



Wallace: Scope & Types of Koine Greek; Papyri Reveal Conversational Koine in New Testament; Poor Hermeneutics Appeal Only to Those Who Choose the Lie

Scope of *Κοινή* Greek

Time. Roughly, 330 B.C. to A.D. 330. Or, from Alexander's conquests to the removal of the Roman Empire's capital from Rome to Constantinople. With the death of Aristotle in 322 B.C., classical Greek as a living language was phasing out. Koine was at its peak in the first century B.C. and first century A.D.

Place. For the first time, Greek was universalized. As colonies were established well past Alexander's day, and as the Greeks continued to rule, the Greek language kept on thriving in foreign lands. Even after Rome became a world power in the first century B.C., Greek continued to penetrate distant lands. Consequently, even when Rome was in absolute control, Latin was not the *lingua franca*. Greek continued to be a *universal* language until at least the end of the first century. From about the second century on, Latin began to win out in Italy, then the West in general, once Constantinople became the capital of the Roman empire. For only a brief period, then, was Greek the universal language. (p. 18)

Changes from Classical Greek. In a word, Greek became *simpler*. The language tended toward shorter, simpler sentences. The language replaced the precision and refinement of classical Greek with greater explicitness. (p. 19)

Types of *Κοινή* Greek. Many scholars admit of only two real levels: vulgar and literary. A few scholars have suggested that there may be at least one intermediate level of Koine Greek between (these) extremes. That assessment seems to be correct; the following breakdown reflects this. (pp. 20-21)

1. **Vernacular or Vulgar** (e.g., papyri, ostraca). This is the language of the streets—colloquial, popular speech. It is found principally in the papyri excavated from Egypt, truly the *lingua franca* of the day.
2. **Literary** (e.g., Polybius \pa-lib' ē-as\, Josephus, Philo \f' lō\ (of Alexandria), Diodorus \dī-a-dōr' as\ (Siculus \sik' ya-las\), Strabo \strā' bō\, Epictetus \ep-ik-tēt' as\, Plutarch \plū' tār\). A more polished Koine, this is the language of scholars and *littérateurs*, of academics and historians. The difference between literary Koine and vulgar Koine is the difference between English spoken on the streets and English spoken in places of higher education. (p. 21)
3. **Conversational** (New Testament, some papyri). Conversational Koine is typically the *spoken* language of educated people. It is grammatically correct for the most part, but not on the same literary level as literary Koine. By its very nature, one would not expect to find many parallels to this (conversational Koine) ... among literary authors (for their language is a written language). (p. 22)

New Testament Greek

In 1863, J. B. Lightfoot anticipated the great discoveries of papyri parallels when he said, "If we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we should have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the New Testament generally."

Thirty-two years later, in 1895, Adolf Deissmann published his *Bibelstudien*—an innocently titled work that was to revolutionize the study of the New Testament. In this work (later translated into English under the title *Bible Studies*) Deissmann showed that the Greek of the New Testament was not a language invented by the Holy Spirit.



Deissmann demonstrated that the vast bulk of New Testament vocabulary was to be found in the papyri. The pragmatic effect of Deissmann's work was to render obsolete virtually all lexica and lexical commentaries written before the turn of the century.

James Hope Moulton [Professor of Hellenistic Greek and Indo-European philology in the University of Manchester. His work was especially important for showing the kinship between the Greek of the New Testament and that of the recently discovered papyri. (R. E. Nixon, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 681)] took up Deissmann's mantle and demonstrated parallels in syntax and morphology between the New Testament and the papyri. In essence, *what Deissmann did for lexicography, Moulton did for grammar.* (p. 25)

8. The discovery of more ancient manuscripts and the advances in philology that augmented the science of textual criticism have given theologians, pastors, and missionaries all the tools one would need to translate biblical texts correctly.
9. Such is not the case. Seminaries are drifting toward limited atonement or "limited atonement lite," such as "lordship salvation." Pastors are more interested in attracting new customers at the expense of a clear, precise presentation of the Gospel.
10. The thing that drives this heresy is a works-oriented legalism that finds its origin in the writings and influence of Theodore Bèza and those who followed him in the development of Reformed theology.
11. This is ridiculous! The only way works can be effective at all, let alone over the long haul, is for believes to know doctrine and how to use it under the power of the Holy Spirit.
12. The impact of limited atonement and lordship salvation has led to the emergence of a touchy-feely Christianity that is not motivated by love for God, executed by the power of the Spirit, or guided by the Word of God.
13. Instead there is the false motivation to either self-verify salvation or make Christ Lord.
14. This is where the sinful nature's trends toward human good get converted into evil and the sad result is a loss of truth and a buying of the lie.
15. Satan's genius approach to neutralizing believers and client nations is the presentation of the lie in such alluring terms that it is mistaken for the truth.
16. Those devoid of doctrinal discernment are ever eager to believe the lie and to make personal decisions based upon it. The reason is they are not taught properly by their pastors. These issues are addressed by Paul in:

2 Timothy 4:2 -Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season [**good times & bad**], reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience [**never deviate from truth**] and instruction [**teach doctrine**].

v. 3 - The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [**no objectivity**]; but wanting to have their ears tickled [**an eagerness to hear what appeals to them**], they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires;

v. 4 - and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths [μῦθος, **muthos**].