

The Ablative

The Ablative is the case of separation or origin. The word comes to the English from the Latin *ablātus* meaning “carried off.” “This case has seldom occurred in Indo-European languages with a distinctive ending of its own, but it does have quite a distinct function. The name suggests the basal significance of the case: ablatives, that which is borne away, or separated.”¹

When speaking of the ablative it may be static or progressive. In the static sense it means a state of being – as separated where the emphasis may be either on the resulting state or separation as the cause and may be the source or origin. In the progressive sense as in moving away from something.

Uses of the Ablative

Ablative of Separation. This is the simple basal use, unaffected by any associated idea. Often time the Ablative of separation will be accompanied by the preposition *απο* or *εκ*. Separation may be either physical or metaphorical.

For example Eph. 2:12: ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι **τῆς πολιτείας** τοῦ Ἰσραηλ. “having been alienated **from the commonwealth** of Israel.”

Ablative of Source. As the name implies the ablative of source says something about the source or original situation contributed in some way to that head noun’s present character or state.

An example is Rom 9:16: ἄρα οὐκ οὐ **τοῦ θελοντος** οὐδὲ **τοῦ τρεχοντος** ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος **θεοῦ**. “So then [it is] not **dependent on the one who wills** nor **on the one who runs**, but **on the God** who shows mercy.”

Another example is Rom. 10:3: ἀγνοοῦτες γὰρ τὴν **τοῦ θεοῦ** δικαιοσύνην. “For they being ignorant of the righteousness **that comes from God.**”

¹ Dana & Mantey, p. 61