

Greek Quick Reference Guide

GREEK VERBS QUICK REFERENCE

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(1) TENSE OF VERB

TENSE	ACTION	EXAMPLE & EXPLANATION
		<p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLE OF PRESENT TENSE</p> <p>1Peter 1:5-note who are protected (word study) (PPPMPA) (5746) by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time</p> <p>PPPMPA = Present Tense, Passive Voice, Participle, Masculine, Plural, Accusative</p> <p>From Peter's use of Present tense one can see that in context (see also discussion of context) he is referring to born again ones, describing them as those who are "continually being protected by the power (dunamis) of God". God's protection of His children isn't fickle, present one day and absent the next. You can see how even the most basic understanding of verb tense can add so much to the meaning.</p>

PRESENT TENSE

CONTINUOUS ACTION

HABITUAL ACTION

OFTEN REFLECTS A LIFESTYLE

Knowledge of the tense of a verb can sometimes be critical for accurate interpretation. For example read the following verse...

1Jn 3:9: "No one who is born of God **practices** (present tense) sin (noun), because His seed abides in him and he cannot **sin** (verb), because he is born of God."

Look at the verb **sin**. At first glance the verse seems to imply that one who is "*born of God*" can never commit a sin and yet all genuine believers know that this is not a reality (cf 1Jn 1:8, 2Chr 6:36, Ec 7:20, Jas 3:2). When you understand that the verb **sin** is in the **present tense**, it becomes clear that John is saying that one who is born of God cannot **habitually commit sins** as their general pattern of life. The verb "**practices**" is also present tense and conveys the same thought. All believers commit sins but not habitually or as their lifestyle. **Application:** if one's lifestyle is that of continual sinning in conjunction with no desire for holiness (cf He 12:14), these individuals need to examine whether they are genuinely new creatures in Christ (2Cor 5:17-note) born from above (Jn 3:3, 5, 2Co 13:5-note). And so one can see that in 1Jn 3:9 (as in most of chapter 3 of first [John](#)) the accurate interpretation of the passage is aided by a proper understanding of the verb tense.

Depending on the context, the following adverbs may be useful to "amplify" the meaning of a verb in the present tense:

"Continuously, constantly, habitually".

Present Tense with the indicative mood represents contemporaneous action, as opposed to action in the past or future. In moods other than in the indicative mood, it refers only to continuous or repeated action.

EXAMPLE OF AORIST TENSE

AORIST TENSE

EFFECTIVE ACTION

SUCCESSFUL ACTION

SINGLE ACTION

ONE-TIME ACTION

States that an action occurs without regard to its duration. It is analogous to a snapshot which captures an action at specific point in time.

In indicative mood, aorist can indicate punctiliar action (happens at a specific point in time) in past

1Peter 1:3-note Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again (AAPMSN) (5660)** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

AAPMSN = Aorist Tense, Active Voice, Participle, Masculine, Sing., Nominative

The **Aorist tense** conveys the truth that the believer's new birth (indicative mood is mood of reality) has occurred at a point in the past without specifying when this event occurred. The **passive voice** indicates this new birth was produced by a Source outside of the recipient and in context that Source is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Depending on the context the following adverbs may be useful to "amplify" the meaning of the action portrayed by the aorist tense:

"Effectively, successfully, completely, even once, actually, really".

Aorist tense is somewhat difficult to grasp, so don't be frustrated if you don't receive any glowing practical insights initially. If you continue to perform Word Studies (including verb tense, voice and mood) as an integral part of your Bible study, you will begin to appreciate the meaning of the aorist tense and you will begin to receive insights from this understanding.

One writer adds "strictly speaking, the **aorist** denotes past time only in the indicative; in the other moods the aorist is not confined exclusively to action in the past. Unlike the imperfect, the aorist is used to express an action that is not continuous or habitual." (Learning the Basics of New Testament Greek. AMG Publishers)

EXAMPLE OF PERFECT TENSE

1Peter 1:4-**note** to *obtain* an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, **reserved (word study) (RPPFSA) (5772)** in heaven for you

RPPFSA = Perfect Tense, Passive Voice, Participle, Fem, Sing, Accusative

In this verse Peter uses the **Perfect Tense** to convey the truth of the "living hope" (not "*hope so*" but a certain expectation of future good. Click more on "*hope*") that believers have an inheritance that has been reserved for us at a point of time in the past (when we were born again) and remains in a state of being "reserved". What a great picture. When taking a long road trip we have all had the misfortune of arriving at our motel late at night, only to discover that our reservation has been given away! Peter says that this "mistake" will not happen to believers when we reach our final destination in heaven, for our future home (and inheritance) have been reserved for us in the past and that reservation is valid for all eternity because the "reservation price" has been "*paid in full*" when Jesus' cried out "**It is finished** (notes)" (Jn 19:30).

"Finished" (teleo - word study) in Jn 19:30 is also in the **perfect tense** and refers to Messiah's work of having obtained "once for all eternal redemption" (He 9:12-note), making possible "so great a salvation" (He 2:3-note) (eternal life) through the payment of His precious blood (1Pe 1:18, 19-note) on Calvary, so that all the sinful sons of Adam (Ro 5:12-note) who justly deserved their wages for sin (eternal death) might receive "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23-note) by grace through faith (Ep 2:8-note, cp 1Pe 1:3-note, 1Pe 1:21-note, Jn 5:24, 8:24, Ac 16:31).

The entire sense of Jesus' poignant cry is "It was finished and as a result it is forever done!" "It stands finished!". The priests in the tabernacle always stood when ministering the sacrifices. But Jesus Christ our great High Priest is seated because

ACTION
COMPLETED at a
SPECIFIC POINT of
TIME in PAST (●)
with results
CONTINUING into
the PRESENT (■►).
In certain contexts

PERFECT TENSE

the results are PERMANENT.

Schematically illustrated by a "dot" (●) denoting a definite action in the past followed by a line (─▶) indicating effect of that action continuing into present



His work is forever finished. He need never arise and offer another sacrifice because full payment for our sins has been paid in the past with His sacrificial blood and the effect of that payment will endure throughout eternity! This is indeed good news, beloved of the Lord!

In short, the **perfect tense** is very expressive for it speaks of an action that took place in the past, which was completed in past time, and existence of its finished results. For instance one might say "I have closed the door" which speaks of a past completed action. But the implication is that as a result the door is still closed. Thus, the entire meaning is, "I have closed the door and it is closed at present." You can see how a simple understanding of the perfect tense can often amplify the meaning which may not be readily apparent in the English translation, because the perfect tense has no exact equivalent in English.

In Matthew 4:4, our Lord answers Satan, "It is written" and "written" is in the **perfect tense**. Here Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy which had been written by Moses 1500 years before, but is still on record. David said, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." A good paraphrase would be "It stands written forever." It is the eternal word of God and you can stake your life on it yesterday, today and tomorrow! (cf He 13:8, Mt 24:35, Ps 89:34, Is 40:8, 55:11, 1Pe 1:25)

In Ephesians 2:8-note we read, "For by grace you have been saved through faith" where "**have been saved**" (sozo-word study) is in the **perfect tense**. The picture therefore for every believer is that each we were given the gift of salvation at a specific time in the past when we believed, and as a result of that past completed work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and our past acceptance of the same, we at present are eternally "safe" (saved) and continue in that state forever in Christ. Amen. A believer's present possession of salvation therefore is based upon one thing only -- what Jesus did on the Cross for us and our acceptance of His finished work

which means that the works of an individual, past or present, good or bad, do not enter into our acceptance or retention of salvation (Titus 3:5-note; 2Ti 1:9-note). Salvation is the work of Christ alone and our reception of that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. The believer is the recipient which means that the believer is saved and saved forever, for the present results of the perfect tense are always present with the reader.

EXAMPLE OF IMPERFECT TENSE

Acts 16:7 and after they came to Mysia, **they were trying (3PIAI)** ([5707](#)) to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them

3PIAI = 3rd Person, Plural, Imperfect Tense, Active Voice, Indicative Mood

The **Imperfect tense** denotes continuous, ongoing or repeated action in past. Thus the imperfect tense often "paints" a vivid picture of an action ("motion picture") as one which happens over and over. E.g., in Acts 16:7 Luke uses the **imperfect tense** to portray Paul attempting to enter Bithynia, being hindered in some way by the Holy Spirit and yet trying again and again to enter! Interesting! This dramatic picture gives us an intriguing insight into the heart of Paul that cannot be gleaned without a basic understanding of the **imperfect tense**. Doesn't the added insight help make this verse literally "*come alive*"? This is often the effect of the **imperfect tense**.

Michael Heiser on the imperfect tense = "The verb tense where the writer portrays an action in process or a state of being that is occurring in the past with no assessment of the action's completion."

Look at some other examples of the picture painted by the imperfect tense...

Mark 4:37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the

IMPERFECT TENSE

REPEATED or
CONTINUAL
ACTION IN THE
PAST

waves **were breaking over** (imperfect tense) the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

Comment: Can't you picture yourself in the boat with the waves pounding again and again (imperfect tense conveys this picture) against the side and even beginning to fill the boat with water.

Luke 9:16 Then He took (aorist) the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up (aorist) to heaven, He blessed (aorist) them, and broke (aorist) them, and **kept giving (imperfect)** them to the disciples to set before (aorist) the people.

Comment: The blessing and breaking of the loaves and fish happened in a moment of time, while the "giving" of the bread and fish occurred over and over, which paints a vivid picture of the miraculous nature of the event. Try to place yourselves in the disciples' "sandals" for a moment!

These examples should help you see the wonderful added insights that are possible with just a simple understanding of the verb tenses. If you are intrigued, take some time and practice applying your new understanding to a few other NT verses that use the **imperfect tense** and see if you do not glean some added insights which help make the texts "come alive" as you envision the action suggested by the imperfect tense (this exercise will be most beneficial if you read verses in context)...

Mt 2:4 "he began to inquire" (**imperfect**)

Mt 26:59 "kept trying to obtain (**imperfect**) false

testimony"

Mt 27:23 "they kept shouting (**imperfect**) all the more"

Mk 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking (**imperfect**) Him to cast the demon out of her daughter." (what a vivid scene!).

If you have meditated on (**Click Primer on Meditation**) the pictures portrayed by the over and over (imperfect tense) actions in each of the preceding verses, you are beginning to see the incredible value of a simple understanding of this tense. You were probably familiar with each of the scenes depicted, but heretofore you had viewed them only as "black and white stills", whereas now illumined by your understanding of the imperfect tense, you can see them as vividly "colorized motion pictures".

(2) TRANSLATING TENSES INTO ENGLISH

Note: These are only general guidelines

PRESENT IMPERATIVE

PRESENT IMPERATIVE

Continually, habitually follow this command! The Present Imperative is often a call to a long-term commitment and calls for the attitude or action to be one's continual way of life (lifestyle). ([See all NT occurrences of the present imperative - makes for an interesting study](#))

1Pe 2:17-note **Honor** ([5657](#)) all people, **love** (**2PPAM**) ([5720](#)) the brotherhood, **fear** (**2PPPM**) ([5737](#)) God, **honor** (**2PPAM**) ([5720](#)) the king

2PPAM: 2nd Person, Plural, Present Tense, Active Voice, Imperative Mood

These actions are not "suggestions" but commands to make each

attitude/action our habitual practice. Remember that whatever God commands of us, He always provides the grace and empowerment in Christ Jesus and His Spirit so that we might be enabled to carry out the command.

PRESENT IMPERATIVE w/ NEGATIVE

PRESENT IMPERATIVE WITH A NEGATIVE

“STOP an action which is already going on”. CEASE an act in progress.

1Pe 4:12-note Beloved, **do not be surprised** (2PPPM) ([5744](#)) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

2PPPM: 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Passive voice, Imperative Mood

The implication is that they were being surprised by the fiery ordeals (but aren't we all frequently caught off guard by God's "pop tests"?) so Peter says stop doing this!'

AORIST IMPERATIVE

AORIST IMPERATIVE

Calls for a SPECIFIC, DEFINITE, DECISIVE choice. "DO THIS NOW, AT ONCE, ONCE FOR ALL and in one quick action (in contrast to present imperative which commands a habitual action). Often expresses a note of URGENCY. ([See all the NT occurrences of the aorist imperative](#))

1Pe 1:17-note If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct** (2PAPM) ([5649](#)) yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

2PAPM: 2nd person, Plural, Aorist Tense, Imperative Mood

(3) VOICE OF VERB

As explained below the **Voice** highlights the relationship of the **subject** to the verbal **action**.

Verbs in **active voice** picture the subject as the one who performs or produces the action or exercises a certain activity. **Active voice** represents the action as being accomplished by the subject of the verb.

ACTIVE VOICE

The **Active voice** is the most common voice in the NT, occurring 20,697 times compared to 3500 for middle and 3933 for passive.

1Pe 1:13-note Therefore, gird (the loins of) your minds for action, **keep sober (PAPMPN) (5723)** *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

PAPMPN = Present Tense, Active Voice, Participle, Masc, Plural, Nominative

PASSIVE VOICE

The **passive voice** conveys the idea that the SUBJECT is being ACTED UPON by an OUTSIDE force or power. SUBJECT is the RECIPIENT or the RECEIVER of the verbal action or effect. In English passive voice is usually indicated by the phrase "to be".

1Pe 1:15-note but like the Holy One Who called you, be (2PAPM) (5676) holy yourselves also in all your behavior

2PAPM = 2nd person, Plural, Aorist Tense, Passive Voice, Imperative Mood

Peter's point then is that it is not believers who make themselves holy (eg, by keeping a list of do's and don't's) but it is God Who makes us progressively more and more holy as we surrender our will to His sweet will. (See related topic: LORD Who Sanctifies)

Michael Heiser - The grammatical voice that signifies that the subject is being acted upon; i.e., the subject is the receiver of the verbal action. A verb in the passive voice with God as the stated or implied agent is often referred to as the "**divine passive.**"

MIDDLE VOICE

This voice means that the SUBJECT **initiates** the action and **participates** in the results of the action. In other words the subject is both doing and receiving the action. The middle voice indicates the subject performs an action upon himself or herself (reflexive action) or for their own benefit. E.g., "The boy groomed **himself.**"

The middle voice is **reflexive** which describes an action directed back on the subject ("he perjured himself"). It is often translated with words like "-self" (**himself, herself, themselves**, etc).

1Pe 1:6-note In this you (**yourselves**) **greatly rejoice (2PPMI) (5736)** even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials

2PPMI = 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Middle Voice, Indicative Mood

1Pe 1:13-note Therefore, (you plural) **gird (yourselves)** ([5671](#)) (**AMPMPN**) (the loins of) your minds for action...

AMPMPN = Aorist Tense, Middle Voice, Participle, Masc., Plural, Nominative

(4) MOOD OF VERB

INDICATIVE MOOD

MOOD of CERTAINTY = simply states a thing as being a FACT. There is no doubt that the action occurred. If an action really occurs or has occurred or will occur, it will be rendered in the indicative mood.

1Pe 1:8 -note and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you **greatly rejoice** ([5736](#)) (**2PPMI**) with joy inexpressible and full of glory

2PPMI = 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Middle Voice, Indicative Mood

IMPERATIVE MOOD

COMMAND = Calls for the recipient to perform a certain action by the order and authority of one commanding. Imperative mood can also indicate a request or entreaty (Lk 11:3)

1Pe 1:13-note Therefore, gird (the loins of) your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (**2PAAM**) ([5657](#)) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2PAAM = 2nd Person, Aorist Tense, Active Voice, Imperative Mood

SUBJUNCTIVE

MOOD of PROBABILITY (possibility, potentiality) = expresses an action which may or should happen but which is not necessarily true at present. In other words subjunctive expresses some doubt that an action occurred (or will occur). It suggests that the action is dependent upon some condition being met. This description is simplistic and for more detailed description click here ([or here](#))

Conditional sentences ([click](#) summary of conditional sentences) of the third class ([ean](#) + the subjunctive) are all of this type, as well

MOOD	<p>as many commands following conditional purpose clauses, such as those beginning with "hina." ("in order that")</p> <p>1Pe 1:7 -note so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found (3SAPS) (5686) to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;</p> <p>3SAPS = 3rd person, Aorist Tense, Passive Voice, Subjunctive Mood</p>
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OPTATIVE MOOD	<p>EXPRESSES A WISH or DESIRE most often specifically indicates a PRAYER. In a few cases the optative mood expresses the STRONGEST POSSIBLE WISH regarding an event, especially in the phrase "May it never be" (NASB) with 15/16 uses by Paul (see Ro 6:2-note)</p> <p>1Pe 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure (5684) (3SAPO) [Literally = be multiplied]</p> <p>3SAPO = 3rd person, Aorist Tense, Passive Voice, Optative Mood</p>
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(5) HOW TO DETERMINE VERB TENSE, VOICE and MOOD (TVM)

The easiest way to do this on the web is to search "Strong's Interlinear" (search box below). Simply type in the passage that has the word in which you are interested and click "Search." A new page opens on Studylight.org. Scroll down to passage and hold your mouse over the English or Greek word and the box pop up is the Strong's Number for that word. If you are studying several passages in a chapter, to save time, entering the book and chapter number without specifying a verse. When you hold your pointer over the Greek word notice (1) that the corresponding English word is highlighted and (2) the verb parsing show up below the passage giving you in order the tense, the voice and the mood.

Let's walk through an example:

(1) Enter [1Peter 1:4](#) and hold you pointer over **reserved** and you see Strong's #5083 pop up and the corresponding Greek word. Hold your pointer over the Greek word and below in Lexical Parser you have the tense, etc - **Perfect, Passive, Participle, Accusative, Singular, Feminine.**

(2) Click on the English on Greek word to see more information below on the reserved (tereo).

(3) Notice the Strong's number (#5083) in the upper left corner -- click it and you will retrieve a much more in depth definition on the word **tereo** -- (a) Liddell-Scott-Jones Definitions below which is (b) Thayer's Expanded Definition below which is (c) the Frequency of uses of the word (tereo) by book of the Bible.

(4) Notice that most of the uses of **tereo** are in John and Revelation. Click on one of these books in the translation you would prefer (KJV, NAS, HCS) and you can study see all the uses in that book.

Comment: You probably noted that there were more uses of tereo in the KJV than the other two translations. The reason for this is that the KJV is translated from an older Greek manuscript (Textus Receptus) which is not considered by most authorities as accurate as the more modern Greek manuscripts (NAS uses the Nestle-Aland).

Strong's Interlinear Bible Search



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(6) MORE RESOURCES ON GREEK

- **Greek Word Studies** - links to in depth word studies on site (new words added weekly)
- [It's Greek To Me](#) - multiple resources to help you perform in depth word studies (in Greek and Hebrew)
- **Perform a Greek Word Study using the Web**
- [The Greeks Had a Word for It](#): excellent summary chapter from the book Basics of Biblical Interpretation by Bob Smith
- [Greek Grammar](#): compilation based primarily on Mounce. There are other areas of this website that express opinions I do not agree with but the Greek seems to be objective and accurate. As always be a Berean on my site or any other internet site (Acts 17:11-notes)
- [Learning NT Greek](#) - click index on left side of page to open specific subject. Nice feature is you can read a simple explanation and if you desire more detail you can read an intermediate/advanced explanation, including [Subjunctive Mood](#).
- [Brief overview of Greek Verbs in the Greek New Testament](#).

(7) DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING USE OF GREEK PREPOSITIONS



(8) ALL THE COMMANDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Comment: From the following compilation of commands, it is clear that our Father places considerable emphasis on **Commands** in Scripture, and for followers of Jesus Christ, our obedience to His commands (specifically those commands which in context apply to us today) is our tangible way to say we really do **love** Jesus! (Jn 14:15, 23, 24, Paul adds 1Cor 16:22) **Beloved, don't miss this point! Love** is not a sentimental emotion, as too often portrayed in modern day Christianity. Yes, **God is love** (1Jn 4:8, 16), but John also writes **God is Light** (1Jn 1:5-note) . **Love** and **Light** (holiness) counterbalance one another. We cannot say we **love God** and choose to **walk in the darkness!** That is a lie and we are not practicing the truth (1Jn 1:6-note). The way we live our life, the choices we make each daily, will resound clearly in heaven either "I love You Lord" or "I don't love You Lord"! There is no middle ground regarding love of Jesus and walking in the light. But praise God, Jesus knows that the old **flesh nature** (still present in all believers) continually calls us to run from God's commands (leading to licentiousness) or to carry them out in our own fleshly strength (leading to legalism). But thanks be to God for He has given us the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Who indwells every believer (Romans 8:9-note) and provides us with both the **desire** and the **power** (Philippians 2:13NLT-note, cp Ezekiel 36:27-note) to walk in His enabling power and not carry out the desire of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-note). Our part, our responsibility under grace not law (Romans 6:14- note) is to make choices (Php 2:12-note, but even the desire for such "holy" choices being "energized" or enabled by the Spirit) motivated by His love which constrains (controls, compels, urges, impels) us (2Cor 5:14-note) to choose to obey His non-burdensome commands (1Jn 5:3). And oh what a reward He promises us in John 14:21!. Thank You Lord. Amen.

One final practical thought: Every encounter with a **command to obey**, is our opportunity to **jettison self-reliance** and to **yield to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit**. Supernatural commands from the supernatural God can only be carried out with reliance on His supernatural power! The Spirit is called the Helper, but don't let His Name mislead you. To say that we need His **help** is to imply we have some ability of our own to obey and are in need of a little "push" so to speak. It is better to say that we need Him to **enable** us to obey divine commands, for the word **enable** indicates that without His power we cannot obey. **Webster** says **enable** means "*to supply with power, physical or moral, to furnish with sufficient power or ability!*" In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul describes the incomprehensible, mysterious balance between man's free will and God's sovereign provision of His Spirit!

All the Present Imperatives in the New Testament - 880x in 705v in NT (in Bibleworks Greek NT Morphology) - Matt 2:13, 20; 3:2f; 4:10, 17; 5:12, 24f, 37, 41, 44; 6:1, 9, 16, 19f, 25, 33; 7:1, 7, 12, 15, 23; 8:4, 9, 13, 22, 32; 9:2, 5f, 9, 22, 24, 30; 10:6ff, 16f, 23, 28, 31; 11:15; 13:9, 43; 14:18, 27; 15:4, 10, 25; 16:6, 11, 23f; 17:5, 7, 17;

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