A Church Slavonic Primer
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Lesson 3 - Blessed is the Kingdom

Now that we have a few concepts down, we shall continue from the beginning, the beginning of the Divine Liturgy that is. If you're at a service where a deacon is serving, the first words of the Liturgy said before the people are "Bless, master."

This is Бл҃гословѝ, влⷣко (влады́ко) /blagoslov'i vladyko/ (Благослови, влад**ы**ко), which can be translated with the same syntax. The second word is usually with a titlo, but I have provided the full word so that you can see the spelling and stress. (Other words in this lesson that usually have a titlo will be shown in the notes to the lesson.)

We now also see the grave accent in Бл҃гословѝ at the end, because the accent falls on the last vowel.

Once again, however, to be technical, we could say, "Bless, O master," because "master" here is in the vocative case. "But wait!" you say, "There's an о on the end of that word! And there was an и on the end of Го́споди, so they can't both be in the vocative!"

Do you remember when I said that there are <630 adjective endings? (Ok, so maybe I was counting *all* the forms, including some that are partially the same, but there are quite a few nonetheless.) We also have a number, not so numerous, of *variations of noun endings for the same case*. In this word влады́ко has an о *ending in the vocative case because it has an -а ending in the nominative:* влады́ка. (Words that end in -а are usually feminine, but this word is masculine.)

In words like влады́ка with a titlo, the case ending will always be shown nonetheless. So as long as you've learned the nominative form, you will have no problem recognizing the word in another case. Го́споди, by the way, is a masculine noun; however, the -и ending in the vocative is an exception.

You may have already guessed it from the context in English, but our other word in this phrase, Бл҃гословѝ, is a verb in the **imperative mood**. If so, you're probably now wondering why we had an -й at the end of поми́луй and now have an -и. If you will notice, they do look almost exactly the same, and they really are

just a slight variation of the same letter. I should say, however, that -й is considered a consonant (similar to "y" in English). So the imperative form also has a few variations.

Further, the priest proclaims (and these are the first words before the people when no deacon serves):

Благослове́но ца́рство, Ѻ҆тца̀ и҆ сы́на и҆ свѧта́гѡ дꙋ́ха, ны́нѣ и҆ прⷭ҇нѡ и҆ во вѣ́ки вѣкѡ́въ.

/blagoslov'**e**no ts**a**rstvo otts**a** i s**y**na i sv'at**a**go d**u**kha n**y**n'e i pr'**i**sno i vo v'**e**ki v'ek**o**v/
(Благослов**е**но Ц**а**рство Отц**а** и С**ы**на, и Свят**а**го Д**у**ха, н**ы**не и пр**и**сно, и во в**е**ки век**о**в.)

This is "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages." And you're in luck again because this phrase can also be translated with the same syntax.

The grammar here is pretty straightforward, but we will be introduced to some new concepts.

Благослове́но is a **passive past tense participle**, (sometimes referred to as a **verbal adjective**) which means that it is a form of a verb that has adjectival qualities. It is passive because the subject of the phrase ца́рство is not the doer of the action of the verb but the receiver. Благослове́но ца́рство is translated as "Blessed *is* the Kingdom," and this displays a particularity of Church Slavonic in that, in many situations, a present tense verb, "am, is, are," are often left out and assumed.

This participle is comprised of two very important roots that you might as well learn now. (In general, I very much advise you to learn roots of words when you study vocabulary, because it will really help you figure out unknown words that share a root with a word you already know.)

These two roots are /blag/ and /slovo/, which mean "good" and "word." This is the same "word," for instance, used in reference to Christ. "Word," however, in благослове́но is in a verb form, i.e., speaking. Thus, someone is "blessed" when someone else has spoken good or we rather say "well" (that is, to be grammatically correct) of them.

As I mentioned, the participle has qualities of a verb and an adjective, so благослове́но is further *neuter, singular,* and *short form.* Neuter and singular because it modifies ца́рство, which is a neuter, singular noun. You said neuter? How can that be? It has an о at the end, and above you said -о is a vocative ending!? For nouns, -о is one of the basic nominative neuter endings (the other principle one being -є, though there are exceptions).

There is a long form and a short form of both adjectives and participles, which means they have slightly different endings, which, naturally, agree in number and gender with the word they modify.

In our second word, ца́рство, I hope you have recognized the root, which is ца́р–, and I hope I don't have to tell you what that means. (Notice that, in the transcription, "ts" represents only one letter (ц) and it should be pronounced as such.)

Church Slavonic, as with all Slavic languages, does not have articles. So when we come to "of the Father," we can immediately take out "the," and then we'll put the "of" inside parenthesis, because, due to the wonders of inflection, our "of" is included right inside our noun in its ending, the -а. This "of" situation is often conveyed by the genitive case, which is half the time an -а for masculine nouns. To remember the name of this case, you could think of all those begets in the genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew, the "sons of" who are generated by their fathers. You probably have guessed that if Отца̀ is in the genitive case, the nominative must be something else, which it is: Оте́цъ.

Often only one or two letters change in endings, but in this case we have a slightly more drastic change of a "fleeting vowel," which is demonstrated in this case by the є flying away.

Continuing to "of the Son," you assumed, I'm sure, that the above applies here as well, which it does, and it also applies to "of the Holy Spirit."

The nominative in this case is сы́нъ and ду́хъ for Son and Spirit, respectively. (And notice the hard signs at the ends of the words, and that these hard signs disappear when an ending is added.)

We also, however, have an adjective, "holy," here. And, thus, we meet the genitive ending for a singular, masculine adjective: -агѡ or in certain other cases -ѧгѡ.

"Now," of course, will be easy to remember, because it begins with a similar sound: ны́нѣ.

"And" is also simple: и҆; and при́снѡ is ever.

во is the preposition "to/unto" in this phrase, though it does have another meaning in certain situations. What situations? Here, it will be convenient to explain that *prepositions demand certain cases of the word or words that follow them*, which in the above phrase helps us to understand that во is used in the said meaning and not another. In this phrase, the following word, вѣ́ки (ages) is masculine plural and in the accusative case (the nominative and accusative coincide for this word, actually). What's that?! Now we have a plural word with an -и ending? Yes, this ending is, in fact, one of two of the most common endings for plurals. But getting back to the meaning of во in this situation, since вѣ́ки is in the accusative/nominative plural case, we are assured that во means "to/unto."

I will frustrate you by saying that the final word, вѣкѡ́въ, is in the genitive case, the genitive plural case, that is. So, yes, we have another ending to learn for this case.

As you can see, the endings are stacking up (if you haven't figured it out yet, there's a singular and plural ending for each gender, then there's a dual—but you'll be happy to know that it's not so frequently met; in the end we'll have seven cases, and there are also some variations on the case endings...).

All of these confusing and sometimes overlapping endings are an important reason why it is necessary to know the gender of each noun, because if you know the gender as well as some other rules regarding the ending, you will be able to know the case of a noun, since there are a particular set of endings for each gender. Also, if you recognize the endings for the surrounding words (adjectives, pronouns), this will also assist you, especially if you have doubts about the noun itself. For instance, if you see вѣ́ки, as above, you might think it is nominative plural, but, as long as you knew во and that it would require the accusative case

for this situation, you would then realize that **в҃цы** is actually in the plural accusative case. And it's that easy!

Now that we've gotten our heads in a jumble, I'll add that probably the easiest way to learn will be simply to follow along during the Liturgy with a parallel text. Once you can in general tell a noun apart from a verb and recognize adjectives, you should be able to slowly pick up the other words and their meaning by looking at a parallel text.

Lesson Notes:

Words with titlo:

вл҃ко	влады́ко
бл҃гослове́но	благослове́но
ца҃рство	ца́рство
ѻ҃ц҃а̀	ѻ҆тца̀
сн҃а	сы́на
ст҃а́гѡ	свѧта́гѡ
дх҃а	дꙋха

Case ending examples:

	Masculine, singular		
Nominative	ѻ҆те́цъ	сы́нъ	дꙋхъ
Genitive	ѻ҆тца̀	сы́на	дꙋха
Accusative	ѻ҆тца̀	сы́на	дꙋха
Vocative	ѻ҆́тче	сы́не	дꙋше

Note: Genitive and accusative are the same for nouns denoting people (animate nouns).

	Masculine, singular	plural
Nominative	вѣ́къ	вѣ́ки
Genitive	вѣ́ка	вѣ́кѡ́въ
Accusative	вѣ́къ	вѣ́ки

	Masculine, singular (with -а ending)
Nominative	владь́ка
Genitive	владь́ки
Accusative	владь́кꙋ
Vocative	владь́ко

	Neuter, singular
Nominative	ца́рство
Genitive	ца́ства
Accusative	ца́рство

Note: Nominative and accusative are often the same for neuter nouns

Adjective ending example:

	Masculine, singular
Nominative	свѧты́й
Genitive	свѧта́гѡ