

# Infinitive Clauses

Making a clause act like a nominal

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app

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# Dependent Clauses


- We learned earlier about subordinate clauses
  - Clauses that tell us more about the main clause
- Some subordinate clauses are *independent*
  - Could stand on their own as a main clause
  - Only subordinate because of a subordinating conjunction
    - e.g., ὅτι used to mean "because"
- Some subordinate clauses are *dependent*
  - Could not stand as a main clause
  - Don't have a "finite" verb (one with person and number)
    - e.g., infinitive clauses

# Infinitive Clauses

- Infinitive Clause: Any clause whose verb is an infinitive
- Infinitives are verbal nouns
  - They "pack up" the action of the clause in a "noun-like" package
- The infinitive clause can take the place a noun usually would in the main clause

# Infinitive Clause as Direct Object

- Can act as the direct object of a verb
  - θελω is the verb of the main clause
  - ἀγορασαι τον ἄρτον = infinitive clause
    - the direct object of θελω.
- Some of these cases are called "complementary infinitives"
  - Main verb needs an infinitive object
  - But the syntax is no different
    - Infinitive clause is the direct object of the main verb



Θελω [ἀγορασαι τον ἄρτον].

I want to buy the bread.

# Infinitive Clause in a Prepositional Phrase

- An infinitive clause can act as the "noun" in a prepositional phrase
  - Preposition + neuter singular article + infinitive clause
- e.g.
  - εἰς το πωλεῖν αὐτον = prep. phrase
  - πωλεῖν αὐτον = infinitive clause

Θελω ἄρτον εἰς το [πωλεῖν αὐτον].

I want bread in order to sell it.

# Infinitive Clause in a Prepositional Phrase

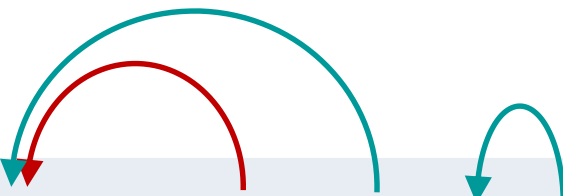
- Preposition has a standard meaning
  - Although it may not be the most common
  - εἰς can mean "for" instead of "to, into"
- Why the article?
  - Reminds us the inf. clause is acting like a noun
  - Shows us the case of this infinitive "noun" so we know how to take the preposition

Θελω ἄρτον εἰς το [πωλεῖν αὐτον].

I want bread in order to sell it.

# Infinitive Clause in a Prepositional Phrase

- Translate first with “ing” rather than “to”?
  - Like an English gerund (“the selling”)
- Put the rough translation into idiomatic English



Θελω ἄρτον εἰς το [πωλεῖν αὐτόν].

I want bread [for the selling it].

I want bread [in order to sell it].

I want bread [so that I can sell it].

# Common Prepositions with Infinitive Clauses

- Purpose and cause
  - Εἰς το + inf
    - "In order to . . .", "So that X can . . ."
  - Δια το + inf
    - "Because of . . .", "As a result of . . ."
- Time
  - Προ του + inf
    - "Before . . ."
  - Ἐν τῷ + inf
    - "While . . .", "During . . ."
  - Μετα το + inf
    - "After . . ."



# Infinitive Clauses and their Subjects

- An infinitive clause puts its subject in the *accusative* case
  - Probably because infinitives so often serve as direct objects

- Examples

- ... δια το [πλαναν τον ληστον] = "because the bandit deceived"



- ... μετα το [είπειν την γυνην] = "after the woman spoke"



# Infinitive Clauses and their Subjects

- The accusative subject can create ambiguity
  - The direct object of the infinitive is *also* accusative

- Example

• ἐν τῷ [πωλεῖν Ἀλεξάνδρον αὐτόν]

- "... while he was selling Alexander"

• ἐν τῷ [πωλεῖν Ἀλεξάνδρον αὐτόν]

- "... while Alexander was selling it"

# Keep Learning

- You can learn more about Greek cases and the nominative case in particular here:
  - Wallace, *Basics of New Testament Syntax* (1<sup>st</sup> edition)
    - "Infinitive," pp. 256-263