#### THIRD EDITION

# Basics of Biblical Grek

GRAMMAR

William D.

MOUNCE



#### Also by William D. Mounce

Basics of Biblical Greek Workbook

Basics of Biblical Greek Vocabulary Cards

Basics of Biblical Greek Audio CD

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mounce, William D.

Basics of biblical Greek grammar / William D. Mounce. — 3rd ed.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-310-28768-1 (hardcover)

1. Greek language, Biblical—Grammar. 2. Bible. N.T.—Language, style. I. Title.

PA817.M63 2009

487'.4—dc22

2009023109

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Edited by Verlyn D. Verbrugge

Typeset by Teknia Software

Printed in China

#### This text is affectionately dedicated to my parents,

Bob and Jean Mounce.

It is my wish that a study of biblical Greek will help to produce in you the same qualities that have always been exhibited in both their lives:

a love for their Lord and His Word;
an informed ministry based on His Word;
a sense of urgency to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those they meet.

ό νόμος τοῦ κυρίου ἄμωμος, ἐπιστρέφων ψυχάς·

ή μαρτυρία κυρίου πιστή, σοφίζουσα νήπια·

τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου εὐθεῖα, εὐφραίνοντα καρδίαν·

ή ἐντολὴ κυρίου τηλαυγής, φωτίζουσα ὀφθαλμούς·

ό φόβος κυρίου άγνός, διαμένων εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος·

τὰ κρίματα κυρίου ἀληθινά, δεδικαιωμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

καὶ ἔσονται εἰς εὐδοκίαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ στόματός μου καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῆς καρδίας μου ἐνώπιόν σου διὰ παντός, κύριε βοηθέ μου καὶ λυτρωτά μου.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ ΙΗ 8-10. 15

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## **Preface**

A publisher once told me that the ratio of Greek grammars to Greek professors is ten to nine. It is reasonable to ask, therefore, why this one should be written. There are several good reasons. Most existing grammars fall into one of two camps, deductive or inductive. Deductive grammars emphasize charts and rote memorization, while inductive grammars get the student into the text as soon as possible and try to imitate the natural learning process. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. The deductive method helps the student organize the material better, but is totally unlike the natural learning process. The inductive method suffers from a lack of structure that for many is confusing. My method attempts to teach Greek using the best of both approaches. It is deductive in how it initially teaches the material, and inductive in how it fine-tunes the learning process. (See the following "Rationale Statement" for more details.)

Most grammars approach learning Greek primarily as an academic discipline; I make every effort to view learning Greek as a tool for ministry. My assumption is that you are learning biblical Greek so you can better understand the Word of God and share that understanding with those around you. If some aspect of language study does not serve this purpose, it is ignored.

I try to include anything that will encourage students. This may not be the normal way textbooks are written, but my purpose is not to write another normal textbook. Learning languages can be enjoyable as well as meaningful. There is much more encouragement on the website (see page xviiiff.).

Probably the greatest obstacle to learning, and continuing to use, biblical Greek is the problem of rote memorization, both vocabulary and charts. When I was first learning Greek, I used to ask my father what a certain form meant. He would tell me, and when I asked how he knew he would respond, "I'm not sure, but that's what it is." What was frustrating for me then is true of me now. How many people who have worked in Greek for years are able to recite obscure paradigms, or perhaps all the tense forms of the sixty main verbs? Very few I suspect. Rather, we have learned what indicators to look for when we parse. Wouldn't it be nice if beginning students of the language could get to this point of understanding the forms of the language without going through the excruciating process of memorizing chart after chart? This is the primary distinctive of this textbook. Reduce the essentials to a minimum so the language can be learned and retained as easily as possible, so that the Word of God can be preached in all its power and conviction.

The writing style of *BBG* is somewhat different from what you might expect. It is not overly concerned with brevity. Rather, I discuss the concepts in some depth and in a "friendly" tone. The goal is to help students enjoy the text and come to class knowing the information. While brevity has its advantages, I felt that it hinders the self-motivated student who wants to learn outside the classroom. For teachers who prefer a more succinct style, I have included overview and summary sections, and have placed some instruction in the footnotes and the Advanced

Information sections. The section numbers also make it easy for teachers to remove information they feel is unnecessary. For example: "Don't read 13.4–5 and 13.7."

It is possible to ignore all the footnotes in this text and still learn Koine Greek. The information in the footnotes is interesting tidbits for both the teacher and the exceptional student. They will most likely confuse the struggling student.

I follow standard pronunciation of Koine Greek (also called "Erasmian"). There is increasing interest in modern Greek pronunciation, and some are making the argument that this is closer to the true pronunciation of Koine. I have included some modern Greek pronunciation on the website. But the majority of students learn the standard pronunciation, and those who learn modern often have difficulty communicating with students from other schools.

There are many people I wish to thank. Without my students' constant questioning and their unfailing patience with all my experiments in teaching methods, this grammar could never have been written. I would like to thank especially Brad Rigney, Ian and Kathy Lopez, Mike De Vries, Bob Ramsey, Jenny (Davis) Riley, Handjarawatano, Dan Newman, Tim Pack, Jason Zahariades, Tim and Jennifer Brown, Lynnette Whitworth, Chori Seraiah, Miles Van Pelt, and the unnamed student who failed the class twice until I totally separated the nouns (chapters 1–14) from the verbs (chapters 15–36), and then received a "B." Thanks also to my students at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and my T.A.'s, Matthew Smith, Jim Critchlow, Jason DeRouchie, Rich Herbster, Juan Hernández, Ryan Jackson, Steven Kirk, David Palmer, Andy Williams, and especially my colleagues and friends, Edward M. Keazirian II, George H. Guthrie, and Paul "Mr." Jackson.

I want to thank those professors who were willing to try out the grammar in its earlier stages, and for those upon whom I have relied for help: Robert H. Mounce, William S. LaSor, Daniel B. Wallace, Thomas Schreiner, Jon Hunt, Nancy Vyhmeister, Keith Reeves, Ron Rushing, George Gunn, Chip Hard, Verlyn Verbrugge, and Craig Keener. A very special thank you must go to Walter W. Wessel, who used the text beginning with its earliest form and who was constant and loving in his corrections, criticisms, and praise. When I thought the text was basically done, my excellent editor, Verlyn Verbrugge, continued to fine-tune my work, not just by finding typos and grammatical errors, but by adding substantially to the content and flow of the chapters. (As always, any errors are my fault, and I would appreciate notification of any errors or suggestions. Correspondence may be sent through www.Teknia.com, where a list of the corrections made between printings is maintained.) If it were not for the diligent efforts of Ed van der Maas and Jack Kragt, this grammar may never have been published and marketed as well as it has been. I must also mention my marvelous Greek teachers who first planted the seed of love for this language and nurtured it to growth: E. Margaret Howe, Walter W. Wessel, Robert H. Mounce, William Sanford LaSor, and George E. Ladd.

Much of the work, especially in the exercises, could not have been done without the aid of the software programs *Gramcord* and *Accordance*. Thanks.

As this is the third edition of the textbook, I would also like to thank those who have used *BBG* over the past nearly two decades, and Rick Bennett, Randall Buth, Christine Palmer, and Ed Taylor for their help. BBG's acceptance has been gratifying; I trust that you will find the fine-tuning in this edition helpful.

A special thank you to my wife Robin, for her unfailing patience and encouragement through the past twenty-five years, and for believing in the goals we both set for this grammar. And finally I wish to thank the scholars who agreed to write the exegetical insights for each chapter. As you see how a knowledge of the biblical languages has aided them in their studies, I trust you will be encouraged in your own pursuit of learning and using Greek. Thank you. Bill Mounce

# **Abbreviations**

Accordance Roy Brown, Oaktree Software, (www.Accordancebible.com)
 BBG Basics of Biblical Greek, William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 2003)
 BDAG A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, eds. W. Bauer, F. E. Danker, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, third edition (University of Chicago Press, 2000)
 Bl-D A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, eds. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, trans. R. Funk (University of Chicago Press, 1961)

Fanning Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, Buist M. Fanning (Clarendon Press, 1990)

Gramcord Paul Miller, The Gramcord Institute, (www.Gramcord.org)

Klein A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, Ernest Klein (Elsevier Publishing Co., NY, 1971), from which I drew heavily for cognates in the vocabulary sections

LaSor Handbook of New Testament Greek, William Sanford LaSor (Eerdmans, 1973)

Machen New Testament Greek for Beginners (Macmillan, 1951)

MBG The Morphology of Biblical Greek, William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 1994)

Metzger Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek, Bruce M. Metzger

(BakerBooks, 1997)

Smyth Greek Grammar, Herbert Weir Smyth (Harvard University Press, 1980)

Wallace Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testa-

ment, Daniel B. Wallace (Zondervan, 1995)

Wenham The Elements of New Testament Greek, J. W. Wenham (Cambridge Uni-

versity Press, 1965)

# **The Professor**

In the third edition I am introducing the Professor. This is the cartoon character who appears in the margins. Everything he says is optional, but they can be helpful tidbits. I will be adding more of the Professor between printings as I discover additional things that are fun to learn.

I will give you an overview of every chapter, a review half way through, and a final summary.

At the end of most chapters I will give you the chance to write down what you learned in the Workbook. Pay special attention to the Summary section.



There's no telling what I have to say!

I'm the funnest of all! I am going to teach you some conversational Greek, like how to count to ten, ask where the bathroom is, and stuff like that.





I may be the most relationally challenged—some say I am boring—but I think my little tidbits of information are interesting to know, even if they are not necessary.





# **Rationale Statement**

With so many introductory Greek grammars available, it is appropriate to begin with a rationale for yet another. *BBG* is not just new to be different, but approaches the instruction of the language from a different perspective that I hope makes learning Greek as easy as possible, as rewarding as possible, and, yes, even enjoyable.

The following explains my approach, why it is different, and why I think it is better. The widespread acceptance of the first two editions has been encouraging.

#### Goals

- 1. To approach learning Greek not as an intellectual exercise but as a tool for ministry.
- 2. To provide constant encouragement for students, showing them not only what they should learn but why.
- 3. To teach only what is necessary at the moment, deferring the more complicated concepts until later.
- 4. To reduce rote memorization to a minimum.
- 5. To utilize current advances in linguistics, not for the purpose of teaching linguistics but to make learning Greek easier.
- To be able to read most of the books in the New Testament with help from a lexicon.

#### 1. A Tool for Ministry

Biblical Greek should not be taught simply for the sake of learning Greek. Although there is nothing necessarily wrong with that approach, it is inappropriate for a great number of students in colleges and seminaries. Too often they are taught Greek and told that eventually they will see why it is important to know the material. In my opinion, they should be shown, in the process of learning, why they are learning Greek and why a working knowledge of Greek is essential for their ministry.

#### 2. Encouragement

Most students come to Greek with varying degrees of apprehension. Their enthusiasm often wears down as the semester progresses. *BBG*, therefore, has built into it different ways of encouraging them.

a. Most of the exercises are from the Bible, mostly the New Testament, but some from the Septuagint. From day one, the students are translating the biblical text. If a passage has a word that is taught in a later chapter, it is translated.

This gives students the satisfaction of actually having translated a portion of the Bible. Whenever the Greek in the exercises clarifies an exegetical or theological point, I have also tried to point it out.

The disadvantage of using the biblical text is that the student may already know the verse in English. But with a little discipline on the student's part, this disadvantage is far outweighed by the advantages. There are also made-up sentences in the exercises.

- b. The frequency is given for every vocabulary word. It is one thing to learn that καί means "and," but to see that it occurs 9,161 times in the New Testament will motivate students to memorize it.
- c. There are some 5,423 different words in the New Testament that occur a total of 138,167 times. After every vocabulary section, students are told what percentage of the total word count they now know. By the eighth chapter the student will recognize more than one out of every two word occurrences.
- d. Many chapters end with an Exegesis section. This section expands on the basic grammar of the chapter and enables students to see that grammar makes a difference in exegesis. For example, after they learn the present active indicative, I show them examples of the punctiliar, progressive, customary, gnomic, historic, and futurist use of the present tense. If this is more information than a student needs, it can be skipped.
- e. The website (www.Teknia.com) is full of additional helps that will encourage students, such as relevant blogs, videos, and additional exercises.

#### 3. Teaching Only What is Necessary

Students only learn what is necessary in order to begin reading the biblical text. After they have mastered the basics and have gained some experience in reading, they are taught more of the details. In order to encourage the better student and make the text more usable for more teachers, additional detailed material is put in footnotes or in two sections at the end of the chapter called "Advanced Information" and "Exegesis."

For example, some of the rules for accents are included in the Advanced Information, so it is up to the student or teacher as to whether or not they should be learned. The adverbial participle provides another example. Students are taught to use the "-ing" form of the verb, prefaced by either a temporal adverb ("while," "after") or "because." In the Advanced Information, students can also read that they may include a personal pronoun identifying the doer of the participle, and that the time of the finite verb used to translate the participle is relative to the main verb.

#### 4. Memorization

Rote memorization for most people is difficult. It makes language learning a chore, and often results in students forgetting the language. I will do everything I can to keep the amount of memorization to a minimum. For example, in the noun system you will learn only one paradigm and eight rules instead of memorizing dozens of charts. As I often say in the website lectures: "You're welcome."

#### 5. Modern Linguistics

Modern studies in linguistics have much to offer language learning. *BBG* does not teach linguistics for linguistics' sake, but the basic principles can be taught and applied generally.

For example, the "Square of Stops" is mastered since it explains many of the morphological changes of the verb. Also, a basic set of case endings are learned, and then students are shown how they are modified, only so slightly, in the different declensions. Once it is seen that the same basic endings are used in all three declensions, memorization is simplified. In the lexicon, all words are keyed to my *The Morphology of Biblical Greek* (see bibliography on page xii). As the students' knowledge and interest progresses, they will be able to pursue in-depth morphological work in this text.

#### 6. Innovative

*BBG* approaches the joyful task of learning Greek from new and innovative angles, not merely for the sake of newness but from the desire to make learning Greek as rewarding as possible. The easier it is to learn the language, the more the language will be used by pastors and others involved in ministry.

- a. All definitions are derived from Prof. Bruce Metzger's Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek and Warren Trenchard's The Student's Complete Guide to the Greek New Testament. This way, when students move into second-year Greek and use one of these two excellent study aids for increasing their vocabulary, they will not have to relearn the definitions.
- b. A lexicon is provided that lists all words occurring ten times or more in the Greek Testament along with the tense forms for all simple verbs. (Any word in the exercises that occurs less than ten times will be identified in the exercise itself.) This will be needed for the additional and review exercises. There also is a full set of noun and verbal charts.
- c. Instead of switching students back and forth between nouns and verbs, *BBG* teaches nouns first and then verbs. Because verbs are so important, some have questioned the wisdom of not starting them until chapter 15. Here are my reasons.<sup>1</sup>
  - Over the years I found that excessive switching between nouns and verbs was one of the most confusing aspects to teaching Greek.
  - Nouns are learned so quickly that you get to chapter 15 sooner than you might expect.
  - If you listen to a child learn to speak, you can see that it is more natural to learn nouns first and later move on to the verbal system.

While this approach has proven itself over the years, I wanted to be sensitive to other teachers' preferences. Therefore, in the second edition I added a "Track Two" of exercises. It is an alternate set of exercises that allows you to move from chapter 9 up to chapter 15 and learn about verbs, and after several chapters on verbs come back and finish nouns. This involves switching back and forth between nouns and verbs only once, and in my experience it has shown itself to be effective. If you utilize Teknia.com, it is especially easy to follow Track 2.

- d. At the beginning of most chapters is an Exegetical Insight based on a biblical passage. These are written by New Testament scholars and demonstrate the significance of the grammar in the chapter.
- e. Next comes a discussion of English grammar, and in the summary of Greek grammar that follows as many comparisons as possible are made between

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I have since learned that the US Diplomatic Service uses the same approach in teaching modern languages.

- English and Greek, with emphasis on the similarities between the two languages.
- f. Greek grammar is initially taught with English illustrations. When illustrations for new grammatical constructions are given in Greek, students spend much of their concentration on identifying the Greek forms, and often do not fully understand the grammar itself. In *BBG* the grammar is made explicit in English, and only when it is grasped is it illustrated in Greek. For example,

A participle has verbal characteristics. "After eating, my Greek teacher gave us the final." In this example, eating is a participle that tells us something about the verb gave. The teacher gave us the final after he was done eating. (After is an adverb that specifies when the action of the participle occurred.)

A participle also has adjectival aspects. "The woman, sitting by the window, is my Greek teacher." In this example, sitting is a participle telling us something about the noun "woman."

- g. There are many free resources available at the website. Go to www.Teknia. com/basicsofbiblicalgreek." There you will find many tools to help you learn Greek, such as free flash card software.
  - Most importantly, you have free access to the Greek classes that will help walk you through the textbook (see below). Most of the free resources are available within the online class; just go to the appropriate chapter.

It is my hope that Teknia.com will become a centralized rallying point for learning Greek, where we can all share our insights and help one another.

# **BillMounce.com**

The Chapter Overviews on the website are 8-10 minute lectures over the main points of the chapter. They are in the online class.

There also are full length lectures available for sale at BillMounce.com.
These lectures cover everything in the chapter.



Teachers: I don't take class time lecturing over the textbook any more; I use these full lectures. This way I am saving valuable class time for the most important thing I can do: work with the exercises. It really works doing it this way.



As we move into the digital age, there are so many ways that I can help you learn Greek beyond just writing the grammar and workbook. One way is to be able to share my teaching with you.

This is especially for those who are tired or need a little extra help. I have recorded my two-semester course in which I go through each chapter in detail. These lectures can be purchased at my website: www.Teknia.com. Once purchased, they are available inside the free online class or as DVD videos.

I am more excited about the possibilities of this website than I have been since the creation of the CD-ROM. The possibilities are endless as to how we can create a community to teach and learn biblical Greek. This site is constantly changing, so what follows is what I have right now or have planned in the foreseeable future.

To find these resources, go to the online class by clicking "Online Classes" on the home page (www.teknia.com/classes), click on the correct class, and go to the appropriate chapter. A general listing of the resources can be found at www.teknia.com/basicsofbiblicalgreek.

#### For the textbook

- The online class walks you chapter by chapter through the textbook
- Section Overview. Before each new major section, there will be a video lecture giving the grand overview
- Chapter Overview lectures (formerly called "Summary Lectures") cover just the highlights of the chapter. You can watch online or download the mp3 audio.
- Study Guide for the Chapter Overview lectures
- Monday with Mounce blogs (at BillMounce.com), which centers on translation issues
- Mnemonic devices for learning vocabulary; students can even add their own (see page xix)
- Quizzes for testing yourself on each chapter (and someday answers)

Resources can be downloaded from the appropriate lesson in the online class.

#### For the workbook

- Answers for the entire workbook
- Audio helps for the workbook. These are my discussions of the difficult parsing and sentence exercises. It's like me being in class with you.
- Color-coded hints for every parsing and translation exercise (see page xxi)

#### For the class

- Sample syllabi
- Overheads for each chapter in Keynote (and someday PowerPoint)
- Teacher forums, so we can work together
- Student forums for each chapter, so students can interact with each other
- Greek Bingo game
- Fun songs rewritten in Greek
- Latest version of FlashWorks (vocabulary learning software)
- Free Greek and Hebrew fonts

#### Free Online Class

I strongly urge every student to have the online class open as they are working through a chapter in the workbook. Go to www.Teknia.com, click on "Online Classes," and choose the appropriate class such as New Testament Greek (Track One). Go to your current chapter and find the appropriate section.

#### **Encouragement, Downloads, and Chapter Overview**



**Encouragement**. Contains the Exegetical Insight from the chapter and relevant blogs.

**Downloads**. Any files necessary for the chapter. If you are looking for a specific resource, such as hearing Bill read the exercise in Chapter 4, then go to that chapter.

**Chapter Overview**. I used to call these "Summary Lectures." They are free, 8-10 minute audio lectures over the chapter, hitting just the highlights. The "Study guide" is for note taking, and you can download the audio to your mp3 player or listen to them online.

#### **Chapter Material**

# CHAPTER MATERIAL Overheads (Keynote) Lecture ( Video using Flash | Video using QuickTime | Audio ) Vocabulary

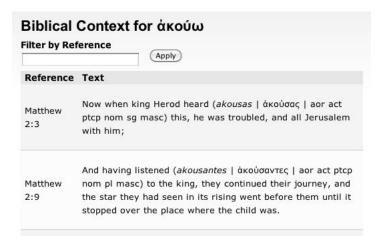
The Chapter Material section contains **overheads** you can download, and you can watch or listen to Bill **lecture** through the chapter if you have purchased access. (You can also purchase video DVDs from the Teknia store if you don't want to watch them online.) Remember, the online class is free, but the full lectures require payment.

**Vocabulary** walks you through the words you need to learn for this chapter (see next page).

ἀκούω	
Vocabulary form: ἀκούω	
Definition: I hear, learn, obey, understand	
Core Data	
Erasmian: ◀ ► ○ ◀ ▶ ▼	
Modern: ◀0 ▶	
Forms:	
ἀκούσω, ήκουσα, ἀκήκοα, -, ἡκούσθην	
Root: ἀκου	

See this word in its biblical context.

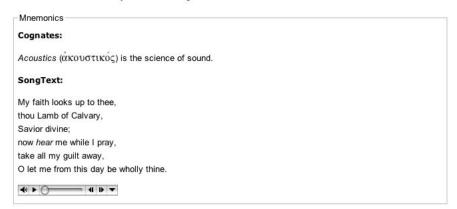
To see how the word is used in the Bible, click "See this word in its biblical context."



As you scroll down, you can see all the hints I have come up with to help you learn these words.

#### Notes:

ακούω can take a direct object in either the genitive or accusative.

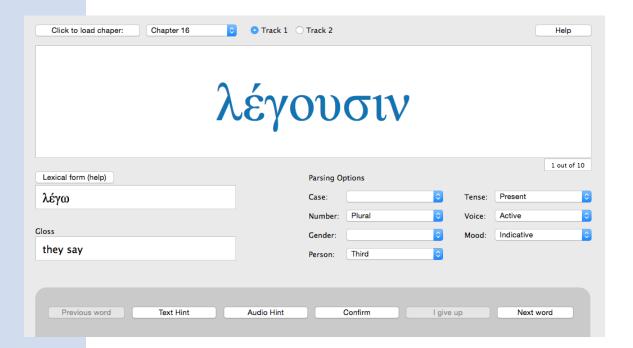


If you scroll down and click on "Add Comment" (sorry, it should say "Mnemonic" but I haven't figured out how to do that yet), you can post your own mnemonics. Please do so; let's collect as many of these as we can. (To be able to do this, you will have needed to create a free account at Teknia.com and have logged in.)

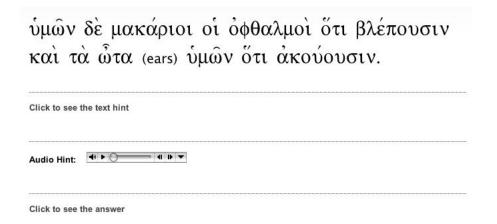
#### **Exercises**



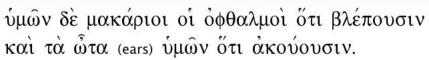
In the Exercises section, you can click on **ParseWorks** to work through the parsing section of the workbook and see if you are right or not.

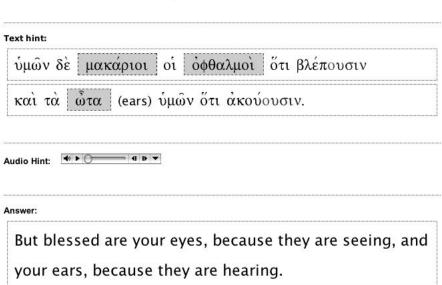


You can also work through the **Warm-up** and **Translation** exercises. Click the sound bar to hear the kind of hints I give in class (without telling you the actual answer).



You can also see a text hint, and if necessary the answer to see if you are right. Please do not abuse these answers. If you do not force yourself to do the homework without peeking, you will never learn the language.





#### **Assessment and Help**



Finally, you can take some sample **quizzes** (answers are not yet available) to prepare for your teacher's quiz, or get some help in the forum (and in turn help others).

We are hoping to add many more features to these offerings. One will be a wiki exercise page where you can add your own exercises, either other verses or made-up sentences.

# **FlashWorks**

*FlashWorks* is a vocabulary drilling program for Macintosh and Windows computers. It is available as a free download at Teknia.com/flashworks.

FlashWorks tags each vocabulary word as to its chapter, category (noun, verb, adjective, preposition, other), and its degree of difficulty (1-5). Then, for example, you can call up all the verbs in chapters 15-20 with a degree of difficulty 3 through 4. The words are then randomly mixed and the fun begins. As you learn the words, you can change the difficulty rating to a lower number, or *FlashWorks* can watch how you are doing and change the rating automatically.

FlashWorks has help information built in. Start the program and from the Help menu select Help; it defaults to the QuickHelp screen. There is more exhaustive help in the help system, and there are a series of tutorials at Teknia.com and on YouTube.com.

