

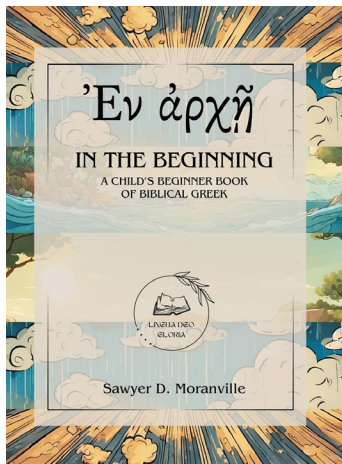
## Book Review

### In the Beginning. A Child's Beginner Book of Biblical Greek

Moranville (S.D.) Pp. vii + 58, colour ills.  
Independently published by Lingua Deo Gloria  
Publishing, 2024. Cased, US\$23.47, £13.74.  
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*In the Beginning: A Child's Beginner Book of Biblical Greek* is the second beginner's book of Biblical languages produced by Lingua Deo Gloria publishing. In much the same style as their 2023 *In the Beginning: A Child's Beginner Book of Biblical Hebrew*, readers are presented with a series of visually attractive, full-colour pages that illustrate various pieces of Biblical, or Koine, Greek vocabulary. Following the usual introduction and acknowledgements, the book

is divided into 11 fully-illustrated sections that cover the Greek alphabet, numbers from 1 to 10, different animals, human body parts and facial features, colours, natural phenomena such as weather events and geological features, the seasons and times of day, food and drink, parts of the city and household, the points on a campus. After 50 pages of full-colour illustrations, the book concludes with a simple glossary of all the terms covered arranged in order of the page on which they appeared.

As the book's title suggests, its target audience are children with little to no prior exposure to Koine Greek. In his introduction, Moranville expresses his desire to teach the language to 'even the youngest children' (p. v). The book's format is very simple. Each page presents a small number of Greek terms presented primarily in just their singular forms and accompanied by a corresponding illustration of the vocabulary in question. In this sense, it reads in a similar way to a child's 'first words' book that could be used to support a learner with little prior exposure to the language as they learn basic Greek vocabulary. While this text could be enjoyed by readers of any age, it would likely be most impactful on those in the intermediate to later stages of early childhood, who are rapidly acquiring new vocabulary while retaining their language learning neuroplasticity.

Given this emphasis on young readers, this text is intended to be read in collaboration with a more experienced parent or educator. The author acknowledges this, stating that his 'main reason for making books like this is to spend more time with my children as they grow up' and that his ambitions for the book are twofold: for readers 'to learn the biblical languages and spend more time with their families' (p. v). *In the Beginning* is thus of limited use to autodidacts. The book presumes that at least one of the individuals reading it will have some familiarity with the Greek language and its pronunciation. It does include an opening section on the Greek alphabet with each Greek letter being accompanied by an example of a Greek word starting with that letter and a corresponding illustration (e.g. 'λέων' and a picture of a lion for the section demonstrating lambda). However, at no point does the author transliterate or provide pronunciation indicators for any of the letters of the Greek alphabet or diacritics used throughout the book. While the book does provide a glossary of translations of the terms shown throughout, this is isolated to the final section of the book, with no English translations presented alongside the Greek terms within the main body of the text. Any educator or parent hoping to use this text with a child or young person will need to already have a grasp of the fundamentals of the language themselves in order to verbalise and comprehend its contents.

Prospective readers may benefit from being aware of the explicitly and openly evangelical nature of this publication and its goals. Its author is director of youth education at a church in Pennsylvania and the website of the publisher states that it 'exists to serve the church of Jesus Christ', describing its mission as being 'to teach languages to the church for the glory of God'. In the introduction the author states he understands the aim of learning Koine/Biblical Greek as being that the reader can 'more accurately understand the Word of God for the rest of their lives' and that 'this book will function as a seed that will grow up into a great love for the original language of the New Testament, ultimately leading to a true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ' (p. v). This Christian ethos does not undermine the applicability and accessibility of the text to wider, non-Christian, audiences and the main body of the text contains no explicit religious imagery or iconography. It is, however, worth noting this context to the book's publication as awareness of this motivation may encourage or dissuade prospective readers depending on their personal inclinations.

The book's illustrations are visually appealing and effectively illustrate the, sometimes quite abstract, concepts they represent. They are vibrantly coloured and of an art style that will be appealing and recognisable to younger readers. It is important to note that, as the author acknowledges, all images were produced with the support of an AI image generator. This doesn't undermine their quality and likely plays a role in enabling the book's affordable retail price, but may potentially be alienating to some prospective readers given the mixed reactions that generative AI's use in illustration can provoke.

*In the Beginning: A Child's Beginner Book of Biblical Greek* is, overall, a high-quality publication that capably fulfils its purpose of providing a means through which younger readers, with the support of a parent or educator, can begin to access Biblical Greek. This reviewer has already trialled it with his own 4-year-old son, who greatly enjoyed trying to master the pronunciation of different Greek

words with the support of the visually stimulating illustrations. In accordance with the Christian ethos of its development, the full text is available on Lingua Deo Gloria's website at no cost through the 'Freely given' scheme of creative commons licenses for evangelical resources (see <https://www.linguadeogloria.com/koinegreekchildrensbook>).

Prospective readers may find this a useful way to investigate the text and assess its relevance and applicability to their own setting before purchasing.

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