

LESSON SIX

VOWELS & DIPHTHONGS

INTRODUCTION

Lesson Six is divided into two parts. In Part 1 we are going to study vowels and in Part 2 we are going to study diphthongs. A vowel is a voice sound that is uninterrupted. A diphthong is a combination of vowels that form one sound.

NOTE: **You should continue to practice Lesson 5
Exercise 4 while you study this lesson.**

PART 1: VOWELS

In the first lesson we stated that there are twenty-four letters in the Koine Greek alphabet. Seventeen letters are consonants and seven are vowels. The seven vowels are **α, ε, η, ι, ο, ω, and υ**. The VOWEL and PRONUNCIATION DIAGRAMS for the Greek vowels will help you to learn the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet in parallel with the five vowels of the English alphabet.

THE VOWEL DIAGRAM for the seven vowels of the Koine Greek alphabet.

ENGLISH	a	e	i	o	u
GREEK (short vowels)	<u>α</u>	<u>ε</u>	<u>ι</u>	<u>ο</u>	<u>υ</u>
GREEK (long vowels)	α	η	ι	ω	υ

Since you have already studied and learned the vowels from your study of the Koine Greek alphabet, you only need to learn the five vowels that line up with the five vowels of the English alphabet, and the two long vowels, ETA (**η**) being the long vowel of EPSILON (**ε**), and OMEGA (**ω**) being the long vowel of OMICRON (**ο**).

You do not need to memorize the above information on vowels. You should understand the above paragraph before moving on to the PRONUNCIATION DIAGRAM.

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VOWEL PRONUNCIATION DIAGRAM

The VOWEL DIAGRAM on page 1 presented the seven vowels of the Koine Greek alphabet and their relationship to each other. Each vowel has a short sound and a long sound depending on what syllable it is in within a word. You will be given a thorough explanation of syllables and the construction of Greek words in Lesson 9. For this lesson it is important to understand the long and short sound or pronunciation of each vowel.

THE PRONUNCIATION DIAGRAM for the seven vowels of the Koine Greek alphabet.

<u>LETTER</u>	<u>SHORT</u>		<u>LONG</u>	
α	short- α	"AH"	long- α	"AAH"
ε/η	short- ε	"EH"	long- η	"AY"
ι	short- ι	"IH"	long- ι	"EE"
ο/ω	short- ο	"OH"	long- ω	"OOH"
υ	short- υ	"EW"	long- υ	"EEW"

VOWEL CATEGORIES

(This is nice-to-know information that is not critical to the understanding of New Testament Greek.) The vowels **α**, **ε**, **η**, **ο**, and **ω** are called open vowels because they are voiced with an open mouth. The vowels **ι** and **υ** are called close vowels because they are voiced with the mouth partially closed.

You should become familiar with the different sounds of each form, short and long, of each vowel. You should not try to perfect them, as the sounds of each will be presented in Lesson 8 in the PRONUNCIATION EXERCISES.

After you review the short and long sounds of each vowel, you will be ready to go on to Part 2 of this lesson, which is the study of diphthongs, which is very important material to learn in the study of New Testament Greek.

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PART 2: DIPHTHONGS

In Part 1 we studied vowels, which is the fundamental lesson for understanding diphthongs. The word *diphthong* comes from two words in Greek, the word *two* (δι-) and the word *sound* (φθογγος) to make the word διφθογγος, which means "two sound."

A DIPHTHONG IS A COMBINATION OF TWO VOWEL SOUNDS BLENDED TOGETHER INTO ONE SOUND.

THE FORMATION OF A DIPHTHONG

A diphthong is formed in two ways:

1. A diphthong is formed when IOTA (ι) follows behind the vowels α, ε, ο, or υ.

EXAMPLES: αι ει οι υι

2. A diphthong is also formed when UPSILON (υ) follows behind the vowels α, ε, η or ο.

EXAMPLES: αυ ευ ου

THE DIPHTHONG PRONUNCIATION DIAGRAM

<u>DIPHTHONG</u>	<u>PRONUNCIATION</u>
αι- - - - -	“ai” as in <u>ai</u> isle
ει- - - - -	“ei” as in <u>ei</u> ght
οι- - - - -	“oi” as in <u>oi</u> l
υι- - - - -	“we” as in <u>uee</u> n
αυ- - - - -	“ow” as in <u>ow</u>
ευ- - - - -	“eu” as in <u>eu</u> d
ηυ (rare in NT)- - - - -	“eu” as in <u>eu</u> d
ου- - - - -	“ou” as in <u>ou</u> th

You should attempt to memorize the diphthongs while doing the PRONUNCIATION EXERCISES for them on page 4.

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EXERCISE ONE

PRONUNCIATION EXERCISES

In this exercise you will be taken through the DIPHTHONGS of Lesson 6 with the DIPHTHONGS pronounced for you. The second time through you will be given a verbal quiz in which you will be asked to respond by pronouncing the sound of the DIPHTHONG when you see and/hear the letters.

Line 1:	αυ Fig. 1	ει Fig. 2	οι Fig. 3	υι Fig. 4	αυ Fig. 5	ευ Fig. 6
Line 2:	ηυ Fig. 1	ου Fig. 2	αι Fig. 3	ει Fig. 4	οι Fig. 5	υι Fig. 6
Line 3:	αυ Fig. 1	ευ Fig. 2	ηυ Fig. 3	ου Fig. 4	αι Fig. 5	αυ Fig. 6
Line 4:	ει Fig. 1	ευ Fig. 2	οι Fig. 3	ου Fig. 4	υι Fig. 5	αι Fig. 6
Line 5:	αυ Fig. 1	ει Fig. 2	ευ Fig. 3	οι Fig. 4	ου Fig. 5	υι Fig. 6
Line 6:	αι Fig. 1	ευ Fig. 2	ει Fig. 3	ου Fig. 4	υι Fig. 5	οι Fig. 6
Line 7:	αυ Fig. 1	ει Fig. 2	ου Fig. 3	οι Fig. 4	ευ Fig. 5	υι Fig. 6

You should learn these diphthongs thoroughly before moving on to Lesson 7. Learning diphthongs is very important to be able to read the Greek of the New Testament.

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