

Pronouncing the New Testament Using Modern Greek Pronunciation

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Letter	Name	Pronunciation	Sound	Examples
Αα	ἄλφα	alpha	a as in	father
Ββ	βῆτα	vēta	v	very
Γγ	γάμα	gama	g if followed by α, ο, ου y if followed by ε, ι	gather yes
Δδ	δέλτα	<u>th</u> elta	th as in	there
Εε	ἔ ψιλόν	epsilon	ě	bet
Ζζ	ζῆτα	zēta	z	zealous
Ηη	ἦτα	ēta	i, ē	these
Θθ	θῆτα	thēta	th as in	thin
Ιι	ἰῶτα	iota	i, ē	these
Κκ	κάπα	kapa	k	cake
Λλ	λάμβδα	lam <u>th</u> a	l	law
Μμ	μῦ	mi	m	mummy
Νν	νῦ	ni	n	notice
Ξξ	ξῖ	ksi	x	box
Οο	ὀ μικρόν	omicron	o	corporal
Ππ	πῖ	pi	p	pastor
Ρρ	ῥῶ	rho	r	run
Σσς	σίγμα	sigma	s	stare
Ττ	ταῦ	taf	t	tomorrow
Υυ	ῦ ψιλόν	ipsilon	i, ē	these
Φφ	φῖ	phi	f	first
Χχ	χῖ	<u>ch</u> i	h	Bach, loch
Ψψ	ψῖ	psi	ps	corpse
Ωω	ῶ μέγα	omega	o	corporal

This document is available online at <http://www.all-of-grace.org/pub/pribble/moderngreek/moderngreek.pdf>. There are also links to audio files of the vocabulary and Scripture texts read by the author.

Diphthongs

When the vowels in the following chart appear next to each other, they form a diphthong, i.e., they are pronounced as one letter, unless the accent falls on the first of the two vowels or the second vowel is ι or υ and has a diaeresis, in which case the two vowels are treated as separate sounds: προῦπάρχω, προῦτης, Γάϊος, Ἡσαΐας.

Diphthong	Sound	Examples	Words
ει, οι, ηυ	i, ē as in	these	εἰς, οἶκος, ἠύρισκετο
αι	ě	bet	αἶμα, αἶρω
ου	oo	soon	βουλή
αυ	av (before a voiced consonant) or af (before an unvoiced consonant)	have after	αὐλή, Παῦλος αὐτός, αὐξάνω
ευ	ev (before a voiced consonant or vowel) or ef (before an unvoiced consonant)	every effigy	εὐλογέω, εὐάρεστος εὐκαιρος, βουλευτής

Miscellaneous

Greek pronunciation is very regular (unlike English, modern Greek dictionaries do not need to give the pronunciation of individual words). Therefore, it is important to learn the rules. Many seem counterintuitive, especially to students who have learned the artificial Erasmian pronunciation.

These six vowels and diphthongs all sound the same (ē): ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι: συνείδησις, υἱός.

These vowels sound the same: ο, ω.

There is no difference in sound between the smooth and rough breather: εἰς, εἶς.

γγ and γκ are pronounced as ng in **longer** or **angry**: ἄγγελος, γάγγραινα, ἐγκράτεια.

γ before the consonants χ or ξ is pronounced as ng nasal, as in **song**: ἐλέγχω, τυγχάνω, ἔλεγεξις, φάραγεξ, λάρυγεξ, σάλπιγεξ.

μπ is pronounced mb, except before another consonant: ἐμπορία, ἔμπροσθεν, but ἐμπτύω.

ντ is pronounced nd: ἀντί, Ἀντιόχεια. The combination is also pronounced nd if a word ending in ν is quickly followed by a word beginning with τ: ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Before another vowel the ě sound becomes ā: θεός, βλασφημέω, γέεννα.

Before or after a voiced consonant σ sounds like z: κόσμος, Ἰσραήλ. The σ also sounds like z if a word ending in ς is quickly followed by a word beginning with a voiced consonant: διδούς νόμους μου.

Don't pronounce υ as ου: λύω, λούω.

Observe the accents; they are important. In ancient times they were tonal, but tonal accents were dying out by the end of the fifth century BC—the time of Plato—replaced by stress accents.

Why Modern Greek Pronunciation?

There is much speculation about how ancient Greek was pronounced, but by the nature of the case it cannot be known definitely. Some grammar books complicate things by trying to determine subtle nuances that cannot be ascertained with certainty. Essentially, modern Greek pronunciation starts from Plato's time, and is how the New Testament was pronounced; it is how the New Testament is pronounced in the Greek church today. Moreover, the reinforcement of hearing the spoken language is a great benefit to learners. Audio recordings of the Greek New Testament, narrated by Spiros Zodhiates and other native Greek speakers, are readily available. Online, an excellent source is ellopos.net.

Closing Word of Encouragement

“The Greek of the New Testament is by no means a difficult language; a very fair knowledge of it may be acquired by any minister of average intelligence. And to that end two homely directions may be given. In the first place, the Greek should be read aloud. A language cannot easily be learned by the eye alone. The sound as well as the sense of familiar passages should be impressed upon the mind, until sound and sense are connected without the medium of translation. Let this result not be hastened; it will come of itself if the simple direction be followed. In the second place, the Greek Testament should be read every day without fail, Sabbaths included. Ten minutes a day is of vastly more value than seventy minutes once a week. If the student keeps a ‘morning watch,’ the Greek Testament ought to be given a place in it; at any rate, the Greek Testament should be read devotionally. The Greek Testament is a sacred book, and should be treated as such. If it is treated so, the reading of it will soon become a source of joy and power.” (J. Gresham Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” *The Presbyterian*, February 7, 1918. Machen was a founding minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and author of *New Testament Greek for Beginners*. Note: Machen's *New Testament Greek*, while helpful, does *not* teach modern Greek pronunciation; nevertheless, the advice to read the Greek Testament aloud every day is excellent.)

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γεννηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον· καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν· καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. ὅτι σου ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Logos

John 1:1-14

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made 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.