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*This project is dedicated to my daughter Grace,
who grew up singing these songs.*



Sing and Learn New Testament Greek
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Requests for information should be addressed to:

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ISBN-13: 978-0-310-28463-5

ISBN-10: 0-310-28463-5

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Printed in the United States of America

— Introduction —

“There has to be an easier way!”

All Greek students have either said or heard this while studying Greek. I said it. I still say it almost every day. But why?

I was required to memorize more than fifty different paradigms during my introductory Greek study. Fifty!!!

What’s a paradigm? A “paradigm” is a pattern of forms found in a language. Here’s a simple example from Greek:

λύω
λύεις
λύει
λύομεν
λύετε
λύουσι(ν)

That’s only *one* paradigm! I had to learn more than *fifty* (when I also count all the noun, adjective, article, and participle patterns that I learned).

“There has to be an easier way!” (Now you’re saying it!)

There is.

Sing and Learn New Testament Greek is a much easier way to learn Greek grammar forms. You can’t learn Greek without some memorization of forms. But it is always easier to learn through music. Always. In addition, things learned through music are not quickly forgotten. Paradigms learned through rote memory are. (Take a minute and try to remember the paradigms you learned for high school French, Spanish, or German!)

In addition, it is difficult to actually bridge the gap between a memorized paradigm and the form that appears before your eyes on the page of your New

Testament. The conceptual distance between the songs presented here and the Greek forms you will actually encounter as you read is much shorter. Apart from the *Prepositions Song*, the longest song takes no more than fifteen seconds to sing through once you know it well. Thus, connecting what you see on the page to what you have memorized is significantly eased.

Linguistic purists may not appreciate this approach. It only covers perhaps 90 percent of all the grammar forms you’ll encounter while reading the New Testament. But would you rather *remember* 90 percent or *forget* 95 percent? It also gives the forms as they *appear* rather than as they mutated somewhere in ancient Greek history. Again, the linguists may be unhappy.

This approach is for those who are simply trying to learn to read the Greek New Testament and use it in ministry. It is not the program for the linguistically particular. If you enjoy the niceties of grammar and the intricacies of language, you’ll face no dearth of books to guide you. But that’s not the aim here.

In one sense, I’m uniquely qualified to attack the problem of Greek grammar memorization. I had to learn Greek *twice*. I learned it once as a Greek minor during my undergraduate studies. I then spent quite a few years in intensive study of modern spoken Turkish while living in Turkey. I lost much of my ability in Greek through the pressures of learning Turkish. So I had to relearn Greek. In the process, I decided that I would learn how to teach Greek while I was relearning it. Since I generally knew what was coming but wanted a way to remember what I was learning over the long haul, I was motivated to find a new way through the maze that would help me easily learn the material in a way that I wouldn’t forget it. The result is what you see here.

It has required a significant amount of time and energy to create patterns that would connect Greek grammar to music. I have been humming these tunes (and hundreds of rejected tunes) since 1992. I have worked on these songs in Turkey, California, Pennsylvania, Ukraine, and New York. They have been my

constant traveling companions. I even once successfully taught an introduction to Greek in Kiev (through Russian translation!) using an earlier version of some of these songs.

Many of the songs were difficult to develop (such as the *Participles Song* and the *Indicative Verb Endings Song*). The *Alphabet* and *Article Songs* use standard charts (though they still each needed a tune). Some aspects of these songs represent true advances in pedagogical method. I have my father (an engineer) to thank for teaching me that it is easy to make things more complex but you have truly succeeded if you can make something simpler.

Some may object to using folk and children's tunes. I seriously considered—and even began—composing new music for each chart. But the familiar songs have the psychological advantage of already being known and of making you feel that what you are doing is easier. These songs are also easier for teachers to use.

This program is meant to function as a supplement to other books. These songs can supplement any beginning grammar book or program. You simply memorize the songs in place of the paradigms you are told to memorize in whatever book you are using to learn Greek. Teachers can feel free to pick and choose if they would rather use a different approach in place of one or more of the songs.

All songs are sung across from left to right. The left to right approach will make it feel like you are singing a song from a piece of music. By the way, you do not have to sing these charts. (I mean ... if you want to be a stick in the mud!) You still will be greatly benefited by memorizing these charts rather than memorizing paradigms. And it's OK to sing a little when nobody's listening!

As to the pronunciation of the “omicron” (a regular point of discussion among teachers of Greek), a sound in between the “alpha” and the “omega” has been employed. This will allow the student to distinguish these vowels from one another.

By way of appreciation, I should mention the labor of love of those who have been my Greek teachers and mentors along the way, in particular Ed Goodrick (now with the Lord), Rex Koivisto, Joe Hellerman, Walt Russell, Clint Arnold, Mike Wilkins, Dan McCartney, Moisés Silva, Steve Taylor, and Vern Poythress. Rick Lepage made early versions of these charts attractive and let me try them out while tutoring him in Greek many years ago. Thanks also are due to David Huttar, who made many helpful suggestions during my days at Nyack College in New York.

My daughter Grace (at age 12) deserves appreciation for suggesting the English Alphabet Song as the tune for the *Alphabet Song*. (This tune may seem obvious [!], but I didn't make the connection for twelve years! By the way, I am also aware that the tune for the *Alphabet Song* and for *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* is the same tune—though most people are not aware of it.) My wife, Trudi, and my older daughter, Lydia—along with Grace—let me try out tune after tune on them. Thank you!

I owe a debt of gratitude to Kyle Bonenberger, who helped me record a demo CD of these songs, and Jon Mathew, who sang on that CD. Dwayne Condon arranged and recorded the tracks for this new recording, and Steven Harms skillfully sang each song; I so appreciate both of them sharing their musical skills. Finally, special thanks are due my Elementary Greek classes at Nyack College and Biola University for letting me try out new songs on them. The first Greek class that actually used rough versions of some of these songs—the Greek *aa* section at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, 1998–1999—is deserving of special appreciation for bearing with me. Together we filled Westminster's hallowed halls with the sounds of children's tunes.

— Alphabet Song —

Sing to the tune of *The Alphabet Song*

α, Α (alpha)	β, Β (beta)	γ, Γ (gamma)	δ, Δ (delta)	ε, Ε (epsilon)		
ζ, Ζ (zeta)	η, Η (eta)	θ, Θ (theta)	ι, Ι (iota)			
κ, Κ (kappa)	λ, Λ (lambda)	μ, Μ (mu)	ν, Ν (nu)	ξ, Ξ (xsi)	ο, Ο (omicron)	
π, Π (pi)	ρ, Ρ (rho)	σ, Σ (sigma)	τ, Τ (tau)	υ, Υ (upsilon)		
φ, Φ (phi)	χ, Χ (chi)	ψ, Ψ (psi)	ω, Ω (omega)			

“This is the Greek alphabet!”

— Article Song —

Sing to the tune of *Three Blind Mice*

		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
S I N G U L A R	Nominative	ὁ	ἡ	τό
	Genitive	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ
	Dative	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ
	Accusative	τόν	τήν	τό
P L U R A L	Nominative	οἱ	αἱ	τά
	Genitive	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
	Dative	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
	Accusative	τούς	τάς	τά