

Bible Greek VPOD – Intermediate Greek Lesson 3

1.b The message brings us into fellowship (1:3)

1:3. ὃ ἑώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκοαμεν, ἀπαγγελλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν (What we have seen and heard, we are making known to you). What we have seen and heard in the past and have been convinced of, we continue to proclaim to you. The perfects, “we have seen,” and “we have heard,” are completed acts whose effect continues up to the point of this writing, the proclamation is a continuous act, a continuous act of proclaiming the Word of God to the people of the Church, even the Church in Ephesus. It is as though the things referred to in verses one and two are those things that have been accumulated over time, from the writings of the Old Testament to those of the Apostles and other New Testament writers, passed from church to church in what will eventually be the collection of writings known as the New Testament. John’s letter to this church can be dated to sometime in the 90’s. This makes him the last of the New Testament authors. It is not known which of the New Testament writings John and the church in Ephesus had, but the writings were passed from church to church. Paul is said to have started the churches in Ephesus (cf. Acts 18:19) and stayed there some time, but it is John who went, stayed, and nourished that church until his death from old age. He is the only apostle that tradition says was not martyred.

The fact that John includes others in this proclamation “we are making known to you,” points to the fact that there is a group of “proclaimers.” Where Paul uses “good news,” John uses ἀπαγγελλω (apaggello) Pres. Act. Ind. 1pl., to bring tidings, proclaim, to make known from the compound of ἀπο (apo) from, out of and ἀγγελος (aggelos) a messenger, envoy, one who is sent (with a message), so the present tense relates the idea, “we continue to make known.”

ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ’ ἡμῶν (and in order that you might have fellowship with us). The *hina* clause is the purpose clause, and the purpose is given that “you might have fellowship with us.” The *hina* with the Present Subjunctive εχω (echo) Pres. Act. Subj. 2pl., to have, hold, is translated “you all might have,” and presents the purpose as a continuous walk in the Word. The idea is that they continue to have κοινωνία (koinonia) a.f.sg., “fellowship, association, community, communion,” from the adj. κοινος (koinos) meaning “common.” When speaking of believers in fellowship with one another it is an association based on the message of Christ. Robertson called it a sharing partnership¹. The purpose of the fellowship gathering is to speak of what Christ has done – to speak of the things of God. A gathering in fellowship with fellow believers must involve Christ as its central discussion. The central point of our fellowship involves “what we have seen and heard” and made known regarding Jesus Christ.

Fellowship is related to the Lord’s Supper or what is sometimes called Communion, that institution that the Lord Himself instituted (Matt. 26:26-29). This Communion is related to the breaking of bread and drinking of the cup of blessing (1 Cor.

¹ Robertson’s Word Pictures (www.onlinebible.org)

10:16; 11:23-26) and involves remembering the what Christ did on the cross and a self-examination of ourselves in light of who He is – a holy, true God who paid the price Himself for our sin, a legal substitute taking our place in death.

και ἡ κοινωια δε ἡ ἡμετερα μετα τοῦ πατρος και μετα τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (and moreover our fellowship [is] with the father and with the Son of Him, Jesus Christ). The conjunction δε (de) “but, moreover” is taken not as the contrast or adversative “but,” but as the continuative “moreover.” The construction “the fellowship, that which is ours” fits with the subject. As Vincent writes, “*Ours* (possessive instead of personal pronoun) indicating fellowship as a *distinguishing mark* of Christians rather than as merely something enjoyed by them.”²

This fellowship is with the Father, and as if to be as clear as possible, John tightly links the fellowship we have with the Father and Son by using the same preposition μετα (meta) twice! It is as though he is saying fellowship with the Father is the same as fellowship with the Son. An equality is established between the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and moreover, this fellowship we have is with a common bond; we have fellowship because He reconciled us back to Him by His Son (cf. Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:21). Christ came in the flesh, lowering Himself a little lower than the angels in order to represent mankind on the cross. That is our common bond that reconciles us to God making fellowship possible. Moreover, fellowship with God involves righteousness as Paul writes,

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14)

In essence John writes we are in fellowship as witnesses of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is notably absent from this introductory statement because the object of John’s proclamation is that Jesus is God, an independent person of the Godhead, and exists glorified without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. John uniquely identifies the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in order to separate them as persons but link them as co-equal. The theological term “trinity” will not come along for some time, yet the New Testament and in particular, the Apostle John, clearly brings out the three-in-one character of the God-head. That God exists as three persons, yet they are One (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; John 14:16-17,26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 John 4:13-15). The Scriptures clearly teach that God exists as three persons, not three gods, nor one God manifesting himself in three modes of existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (modern day modalists). The word Trinity comes to the English from the Latin ‘*trinus*’ or ‘*trinitas*’ meaning “three together.” The earliest use of the word is found in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch (c. 181 A.D.) who remarked, “the three days which were before the luminaries are types of the Trinity (*To Autolycus* 2.15). The term ‘*triad*’ is employed by Plotinus (c. 270 A.D.) and Proclus (c. 485 A.D.). Tertullian (c. 220 A.D.) uses the term ‘*trinitas*’. Origen (c. 250 A.D.) uses ‘*trias*’³. Dr. Ryrie provides a modern

² Vincent’s Word Pictures (www.e-Sword.org)

³ William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishers, 2003), p. 229

definition as: “In the one living and true God there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in existence.”⁴

But John does not leave out the Holy Spirit in this letter because the believer is indwelt by the Spirit, He did not leave us orphans, He left us a helper. Fellowship and the Holy Spirit are important. Our relationship with God the Spirit is linked with fellowship with the rest of the members of the trinity (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1).

1.c. This writing is meant to bring joy (1:4)

1:4. και ταυτα γραφομεν υμιν (ημεις) (And these things we are writing to you). The demonstrative is the neuter plural so the translation is “these things,” and as before, they refer to all things seen, heard and touched. The Apostle John seeks to document all these things to them, but what he desires is either that “we write” meaning there are multiple writers along with John (i.e., the Apostles or other New Testament authors) or that John is documenting their testimonies collectively either a Apostles or those in the Church with him. Either way the message concerns what is heard, seen and touched and further links the uniqueness of their fellowship which speaks of what they have in common in Christ, namely, they are “in Christ,” a technical term for the Church.

ἵνα ἡ χαρα υμῶν (ἡμῶν) ᾗ πεπληρωμενη (in order that the our joy might be made complete). Now the purpose of this writing is made known by the *hina* purpose clause “that, in order that,” **η χαρα ημων** – the joy of us might be made complete. The subjunctive of “to be,” it [the joy] might be in a state of being – complete. The first *hina* clause concerns the believer’s fellowship, the second *hina* clause concerns joy. Salvation involves reconciliation and being in right relationship with God, and that results in joy! John and all Christians are commanded to spread this message and make disciple to the ends of the earth:

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. 9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.(John 15:8-11)

This joy speaks of a progressive joy as the perfect participle speaks of a process, and that joy builds. Their joy is possible as the subjunctive brings out. The purpose of writing of this letter is to describe how their joy might be made complete. The ultimate fulfillment of this state of joy is found in the completed state, namely being in fellowship with God brings joy. Or more precisely, our reconciliation at the point of our salvation places us in fellowship and our joy in that state of being is complete. But the passive reflects God’s

⁴ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago:Moody Press, 1999), p. 632

work in us, either as progressive through our experiential walk being in Christ but ultimately seen as He sovereignly brings us to glorification at the rapture or resurrection.

There is a textural variant here as the copyists added the plural “you” “that your joy might be made complete.” Linski writes, “Misunderstanding scribes altered the text. They thought that John should say: ‘These things we are writing *to you* in order that *your* joy may be full’ (A.V.). Grammars like B.D. 280 and R. 406, 678 support this thought by asserting that γραφομεν is the literary plural. This has ‘we are writing’ = ‘I am writing’ in 2:1. ...In one sentence there are no less than eleven “we” verbs, to say nothing of the “we” and “our” pronouns and now one of these “we” forms is to be regarded as editorial for “I.” This does not seem likely.”⁵

⁵ Linski, p. 380

1. The message defined (1:5)

And this is the message that we have heard from him and we are bringing back to you. That God is light and there is no darkness in him – none.

Και ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκοαμεν ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγελλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

1:5. Και ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκοαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγελλομεν ὑμῖν (And this is the message that we have heard from him and we are bringing back to you). The feminine demonstrative pronoun points to the message that is heard. There is a textural variant here where some manuscripts have ἐπαγγελία (epaggelia) n.f.sg., with def. art., “an announcement, promise,” from the compound of ἐπι (epi) upon, on, over, and ἀγγελος (aggelos) a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel; whereas other manuscripts have ἀγγελία (aggelia) n.f.sg., “a message, announcement.” Either way one takes it, both nouns have the common root as “a message,” and the message continues to be proclaimed as the present active indicative ἐστὶν is used. But note the perfect active indicative ἀκηκοαμεν from the root ἀκουω (akouo) “to hear” – “we have heard” meaning our hearing is a completed act. The message is heard and repeated from generation to generation.

The source of this message has come ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ “from Him” and means Jesus Himself has given the message, He had come in the flesh and manifested the Father to us (cf., John 2:11; 17:6). What we know about God is revealed in two ways, general revelation, which is that revelation concerning God by natural means and reaches all people; and special revelation which comes by various means to various people, but what He has revealed to us and written down in the Bible. This verse refers to the doctrine of special revelation. The incarnation of Christ is described as the most pure of revelations about God to mankind. Jesus “exegeted” the Father, revealing the nature, glory, wisdom, power and love of God (cf., John 1:14; 3:2, 15-16; 7:46; 10:17; 14:9):

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία (that God is light and there is no darkness in him - none). Further, this message concerns God, this equivalence of Him, namely, Jesus Christ and God is linked as an inseparable unit. An equivalence is established that the personal pronoun “Him” is God! (cf. John 1:4-5) The purpose of the pronoun is to replace the noun so the chain is “His Son Jesus Christ” (v.3) – him – God.

The message concerns the fact that God is light and there is no darkness in Him! The use of the word light used here is obviously metaphorical – God is not a photon, the contrast of light and darkness points to a spiritual discernment that is inherent in God who defines what is good from evil, as the metaphors used express the two extremes – light and dark.

How does one tell when the author is using a word metaphorically? The test is that if the thing is impossible to be in its natural state, then the word must be used metaphorically. God is not a photon, He is spirit. Next, the thing that is being described as a metaphor possesses some characteristic of the metaphor. What characteristic of light is God? Light is pure, exposes or bring what is hidden to the eye into sight, or spiritually, what the heart cannot see, He opens the eyes of the heart. But Scripture has to reveal what the word means to relate it in its context.

The apostle John uses this language often in his writings. In John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” reflecting not just spiritual life, but creation and perseveration of physical life. “And the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend it”

(John 1:5); which signifies the spiritual condition of mankind in his fallen estate, depraved individuals who will not accept the things of God (cf., 1 Cor. 1:18-25). And Jesus is the “true light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9; 8:12); “And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light” (John 3:19). This light of the world exposes the evil deeds of men (John 3:20), exposing what is right and wrong (cf. John 11:10; 12:35, 36, 46).

The word light has a rich biblical history as Dr. Wuest writes, “It [light] is the condition of life. Physically, it represents *glory*; intellectually, *truth*; morally, *holiness*. As immaterial it corresponds to God as *spirit*; as diffuse, to God as *love*; as the condition of life, to God as *life*; as pure and illuminating, to God as *holiness* and *truth*. In the Old Testament, light is often the medium of God’s visible revelations to men. It was the first manifestation of God in creation. The burning lamp passed between the pieces of the parted victim in God’s covenant with Abraham. God went before Israel in a pillar of fire, descended in fire at Sinai, and appeared in a luminous cloud which rested on the mercy-seat in the most holy place.”⁶

⁶ Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), Vol. 2, p.100

Detailed Analysis

1:3 - ο εωρακαμεν και ακηκοαμεν απαγγελλομεν υμιν (What we have seen and heard, we are making known to you) : ος (hos) rel. pron. a.n.sg., who, which, that, what; οραω (horaō) Perf. Act. Ind. 1pl., to see with the eyes, mind: we have seen; και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; ακουω (akouō) 2 Perf. Act. Ind. 1pl., to hear: we have heard; απαγγελω (apaggello) Pres. Act. Ind. 1pl., to bring tidings, proclaim, to make known: we are making known; συ (su) pers. pron. 2d.pl., you.

ινα και υμεις κοινωνιαν εχητε μεθ ημων (and in order that you might have fellowship with us) : ινα (hina) conj., in order that, that, so that; και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; συ (su) pers. pron. 2n.pl., you; κοινωνια (koinonia) a.f.sg., fellowship, association, community, communion, from the adj. κοινος (koinos) common; εχω (echo) Pres. Act. Subj. 2pl., to have, hold: you all might have; μετα (meta) prep., with, after, behind; εγω (ego) pers. pron. 1g.pl., I, me.

και η κοινωνια δε η ημετερα μετα του πατρος και μετα του υιου αυτου ιησου (and moreover our fellowship [is] with the father and with the Son of Him, Jesus Christ) : και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; κοινωνια (koinonia) n.f.sg., with def. art., fellowship, association, from κοινος (koinos) common; δε (de) conj., but, moreover; η (he) pron.n.f.sg., that; ημετερος (hemeteros) adj. n.f.pl., our; μετα (meta) prep., with, after, behind; πατηρ (pater) g.m.sg., with def. art., father; και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; μετα (meta) prep., with, after, behind; υιος (huios) g.m.sg., with def. art., a son; αυτος (autos) pres. pron. 3m.sg., him; Ιησους (Iesous) g.m.sg., Jesus of Hebrew origin from (Yehoshua') Joshua or Jehoshua "Jehovah is salvation"; Χριστος (Christos) adj.g.m.sg., Christ from χριω (chrīo) to anoint.

1:4 - και ταυτα γραφομεν υμιν (And these things we are writing to you) : και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; ταυτα (tauta) dem. pron. a.n.pl., these; γραφω (grapho) Pres. Act. Ind. 1pl., to write: we are writing; συ (su) pers. pron. d.2.pl., you.

ινα η χαρα ημων η πεπληρωμενη (in order that our joy might be made complete) : ινα (hina) conj., that, in order that; χαρα (chara) n.f.sg., with def. art., joy, gladness; εγω (ego) pers. pron. g.1.pl., us; ειμι (eimi) Pres. Act. Subj. 3sg., to be, exist: he/she/it might be; πληρωω (plerōō) Perf. Pas. Part. n.f.sg., to make full, to fill up, to complete: having been made complete.

1:5 - και αυτη εστιν η επαγγελια ην ακηκοαμεν απ αυτου και αναγγελλομεν υμιν (And this is the message that we have heard from him and we are bringing back to you) : και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; ουτος (houtos) dem. pron. n.f.sg., this; εστι (esti) Pres. Ind. 3sg., he/she/it is; επαγγελια (epaggelia) n.f.sg., with def. art., announcement, promise, from the compound of επι (epi) upon, on, over, and αγγελος (aggelos) a messenger, envoy, one who is

sent, angel; ος (hos) rel. pron. a.f.sg., who, which, that, what; ακουω (akouo) 2Perf. Act. Ind. 1pl., to hear: we have heard; απο (apo) prep., from, out of; αυτος (autos) pers. pron. 3g.m.sg., him; και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; αναγγελλω (anaggello) Pres. Act. Ind. 1pl., to announce, make known, report, bring back tidings, from the compound of ανα (ana) down, and αγγελος (aggelos) a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel: we are bringing back; συ (su) pers. pron. 2d.pl., you.

στι ο θεος φως εστιν και σκοτια εν αυτω ουκ εστιν ουδεμια (that God is light and there is no darkness in him - none) : στι (hoti) conj., that, because, since; θεος (theos) n.m.sg., with def. art., a god, God; φως (phos) n.n.sg., light; ειμι (eimi) Pres. Act. Ind. 3sg., to be, exist: he/she/it is; και (kai) conj., and, even, also, indeed; σκοτια (skotia) n.f.sg., darkness; εν (en) prep., in, by, with; αυτος (autos) pers. pron. 3d.m.sg., him; ουκ (ouk) neg. part., not; ειμι (eimi) Pres. Act. Ind. 3sg., to be, exist: he/she/it is; ουδεις (oudeis) adj.n.f.sg., no one, nothing, from the compound of ου (ou) not and εις (eis) one.