

Chapter 15

Nominal System: Third-Declension Masculine and Feminine Nouns; Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

THE BASICS

- ✓ The Third Declension
- ✓ Masculine and Feminine Stems and Endings
- ✓ Formation: Stems Ending with a Consonant
- ✓ Formation: Stems Ending with a Vowel
- ✓ Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns
- ✓ Neuter Plural Subjects with Singular Verbs

15.1 Vocabulary

15.1.1 Masculine Nouns: Consonant Stems

αἰών, αἰῶνος, ὁ	eternity, age; εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα = forever
ἄνθρωπος, ἀνδρός, ὁ	man, husband (cf. “androgynous”)
ἄρχων, ἄρχοντος, ὁ	ruler (cf. “monarch”)
μάρτυς, μάρτυρος, ὁ	witness, (cf. “martyr”)
πατήρ, πατρός, ὁ	father (cf. “paternal,” “patron”)
πούς, ποδός, ὁ	foot (cf. “podiatry”)
Σίμων, Σίμωνος, ὁ	Simon (occurs only in the singular)

15.1.2 Feminine Nouns: Consonant Stems

γυνή, γυναικός, ἡ	woman, wife (cf. “gynecology”)
ἐλπίς, ἐλπίδος, ἡ	hope
μήτηρ, μητρός, ἡ	mother (cf. “maternal,” “matron”)
νύξ, νυκτός, ἡ	night (cf. “nocturnal”)
σάρξ, σαρκός, ἡ	flesh (cf. “sarcophagus”)

χάρις, χάριτος, ἡ
χειρ, χειρός, ἡ

grace, favor, gift
hand [the dative plural stem lacks ι:
χερσί(ν)]

15.1.3 Feminine Nouns: Vowel Stems

ἀνάστασις, ἀναστάσεως, ἡ
δύναμις, δυνάμεως, ἡ
θλίψις, θλίψεως, ἡ
κρίσις, κρίσεως, ἡ
πίστις, πίστεως, ἡ
πόλις, πόλεως, ἡ
συνείδησις, συνειδήσεως, ἡ

resurrection
power, might; ability (cf. “dynamic”)
tribulation, affliction
judgment (cf. “critic”)
faith, trust
city (cf. “metropolis”)
consciousness, conscience

15.1.4 Masculine Nouns: Vowel Stems

ἀρχιερεύς, ἀρχιερέως, ὁ
βασιλεύς, βασιλέως, ὁ
γραμματεύς, γραμματέως, ὁ
ιερεύς, ιερέως, ὁ

high priest
king
scribe, expert in the law
priest (cf. “hierarchy”)

15.1.5 Conjunctions

τέ
τέ . . . τέ . . .
τέ καί, τέ . . . καί . . .

and (enclitic)
as . . . so . . . ; not only . . . but also . . .
and, both . . . and . . .

15.1.6 Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

τίς (masc. and fem.), τί (neut.)

who? which (one)? what? (τί as an adverb:
why?)

τις (masc. and fem.), τι (neut.)

someone, a certain one, anyone; neut.:
something, anything

15.2 The Third Declension

The third declension is a grab bag of all nouns that do not belong to the first or second declension. Two characteristics of third-declension nouns, however, set them apart from the other declensions.

1. The third-declension stem is found *not* in the nominative singular form but in the *genitive* singular form. Therefore, one must learn *both* the nominative *and* the genitive singular forms of a third-declension noun. For example, the stem of ἄρχων, ἄρχοντος, ὁ (ruler) is ἀρχοντ- (not ἀρχ-).

2. Masculine and feminine nouns are formed with the same basic case endings.¹ For this reason, the gender must be learned for each noun. For example, (τοῦ) πατρός is *masculine* genitive singular, but (τῆς) χειρός is *feminine* genitive singular; (τὰς) χάριτας is *feminine* accusative plural, but (τοὺς) μάρτυρας is *masculine* accusative plural.

The interrogative and indefinite pronouns are introduced later in this chapter as a bridge to the third declension neuter in ch. 16. It would benefit you to memorize the paradigms for these pronouns thoroughly, for they are both very common and provide the simplest means of learning the third-declension endings for all three genders, singular and plural.

15.3 Masculine and Feminine Stems and Endings

15.3.1 Stems Ending with Consonants and Vowels

There are two types of third-declension nouns: nouns whose stems end with a consonant (e.g., ἐλπιδ-), and those whose stems end with a vowel (e.g., πολε-). This chapter will deal with the peculiarities of each group in turn.

15.3.2 Masculine/Feminine Case Endings

The most frequently encountered masculine and feminine endings of the third declension are the following:

	M/F <i>Singular</i>	M/F <i>Plural</i>
N	-ς, none	-ες
G	-ος	-ων
D	-ι	-σι(ν)
A	-α or -ν	-ας
V	Like the nominative or learn by observation	

15.4 Formation of Third-Declension Masculine and Feminine Nouns: Stems Ending with a Consonant

15.4.1 Consonant Contractions

Chapter 4 (p. 28) showed that when σ is attached to certain consonant stems, contraction occurs, either creating a double consonant or causing the deletion of the stem

¹Some of the neuter-case endings differ; they will be presented in the next chapter.

consonant. This also occurs when third-declension nominative singular and dative plural case endings (ς and σι[ν]) are added to noun stems ending in a consonant.

palatals (κ, γ, χ) + σ = ξ (σαρκ- + σ = σάρξ, σαρκί[ν])

labials (π, β, φ) + σ = ψ (rare)

dentals (τ, δ, θ) + σ = σ (ἐλπιδ- + σ = ἐλπίς, ἐλπίσι[ν])

liquids and nasals² (λ, ρ, ν) + σ = observe the individual word

An important item to remember regarding third-declension nouns ending with consonants: The *genitive* singular ending only *looks* like the second declension *nominative* singular (compare ὁ λόγος, τοῦ λόγου with ὁ πούς, τοῦ ποδός).

15.4.2 Stems Ending in Palatals

This group of words presents no problems as long as one bears in mind the principles of contraction reviewed above. Add the regular endings to the stem.³

ἡ σάρξ, τῆς σαρκός, *flesh*

	Singular		Plural	
N/V	ἡ	σάρξ	αἱ	σάρκες
G	τῆς	σαρκός	τῶν	σαρκῶν
D	τῇ	σαρκί	ταῖς	σαρκί(ν)
A	τὴν	σάρκα	τάς	σάρκας

15.4.3 Stems Ending in Dentals

Remembering that the genitive singular reveals the stem, learn the following paradigm:

ἡ ἐλπίς, τῆς ἐλπίδος, *hope*

	Singular		Plural	
N	ἡ	ἐλπίς	αἱ	ἐλπίδες
G	τῆς	ἐλπίδος	τῶν	ἐλπίδων
D	τῇ	ἐλπίδι	ταῖς	ἐλπίσι(ν)
A	τὴν	ἐλπίδα	τάς	ἐλπίδας
V		ἐλπί		ἐλπίδες

²Verbs whose stems end in liquids and nasals will be considered in ch. 17.

³ἡ γυνή, τῆς γυναικός forms irregularly. The nominative singular and plural have shortened stems (αἱ γυναῖαι). With ἡ νύξ, τῆς νυκτός, the dental consonant τ (νυκτ-) drops out before the nominative singular ς and dative plural σι(ν); the remaining palatal, κ (νυκ-), combines with the σ to produce νύξ, νυξί(ν).

The commonly used noun ἡ χάρις, τῆς χάριτος is a notable exception to the pattern. It varies in the accusative singular, where χάριν usually occurs (χάριτα would be expected).⁴

ἡ χάρις, τῆς χάριτος, *grace*

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N/V	ἡ	χάρις	αἱ	χάριτες
G	τῆς	χάριτος	τῶν	χαρίτων
D	τῇ	χάριτι	ταῖς	χάρισι(ν)
A	τὴν	χάριν	τάς	χάριτας

The ἄρχων, ἄρχοντος pattern, though not common for nouns, is particularly important to memorize because this pattern will be found with *all masculine and neuter active and aorist passive participles* (see ch. 19).

ὁ ἄρχων, τοῦ ἄρχοντος, *ruler*

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N/V	ὁ	ἄρχων	οἱ	ἄρχοντες
G	τοῦ	ἄρχοντος	τῶν	ἀρχόντων
D	τῷ	ἄρχοντι	τοῖς	ἄρχουσι(ν)
A	τὸν	ἄρχοντα	τούς	ἄρχοντας

Before the endings ς and $\sigma\iota(\nu)$, the τ drops out and the \omicron in the stem lengthens. The ν remains in the nominative singular, but drops out in the dative plural, leading to a “compensatory lengthening” of the vowel that follows a regular pattern:

$\alpha\nu\tau + \sigma\iota = \alpha\sigma\iota$ (e.g., $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\iota$)⁵

$\epsilon\nu\tau + \sigma\iota = \epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$ (e.g., $\lambda\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$)

$\omicron\nu\tau + \sigma\iota = \omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota$ (e.g., ἄρχουσι)

15.4.4 Stems Ending in Liquids and Nasals

The following three paradigms focus on stems ending in the liquid consonant ρ . In the first paradigm, the ρ drops out before ς and $\sigma\iota(\nu)$.

⁴And, indeed, it occurs twice in the GNT (Acts 24:27 and Jude 4).

⁵No words presented thus far in this grammar occur with this pattern. $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu$ is the dative plural of the adjective $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$ (see p. 143); $\lambda\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$ is a masculine/neuter dative plural aorist passive participle (see p. 175).

ὁ μάρτυς, τοῦ μάρτυρος, witness

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N/V	ὁ	μάρτυς	οἱ	μάρτυρες
G	τοῦ	μάρτυρος	τῶν	μαρτύρων
D	τῷ	μάρτυρι	τοῖς	μάρτυσι(ν)
A	τὸν	μάρτυρα	τούς	μάρτυρας

In the second paradigm, observe two differences. In the nominative and vocative singular, which have no ending, the δ in the stem is replaced by η or ϵ . In the dative plural, an α is added to prevent an impossible-to-pronounce form.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τοῦ ἀνδρός, man

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N	ὁ	ἄνθρωπος	οἱ	ἄνδρες
G	τοῦ	ἀνδρός	τῶν	ἀνδρῶν
D	τῷ	ἀνδρί	τοῖς	ἀνδράσι(ν)
A	τὸν	ἄνδρα	τούς	ἄνδρας
V		ἄνερ		ἄνδρες

The third paradigm is represented by δ πατήρ, τοῦ πατρός and ἡ μήτηρ, τῆς μητρός. Observe how the stem fluctuates between $\mu\eta\tau\rho-$ and $\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\rho-$. The dative plural again adds an α for euphony.

ἡ μήτηρ, τῆς μητρός, mother

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N	ἡ	μήτηρ	αἱ	μητέρες
G	τῆς	μητρός	τῶν	μητέρων
D	τῇ	μητρί	ταῖς	μητράσι(ν)
A	τήν	μητέρα	τάς	μητέρας
V		μητερ		μητέρες

15.5 Formation of Third-Declension Feminine and Masculine Nouns: Stems Ending with a Vowel

15.5.1 Stems Ending in ϵ/ι

The stems of this group of feminine nouns end in ϵ , which changes to ι in the nominative and accusative singular. These nouns can easily be mastered if you observe the following features:

- The genitive singular ending has lengthened from -ος to -ως.
- The accusative singular ending is -ν, not -α.
- The nominative and accusative plural have the same form: -εις.

A typical paradigm follows:

ἡ πόλις, τῆς πόλεως, city				
	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N	ἡ	πόλις	αἱ	πόλεις
G	τῆς	πόλεως	τῶν	πόλεων
D	τῇ	πόλει	ταῖς	πόλεσι(ν)
A	τήν	πόλιν	τάς	πόλεις
V		πόλι		πόλεις

15.5.2 Stems Ending in ε/εῦ

A similar group of masculine nouns has a stem ending in ε, which lengthens to εῦ before ζ and σι(ν). Observe the following:

- The genitive singular -ος has lengthened to -ως.
- The accusative singular has the more common α ending (unlike πόλιν).
- The nominative and accusative plural have the same form: -εις.

ὁ βασιλεύς, τοῦ βασιλέως, king				
	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
N	ὁ	βασιλεύς	οἱ	βασιλεῖς
G	τοῦ	βασιλέως	τῶν	βασιλέων
D	τῷ	βασιλεῖ	τοῖς	βασιλεῦσι(ν)
A	τόν	βασιλέα	τούς	βασιλεῖς
V		βασιλεῦ		βασιλεῖς

15.6 Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

The interrogative pronoun τίς, τί (stem τιν-) and the indefinite pronoun τις, τι are third declension pronouns that, aside from their accenting, form in identical ways. Thus the presence or position of the accent is critical for identification. In the table below, note carefully that the interrogative pronoun has the acute accent on the single-syllable forms (and this *never* changes to a grave). The two-syllable forms consistently

have the accent on the penult; this, too, is invariably an acute. These two points of accent provide an unchanging identification mark in distinguishing the interrogative from the indefinite pronoun.

In contrast to the interrogative, the indefinite pronoun *τις, τι* is an enclitic (pp. 262–63); it almost never has the accent on the single-syllable forms, and two-syllable forms are accented only on the ultima.⁶ The only oddity in formation is the lack of the nasal-stem consonant *-ν* in the neuter nominative and the accusative singular forms *τί* and *τι*.

The Interrogative Pronoun *τις, who? which (one)?; τι what? why?*

	Singular			Plural		
	M/F	M/F/N	N	M/F	M/F/N	N
N	τίς		τί	τίνες		τίνα
G		τίνος			τίνων	
D		τίνι			τίσι(ν)	
A	τίνα		τί	τίνας		τίνα

The Indefinite Pronoun *τις, someone, anyone; τι something, anything*

	Singular			Plural		
	M/F	M/F/N	N	M/F	M/F/N	N
N	τις		τι	τινές		τινά
G		τινός			τινῶν	
D		τινί			τισί(ν)	
A	τινά		τι	τινάς		τινά

15.7 Neuter Plural Subjects with Singular Verbs

Neuter plural subjects with third-person singular verbs are commonly found in the GNT. When writers have a collective entity rather than individual items in view, they will use a singular verb. If, however, the emphasis is on individuals or discrete entities of a group, a plural verb will normally be used. John 10:25 and 27 illustrate the difference. In 10:25 Jesus says, “τὰ ἔργα [neut. pl.] that I am doing in the name of my Father ταῦτα testifies [μαρτυρεῖ (3d sg.); lit., “it testifies,” it being the collection of works] concerning me.” Then, in 10:27, he says, “My sheep [neut. pl.] hear [ἀκούουσιν, 3d pl.] my voice.” “These works” bear witness to Jesus as a collective entity, whereas each “sheep” hears the Shepherd’s voice individually.

⁶The accent will almost always be a grave; *τις* and *τι* receive acute accents only when they end a clause or sentence (which is rare) or are followed by another enclitic.

EXERCISES

A. Translate the following sentences into English:

1. ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ, Ποῦ*⁷ ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ σου; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὔτε ἐμὲ οἴδατε οὔτε τὸν πατέρα μου· εἰ ἐμὲ ᾔδειτε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου ἂν ᾔδειτε.
2. ἡ γυνὴ γὰρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος* οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει* ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως* δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνή.
3. ἄλλοι ἔλεγον, Ἄγγελος αὐτῷ λελάληκεν.* ἀπεκρίθη καὶ εἶπεν Ἰησοῦς, Οὐ δι' ἐμὲ ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη γέγονεν ἀλλὰ δι' ὑμᾶς. νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω.
4. ὁ δὲ καὶ Σίμων αὐτὸς ἐπίστευεν ὅτε ἔβλεψε δυνάμεις σου.
5. εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι* γινώσκομεν.
6. χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὁ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενή* ἐγενήθη.
7. ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες.
8. καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί.
9. Μετὰ δὲ ἐκείνας τὰς ἡμέρας ὁ Φῆλιξ* καὶ ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως.
10. ὀργή* γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐκ ἐργάζεται.
11. οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν.
12. καὶ νῦν, ἀδελφοί, οἶδα ὅτι κατὰ ἄγνοιαν* ἐπράξατε, ὥσπερ* καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν.
13. ἡγίασται* γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος* ἐν τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ· ἐπεὶ* ἄρα*⁸ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά* ἐστίν· νῦν δὲ ἅγια ἐστίν.
14. Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐλεύθερος;* οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; οὐχί* Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα;*⁹ οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ;
15. οὐ λέγει ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς τῇ χειρί· Χρεῖαν* σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἦ* πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν· Χρεῖαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω.

B. Translate the following sentences into Greek:

1. Grace to you (pl.) and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. For those days will see a tribulation which the world has not seen (aor.).
3. You (pl.) are pursuing faith, hope, and love—these three [τρία] things.
4. Jesus replied to the scribes and (the) elders and said,
5. “You are speaking the words of men of flesh, not of God.”

Rules of accentuation pertinent to this chapter are found in appendix 1.

⁷Where an asterisk (*) is found in this and subsequent exercises, the vocabulary item has not been introduced (and often will not be listed) in the grammar. The word or idiom can be identified by consulting a standard Greek lexicon. This will help you develop proficiency with such reference works.

⁸Note that this word has a particular meaning when it is used with ἐπεὶ.

⁹See ὁράω.