

Greek Exegesis Class: The Genitive Case

Session 2

1) Description. Describes in some loose, broad, and general way the word modified.

In place of the word “of” put “characterized by” or “described by.”

... How dare you turn my Father's house into a house of trade! (John 2:16)

Walk as children of light (Eph 5:8).

i.e. Walk as children characterized or described by light. (see also Rom 13:12 and 1 Thes 5:5)

... the spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2).

2) Possessive. (Very common) The genitive possesses the word it modifies.

In place of the word “of” put “belonging to” or add “s.”

Paul a servant of [= belonging to] Christ Jesus (Rom 1:1).

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God! (lit. the Lord of me and the God of me) (John 20:28).

All things are yours (lit. All things are of you) (1 Cor 3:21).

3) Partitive. The genitive is the whole of which the word modified is but a part.

Each one of you (1 Cor 1:12).

A third of the earth was burned (Rev 8:7).

I will give you up to half of my kingdom (Mark 6:23).

4) Apposition (Epexegetical, Definition). The genitive more precisely defines the word modified, which designates a broad category, by naming a more specific example within that category.

In place of the word “of” put “namely” or “that is” or “which is.”

Lydia was a seller of purple cloth from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14).

You will receive the gift (lit., of) which is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

He received the sign of circumcision (Rom 4:11).

i.e., the sign = circumcision

5) Reference. The genitive restricts the reference (application) of the word modified to one certain thing. Usually modifying an adjective.

In place of the word “of” put “in,” “regarding,” “with respect to,” or “concerning.”

He who partakes only of milk is unskilled of the Word (Heb 5:13).

If the genitive (“of the Word”) were removed, the sentence would state that he who partakes only of milk is unskilled in general, which is not the meaning at all.

The Lord is not slow of his promise (2 Pet 3:9).

“slow regarding his promise” is much more specific than just “the Lord is slow.”

Produce fruit worthy of repentance (Matt 3:8).

i.e., show a change of life that is suitable in so far as repentance is concerned

6) Source (Origin). The genitive indicates the origin from which the word modified comes and sometimes depends on for its very existence.

In place of the word “of” put “from.”

I have come down of heaven (John 6:38).

that the quality of the power may be of God and not of ourselves (2 Cor 4:7).

Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22).

7) Subjective. The genitive produces the action implied in the noun modified. If the noun modified implies action, it can be converted into a verb, and the genitive modifying it can be converted into its subject.

For the phrase “the love of God” ...

Subjective genitive: God’s love for us

Objective genitive: Our love for God

Yet even the testimony of them was not the same (Mark 14:59).

i.e. they testified [the modified noun “testimony” implies an action – the action of testifying. The genitive (them) produces that action]

So will be the coming of the Son of man (Matt 24:27).

i.e., the Son of man comes

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8:35).

i.e., who or what will keep Christ from loving us?

that he might rescue us . . . according to the will of God (Gal 1:4).

i.e., according to God’s willing it

This will lead to my release by your prayer and the help of the Spirit (Phil 1:19).

i.e., by your praying and by the Spirit helping

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace . . . (Gal 5:22).

i.e., the virtues born by the Spirit

8) Objective. The genitive noun (or pronoun) receives like a direct object the action implied in the noun modified. In translation, you can turn the noun modified into a verb, and the objective genitive into its direct object.

The blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven (Matt 12:31)

and yet disregard justice and the love of God (Luke 11:42)

Whom God publicly set forth as a demonstration of his righteousness (Rom 3:25).

i.e., to demonstrate his righteousness = to prove that he is a righteous God not overlooking sin

Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been the counselor of him? (Rom 11:34)

not the removal of dirt from the flesh (1 Peter 3:21)

I live by faith (lit., of) in the Son of God who loved me (Gal 2:20)

i.e., by faith in the Son of God = by trusting the Son

Have faith (lit., of) in God (Mark 11:22).

i.e., confide in God

None was speaking openly about him because of the fear of the Jews (John 7:13).

i.e., because they feared the Jews

This is the love of God: that we keep his commandments (1 John 5:3).

i.e., this is our love for God

Let no one steal your prize by the worship of angels (Col 2:18).

i.e., by worshipping angels

Who wants all men saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4).

i.e., to know the truth

Hear the parable of the sower (Matt 13:18).

Regarding the subjective Genitive, there is debate about the phrase “the faith of Christ.”

Is it objective (faith in Christ) or subjective (Christ’s faithfulness)?

Rom 3:22, Phil 3:9, Eph 3:12, Rom 3:26, Gal 2:16, 20, 3:22

9) Production. Produces the word modified. Similar to the subjective genitive, but is better rendered “produced by” than converting the modified word to a verb.

In place of the word “of” put “produced by.”

for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth (Eph 5:9).

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts ... (Phil 4:7).

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith (Rom 4:11)

but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy... (Gal 5:22)

We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, your work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus (1Thes 1:3).

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13)

10) Product. Produced by the word modified. Similar to the objective genitive, but the modified word is not converted into a verb.

In place of the word "of" put "who/which produces."

the God of hope (Rom 15:13).

The God of steadfastness and of encouragement give you a spirit of unity (Rom 15:5)

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy (Heb 1:9).

For God is not of confusion but of peace (1 Cor 14:33)

The God of love and of peace be with you (2 Cor 13:11)

They shall come forth, those who have done good, to a resurrection of life, but those who have done evil to a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29).

i.e., a resurrection resulting in life or resulting in judgment

Through the righteous act of one person came the free gift to all men for the justification of life (Rom 5:18).

i.e., justification issuing in life

11)Plenary. The genitive is intended by the writer as both subjective and objective (as a kind of play on words or double entendre). [Note, a genitive should not be classified as plenary simply because it works both objectively or subjectively. It should only be considered plenary if the interpreter is confident that the writer intended both meanings.]

The love of Christ constrains us (2 Cor 5:14).

i.e., the love that Christ has for us and the love that we have for him

The testimony of Christ was confirmed among you (1 Cor 1:6).

i.e. the testimony given by Christ (subjective), and the testimony about Christ (objective)

The revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1)

i.e. the revelation given by Christ (subjective, and idea affirmed in Rev 22:16), and the revelation about Christ (objective, affirmed in the rest of ch.1, which reveals Jesus)

Practice

Acts 2:42 They continued in the teaching of the apostles (_____)
and in the breaking of bread (_____)

Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision (_____),
a seal of the righteousness (_____) of faith (_____)
while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who
believe (_____) through uncircumcision in order that
righteousness might be credited to them.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 God rescued you through the sanctification of the
Spirit (_____).

2 Corinthians 1:24 We are coworkers of the joy (_____) of
you (_____)

John 2:1 a wedding took place at Cana of Galilee (_____).

2 Peter 2:6 he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (_____)

Colossians 1:25 the stewardship of God (_____)

1 Timothy 4:1 ...giving heed to doctrines of demons (_____).

Romans 8:17 – heirs of God (_____)