

Mastering New Testament Greek Textbook

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CHAPTER 18

Perfect Verbs

You will be able to—

1. recognize and write the perfect active indicative paradigms,
2. recognize pluperfect active indicative paradigms,
3. know the perfect stem forms of some of the major verbs learned in previous lessons,
4. translate perfect and pluperfect indicative forms,
5. gain more practice in translating and working with Greek,
6. master ten more high-frequency vocabulary words, and
7. memorize Mat. 6:13a in Greek.

Introduction and Translation

The perfect tense form is used by an author to portray an action as a state of being often foregrounding the action, singling out the action for special attention. Porter points out that the perfect may refer to past events and be translated like an aorist (e.g. Jn. 12:40 “he blinded their eyes”), a present (Jn. 12:23 “the hour is come”) and rarely even as a future (1 Jn. 2:5 “the love of God will be completed”). There are also omnitemporal/gnomic and timeless uses as well (1 Jn. 4:12 “no one has ever seen God”) and iterative uses (Jn. 16:23 “these things I have repeatedly spoken to you”) (Porter, *Idioms*, 40f). The diversity of meanings will be narrowed down based on the lexical meaning of a particular verb or by contextual indicators. For now we will translate it with the simple helping verb “have” but realize that its base meaning is foregrounding a state of affairs.

Perfect Formation

The perfect is the last Greek tense to be learned. It is formed by attaching both a prefix and a suffix to the perfect active stem. The perfect suffix is $\kappa\alpha$, while the perfect prefix is derived by reduplication of the initial consonant.

Reduplication	Stem	Perfect connective	Pronominal ending	Perfect tense form
$\lambda\epsilon +$	$\lambda\upsilon +$	$\kappa\alpha +$	$\tau\epsilon =$	$\lambda\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon$

Reduplication Patterns

Consonantal reduplication: When a verb begins with a consonant, the consonant is doubled and attached to the front of a word with a connecting epsilon ($\lambda\epsilon + \lambda\upsilon\kappa\alpha$).

Exceptions: ϕ , χ , or θ

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If the initial consonant of the verb is φ, χ, or θ, the reduplicated consonant will be π (for φ), κ (for χ), or τ (for θ). See Mounce, Basics, 222.

φανερῶ	becomes	πεφανέρωκα	(I have shown)
χαρίζομαι	becomes	κεχάρισμαι	(I have given freely)
θεραπεύω	becomes	τεθεράπευμαι	(I have been healed)

Vocalic reduplication: When a verb begins with a vowel or diphthong, the vowel is lengthened: ἐλπίζω becomes ἤλπικα and αἰτέω becomes ἤτηκα.

Doubled consonant or ρ: If a word begins with two consonants or a rho, an epsilon is usually added instead of reduplication: γινώσκω (stem γνω-) becomes ἔγνωκα.

Compound verbs: The reduplicated form comes between the verb and the initial preposition: ἀποστέλλω becomes ἀπέσταλκα.

Adding Perfect Kappa

Contract verbs lengthen their final stem vowel preceding the perfect κ ending: ἀγαπάω becomes ἠγάπηκα.

If a verb stem ends in τ, δ, or θ, the consonant is dropped when the perfect κ is added: ἐλπίζω (stem ἐλπιδ-) becomes ἤλπικα.

The middle/passives reduplicate on the front end but do not add the κα suffix on the back end.

Perfect Active Indicative of λύω

Singular		Plural	
1. λέλυκα	I have loosed	λελύκαμεν	We have loosed
2. λέλυκας	You have loosed	λελύκατε	You have loosed
3. λέλυκε(ν)	He/she/it has loosed	λελύκασι(ν)	They have loosed

Note that the active endings are used: —, ς, ε, μεν, τε, σι(ν). The first singular drops the ν, and the third plural goes to σι(ν).

Perfect Middle/Passive Indicative of λύω

Singular		Plural	
1. λέλυμαι	I have been loosed	λελύμεθα	We have been loosed
2. λέλυσαι	You have been loosed	λέλυσθε	You have been loosed
3. λέλυνται	He/she/it has been loosed	λέλυνται	They have been loosed

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Translate perfect middle/passives as passive unless the particular verb or context dictates otherwise. Middles will, as normal, be understood as emphasizing the subject's participation in the action of the verb and translated active or for the subject's benefit (have loosed [for himself]). There is no *κα* suffix. Primary endings are added directly, with no theme vowel (*ε, ο*) and “lemoners” drop their consonant as the ending is added. The contract verbs will lengthen their stem vowel and other consonantal ending verbs will make various consonantal shifts:

μαι, σαι, ται, μεθα, σθε, νται

σέσωσμαι, σέσωσαι, σέσωσται . . . (from σώζω)

κέκριμαι, κέκρισαι, κέκριται (from κρίνω)

πεφίλημαι, πεφίλησαι, πεφίληται... (from φιλέω)

γέγραμμαι, γέγραψαι, γεγραπται (from γράφω)

Second Perfect

A few verbs do not take the *κα* perfect tense marker but still follow the reduplication pattern. Mounce (Basics, 224) notes four common second perfect verbs, to which a fifth can be added:

ἀκούω	becomes	ἀκήκοα
γίνομαι	becomes	γέγονα
γράφω	becomes	γέγραφα
ἔρχομαι	becomes	ἔλήλυθα
λαμβάνω	becomes	εἵληφα

Second Perfect Middle/Passive add the endings directly onto the base form without an intervening *κα* (Stevens, New Testament Greek, 255).

ἔγνωσμαι, ἔγνωσαι, ἔγνωσται . . . = I have been known (γινώσκω) (for the second person singular, the doubled sigma reduces to a single sigma for euphonic purposes).

Οἶδα

οἶδα is an odd verb that is a perfect but translated as a present. You should be aware of its irregular form. Mathewson insightfully proffers that it retains its perfect aspect.

οἶδα Paradigm

1.	οἶδα	I know	οἶδαμεν	we know
2.	οἶδας	you know	οἶδατε	you know

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3. οἶδε(ν) he/she/it knows οἶδασι(ν) they know

Pluperfect Paradigm—Augmented Perfect

Pluperfect tense is rare and expresses action completed in the past with a terminated effect some time in the past. The pluperfect is formed by adding an augment to the perfect form and using the suffixes illustrated below. Some pluperfects, however, do not add an augment (Mk. 14:44).

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. | ἐλελύκειν | I had loosed | ἐλελύκειμεν | we had loosed |
| 2. | ἐλελύκεις | you had loosed | ἐλελύκειτε | you had loosed |
| 3. | ἐλελύκει | he/she/it had loosed | ἐλελύκεισαν | they had loosed |

In its form, you can think of the pluperfect as an augmented perfect. The ει connecting diphthong also can trigger you to think of the pluperfect.

Principal Parts

For Greek verbs there are six principal parts from which the paradigms are built. You now know how all the parts function. When you look verbs up in the lexicon, these six principal parts will be listed:

Present	Future	Aorist Active
ἀγαπάω	ἀγαπήσω	ἠγάπησα
Perfect Active	Perfect Mid/Pass	Aorist Passive
ἠγάπηκα	ἠγάπημαι	ἠγαπήθην

Chant Perfect Active Indicative (RAI) Verb

λέλυκα --, -ς, -ε, -μεν, -τε, -σι

Chant Perfect Middle/Passive Indicative (RM/PI) Verb

λέλυμαι -σαι, -ται, -μεθα, -σθε, -νται

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Perfect Indicative Verb Stems

Present Active	Perfect Active	Perfect Mid/Pass	
ἀγαπάω	ἠγάπηκα	ἠγάπημαι	I love
ἀκούω	ἤκηκα	—	I hear
ἀποστέλλω	ἀπέσταλκα	ἀπέσταλμαι	I send
βάλλω	βέβληκα	βέβλημαι	I throw
γίνομαι	γέγονα	γεγένημαι	I become
γινώσκω	ἔγνωκα	ἔγνωσμαι	I know
γράφω	γέγραφα	γέγραμμαι	I write
ἔρχομαι	ἐλήλυθα	—	I come
εὐρίσκω	εὔρηκα	—	I find
ἔχω	ἔσχηκα	—	I have
καλέω	κέκληκα	κέκλημαι	I call
κρίνω	κέκρικα	κέκριμαι	I judge
λαλέω	λελάληκα	λελάλημαι	I speak
λαμβάνω	εἴληφα	—	I take, receive
λέγω	εἶρηκα	εἶρημαι	I say
μένω	μεμένηκα	—	I remain
ὁράω	έώρακα	—	I see
πιστεύω	πεπίστευκα	πεπίστευμαι	I believe
ποιέω	πεποίηκα	πεποίημαι	I do, make
πορεύομαι	—	πεπόρευμαι	I go
σώζω	σέσωκα	σέσωφμαι	I save

Translation Examples

Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐώρακαμεν

What was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen (1 Jn. 1:1)

λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναὶ, κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός.

She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I have believed that you are the Christ” (Jn. 11:27).

(The perfects here refer to present states and may be translated present: “I believe”)

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καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σύ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.

And we have believed and have known that you are the holy one of God (Jn. 6:69).

(Likewise these refer to present states so may be translated present: “We believe and know that...”)

Vocabulary

γεννάω	I beget (97)
δικαιοσύνη, -ης, ἡ	righteousness (92)
ἐάν	if, when (351)
εἰρήνη, -ης, ἡ	peace (92)
οἶδα	I know (318)
οἰκία, -ας, ἡ	house (93)
ὁράω	I see (454)
περιπατέω	I walk, live (95)
πῶς	how (103)
φοβέομαι	I fear (95)

Memory Verse: Mat. 6:12b-13a

ὥς	καὶ	ἡμεῖς	ἀφήκαμεν	τοῖς	ὀφειλέταις	ἡμῶν·
as	also	we	we forgave	the	debtors	our;
καὶ	μὴ	εἰσενέγκης	ἡμᾶς	εἰς	πειρασμόν,	
and	not	(you) lead	us	into	temptation,	