

Come let us Grow Together: Granville Sharp Rule

Come let us Grow Together is a weekly series that deals with the many topical categories that exist within the Word of God. The purpose of this series is to grow in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in things pertaining to God.

Granville Sharp Rule

Paul's Christian form of greeting is "Grace and peace." The standard Greek salutation was *chairein* (greetings), but Paul used *charis* (grace). The standard Hebrew salutation was *shalom* (peace), and Paul used the Greek equivalent here, thus combining into a Christian phrase both the Greek and Hebrew forms of greeting. Grace (unmerited favor) is the cause, and peace (harmony with God and the resulting tranquility of soul) is the effect. Both come from God our Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, because of the death, burial, and resurrection—the mediatorial work—of the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

The greeting phrase here is typical of Paul's epistles. It is not a reference to trinitarianism; if it were, one question that needs an answer is, Why does it omit the Holy Spirit? Rather, the greeting emphasizes the necessity of not only acknowledging God as Creator and Father (which the Jews and many pagans did) but also acknowledging God's revelation in Christ. It emphasizes that God's provision of salvation comes only through Christ.

The definite article ("the") does not appear in Greek before "Lord Jesus Christ." So verse 7 literally says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ." The Greek conjunction here is *kai*, which can mean "even" as well as "and," depending on the context; so the phrase could actually mean "from God our Father, even the Lord Jesus Christ."

When we compare Romans 1:7 with similar phrases elsewhere in Paul's epistles, we find a strong indication that Paul meant to identify God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as the same being. For example, II Thessalonians 1:12, I Timothy 5:21, II Timothy 4:1, and Titus 2:13 all identify God and Jesus Christ as one and the same being. This is especially clear because Granville Sharp's rule applies to the Greek text of these verses: If two nouns of the same number, gender, and case are connected by *kai* and if the first noun has the definite article but the second does not, then both nouns refer to the same thing. (Pgs 36-37 Message to the Romans by Doctor David K. Bernard)

Goole AI: Granville Sharp Rule

The Granville Sharp Rule is a principle of Greek grammar used to determine whether two nouns in a sentence refer to the same person or to two different people. It was formulated in 1798 by Granville Sharp, a British abolitionist and scholar, who used it to argue for the deity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

The Core Rule

The rule states that when two singular, personal nouns (titles or descriptions, but not proper names) are joined by the word "and" (kai) and only the first noun has the definite article ("the"), both nouns refer to the same individual.

The Formula:

Article (ho) + Noun 1 + And (kai) + Noun 2 = Same Person.

Essential Requirements

To be a valid application of Sharp's rule, the following conditions must be met:

Singular: Both nouns must be in the singular number.

Personal: They must describe persons (e.g., "Savior," "God") rather than impersonal things.

Non-Proper: They cannot be proper names like "Paul" or "Timothy".

Single Article: The definite article appears only before the first noun, not the second.

Famous Biblical Examples

The rule is most significant in verses where Jesus is identified as both God and Savior:

Titus 2:13: "...the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ".

2 Peter 1:1: "...the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ".

In these instances, because only "God" has the article, the rule dictates that "God" and "Savior" are one and the same person—Jesus.

Theological Significance

Trinitarian Support: Many scholars use the rule as a grammatical proof of Christ's divinity.

Critiques: Some Unitarian and other scholars argue the rule is a later "discovery" rather than an intentional law of the original Greek authors, suggesting it may not be absolute in every context.