17. Third Person Pronouns

Lesson in a Nutshell

The third person pronoun has gender and follows the familiar 2-1-2 pattern

		M (2)		F (1)		N (2)	
Singular	Nom	αὐτός	he	αὐτή	she	αὐτό	it
	Gen	αὐτοῦ	his	αὐτῆς	hers	αὐτοῦ	its
	Dat	αὐτῷ	to him	αὐτῇ	to her	αὐτῷ	to it
	Acc	αὐτόν	him	αὐτήν	her	αὐτό	it
Plural	Nom	αὐτοί	they	αὐταί	they	αὐτά	they
	Gen	αὐτῶν	of them	αὐτῶν	of them	αὐτῶν	of them
	Dat	αὐτοῖς	to them	αὐταῖς	to them	αὐτοῖς	to them
	Acc	αὐτούς	them	αὐτάς	them	αὐτά	them

As a reminder, the English third person pronouns are in blue.

	Singular	**Plural**
First Person I We	N: I G: mine D: to me A: me	N: we G: our D: to us A: us
Second Person You You	N: you G: your D: to you A: you	N: you G: your D: to you A: you
Third Person He-She-It They	N: he-she-it G: his-hers-its D: to him-her-it A: him-her-it	N: they G: theirs D: to them A: them

As we are learning to expect, Greek third person pronouns are much more consistent. They have gender for both singular and plural forms and follow a nice easy 2-1-2 pattern of declension.

3rd Person Pronoun				
		M (2)	F (1)	N (2)
Singular	Nom	αὐτός he	αὐτή she	αὐτό it
	Gen	αὐτοῦ his	αὐτῆς hers	αὐτοῦ its
	Dat	αὐτῷ to him	αὐτῇ to her	αὐτῷ to it
	Acc	αὐτόν him	αὐτήν her	αὐτό it
Plural	Nom	αὐτοί they	αὐταί they	αὐτά they
	Gen	αὐτῶν of them	αὐτῶν of them	αὐτῶν of them
	Dat	αὐτοῖς to them	αὐταῖς to them	αὐτοῖς to them
	Acc	αὐτούς them	αὐτάς them	αὐτά them

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of the third person pronoun.

It shows up in nearly every line of Greek text.

The third person pronoun follows a nice easy 2-1-2 pattern of declension. In fact, it looks very much like the article with αὐ added to the front. Take some time comparing these three charts.

The Article		M (2)	F (1)	N (2)
Nominative "the"	Singular	ὁ	ἡ	τό
Genitive "of the"		τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ
Dative "to the"		τῷ	τῇ	τῷ
Accusative the		τόν	τήν	τό
Nominative "the"	Plural	οἱ	αἱ	τά
Genitive "of the"		τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
Dative "to the"		τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
Accusative "the"		τούς	τάς	τά

Noun Endings		M (2)	F (1)	N (2)
Nominative subject	Singular	ος	α..η	ον
Genitive possession		ου	ας..ης	ου
Dative in, with, to, by		ῳ	ᾳ..ῃ	ῳ
Accusative object		ον	αν..ην	ον
Nominative subject	Plural	οι	αι	α
Genitive possession		ων	ων	ων
Dative in, with, to, by		οις	αις	οις
Accusative object		ους	ας	α

3rd Person Pronoun		M (2)		F (1)		N (2)	
Nom	Singular	αὐτός	he	αὐτή	she	αὐτό	it
Gen		αὐτοῦ	his	αὐτῆς	hers	αὐτοῦ	its
Dat		αὐτῷ	to him	αὐτῇ	to her	αὐτῷ	to it
Acc		αὐτόν	him	αὐτήν	her	αὐτό	it
Nom	Plural	αὐτοί	they	αὐταί	they	αὐτά	they
Gen		αὐτῶν	of them	αὐτῶν	of them	αὐτῶν	of them
Dat		αὐτοῖς	to them	αὐταῖς	to them	αὐτοῖς	to them
Acc		αὐτούς	them	αὐτάς	them	αὐτά	them

The pronoun will take the case, number, and gender of the noun it "stands in" for (called its "antecedent").

The Greek third person pronoun is perfectly logical. The reason third person pronouns are difficult for English speakers is not because of Greek but because of English.

I provide you with the full paradigms and translations for all of the pronouns so you can get used to the English. The Greek is easy!

Three Uses of αὐτός

In Greek, the third person pronoun is *usually* used as a pronoun, but there are two additional functions to watch out for.

1. αὐτός as a personal pronoun (normal)

John 1 is full of examples of this. There are three in verse 12.

12 ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν
   As many   but (they) received   him   He gave   to them   authority

τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα
children   of God   to become,   to the   ones believing   in   the   name

αὐτοῦ,
   of Him,

Do you see how

> the <u>accusative</u> case is used for the direct object (αὐτόν)?

> the <u>dative</u> case is used for the indirect object (αὐτοῖς)?

> the <u>genitive</u> case is used for possession (αὐτοῦ)?

In each instance, the pronoun is behaving just like it would in English — as a personal pronoun.

2. αὐτός for emphasis

Sometimes, αὐτός is used to emphasize the subject. In translation, we use some form of "self" (myself, himself, herself, itself, themselves…)

ἔγω **αὐτός** διδάσκω κοίνη ὑμίν
I   **myself**   am teaching   Koine   to you.

αὐτός ὁ πατὴρ φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς
Himself   the   father   loves   you.
= "The father himself loves you"

When used this way, αὐτός will never have the article.[1]

3. αὐτός meaning "the same…"

Every now and then, you will run into αὐτός and it should be translated "the same_____."

Here are a couple of examples:

καὶ πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο τὸν **αὐτόν** λόγον
and   again   leaving   he prayed   the   **same**   word

Διαιρέσεις χαρισμάτων εἰσίν, τὸ δὲ **αὐτὸ** πνεῦμα
Varieties   of gifts   there are   the   but   **same**   Spirit

This is the rarest uses of αὐτός. We will not run into it in John 1.

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[1] When a substantive lacks the article it is said to be in "predicate position."