

# New Testament Greek Syntax

## The Dative Case

Expressing the idea of personal interest, accompaniment and means

Later Greek replaces the dative with a prepositional phrase, which process is evident in the NT

### 1. The Pure Dative

The pure dative expresses personal interest in someone or something where a relationship is specified.

#### i] Dative of Indirect Object

The prime function of the dative is to serve as an object complement - *Common*

The noun or pronoun in the dative is the person or thing which receives the direct object of an active verb, or the subject of a passive verb, cf. Wallace.

Often the classification merges with the dative of interest and may be classified as such, so Turner

Sometimes with a preposition: *εν, επι* = "to"

Active:

I will repay all things TO YOU

*παντα αποδωσω σοι*

Passive:

We are manifested TO GOD

*θεω πεφανερωμεθα*

Luke will often use *προς* + acc. instead of a dative for indirect speech

"[They] complained .... TO the disciples"

*εγογγυζον ... προς τους μαθητας*

#### ii] Dative of interest

##### a) Advantage

Most datives can be classified as datives of interest, so Turner

Identifying the one for whose benefit something is done - "for"

Sometimes with a preposition: *εν, επι* = "for", "to", ..

She has done a good thing FOR ME

*καλον εργον ηργασατο εν εμοι*

##### b) Disadvantage

Most datives can be classified as datives of interest, so Turner

Identifying the one who will be adversely affected by the action - "against"

Sometimes with a preposition: *εν, επι* = "against"

Herodias had a grudge AGAINST HIM

*η Ηρωδιας ενειχεν αυρω*

#### iii] Dative of Reference, Respect / Representation, Benefit / Relation

A dative can function adverbially, limiting a verb or adjective

In this usage the dative identifies a person or thing:

a) possessing little or no interest in, but mere reference to; "concerning, about, in regard to, ..."

b) representation or benefit; "on behalf of / for the benefit of"

c) Relation; "in relation to."

Sometimes with a preposition: *εν, επι* = "about" .....

Be not anxious ABOUT your LIFE

*μη μερμινατε τη ψυχη υμων*

#### iv] Dative of Possession

Identifying the person to whom something belongs

Often translated with a possessive pronoun, "his", "her"

the name TO HIM was John = HIS name was John

*ονομα αυτω Ιωαννης*

Sometimes relational / expressing a relationship

I will be a father TO YOU

I will be YOUR FATHER

εσομαι υμιν εις πατερα

#### v] Dative of Feeling / Ethical dative

Identifying the person whose feelings or viewpoint are linked to the action of the verb.

Ascriptions fall into this category; "TO GOD be Glory."

Translate: "as far as I am concerned", "in my opinion"

beautiful TO GOD = beautiful as far as God is concerned

αστειος τω θεω

#### vi] Dative of Recipient

"I write TO YOU (σοι)"

#### vii] Adjectival dative (rare in the NT)

A dative can function as an adjective limiting a noun or another adjective

Often exegetical, "consisting in" = "consisting of"

cf. NIV 2Cor.12:12: "the things that mark an apostle - SIGNS, WONDERS and MIRACLES - were done among you."

## 2. The Local Dative (Locative)

Expressing the idea of location, place, position. The dative of time and space, of temporal and spacial relations.

#### i] The Dative of Space / Place

Identifying a spot or place

Note: Wallace includes this class under Dative of Sphere.

Sometimes with a preposition: εν, επι, παρα, προς = "at", "by", "on", "with", "in", "beside", "among", "upon",

.....

they put it UPON his HEAD

επεθηκαν αυτου τη κεφαλη

#### ii] Dative of Sphere

Identifying a metaphorical spacial idea

Sometimes with a preposition: εν, επι, παρα "in the sphere of", "in the realm of" .....

having been found IN APPEARANCE as a man

σχηματι ευρεθεις ως ανθρωπος

#### iii] Dative of Time (Temporal)

Identifying a particular point in time "when" the action of the main verb is performed

Sometimes with a preposition: εν, επι = "when", "while", "at", "during", "on", .....

ON THE FIRST [DAY] of the week

τη μια των σαββατων

#### iv] Dative of rule

Expressing the idea of conforming with a standard, code, or rule of conduct - "in conformity with."

As many as live ACCORDING TO THIS STANDARD.

οσοι τω κανονι τουτω στοιχισουσιν

#### v] Dative of direction / destination, termination

Expressing the idea of "to" or "toward" / of traveling "to".

I was not able to speak TO YOU = address YOU.

ουκ ηδυνηθην λαλησαι υμιν

## 3. The Instrumental Dative

Expressing the idea of means, agent, cause, manner or instrument, indicating that by/with which the action of the verb was performed

#### i] Dative of Means

Identifying the impersonal means (instrument) by which an action is performed

Sometimes with a preposition: **εν** = "by", "with", "by means of"  
Note: personal agency is expressed by **ὑπο** + genitive  
because he had often been bound BY FETTERS and CHAINS  
**δια το αυτον πολλακις πεδαις και αυσεσιν δεδεσθαι**

## ii] Dative of Cause

Identifying what caused the action to be performed  
Sometimes with a preposition: **εν, επι** = "because of", "on the basis of"  
I am perishing here BECAUSE OF FAMINE  
**εγω λιμω ωδε απολλυμαι**

## iii] Dative of Manner / Attendant Circumstance

As an adverb describing an accompanying circumstance, or manner (method), by which the action of the verb is performed.

"Called out WITH A LOUD VOICE"  
Sometimes expressed with a preposition: **εν** + dat. = "in", **μετα**+ gen. = "with"  
he speaks WITH BOLDNESS (= BOLDLY)  
**παρησια λαλει**

## iv] Dative of Association / Relation / Accompaniment

Identifying those persons or things that accompany the action performed  
Often occurring with verbs with a **συν** prefix  
Sometimes with a preposition: **εν, παρα, συν, μετα** = "with"  
he made us alive WITH CHRIST  
**συνεζωοποιησεν τω Χριστω**

## v] Dative of Measure / degree of difference

Identifying the intervening measure between two points, usually an interval of time  
Sometimes with a preposition: **εν** = Difference by - "during", "much", "in addition to", ...  
FOR A LONG TIME he had worn no garment  
**χρονω ικανω ουκ εδεδυσσαστο ιματιον**

## vi] Dative of Agency

Identifying the personal agent by whom the action is performed  
Translation: "by", "through"  
has been tamed by humankind  
**δεδαμασται τη φυσει τη ανθρωπινη**

## vii] Dative of Material

Identifying the material (rather than tool) used to perform the action  
written not WITH INK  
**εγγραμμενη ου μελανι**

## viii] Dative of Content

Identifying the content that is used by a verb of filling  
he was filled WITH WISDOM  
being filled WITH WISDOM  
**πληρουμενον σοφια**

## ix] Dative of The Thing Compared

Used sometimes instead of the adjective **ομοις**, "like", or the particle **ως**, "as".

## 4. Datives after certain verbs, nouns and adjectives

The use of the dative after certain words

### i] Dative of Direct Object

The classification "necessary complement / dative complement" is often used for a dative of direct object although best limited to the dative complement of a substantive construction.

A dative will often follow compound verbs with a prefix such as **συν, προς, επι, παρα**  
Jesus strictly warned them

he having spoken against THEM

ὁ ἐπιτιμησας αυτοις. The prefix *επι* + dat. = "against"

As with the dative of indirect object, these datives may be classified as datives of interest

Some verbs naturally take a dative, eg. "I obey him" = "I am obedient to him"; "I rebuke him" = "I speak sternly to him"

Usually translated by *to* or *in*, eg *πιστευω*, followed by the dative, "I believe/trust IN ....."

Applicable to verbs of trusting, obeying, serving, worshipping, thanksgiving, belief, following, rebuking, helping, pleasing, commanding, ....

I serve God's LAW

I submit to LAW of God

δουλευω νομω θεου

Sometimes with a preposition: *εν*

A dative substantive following a verb with the prepositional prefix *συν*, "with", could also be classed as a dative of accompaniment.

The following word groupings often take a dative direct object, sometimes an accusative, cf. BDF:

i] Helping: to do good, to benefit, help (*βοηθew*), please / to harm, etc. with dative or accusative

ii] Pleasing: to please (*αρεσκω*)

iii] Serving: to serve (*διακονew*), follow, meet, make a slave to, be enslaved to

iv] Revealing: to show, reveal, seem

v] Directing: to command, censure, rebuke (*επιτιμαω*) - most times take a dative

vi] Responding: to trust, obey, believe (*πιστευω*), follow / disbelieve, disobey

vii] Emoting: to be angry, envy, thank (*ευχαριστεω*), owe

viii] Worshipping: *προσκυνεω*

## ii] Dative after certain nouns and adjectives

A dative can be prompted by a verbal noun and is best classified as a "dative complement"

An adjective which prompts a dative is usually classified as a "dative of reference"

The nouns usually carry the idea of personal interest

service TO THE SAINTS

διακονιαν τοις ἁγιοις

**\*A less than common usage\***