

Lesson One

Alphabet

Introductory Notes

Learning a new language begins with learning the Alphabet. Rodney J. Decker emphasizes that, “until you learn the alphabet well, there is not much else that you can do.” (Decker 2014:11) John H Dobson concurs with Decker in that, “the first step in learning New Testament Greek is to recognize the letters of the Greek Alphabet.” (Dobson 1993:1). Therefore it is a common practice that many grammar books on Greek have the first lesson on alphabet. However, it is important to learn the alphabet in the alphabet order as Jeremy Duff points out that it helps in finding up words in the dictionary. (Duff 2005:13). This might need a lot of memorizing but it is necessary when learning a new language. There is no special or prescribed way of writing those words as our hand writings differ and this is where the influence of the teacher comes into play. You can consult page 13 of Jeremy Duff as he demonstrates on how to write these letters. The Greek alphabet has twenty-four letters unlike the English one that has twenty-six letters. I would give you a home work of identifying the two missing English alphabetic letters. The Greek alphabet has both the upper and lower case but the upper case are not mostly used like the lower case. Decker argues that, “Greek has not always had uppercase and lowercase. The origin of the two distinct cases, upper and lower can be traced to the ninth century.” (Decker 2014:11). Therefore, it is important to master the lower case first before the upper case. However, this does not imply that the uppercase is of less significance. According to David Wenham, “nowadays capital letters are used in Greek for proper nouns and for the first letter of a paragraph, and to mark the beginning of a direct quotation.” (Wenham 1965). Therefore, we cannot ignore the capital letters, just imagine how many proper nouns are in the New Testament as well as direct quotations? This week we will learn small letters/lowercase and then capital letters next week.

Small Letters

No	Letter in Greek	English equivalence	Name of the letter
1	α	a	Alpha
2	β	b	Beta
3	γ	g	Gamma
4	δ	d	Delta
5	ε	e	Epsilon
6	ζ	z	Zeta
7	η	Long 'e'	Eta
8	θ	th	Theta
9	ι	i	Iota
10	κ	k	Kappa
11	λ	l	Lambda
12	μ	m	Mu
13	ν	n	Nu
14	ξ	x	Xi
15	ο	o	Omicron
16	π	p	Pi
17	ρ	r	Rho
18	σ/ς	s	Sigma
19	τ	t	Tau
20	υ	u	Upsilon
21	φ	ph	Phi
22	χ	ch	Chi
23	ψ	ps	Psi
24	ω	Long 'o'	Omega

Your task this week is to master this vocabulary and make some observations. Next week, I will explain some of the things you might have observed from this alphabet.

References

Decker, Rodney. J. (2014). *Reading Koine Greek: An Introduction and Integrated Workbook*. Michigan: Baker Academic.

Dobson, John. H. (1993). *Learn New Testament Greek*. Michigan: Grand Rapids.

Duff, Jeremy. (2005). *The Elements of the New Testament Greek*.
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Wenham, J.W. (1965). *The Elements of New Testament Greek*.
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