

The Locative

The locative is the case of location or position. It shares the same form as the dative and instrumental but is distinguished by its use as it is translated by adding the word “in.” For example: υἱόῳ “in a son,” or when used with the article τῷ υἱόῳ “in the son.” The root idea of the locative is clear and its application is readily identifiable. The word comes from the Latin locus “a place,” “position,” “a period,” “a condition.” The case “indicates a point within limits and corresponds to the English in, on, among, at, by. “In every instance it is not hard to see the simple root idea of the case, a point with limits set by the word and context. So in simplest terms we may define the location as the case of *position*. Its varieties in use are few and plain.”¹

Uses of the Locative

Locative of Place. The locative of place serves to limit spatially. It is used in this sense most frequently with prepositions. For example John 21:8: οἱ δε ἄλλοι μαθηται **τῷ πλοιαριῷ** ἦλθον (The disciples came **in the boat**).

Locative of Time. The locative of time serves to limit temporally. This usage serves to indicate the time when the action of the main verb takes place. For example Matt. 20:19: και **τῇ τριτῇ ἡμέρᾳ** ἐγερθησεται (And **in the third day** He will be raised up).

Locative of Sphere. The locative of sphere serves to limit spherically (within the spheres of a thing). This is most often a metaphorical use of the locative. The limit is logical rather than spatial or temporal, confining the idea within the bounds of the sphere of a thing.

For example Rom 3:24: δικαιομενοι δωρεαν τῇ αὐτοῦ χαριτι δια τῆς ἀπολυτρωσεως τῆς **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** (being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is **in Christ Jesus**) (cf. Rom. 8:1; 8:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:16; Eph. 1:10; 1 Thes. 4:16; 2 Tim. 3:15; etc)

¹ Dana & Mantey, p. 86