12. 2-1-2 Adjectives

Lesson in a Nutshell

2-1-2 adjectives follow the 2-1-2 pattern of declension. They are by far the most common.

When you look up the adjective ἀγαθός in the lexicon, it will be listed like this:

<p style="text-align:center">ἀγαθός, ή, όν</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Please notice that there is no article. Why?</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Because ἀγαθός is not a noun. It is not masculine <u>or</u> feminine <u>or</u> neuter.</p>

<p style="text-align:center">ἄγαθος is an adjective. It has to be able to be masculine <u>AND</u> feminine <u>AND</u> neuter.</p>

The lexicon gives you the endings (in red above) to tell you how it behaves in all three genders.

<p style="text-align:center">ἀγαθός is the masculine form</p>

<p style="text-align:center">ἀγαθή is the feminine form</p>

<p style="text-align:center">ἀγαθόν is the neuter form</p>

<p style="text-align:center">ἀγαθός is a 2-1-2 adjective. This means it follows</p>

<p style="text-align:center">second declension in the masculine (2)</p>

<p style="text-align:center">first declension in the feminine, and (1)</p>

<p style="text-align:center">second declension in the neuter (2)</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Just like the article!</p>

Do you see why we must have all three genders? Because "good" needs to be able to modify masculine _and_ feminine _and_ neuter nouns. This is unlike English. English has only one form. Compare the English adjective "good" with the Greek adjective ἀγαθος.

Case, Number, Gender	Greek	English
nominative, singular, masculine	ἀγαθος ἀνθρωπος	good man
nominative, plural, masculine	ἀγαθοι ἀνθρωποι	good men
nominative, singular, feminine	ἀγαθη γύνη	good woman
nominative, plural, feminine	ἀγαθαι γύναι	good women
nominative or accusative, singular, neuter	ἀγαθον ἐργον	good work
nominative or accusative, plural, neuter	ἀγαθα ἐργα	good works
genitive, singular, neuter	ἀγαθου ἐργου	of a good work
dative, singular, neuter	ἀγαθῷ ἐργῷ	to a good work

Do you see how "good" never changes form, but ἀγαθος is constantly changing to match the noun it modifies?

Now the lights are going on!

Notice how the endings follow the 2-1-2 pattern (in blue). Also, compare the endings of ἀγαθός with the article below. Do you see how similar the endings are?

24 forms of ἀγαθός [2-1-2]

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
n	αγαθος	αγαθη	αγαθον
g	αγαθου	αγαθης	αγαθου
d	αγαθῳ	αγαθη	αγαθῳ
a	αγαθον	αγαθην	αγαθον
n	αγαθοι	αγαθαι	αγαθα
g	αγαθων	αγαθων	αγαθων
d	αγαθοις	αγαθαις	αγαθοις
a	αγαθους	αγαθας	αγαθα

Case Endings

		Masculine 2	Feminine 1	Neuter 2	Masc / Fem 3	Neuter 3
Singular	Nominative subject	ος	α or η	ον	ς	–
	Genitive possession	ου	ας or ης	ου	ος	ος
	Dative in, with, to, by	ῳ	α or η	ῳ	ι	ι
	Accusative object	ον	αν or ην	ον	α	–
Plural	Nominative subject	οι	αι	α	ες	α
	Genitive possession	ων	ων	ων	ων	ων
	Dative in, with, to, by	οις	αις	οις	σιν	σιν
	Accusative object	ους	ας	α	ας	α

The Article

			M	F	N
Singular	Nominative	"the"	ὁ	ἡ	τό
	Genitive	"of the"	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ
	Dative	"to the"	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ
	Accusative	the	τόν	τήν	τό
Plural	Nominative	"the"	οἱ	αἱ	τά
	Genitive	"of the"	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
	Dative	"to the"	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
	Accusative	"the"	τούς	τάς	τά

Greek may seem complicated at first. But as you go along, you will come to recognize a few consistent patterns that reveal the case, number and gender of every substantive. It will become as plain as the nose on your face.

Please study the chart below and be certain that all the letters in green make sense to you. Be sure you understand:

1. That they follow the 2-1-2 pattern of declension.

2. That the articles and adjectives match the noun they modify in case, number and gender.

3. The translations.

the good word / beginning / work						
		Masculine (2nd declension)		**F**eminine (1st declension)		**N**euter (2nd declension)
Singular	N	ος	ὁ ἀγαθός λόγος the good word	α..η	ἡ ἀγαθή ἀρχή the good beginning	ον	τό ἀγαθόν ἔργον the good work
	G	ου	τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ λόγου of the good word	ας.ης	τῆς ἀγαθῆς ἀρχῆς of the good beginning	ου	τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔργου of the good work
	D	ῳ	τῷ ἀγαθῷ λόγῳ to the good word	ᾳ.η	τῇ ἀγαθῇ ἀρχῇ to the good beginning	ῳ	τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ to the good work
	A	ον	τόν ἀγαθόν λόγον the good word	αν. ην	τήν ἀγαθήν ἀρχήν the good beginning	ον	τό ἀγαθόν ἔργον the good work
Plural	N	οι	οἱ ἀγαθοί λόγοι the good words	αι	αἱ ἀγαθαί ἀρχαί the good beginnings	α	τά ἀγαθά ἔργα the good works
	G	ων	τῶν ἀγαθῶν λόγων of the good words	ων	τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀρχῶν of the good beginnings	ων	τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων of the good works
	D	οις	τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς λόγοις to the good words	αις	ταῖς ἀγαθαῖς ἀρχαῖς to the good beginnings	οις	τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἔργοις to the good works
	A	ους	τούς ἀγαθούς λόγους the good words	ας	τάς ἀγαθάς ἀρχάς the good beginnings	α	τά ἀγαθά ἔργα the good works