

# Greek Quick Reference Guide

## GREEK VERBS QUICK REFERENCE

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[\(8\) All the Commands in the New Testament](#) - How do you obey them? This is a vital truth every saint must comprehend in order to ensure a worthy walk, a walk of holiness! (Eph 4:1+, Col 1:10+, 1 Th 2:12+) (**NB:** "+" after chapter/verse indicates an in depth commentary on that verse).

## SUMMARY OF MEANING OF GREEK PARSING ABBREVIATIONS

Parsing abbreviations show how a Greek word functions in the sentence and not just what it means.

### Tense

- **P** – Present (continuous or ongoing action)
- **I** – Imperfect (past, continuous)
- **F** – Future
- **A** – Aorist (simple or undefined action)
- **R** – Perfect (completed action with ongoing results)
- **L** – Pluperfect (past completed action)

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### Voice

- **A** – Active (subject performs the action)
- **M** – Middle (subject participates in the action)
- **P** – Passive (subject receives the action) (See also Divine Passive)
- **D** – Middle/Passive (deponent or ambiguous)

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### Mood

- **I** – Indicative (statement of fact)
- **S** – Subjunctive (possibility, purpose)

- **O** – Optative (wish, potential)
  - **M** – Imperative (command)
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### Verbal Forms

- **I** – Infinitive
  - **P** – Participle
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### Person

- **1** – First person (I / we)
  - **2** – Second person (you)
  - **3** – Third person (he / she / they)
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### Gender

- **M** – Masculine
  - **F** – Feminine
  - **N** – Neuter
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### Number

- **S** – Singular
  - **P** – Plural
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### Case

- **N** – Nominative (subject)
  - **G** – Genitive (possession, source)
  - **D** – Dative (indirect object, means)
  - **A** – Accusative (direct object)
  - **V** – Vocative (address)
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### EXAMPLE OF PARSING ABBREVIATION FROM 1 Peter 1:5 (first example below)...

In **1 Peter 1:5**, the key word is **φρουρουμένων** (*phrouroumenous*) = “being guarded / protected”

Its parsing is **PPMPA**, meaning:

- **P** = **Present** (tense)
- **P** = **Passive** (voice)
- **P** = **Participle** (verbal form)
- **M** = **Masculine** (gender)

- **P = Plural** (number)
- **A = Accusative** (case)

So **PPMPA** = Present Passive Participle Masculine Plural Accusative.

**YOU ARE PROBABLY ASKING "SO WHAT?"**

What that tells you about the phrase “who are protected...”

- **Present participle:** an **ongoing** reality — *continually being guarded*.
- **Passive voice:** believers are **receiving** the action — *God is doing the guarding*, not them. (Divine Passive)
- **Masculine plural accusative:** it agrees with and modifies the plural object “you” (the believers) in context — *you-all are the ones being guarded*.

**Related Resources:**

- **Dana and Mantey's** [A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament](#) (ONLINE) - if you want more detail than on this page.
- [Bob Utley - Greek Grammatical Terms](#) - Good Summary - Verbs, Nouns, Conjunctions, Conditional clauses, Prohibitions, Ways to show emphasis in the Greek
- See [multiple additional related resources](#)
- [Englishman's Greek - Verbs - Voice, Mood and Tense](#) - with examples from Scripture

**(1) TENSE OF VERB**

TENSE	ACTION	EXAMPLE & EXPLANATION
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESENT TENSE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTINUOUS ACTION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>HABITUAL ACTION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OFTEN REFLECTS A LIFESTYLE</b></p> <p>(If you still use a paper Bible, to help identify the present tense place a "tilde" [ ~ ] over the verb and designate imperatives with an ! after the tilde symbol) (<a href="#">see note</a>)</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>EXAMPLE OF PRESENT TENSE</b> (<a href="#">note</a>)</p> </div> <p>1Peter 1:5+ who are <b>protected</b> (PPPMPA) 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 <b>Present tense</b> one can see that in context (see also discussion of <b>context</b>) he is referring to born again ones, describing them as those who are "continually being protected by the power (<a href="#">dunamis</a>) 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> <p>Knowledge of the tense of a verb can sometimes be critical for accurate interpretation. For example read the following verse...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1Jn 3:9+ "No one who is born of God <b>practices</b> (present tense) sin (noun), because His seed abides in him and he cannot <b>sin</b> (verb), because he is born of God."</p> <p>Look at the verb <b>sin</b>. 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 <b>sin</b> is in the <b>present tense</b>, it becomes clear that John is saying that one who is born of God cannot <b>habitually commit sins</b> as their general pattern of life. The verb "<b>practices</b>" is also present tense and conveys the same thought. All believers commit sins but not habitually or as their lifestyle. <b>Application</b>: 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+) born from above (Jn 3:3, 5, 2Co 13:5+). 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.</p> <p>Depending on the context, the following adverbs may be useful to "amplify" the meaning of a verb in the present tense:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Continuously, constantly, habitually".</p> <p><b>Present Tense</b> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ See also <a href="#">informative note on Present Tense by Gary Hill in the Discovery Bible</a>.</li> </ul>
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>EXAMPLE OF AORIST TENSE</b> (<a href="#">note</a>)</p> </div> <p>1Peter 1:3+ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy <b>has caused us to be born again</b> (AAPMSN) to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,</p> <p>AAPMSN = Aorist Tense, Active Voice, Participle, Masculine, Sing., Nominative</p> <p>The <b>Aorist tense</b> conveys the truth that the believer's new birth (indicative mood</p>

## 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 a specific point in time.

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

(If you still use a paper Bible, to help identify the aorist tense place a "x" over the verb and designate imperatives with an ! after the "x") ([see note](#))

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.

The aorist (aoristos = "undefined" or "without limit") is a verb tense that describes an action as a whole, without focusing on its duration, repetition, or ongoing nature. It's sometimes called the "**snapshot tense**." It simply views the action as a complete event — as a whole — rather than as a process.

Aorist primarily states the kind of action (aspect), whether complete or whole event. Not the time of action (past, present, future) which is determined by context, not by the tense itself. So 1Jn 1:9+ both "forgive us" and "cleanse us" speak of complete (not partial) cleansing, decisive (not gradual) cleansing, effective (not tentative) cleansing. When genuine confession occurs, God's forgiveness and cleansing are viewed as whole events — instantly and fully accomplished. If you are holding on to some guilt after you have confessed, you need to "let the pot drop" because God did! (see full devotional thought!)

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)

- See also [informative note on Aorist Tense by Gary Hill in the Discovery Bible](#).

**PROLEPTIC AORIST** - In certain contexts, this variant of the aorist tense describes a future event that is so certain to occur that it is spoken of as if it has already taken place (past tense). It is as good as done. even though it is still in the future! E.g., Ro 8:30+ speaking of believers says "**He also glorified**" (or "He has glorified" = past tense) Our glorification is clearly a future event but it is so certain of fulfillment (because God is sovereign!) that Paul speaks of it as if it had already been accomplished! In other words, this is not a "hope so" but a "hope sure!" The best is yet to come! Hold fast beloved! Persevere! He is coming quickly (Rev 22:7+). This tense is also sometimes called the "**prophetic aorist**" (see explanation) especially in apocalyptic literature (e.g., "fallen, fallen is Babylon the great" even though she does not actually fall until Rev 16:19+.)

### EXAMPLE OF PERFECT TENSE ([note](#))

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

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

## PERFECT TENSE

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

To mark perfect tense in your Bible, over the verb place a "dot" (●) denoting a definite action in the past followed by a line (■ ►) indicating effect of that action continuing into present

●-■ ►

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+), making possible "so great a salvation" (He 2:3+) (eternal life) through the payment of His precious blood (1Pe 1:18, 19+) on Calvary, so that all the sinful sons of Adam (Ro 5:12+) 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+) by grace through faith (Ep 2:8+, cp 1Pe 1:3+, 1Pe 1:21+, Jn 5:24+, Jn 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 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." (Ps 119:89+) 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 Heb 13:8, Mt 24:35, Ps 89:34, Is 40:8, 55:11, 1Pe 1:25)

In Ephesians 2:8+ 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+; 2Ti 1:9+). 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.

- [See informative note on Perfect Tense by Gary Hill](#)

### EXAMPLE OF IMPERFECT TENSE ([note](#))

Acts 16:7+ and after they came to Mysia, **they were trying** (3PIAI) 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."

Imagine repeated or extended activity as a motion-picture — re-live the scene!

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 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"

## IMPERFECT TENSE

### REPEATED or CONTINUAL ACTION IN THE PAST

To identify the imperfect tense place a "xxx" over the verb. ([see note](#))

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".

[Gary Hill on imperfect](#) - The NT (Greek) *imperfect* dramatically re-enacts how action *repeated* or *was prolonged*. Readers vividly imagine the action in keeping with the context. The NT (Greek) imperfect re-enacts the original scene – a real-time *video* stimulating sanctified-imagination to re-live the original *drama*. It portrays activity in its *vivid progression* or *repetition*. The context shows if the action *repeated* or *was prolonged* (and both senses can apply simultaneously).

This *process-action* may have unfolded over a short or long period of time. (See [Discovery Bible note](#))

#### Illustrating "in plain English"

- "Paul sought God's will" – habitually, over-and-over again (not just once).
- "Phoebe conquered her fears" – repeatedly, ongoingly, again-and-again (not just a single occasion).

#### Scripture examples

- (Mk 6:13+) "And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil..." – A. T. Robertson, "The imperfects express continued repetition" (WP, 1, 309).
- (Lk 23:23+) "But they persistently insisted, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices were prevailing" – prolonged, repeated actions re-played as a video before the mind's eye.
- (Ro 15:22+) "For this reason I have been hindered from coming to you" – "denoting continuousness, and implying a succession of hindrances" (M. Vincent, WS, 751).

**In summary** - The Greek imperfect moves readers to envision (re-live) the graphic narrative played out step-by-step in living color. It carries them back to the original scene like a time-machine to catch the repetition or prolongment of the activity as though they were there. ([The Discovery Bible](#))

## (2) TRANSLATING TENSES INTO ENGLISH

Note: These are only general guidelines



<p><b>PRESENT IMPERATIVE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESENT IMPERATIVE</b></p> <p>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). (<a href="#">See all NT occurrences of the present imperative - makes for an interesting study</a>)</p> <p>1Pe 2:17+ <b>Honor</b> all people, <b>love</b> (2PPAM) the brotherhood, <b>fear</b> (2PPPM) God, <b>honor</b> (2PPAM) (<a href="#">5720</a>) the king</p> <p>2PPAM: 2nd Person, Plural, Present Tense, Active Voice, Imperative Mood</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>PRESENT IMPERATIVE w/ NEGATIVE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESENT IMPERATIVE WITH A NEGATIVE</b></p> <p>"STOP an action which is already going on". CEASE an act in progress.</p> <p>Keep on refusing to do this and/or, stop doing this if it has already started!</p> <p>1Pe 4:12+ Beloved, <b>do not be surprised</b> (2PPPM) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;</p> <p>2PPPM: 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Passive voice, Imperative Mood</p> <p>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! Present imperative with a negative can also convey the idea of do not begin doing something.</p>
<p><b>AORIST IMPERATIVE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AORIST IMPERATIVE</b></p> <p>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. (<a href="#">See all the NT occurrences of the aorist imperative</a>)</p> <p>Check it off, get it done! Focus on the first opportunity to complete it!</p> <p>1Pe 1:17+ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, <b>conduct</b> (2PAPM) yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; (Great passage to memorize and live out!)</p> <p>2PAPM: 2nd person, Plural, Aorist Tense, Imperative Mood</p>

### (3) VOICE OF VERB

<p><b>ACTIVE VOICE</b></p>	<p>As explained below the <b>Voice</b> highlights the relationship of the <b>subject</b> to the verbal <b>action</b>.</p> <p>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. The Active voice is the most common voice in the NT, occurring 20,697 times compared to 3500 for middle voice and 3933 for passive voice.</p> <p>1Pe 1:13+ Therefore, gird (the loins of) your minds for action, <b>keep sober</b> (PAPMPN) <i>in spirit</i>, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>PAPMPN = Present Tense, Active Voice, Participle, Masc, Plural, Nominative</p>
<p><b>PASSIVE VOICE</b></p>	<p>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".</p> <p>1 Pe 1:15+ but like the Holy One Who called you, <b>be</b> (2PAPM) holy yourselves also in all your behavior</p> <p>2PAPM = 2nd person, Plural, Aorist Tense, Passive Voice, Imperative Mood</p> <p>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 (His Spirit sanctifies us -1Pe 1:2+) makes us progressively more and more holy (see progressive sanctification) as we surrender our will to His sweet will. (See related topic: LORD Who Sanctifies)</p> <p>Passive voice 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 an example of the so-called "<a href="#">divine passive (see discussion)</a>."</p>
<p><b>MIDDLE VOICE</b></p>	<p>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."</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Middle voice speaks of the personal involvement of the subject in the act or action.</p> <p>1Pe 1:6+ In this you (yourselves) <b>greatly rejoice</b> (2PPMI) even though now for a little while, if necessary , you have been distressed by various trials</p> <p>2PPMI = 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Middle Voice, Indicative Mood</p> <p>1Pe 1:13+ Therefore, (you plural) <b>gird</b> (yourselves) (AMPMPN) (the loins of) your minds for action...</p> <p>AMPMPN = Aorist Tense, Middle Voice, Participle, Masc., Plural, Nominative</p>

## (4) MOOD OF VERB

<p><b>INDICATIVE MOOD</b></p>	<p><b>MOOD of CERTAINTY</b> = 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.</p> <p>1Pe 1:8+ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you <b>greatly rejoice</b> (2PPMI) with joy inexpressible and full of glory</p> <p>2PPMI = 2nd person, Plural, Present Tense, Middle Voice, Indicative Mood</p>
<p><b>IMPERATIVE MOOD</b></p>	<p><b>COMMAND</b> = 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+)</p> <p>1Pe 1:13+ Therefore, gird (the loins of) your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, <b>fix your hope</b> (2PAAM) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>2PAAM = 2nd Person, Aorist Tense, Active Voice, Imperative Mood</p>
<p><b>SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD</b></p>	<p><b>MOOD of PROBABILITY</b> (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 (<a href="#">or here</a>)</p> <p><b>Conditional sentences</b> (click summary of conditional sentences) of the third class (<a href="#">ean</a> + the subjunctive) are all of this type, as well as many commands following conditional purpose clauses, such as those beginning with "<a href="#">hina</a>." ("in order that" - see this strategic "hinge word" discussed in <a href="#">term of purpose/result</a>)</p> <p>1Pe 1:7+ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be <a href="#">found</a> (3SAPS) 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> <p>The <b>subjunctive mood</b> signifies possibility, potential, purpose, or expectation, rather than certainty. For example, in Hebrews 4:16 (see commentary), it teaches that mercy and grace are fully available at the throne of grace, but they must be appropriated by faith—they are possible, but not automatic.</p>
<p><b>OPTATIVE MOOD</b></p>	<p><b>EXPRESSES A WISH or DESIRE</b> 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 = Lk 20:16; Ro 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1Co 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21; 6:14 (see commentson Ro 6:2+)</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 <a href="#">fullest measure</a> (3SAPO) [Literally = be multiplied]</p> <p>3SAPO = 3rd person, Aorist Tense, Passive Voice, Optative Mood</p>

Below is a compilation of suggested Symbols from [Gary Hill's DISCOVERY BIBLE](#) which I have used for over 30 years in my paper Bible for marking the verbs. That way, when I re-read that passage even years later, I can quickly discern the parsing of the Greek verbs. See [also his "Discovery Bible" on a digital program](#) - very useful for those of us who are not Greek experts - includes definitions of many Greek words.

## ((5) HOW TO DETERMINE

## VERB TENSE, VOICE and MOOD (TVM)

The easiest way to do this on the web is to use the [Interlinear Bible on Biblehub.com](https://www.biblehub.com/interlinear/).

Here is an example from the [Hebrew of Genesis 1:1](#). The Strong's number is at the top (1254) followed by the transliterated word, the original Hebrew (or Greek), the meaning and the verb tense, voice, mood at the bottom ([V-Qal-Perf-3ms](#)). This pattern is the same for the Greek in the New Testament (See [Matthew 1:1](#)).

1254 [e]

bā·rā

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created

[V-Qal-Perf-3ms](#)

## (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](#) See chapter 10 for excellent summary from the book Basics of Bible 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+)
- [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

Source: <https://www.webtruth.org/>

## (8) ALL THE COMMANDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### HOW TO KEEP ALL 1642 COMMANDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!

You are probably having a visceral reaction to the preceding statement! You might even be quoting me Paul's words in Romans 7:6- that "now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter." Yes, that is absolutely true, but being released from the Law, does not mean we are free to live lawlessly. Unbelievers are deceived and think that real freedom means you can live as you please. The truth according to God is that real freedom is not the right to live as you please, but the power to live as you should. And so, in what almost seems like a paradox, to aid us to walk in the freedom of the newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter (law) the New Testament gives us approximately 1642 **commands**, 880 Present Imperatives in 705 verses and 762 Aorist Imperatives in 616 verses! [See the](#)

[entire list below](#)).

And so it is crystal clear that God still places considerable emphasis on His holy **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! (John 14:15, 23, 24+, Paul adds 1 Cor 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** (1 Jn 4:8, 16+), but John also writes **God is Light** (1 Jn 1:5+). **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 (1 Jn 1:6+). 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+) and provides us with both the **desire** and the **power** (Philippians 2:13NLT+, cp Ezekiel 36:27+) to walk in His enabling power and not carry out the desire of the flesh (Galatians 5:16+). Our part, our responsibility under grace not law (Romans 6:14+) is to make choices (Php 2:12+, but even the desire for such "holy" choices being "energized" or enabled by the Spirit who gives us the "holy want to!") motivated by His love which constrains (controls, compels, urges, impels) us (2 Cor 5:14+) to choose to obey His non-burdensome commands (1 Jn 5:3+). And oh what a reward He promises us in John 14:21+!. Thank You Lord. Amen.

**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! (See the related discussion of the [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#) [100/100](#)) Remember that God's commandment is always God's enablement, and to win the victory, His people need only [trust and obey](#) (for there's no other way to be happy [blessed] in Jesus than to trust and obey - He does His part but we must do our part (albeit that even enabled by His Spirit - Amazing Grace indeed!)).

And lest you think this is just my own personal view regarding the keeping of the NT commands, below is a discussion by Dr John Piper which underscores the premise that all of the NT commands can **ONLY** be obeyed by reliance on the enablement of the Spirit, **NOT** on reliance on our fallen, sinful flesh. **Dr Piper** says...

If it is true that the sinning of a Christian diminishes joy in Christ, and Christian acts of love increase joy in Christ, then the fight for joy is the fight to kill sin and pursue **obedience to the commands** of love.....When Christ shed the blood of the new covenant (Luke 22:20) He secured, at infinite cost, not only the forgiveness of our sins (Jeremiah 31:34), but also God's writing of the law on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). He secured infallibly for all the elect the new covenant promise "**I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules**" (Ezekiel 36:27). And he did this not by giving us his Spirit and removing all commandments from the New Testament and replacing them with the Holy Spirit. **He did it by giving us hundreds of commandments** that describe the narrow path of love that leads to life, and **then giving us His Spirit so that we would love these commandments, and they would not be burdensome** (1 John 5:3), but his yoke would be easy (Matthew 11:30), indeed, more joyful than if there were no commandments at all....

(Dr Piper then goes on to describe what he feels are two defects in Gospel preaching)... Second, these preachers tend to shrink back from the apostolic intention of "the law of Christ" unfolded in **hundreds of New Testament commands** (ED: 880 present imperatives and 762 aorist imperatives!) that define the path of love that leads to life (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2). And instead of calling for obedience like the apostles do (1 Thessalonians 4:1), they (ED: REFERRING TO THE WEAKNESS OF SOME GOSPEL PREACHING) only use the commandments to say, "You can't do that. Christ did it for you. Trust in the imputation of his obedience. End of sermon. Celebrate grace."

That's a half-gospel based on a half-grace, offering a half-joy. By all means say, "You can't obey these

commands **in your own strength**. Christ obeyed them perfectly on your behalf. Trust in the imputation of that perfect obedience as the ground of your happy acceptance.” Yes!

**And then look to the rest of what he purchased for you at the cost of his life. He purchased the Holy Spirit and gave him to you.** He purchased the writing of the law on your heart so that you love his commandments. He purchased the sovereign promise, “I will...cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (Ezekiel 36:27).

This is the grand achievement of the blood of the new covenant. And the commandments of the New Testament are not given merely to expose our sin. They are given to show us the kind of life Christ died to create in his church. They are given to us so that by doing them by faith in Christ’s blood-bought power — gospel power! — we might have more joy as his power is perfected in our weakness — that we might have *more joy* in Christ himself. (See full sermon - [Is It Right to Seek More Joy Than We Have Through Justification?](#))

And here is **Dr John MacArthur’s** explanation -

So, answer to the question, **“How did Jesus do the will of God, the work of God in the way that God did it? How did He render perfect love toward God, perfect obedience toward God?”** The answer, “By the power of the Holy Spirit.” The very person who empowered the perfect obedience of Christ is the very person that takes up residence in our lives as believers. So Jesus obeyed the word of God perfectly in the power of the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:6+ says “The one who says he abides in Him (in Christ) ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” If you say you abide in Christ you ought to walk as He walked. How did He walk? **He walked in the Spirit; He walked in the power of the Spirit** (Read his excellent analysis of Jesus’ life [The Perfect Model of a Spirit-Empowered Life](#)).

**Charles Swindoll** adds...

**I don’t know of a more important verse in the New Testament for the Christian than [Ephesians 5:18](#)— honest, no exaggeration.** This verse tells the believer how to live an authentic, empowered life: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” It begins with a negative command: “Don’t get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation” (which means excess, existing hopelessly out of control). When you’re drunk with alcohol, you lose control. You also lose self-respect and the respect of others. “Don’t get drunk.” A positive command follows: “But be filled with the Spirit.”...This is a command, not a suggestion. It’s an urgent imperative, not a casual option...“Be filled” is a command, which means I play a part in it. For example, I cannot be filled with the Spirit while I have unconfessed sin within me. I cannot be filled with the Spirit while at the same time conducting my life in the energy of the flesh. I cannot be filled with the Spirit while I am resisting God’s will and relying only on myself. I need to be sure that I have taken care of the sins that have emerged in my life, that I have not ignored the wrong that I have done before God and to others. I need to walk in conscious dependence on the Lord on a daily basis. Many a morning I begin my day by sitting on the side of the bed, saying:

This is your day, Lord. I want to be at Your disposal. I have no idea what these next twenty-four hours will contain. But before I sip my first cup of coffee, and even before I get dressed, I want You to know that from this moment on throughout this day, I’m Yours, Lord. Help me to lean on You, to draw strength from You, and to have You fill my mind and my thoughts. Take control of my senses so that I am literally filled with Your presence and empowered with Your energy. I want to be Your tool, Your vessel today. I can’t make it happen. And so I’m saying, Lord, fill me with Your Spirit today.

I challenge you to begin every day with a similar prayer. “Lord, today, enable me to live out the authentic Christian life for Your glory.” Customize it with your own details depending on what may be the needs of that particular day. ([Embraced by the Spirit: the Untold Blessings of Intimacy with God](#))

**All the Present Imperatives in the New Testament - 880x in 705 verse 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; 18:10, 15, 17; 19:6, 12, 14, 19, 21; 20:4, 7, 14; 21:2, 28; 22:9, 44; 23:3; 24:4, 6, 15f, 20, 33, 42ff; 25:6, 9, 13, 41; 26:18, 38, 41, 45f, 49; 27:29, 65; 28:5, 9f; Mark 1:3, 15, 44; 2:9, 11, 14; 3:3; 4:3, 9, 23f, 39; 5:19, 34, 36, 41; 6:10, 38, 50; 7:10, 29; 8:15, 33f; 9:7, 19, 24, 39, 50; 10:9, 14, 19, 21, 49, 52; 11:2, 22, 24f; 12:15, 29, 36, 38; 13:5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 18, 21, 23, 29, 33, 35, 37; 14:13, 34, 38, 41f, 44; 15:18; 16:6f; Luke 1:13, 28, 30; 2:10; 3:4, 11, 13f; 5:10, 23f, 27; 6:8, 27ff, 35ff; 7:6, 8, 13, 50; 8:8, 18, 39, 48ff, 52, 54; 9:3ff, 23, 35, 50, 59f; 10:3ff,

7ff, 11, 20, 28, 37; 11:2f, 7, 9, 35; 12:1, 7, 15, 19, 22, 29, 31f, 35, 39f; 13:14, 24, 31; 14:12f, 17ff, 35; 15:23; 17:3, 8, 10, 19, 32; 18:16, 20, 22; 19:17, 19, 30; 20:42, 46; 21:8, 21, 31, 34, 36; 22:19, 26, 40, 42, 46, 51; 23:18, 21, 28; John 1:39, 43, 46; 2:8, 16; 4:16, 21, 50; 5:8, 11f, 14, 28, 39, 45; 6:20, 27, 43; 7:3, 24, 37; 8:11; 9:7, 11; 10:37f; 11:34; 12:15, 19, 26, 35f; 14:1, 11, 27, 31; 15:18, 20, 27; 16:24, 33; 19:3, 21; 20:17, 27; 21:15ff, 19, 22; Acts 1:20; 2:14, 34, 36; 3:6; 4:10; 5:20, 35; 8:26; 9:15; 10:15, 20; 11:9; 12:8; 13:15, 38, 40; 16:15, 36; 18:9; 19:38; 20:10, 28, 31; 21:14, 28, 36; 22:10, 21f, 27; 23:11; 24:25; 25:5, 24; 27:24f; 28:28; Rom 3:4; 6:11ff; 11:18, 20; 12:2, 14, 16, 20f; 13:1, 3f, 8, 14; 14:1, 3, 5, 15f, 20, 22; 15:2, 7, 11; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:26, 31; 3:10, 18, 21; 4:1, 5, 16; 6:9, 18; 7:2f, 5, 11ff, 15, 17f, 20f, 23f, 27, 36; 8:9; 9:24; 10:7, 10, 12, 14, 18, 24f, 27f, 31f; 11:1, 6, 24f, 28, 33f; 12:31; 14:1, 12f, 20, 26ff, 34f, 37, 39f; 15:33f, 58; 16:2, 10, 13f, 18, 22; 2 Cor 6:14, 17; 10:7, 11, 17; 11:1; 12:16; 13:5, 11; Gal 1:8f; 3:7; 4:12, 21; 5:1, 13, 15f; 6:1f, 4, 6f, 17; Eph 2:11; 4:25ff, 32; 5:1ff, 6ff, 11, 14f, 17f, 25, 33; 6:1f, 4f, 9f; Phil 1:27; 2:5, 12, 14f, 18, 29; 3:1f, 17; 4:1, 3f, 6, 8f; Col 2:6, 8, 16, 18; 3:1f, 9, 15f, 18ff; 4:1f, 5, 17f; 1Thess 2:9; 4:18; 5:11, 13ff, 25; 2 Th 2:15; 3:1, 10, 14f; 1 Tim 2:11; 3:10, 12; 4:7, 11ff; 5:1, 3f, 7, 9, 11, 16f, 19f, 22f; 6:1f, 11f, 17; 2 Tim 1:13; 2:1, 7f, 14, 16, 22f; 3:1, 5, 14; 4:5, 11, 13, 15; Titus 1:13; 2:1, 6, 15; 3:1, 9f, 14; Philemon 1:18, 22; Heb 1:13; 3:12f; 7:4; 8:5; 10:32; 12:5, 7, 13f, 25; 13:1ff, 7, 9, 16ff, 22f; Jas 1:4ff, 9, 13, 16, 19, 22; 2:1, 3, 12, 16; 3:1, 14; 4:11, 13; 5:1, 9, 12f, 16, 20; 1 Pet 1:6, 8; 2:5, 17; 3:3; 4:12f, 15f, 19; 2 Pet 3:8, 15, 17f; 1 John 2:15, 24, 27ff; 3:7, 13; 4:1f; 2 John 1:8, 10; 3 John 1:11, 15; Jude 1:22f; Rev 1:17; 2:5, 10; 3:2f, 11, 19; 5:5; 6:1, 3, 5, 7; 10:8; 11:1; 12:12; 16:1; 18:20; 19:5, 10; 22:9, 17, 20

#### All the **Aorist Imperatives** in the New Testament - 762x in 616 verses in NT (in Bibleworks Greek NT Morphology)-

Matt 2:8, 13, 20; 3:3, 8, 15; 4:3, 6; 5:16, 24, 29ff, 39f, 42; 6:3, 6, 9ff, 17, 26, 28; 7:4f, 13; 8:3f, 8f, 13, 21f, 25, 31; 9:6, 13, 18, 27, 29, 38; 10:8, 11ff, 27; 11:4, 29; 12:13, 33; 13:18, 30, 36; 14:8, 15f, 28ff; 15:14f, 22f, 28; 16:24; 17:7, 15, 20, 27; 18:8f, 15ff, 26, 28f; 19:14, 17, 21; 20:8, 14, 21, 30f; 21:2, 5, 21, 33; 22:4, 9, 13, 17, 19, 21, Mt 22:37 (but strictly speaking not in form of a commandment in Greek); Mt 23:3, 26, 32; 24:3, 17f, 32; 25:8f, 11, 21, 23, 28, 30, 34; 26:18, 26f, 36, 38f, 42, 48, 52, 68; 27:22f, 40, 42f, 49, 64f; 28:6f, 10, 13, 19; Mark 1:3, 25, 41, 44; 2:9, 11; 3:5; 5:8, 12, 19; 6:11, 22, 31, 36ff; 7:14, 27, 34; 8:34; 9:22, 25, 43, 45, 47; 10:14, 21, 37, 47ff; 11:2f, 23, 29f; 12:17; 13:4, 15f, 28; 14:6, 13ff, 22, 32, 34, 36, 44, 65; 15:4, 13f, 30, 32, 36; 16:7, 15; Luke 3:4, 8, 11; 4:3, 9, 23, 35; 5:4, 8, 13f; 6:8, 10, 23, 42; 7:7f, 14, 22, 40; 8:50; 9:12ff, 23, 41, 44, 59ff; 10:2, 10, 35, 40; 11:1f, 4f, 41; 12:5, 13, 19, 24, 27, 33, 58; 13:7f, 25, 27, 31f; 14:9f, 21, 23; 15:6, 9, 12, 19, 22f; 16:2, 6f, 9, 24f, 29; 17:3, 5ff, 13f, 31; 18:3, 6, 13, 16, 22, 38f, 42; 19:5, 13, 24, 27, 30, 39; 20:2f, 24f; 21:14, 19f, 28f; 22:8, 10, 12, 17, 32, 36, 42, 64, 67; 23:18, 30, 34f, 37, 39, 42; 24:6, 29, 39, 49; John 1:23, 46; 2:5, 7f, 16, 19; 4:7, 10, 15f, 29, 31, 35, 49; 5:8, 11f; 6:10, 12, 34; 7:3f, 8, 52; 8:7; 9:7, 11, 21, 23f; 10:24; 11:34, 39, 44; 12:7, 27f; 13:27, 29; 14:8f; 15:4, 7, 9; 17:1, 5, 11, 17; 18:8, 11, 21, 23, 31; 19:6, 15; 20:15, 17, 22, 27; 21:6, 10, 12; Acts 1:20, 24; 2:14, 22, 38, 40; 3:4, 19; 4:19, 29; 5:8, 38; 6:3; 7:2f, 33, 40, 59; 8:19, 22, 24, 26, 29; 9:6, 11, 34, 40; 10:5, 13, 20, 26, 32; 11:7, 13; 12:7f, 17; 13:2, 16, 41; 14:10; 15:13; 16:9, 31, 35, 37; 21:23f, 39; 22:1, 13, 16, 18; 23:15, 17, 23; 24:20; 26:16; 28:26; Rom 6:13, 19; 11:9f, 22; 12:19; 13:7, 14; 14:13; 15:10f; 16:3, 5ff; 1 Cor 3:18; 5:7, 13; 6:20; 7:9, 11, 21; 10:15; 11:6, 13; 15:34; 16:1, 11, 20; 2 Cor 5:20; 6:13, 17; 7:2; 8:11; 11:16; 12:13; 13:12; Gal 4:27, 30; Gal 5:17, 6:11; Eph 4:31; 5:14; 6:11, 13f, 17; Phil 2:2; 4:5, 21; Col 3:5, 8, 12; 4:10, 15ff; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Tim 6:12, 20; 2 Tim 1:8, 14; 2:2f, 15, 19; 4:2, 5, 9, 19, 21; Titus 3:12f, 15; Philemon 1:17, 20; Heb 1:6; 3:1; 8:11; 12:3, 12; 13:24; Jas 1:2, 21; 2:3, 5, 18; 3:13; 4:7ff; 5:1, 7f, 10, 14; 1 Pet 1:13, 15, 17, 22; 2:2, 13, 17; 3:10f, 15; 4:1, 7; 5:2, 5f, 8f, 12, 14; 2 Pet 1:5, 10; 3:14; 1 John 3:1; 5:21; Jude 1:17, 21; Rev 1:11, 19; 2:1, 5, 7f, 11f, 16ff, 25, 29; 3:1ff, 6f, 13f, 19, 22; 4:1; 6:16; 9:14; 10:4, 8f; 11:1f, 12; 13:9, 18; 14:7, 13, 15, 18; 18:4, 6f; 19:9f, 17; 21:5; 22:9, 11, 17

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David Black - BORROW [It's Still Greek to Me](#) - source for quotes below (**Recommended Resource** - purchase [It's Still Greek to Me](#))

#### Action in Past Time

### Aorist Tense

The word aorist, as we have seen, means "unlimited" or "undefined." It was given to this tense by grammarians to denote that the action spoken of is to be regarded simply as an event, without any regard to the time in which it occurs or the length of time during which it has been going on. However, this statement must be qualified with respect to the indicative mood. Here the aorist has an augment and is generally used of events that are spoken of as occurring in past time. It is therefore the most suitable Greek tense to translate the English simple past tense ("I heard," "I believed," "I was saved"). Thus, the aorist indicative is a past-tense form, but it is the augment, the sign of past time, that makes it so, not the term aorist.

A given aorist-tense form may have any one of three points of emphasis: it may accent the beginning of the action, it may accent the conclusion of the action, or it may look at the whole action without any emphasis on its beginning or conclusion.

- If it stresses the beginning of the action it is an ingressive aorist: λόγος σ ρ ξ γένετο, the Word became flesh (John 1:14); πτώχευσεν, [Christ] became poor (2 Cor. 8:9); δάκρυσεν ἰησοῦς, Jesus burst into tears (John 11:35).
- If the emphasis is on the end of the action, rather than its beginning, it is an effective aorist: γ γ ρ μαθὼν ὅτι ἐμὶ ἀτάκτως εἶμι, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am (Phil. 4:11).
- If the action involved is viewed as a whole, a constative aorist is used: πέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἑκατὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε, I remained with him for fifteen days (Gal. 1:18).

These emphases, it must be noted, are concessions to the English point of view. The aorist itself simply regards the action as an event. The aorist also has several "special" uses.

- The gnomic aorist is used to express a universal or timeless truth: δικαιοῦθη σοφία πάντων τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς, wisdom is vindicated by all her children (Luke 7:35).
- The epistolary aorist is used by writers when they put themselves in the position of their readers and look back on the time of writing as a past event: γ Παῦλος γράψατο μὴ χειρὶ, I, Paul, write [this] with my own hand (Philem. 19).
- The dramatic aorist describes something that has just happened, the effect of which is felt in the present: οὗτός στίβιός μου γαπητός, εὐδόκησα, you are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17).

It should be obvious that all these distinctions are determined by context alone. There is absolutely no formal difference between a constative aorist and a dramatic aorist, and many times even the context is not fully conclusive, as the disagreements among commentators prove.

## Imperfect Tense

Strictly speaking, the imperfect tense views the action as in progress. It is represented by the English past continuous forms ("I was teaching," "I used to go"). But a simple past tense ("I taught," "I went") may sometimes be a sufficient translation for a Greek imperfect tense.

If the aorist tells the story, the imperfect helps you to see the flow of the action. There is a variety of ways in which it may do this.

- The progressive imperfect emphasizes the duration of the action: τί τί ζητετέ με, why were you looking for me? (Luke 2:49).
- The iterative imperfect emphasizes the repetition of the action: ῥχοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγον, Χαίρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, [people] kept coming to him and kept saying, "Hail, king of the Jews" (John 19:3).
- The tendential imperfect presents the action as having been attempted but not accomplished: ... ὠάννης διεκώλυεν αὐτόν, John was trying to prevent him (Matt. 3:14).
- The inceptive imperfect emphasizes the beginning of the action: εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν διδάσκειν, when he entered the synagogue, he began to teach (Mark 1:21). This usage is very frequent in the New Testament.

It is important to distinguish between imperfect and aorist and to note that Greek prefers to use the aorist in narrative unless there is a need to emphasize that an action is in progress. So, for example, in Luke 17:27 four imperfects describe the life of Noah's day: they were eating ( ἔσθιον), they were drinking ( πίνον), they were marrying ( γάμου), and they were giving in marriage ( γαμίζοντο). The other verbs in the verse are all aorists: "entered," "came," "destroyed." Another interesting example is found in Matthew 1:24-25: "[Joseph] did as the angel of the Lord had told him, and he took [Mary] as his wife; yet he was not knowing her until she brought forth her firstborn son." The imperfect οὐκ ἐγινώσκεν αὐτήν, "was not knowing her," shows that Joseph lived in continence with the virgin until after the birth of the Savior.

## Present Tense

The present tense normally expresses action as being in process in present time, that is, at the time of speaking, though it may also be used of the past and of the future. Inasmuch as the indicative mood has no distinct tense for aoristic aspect in present time, the present tense is used to perform that function. However, the Greek present tense generally corresponds more clearly to the English continuous present ("I am teaching") than to the simple present ("I teach"). The present tense has several prominent uses.



- The descriptive present describes the action as currently taking place: κύριε, σὸν, πολλύμεθα, Lord, save [us]! We are drowning! (Matt. 8:25).
- The progressive present describes an action begun in the past as continuing into the present: τοσαυτὰ τὴ δουλεύω σοι, all these years I have been serving you (Luke 15:29).
- The iterative present depicts an action that is repeated at certain intervals: πωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ, I repeatedly beat my body and subdue [it] (1 Cor. 9:27).
- The tendential present indicates an action being attempted or proposed but that has not actually taken place: κύριε, σὺ μου νίπτεις τὸ πόδας, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? (John 13:6).
- The historical present describes a past event as though it were actually taking place: λέγουσιν αὐτὴν περὶ αὐτῆς, they spoke to him about her (Mark 1:30). Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences ("then he says to me").
- The futuristic present describes what is going to take place in the future as though it were already occurring: πάγω καὶ ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, I will go away and will come to you (John 14:28). English has a similar idiom: "he is coming tomorrow."
- The aoristic present expresses the action as a simple event without any reference to its progress: τέκνον, φιλῆνταί σου ἁμαρτίαι, child, your sins are forgiven (Mark 2:5).

## Perfect Tense

The perfect tense describes an action as completed at the time of writing or speaking. While dealing with the past to some extent, the perfect tense is primarily concerned with present time. An action has occurred in the past whose results are still apparent. Thus τέθνηκε (the perfect of ποθνήσκω) does not mean "he died" but "he is now dead." Similarly, γέγραφα (the perfect of γράφω) means "[it is there on paper, because] I wrote [it]."

There is no exact English equivalent to the Greek perfect. The so-called English perfect, formed by the auxiliary verb have, is the nearest equivalent that can be given, but it will not always serve to translate a Greek perfect. The perfect tense has three main uses.

- The intensive perfect expresses a present state resulting from a past action: ὁ τὼς γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν, thus it is written that the Christ should suffer (Luke 24:46).
- The consummative perfect emphasizes the completed action: πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε, your faith has made you well (Mark 10:52).
- The dramatic perfect is used to bring a past event vividly into the present: ὡάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν, John testifies about him and cries out (John 1:15).

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