek Verse of the Week, and The Professor Says, where you can learn fun things to say in Greek.

My experience in teaching this class over the past thirty years is that the biggest challenge students face is to realize this is an academic endeavor. Some people think that because it’s not the traditional method for learning Greek, it will be easy. To be sure, it will be *easier*, but this is still an academic topic and requires academic rigor. Don’t let that scare you, but you should be prepared for real work.

I primarily use the Mounce translation and Accordance to illustrate Bible software, but you can also use Logos, The Bible Study App (from OliveTree), and others. Tutorials on how to use the apps are in the online

course in the relevant lessons. If you use Accordance, be sure to purchase the Mounce Study Bundle.

Of the many people I would like to thank, most goes to my Greek assistant Matt Smith for his many hours of help, to my colleagues Lynn Losie, Doug Stuart, and Daniel Wallace for their help, to my editors Verlyn Verbrugge and Chris Beetham, and to the many students who patiently endured while I changed my mind on how to teach this material, especially Lew Dawson.

I am also thankful that Lee Fields has written the Hebrew counterpart, *Hebrew for the Rest of Us*. My old appendix on Hebrew can still be downloaded from the last lesson in the online class, but I encourage you to study his book. I trust that you will find this a valuable resource as you work to understand the Word of God better.

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