

New Testament Greek Syntax

The Perfect Tense

In the NT the perfect tense generally presents as one of three different actions:

Stative. A present continued or repeated action which has resulted from a past action, 55%

Ongoing relevance. A present relevance / state which is the result of a past action, 35%

Aorist. Indistinguishable from an punctiliar aorist - determined by context, 10%

In the gospels 97% of perfect indicatives appear in the context of direct speech

i] Intensive Perfect (Resultative)

Emphasizing the present results or present state achieved after a past action

Translate as an English present tense

your sins ARE FORGIVEN

αφεωνται σοι αι αμαρτια σου

The Greek Perfect is concerned with result, the English with the absence of an interval

For by grace ARE ye SAVED, KJV;

not: for by grace you HAVE BEEN SAVED, RSV.

τη γαρ χαριτι εστε σεσωσμενοι

ii] Extensive Perfect (Consummative)

Emphasizing a past completed action from which has come abiding results

Translate as an English present perfect

Often found among aorists and the verb is often transitive.

your faith HAS MADE you well

η πιστις σου σεσωκεν σε

iii] Broken continuity (Iterative)

Expressing a past event which involved repeated actions for its completion

those whom I SENT to you (in succession)

τινα ων απεσταλκα προς υμας

iv] Dramatic (Aoristic, Historical)

Vividly describing a past event

The results of the action are emphasized, but "without concern for present consequences"

A similar expression to the historic present and the dramatic aorist

I GOT no relief

ουκ εσχικα ανεσιν

v] Gnostic (Omnitemporal)

Describes a custom of society or a generally accepted truth

a wife IS BOUND as long as her husband is living

γυνη δεδεται εφ οσον χρονον ζη ο ανηρ αυτης

vi] Futuristic (Proleptic, prophetic)

Expressing the results of an action that is still in the future

Often occurs in the apodosis of a conditional sentence

the one who loves his neighbor HAS FULFILLED the law

ο αγαπων τον ετερον νομον πεπληρωκεν

vii] Allegorical (Perfect of Allegory, Moule p14.)

Expressing an Old Testament event that has contemporary significance

eg. Jn.6:32, Act.7:35, Gal.3:18, 4:23, Heb.7:6,9, 8:5

by faith HE HAS KEPT the passover

πιστει πεποιηκεν το πασχα

Notes:

i] The Periphrastic Perfect

The perfect part. + an auxiliary verb, usually **εἰμι**, sometimes **γίνομαι**. Only 40 examples became DARKENED

εγένετο εσκοτωμένη

ii] Perfect present verbs

Stative verbs that occur in the perfect tense but are read as present tense

οἶδα, ἔστηκα, πεποιθα, μεμνημαι

A less than common usage