

THE USE OF THE INFINITIVE IN BIBLICAL GREEK

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BY

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1. THE TEXT.

For this study of the use of the infinitive in Biblical Greek the texts have been:

(a) for the Old Testament, canonical and apocryphal, the Swete text of the Septuagint (Cambridge, 1887-94, 3 vols., 2 ed. of Vol. 1, 1895), comprising 2346 pages (O. T. 1909 pp., Apoc. 437 pp.)

(b) for the New Testament, the Westcott and Hort text (Cambridge, 1881), comprising 528 pages.

The Swete text is the text of the Codex Vaticanus, edited in accordance with the best scientific methods and the most thorough critical knowledge. The *lacunae* in this MS. are at Gen. 1:1-46:28; 2 Kgs. 2:5-7, 10-13; Psa. 105:27-137:6; the Prayer of Manassas, and the Books of Maccabees. These defects are supplied from the Alexandrine MS. or, in the few cases where this also is defective, from the uncial MSS. which rank next in age or importance. This text is accompanied on the page by footnotes which give the variant readings found in the other three great uncial MSS., Codices Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus and Ephraemi. Of these the Alex. is almost complete for both O. T. and Apoc., the Sin. contains not more than one-half, and the Eph. is but a fragment. To these variant readings have been added those of three lesser MSS., D, E and F, in portions where the greater ones are defective.

The Westcott and Hort text does not aim to reproduce the text of Codex Vaticanus for the New Testament, as the Swete text does for the Old Testament, but undertakes by a collation and critical use of all MSS. of the New Testament to build up a text of the New Testament which shall be the closest possible approximation to the original text. But the editors were led by their investigations to the belief that the text of Codex Vaticanus was nearer to the original text than

that of any other single codex in existence. The Codex Vaticanus, which is complete for the New Testament, was therefore used by Westcott and Hort as the chief authority. Next to this is ranked the Codex Sinaiticus, which contains all but a small portion of the New Testament.

So that the text upon which this investigation is based is substantially that of the Codex Vaticanus.

The variant readings of the MSS. affect about one-fourth of all the instances of the infinitive. These variations are not due to any peculiarities among the texts as regards the logical uses which the infinitive is made to serve, nor does any one text noticeably surpass another in its number of instances of the infinitive, nor does any one text as compared with others show any great preference for the anarthrous as against the articular infinitival form or the reverse. The variations are mainly of three kinds: the anarthrous form of the infinitive often occurs in one text where the articular form is found in others, the tense form of the same instance of the infinitive is frequently a present in one text and an aorist in another, and sometimes an idea which is expressed in one text by an infinitive is expressed in another text by some other construction.

These variant readings among the texts of the several MSS. occur in the case of all the books except the very brief ones. In some books as compared with others the percentage of variations is large, while in others it is small. The variations are due to scribal peculiarities and other incidents of transmission. They balance off against one another in such a way that they do not need further consideration for the purposes of this study. The classification of uses, the distribution of instances and the total number of occurrences of the infinitive are not materially affected by the variant readings.

2. TABLE OF THE USES OF THE INFINITIVE.

I. The Anarthrous Infinitive.

1. VERBAL OBJECT.^{318B}
 - 1) of verbs in general (=b)^{318B}, except
 - 2) of verbs of commanding, promising and the like (=j).⁵⁰⁷
 - 3) of verbs of bidding (understood) in salutations (=l).³²
 - 4) of verbs which introduce indirect discourse (=i).¹⁹²
 - 5) of verbs of hindering and the like (=v).³⁹
2. PURPOSE.¹⁶¹³
 - 1) distinct and specific, without attendant particle (=d).¹²⁸⁵
 - 2) distinct and specific, with preceding *ἵνα* (or *ὥς*) (=e).⁹⁷
 - 3) modified and general, without attendant particle (=o).³²¹
3. SUBJECT.⁶⁰⁹

the subject of a verb personal or impersonal (=a).⁶⁰⁹
4. RESULT.⁴⁴⁷
 - 1) actual or hypothetical, without attendant particle (=p).¹¹¹
 - 2) actual or hypothetical, with preceding *ἵνα* (or *ὥς*) (=f).¹⁰⁰
 - 3) epexegetic or explanatory, without attend. part. (=s).¹⁵⁸
5. LIMITING NOUNS, ADJECTIVES (AND ADVERBS).⁹¹¹
 - 1) nouns signifying ability, fitness, need, time, etc. (=h).¹¹³
 - 2) adjectives (and adverbs) of like signification (=g).⁹⁹
6. WITH *πρὶν* OR *πρὶν ἤ*.⁵⁸

the phrase having a temporal significance (=x).⁵⁸
7. APPPOSITION.³⁹

standing in apposition with a noun or pronoun (=c).³⁹
8. PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT.²⁸

standing as the object of a preposition (=k).²⁸
9. PARENTHETIC ABSOLUTE.¹

standing in a parenthetical clause, independently (=r).¹
10. FOR THE IMPERATIVE.¹

as a principal verb, expressing an exhortation (=n).¹

II. The Articular Infinitive.

1. PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT.¹¹⁶¹
standing as the object of a preposition, with $\tau\omicron\upsilon$, $\tau\phi$ or $\tau\acute{o}$ (=k).¹¹⁶¹
2. PURPOSE.⁴¹⁹
 - 1) distinct and specific, with $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (=e).¹⁶⁷
 - 2) modified and general, with $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ (=o).⁵⁸
3. VERBAL OBJECT.³⁷⁵
 - A. With $\tau\acute{o}$, as the object of a verb (=b).⁵³
 - B. With $\tau\omicron\upsilon$, as the object of a verb,
 - 1) of verbs in general (=bb)¹⁷³, except
 - 2) of verbs of commanding, promising and the like (=j).³⁷
 - 3) of verbs of hindering and the like (=v).³⁵
4. RESULT.¹⁶⁴
 - 1) actual or hypothetical, with $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ (=f).⁵⁶
 - 2) epexegetic or explanatory, with $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ (=s).⁷³
5. LIMITING NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES.¹¹⁸
 - 1) nouns signifying ability, fitness, time, etc. with $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ (=k).⁹¹
 - 2) adjectives of like signification, with $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ (=g).³⁷
6. SUBJECT.¹⁶⁷
 - 1) with $\tau\acute{o}$, as subject of a finite verb (=a).⁶⁹
 - 2) with $\tau\omicron\upsilon$, as subject of a finite verb (=aa).³⁸
7. APPOSITION.³¹
standing in apposition with a noun or pronoun, with $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ or $\tau\acute{o}$ (=c).³¹
8. CAUSE, MANNER, MEANS.⁷
indicating the cause, manner or means of the action of the governing verb, with $\tau\phi$ (=r).⁷

In the above table, after the main division between the uses of the anarthrous and those of the articular infinitive, the arrangement is by main groups in order of relative frequency of occurrence of the uses in Biblical Greek as a whole. The superior figures indicate the actual number of instances of each use, with the reservation that it has sometimes been difficult to classify certain ambiguous or anomalous instances of the infinitive.

3. THE USES OF THE ANARTHROUS INFINITIVE.

1. Verbal Object.⁵¹⁸1) OF VERBS IN GENERAL (=b)⁵¹⁹, EXCEPT—

Many Greek verbs either require or assume an infinitive to complete or make specific their meaning.

Ex. 2:15. *ἔζητα ἀνελᾶν Μωσῆν.*

1 Macc. 15:14. *οὐκ ἔασεν οὐδένα ἐκπορεύεσθαι.*

Matt. 11:20. *τότε ἤρξατο ἐνεδίδειν τὰς πόλεις.*

Also Deut. 4:1. 25:7. 1 Kgs. 5:3. Psa. 9:39. Prov. 14:12. Isa. 1:17. Wis. Sol. 4:7. Wis. Sir. 23:1. Judh. 9:8. Tob. 5:1. Bar. 3:9. 2 Macc. 2:3. Mk. 8:14. Lk. 8:20. Jno. 6:10. Acts 12:3. Rom. 15:26. Phil. 4:12. Heb. 11:24,25.

The list for Biblical Greek shows 287 verbs followed by the infinitive in this construction, of which the most common are *δύναμαι*, *θέλω*, *ἄρχομαι*, *βούλομαι*, *μέλλω*, *προστίθηναι*, *ποιέω*. This use of the infinitive is found twice as frequently as any other; in the O. T. it is somewhat surpassed by the use to express purpose; but in the Apoc. and N. T. it occurs four times as often as any other use.

The following sub-classes (j, l, i, v) are also object infinitives, but because they present the object idea in a special aspect it is desirable to arrange them into groups by themselves.

2) OF VERBS OF COMMANDING, PROMISING AND THE LIKE (=j).⁵²⁰

The infinitive is used as the object of verbs of commanding, promising and the like, to indicate that which one commands another to do, or promises (generally under oath) to do for another.

Gen. 42:25. *ἐνετείλατο Ἰωσήφ ἐμπλῆσαι τὰ ἄγγια αὐτῶν.*

Deut. 10:11. *τὴν γῆν ἣν ᾤμοσα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν δοῦναι αὐτοῖς.*