

A Church Slavonic Primer **by Aleksander Brooks**

Lesson 6 - Peace be unto All; Peace be unto Thee

Last time we expanded our vocabulary of words in the dative case, which, you will remember, is the case we use to send something. Today we will also be sending something, and, since it's appropriate as the Nativity is coming up, we'll be sending peace.

There are three instances in the Divine Liturgy in which peace is being sent, and I have the joy to tell you that you will have all of four words to learn! These phrases are "Peace be unto all" and "Peace be unto thee."

First of all, peace is **Мірѣ** /mir/ (Мир), and this word demonstrates a point I briefly mentioned in lesson four about certain sounds, particularly vowels, that have several letters that represent them.

There are currently set rules that govern the spelling of words using these similar letters, which can distinguish a difference in meaning of a word or a difference in grammar, for instance, singular or plural or being in a one case or another. This is also another very good reason for using actual Church Slavonic fonts and not transliterating into a modern Russian font, because there can be some ambiguity in certain words.

Regarding our above word for peace, there is another word, spelled **Мръ** /mir/, that means "world," but notice that it is pronounced exactly the same.

This is a particularly important distinction to make regarding one of today's phrases, because, as Christians, I don't think we should be desiring "the world" for anyone.

So peace is what the priest is sending, and "all" are the receivers, so "all" will be in the dative case, which is **всѣмъ** /fs'em/ (всем). The pronunciation of this word requires a little explanation. Certain consonants, when they are in front of certain other consonants, will be pronounced "devoiced," for instance, "v," the first letter of this word and a voiced consonant, here becomes "f," the devoiced pair of "v." Further along we will see more examples of this phenomenon.

This word showcases the circumflex stress, which indicates that this word is in the plural dative case. (If this word does not have a circumflex stress but an acute stress, it is in a different case.)

Notice that, again, we don't need any extra word for "unto" in this phrase, the dative case of "all" takes care of this.

So the full phrase is **Μήρξ κςϛ̂μζ** /mir fs'em/ (Мир всем).

Now that we've covered this phrase, we only have one more word to learn. You may have already realized that "Peace be unto thee" is quite similar to "Peace be unto all," and, that if "all" was in the dative case above, then "thee" should be in the dative case as well.

Thus, **Μήρξ τ̂η** /mir ti/ (Мир ти) is "Peace be unto thee." Now, those of you who diligently studied lesson 5 will protest that the "thee" used in the phrase "To Thee O Lord" was different, which is true. The **Τεβ̂ϛ̂** used in the phrase "To Thee O Lord" is simply the other variant, and, no, it is not specific to cases when referring to the Lord. (I actually have a suspicion that the choice of the "thee" in each phrase is because each sounds more pleasing in its respective phrase when sung or intoned.)

Lesson Notes:

Personal pronouns (Charts will be filled in further in future lessons)

	2nd person singular
Nominative	
Genitive	
Dative	Τεβ̂ϛ̂ / τ̂η
Accusative	
Instrumental	
Prepositional	

Determinative pronoun

	plural
Nominative	
Genitive	
Dative	κςϛ̂μζ
Accusative	
Instrumental	
Prepositional	