

Chapter 48

Infinitives

48.1 The Infinitive has the form "to do something". It is treated as one of the Moods of the Verb; it shows Voice (Active, Middle, Passive) and Tense, but does not take personal endings.

Infinitives can be Active (to sing, to go), Middle (to seat oneself), or Passive (to be loved, to be called)

We met the **Present Active** forms of the Infinitive in Chapter 19.

Before proceeding, please review Chapter 19, particularly the various idiomatic uses of the Infinitive.

They are given again here for reference :

The Infinitive functions as a Neuter Verbal Noun.

1. As subject of a verb e.g. "To sing improves the voice."
2. As object of a verb e.g. "I gave him something to eat."
3. As a predicate complement e.g. "I have something to say."

Greek also uses the Infinitive with prepositions (where English might use a participle) :

1. **ἐν τῷ** - time at which to do something
2. **πρὸ τοῦ** - before doing something
3. **μετὰ τοῦ** - after doing something
4. **διὰ τοῦ** - because (reason) to do something
5. **εἰς τοῦ, πρὸς τοῦ** - purpose (in order) to do something
6. **τοῦ** - purpose (in order) to do something

48.2 The Present Infinitives are built on the Present Stem, and imply continuous or repeated action (to be doing something), though this is often not easy to show in English.

For the **Present Infinitive Active**,

For verbs in -ῶ, the ending is **-εῖν**. For contract verbs **-εῖν** becomes **-αν, -εῖν, or -οῦν**

For the -μι verbs, the ending is **-αι**

For the **Present Infinitive Middle and Passive**, for verbs in **-ῶ** and verbs in **-μι**, the ending is **-σθαι**, which is joined to the stem through a "euphonic vowel" if necessary.

The euphonic vowel is added as an aid to pronunciation, rather than being part of the verb ending.

As you progress with the Passive Voice you will notice that many of its endings contain a theta.

"thee a theta - think pathive"

The meaning of the Active Infinitive is "To do something", "To be doing something"

The meaning of the Passive Infinitive is "To be (something-ed)", "To be having something done to one"

The Middle implies "To be doing something to oneself"

Remember that the Deponent Verbs look passive - but they should be translated in an active sense.

Examples

	Active		Middle and Passive	
to loose	λυεῖν	λυεσθαι	to loose oneself, to be loosed	
to do	ποιεῖν	ποιεσθαι	to do to oneself, to be done	
to love	ἀγαπᾶν	ἀγαπασθαι	to love oneself, to be loved	
to make clear	φανεροῦν	φανεροσθαι	to make oneself clear, to be made clear	
to give	δίδοναι	διδοςθαι	to give oneself, to be given	
to cause to stand	ἵσταναι	ἵστασθαι	to set oneself in place, to be stood	
to place	τιθεῖναι	τιθεσθαι	to set oneself in place, to be set in place	
to be	εἶναι	(No Middle or Passive forms)		
to be coming / going		ἐρχεσθαι		

Negation is with **μη**

e.g. **μη ποιεῖν** to not do, to not be doing

A. Practice, Active - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. λεγει αυτοις,
Υμεις δε τίνα με λεγετε είναι ; | He says to them, "But you - whom do you say I am (me to be)?" (Matt. 16:15) |
| 2. απο τοτε ηρξατο ο Ιησους κηρυσσειν και λεγειν, Μετανοειτε | From then (on) Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, . . . (Matt. 4:17) |
| 3. προσεχετε δε την δικαιοσυνην υμων μη ποιειν εμπροσθεν των ανθρωπων. | Watch out not to do your righteousness (good deeds) in front of men. (Matt. 6:1) |
| 4. μηδενι μηδεν οφειλετε ει μη το αλληλους αγαπαν. | Owe no-one anything (nothing) except to love one another. (Rom. 13:8) |
| 5. ου θελομεν δε υμας αγνοειν, | We do not want you to be ignorant, . . . (1 Thess. 4:13) |
| 6. περι δε της φιλαδελφιας ου χριαν εχετε γραφειν υμιν. | You do not (have) need (for me) to write to you. (1 Thess. 4:9) |
| 7. μελλοντος δε του Παυλου ανοιγειν το στομα | As Paul was about to open (his) mouth (Acts 18:14) |
| 8. ο Πητρος ηρξατο επιτιμαν αυτω | Peter began to rebuke him . . . (Matt. 16:22) |
| 9. εξουσιαν εχει ο υιος του ανθρωπου επι της γης αφιεναι αμαρτιας. | The Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins. (Matt. 9:6) |
| 10. και παλιν ηρξατο διδασκειν παρα την θαλασσαν. | And he began to teach again beside the sea. (Mark 4:1) |

B. Practice, Middle / Passive - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. βουλομαι ασπαζεσθαι τους αδελφους. | I plan to be greeting the brothers. |
| 2. θελω αγαπασθαι υπο των αδελφων. | I wish to be loved by the brothers. |
| 3. θελομεν μη μισεισθαι υπο του προφητου. | We wish to not be hated by the prophet. |
| 4. οι μαθηται βουλονται προσευχεσθαι εν τω ιερω. | The disciples plan to be praying in the temple. |
| 5. εισηλθεν εις το ιερον εις το προσευχεσθαι. | He came into the temple in order to pray. |
| 6. ερχεται προς την συναγωγην εις το διαλεγεσθαι τον λογον του θεου μετα των Φαρισαιων. | He comes to the synagogue in order to discuss the word of God with the Pharisees. |
| 7. θελετε ιασθαι τους τυφλους ; | Do you wish to be healing the blind? |
| 8. ο τελωνης βουλεται ψευδεσθαι τω κριτη. | The tax-collector plans to lie to the judge. |
| 9. οφειλομεν μη ψευδεσθαι ταις αδελφαις. | We should not be lying to the sisters. |
| 10. οφειλετε ρυεσθαι τους πτωχους. | You ought to be saving the poor. |

48.3 The Future Infinitives are built on the Future Stem, they are rare in the New Testament.

Future Infinitive Active	Stem + σ + ειν	"to be about to doing something"
Future Infinitive Middle	Stem + σε + σθαι	"to be about to do something to oneself"
Future Infinitive Passive	Stem + θησε + σθαι	"to be about have something done to one"

Examples :	Active	Middle	Passive
λυω	λυσειν to be about to loose	λυσεσθαι to be about to loose oneself	λυθησεσθαι to be about to be loosed
ειμι		εσεσθαι - to be about to be	
ερχομαι		ελευσεσθαι - to be about to come/go	

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. αναστας δε εις εξ αυτων ονοματι Αγαβος εσημανεν δια του πνευματος λιμον μεγαλην μελλειν εσεσθαι εφ' ολην την οικουμενην. | One of them, by name Agabus, having stood up, signaled through the Spirit (that) a great famine (was) about to be over the whole inhabited earth. |
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- (That there was about to be a great famine over . . .) (σημαίνω = I signify, give a sign) (Acts 11:28)

2. ἔστιν δε και ἄλλα πολλα ἃ ἐποίησεν
ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀτίνα ἐαν γραφηται καθ' ἐν,
οὐδ' αὐτον οἶμαι τον κοσμον χωρησειν
τα γραφομενα βιβλια.
(I do not suppose the world to be about to have room for the being-written-books. οἶμαι = "I suppose")
(John 21:25)

(The text above is from the version of Westcott and Hort. Other versions have an Aorist Infinitive χωρησαι)

3. ὁμολογω δε τουτο σοι ὅτι . . .
λατρευω τω πατρω θεω, . . .
ἐλπιδα ἐχων εις τον θεον,
ἦν και αὐτοι οὗτοι προσδεχονται,
ἀναστασιν μελλειν ἐσεσθαι δικαιων
τε και ἀδικων.
I confess this to you, that . . .
I worship the God of our fathers . . .
having a hope towards God,
which they themselves also await,
the (to-be-in-the)-future resurrection
of the righteous and the unrighteous.
(Acts 24:14-15)

4. παρηνει ὁ Παυλος λεγων αὐτοις, ἄνδρες,
θεωρω ὅτι μετα ὑβρεως και πολλης ζημιας
οὐ μονον του φορτιου και του πλοιου
ἀλλα και των ψυχων ἡμων
μελλειν ἐσεσθαι τον πλουν.
Paul exhorted (them), saying, "Guys,
I know that the voyage is about to be with
disaster and much damage, not only to the
cargo and the ship, but to our lives.
(Acts 27:9-10)

(Note that the "voyage" comes first in English, and "disaster" comes second. For Luke, the impending disaster is foremost in Paul's mind.)

(παρηνει = Aorist of παραινεω - I exhort, admonish

ἡ ζημια = damage ὁ φορτος = load, ship's cargo ὁ πλόος = voyage)

5. τίσιν δε ὠμοσεν μη εἰσελευσεσθαι
εἰς την καταπαυσιν αὐτου εἰ μη
τοις ἀπειθησασιν ;
(ὠμοσεν - Aorist of ὀμνυω - I swear, take an oath
ἡ κατάπαυσις - rest, place of rest, a putting down to rest, from καταπαύω - I settle down)
To whom, then, did he swear (that they were)
not about to enter into his rest, except
to the unfaithful ? (Heb. 3:18)

My grateful thanks to Stirling Bartholomew, Randall Buth, and the B-Greek Group for help in locating these passages.

48.4 First Aorist Infinitives are built on the First Aorist Stem and imply a single or completed action.

The meaning of the Aorist Infinitive Active is "to do something"

The meaning of the Aorist Infinitive Middle is "to do something to oneself"

The meaning of the Aorist Infinitive Passive is "to be have something done to one"

First Aorist endings are used by verbs whose Aorist Stem is identical to the Present Stem.

The typical signal for a First Aorist is **-σα-** in the Active, and **-θη-** in the Passive.

First Aorist Infinitive Active	Stem + σ + αι	"to do something"
First Aorist Infinitive Middle	Stem + σα + σθαι	"to do something to oneself"
First Aorist Infinitive Passive	Stem + θη + ναι	"to be have something done to one"

Remember the interactions of **-σ-** with stems ending in gutturals, labials, dentals or liquids.

Examples

Active	Middle	Passive
λυω λυσαι to loose, to have loosed	λυσασθαι to loose oneself	λυθηναι to be loosed
ποιεω ποιησαι to make, do, act	ποιησασθαι to make oneself	ποιηθηναι to be made
γραφω γραψαι to write	-	γραφηναι to be written

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. βαπτισμα δε ἐχω βαπτισθηναι . . . I have a baptism to be baptized (in/with)
(Luke 12:50)
2. μετα δε το σιγησαι αὐτους . . . After they were silent . . . (Acts 15:13)

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| 3. Ἰωσηφ δε ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θελών αὐτὴν δειγματῖσαι, ἐβουλήθη λαθρὰ ἀπολῦσαι αὐτὴν. | But Joseph her husband, being righteous and not wishing to expose her, was wishing to put her away secretly. (<i>Matt. 1:19</i>) |
| 4. εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστερα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἤλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. | For we saw his star in the East and we came to worship him. (<i>Matt. 2:2</i>) |
| 5. μελλεῖ γὰρ Ἡρῳδῆς ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολεσαι αὐτοῦ. | For Herod is about to seek the child in order to kill him. (<i>Matt. 2:13</i>) |
| 6. οὐ δύνασαι μιαν τρίχα λευκὴν ποιῆσαι ἢ μελαιναν. | You are not able to make one hair white or black. (<i>Matt. 5:36</i>) |
| 7. καὶ οὐδεὶς οὐκέτι ἐτόλμα αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι. | And no-one dared any longer (no more) to question him. (<i>Mark 12:34</i>) |
| 8. οἱ δε εἶπαν, Ἐπέτρεψεν Μωϋσῆς βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γραψαι καὶ ἀπολῦσαι. | They said, "Moses allowed (us) to write a book (bill) of divorce and to send (her) away. (<i>Mark 10:4</i>) |
| 9. ἐγὼ δε λεγὼ ὑμῖν ὅτι πας ὁ βλέπων γυναῖκα πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτὴν ἤδη ἐμοιχεύσεν αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ. | But I say to you that everyone eyeing a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (<i>Matt. 5:28</i>) |

48.5 Second Aorist Infinitives are built on the Second Aorist Stem. Second Aorist endings are used by verbs whose Aorist and Present Stems are different. This includes the "Weirdos", but remember that "I carry, bear, bring" φέρω, οἶσω, ἠνεγκον / ἠνεγκα can be found with either First or Second Aorist endings. γινώσκω (I know) and the -βαίνω (come/go) verbs use First Aorist endings.

Second Aorist Infinitive Active	Stem + εἶν	"to do something"
Second Aorist Infinitive Middle	Stem + euphonic vowel + σθαι	"to do something to oneself"
Second Aorist Infinitive Passive	Stem + η + ναι	"to be have something done to one"

Examples :	Active	Middle	Passive
-βαίνω	-βῆναι to come/go	-	-
βαλλῶ	βαλεῖν to throw	βαλεσθαι to throw oneself	βλήθηναι to be thrown
γίνομαι	-	γενεσθαι to become	-
γινώσκω	γινῶναι to know	-	-

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. Ἰωσηφ, υἱὸς Δαυιδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαριαμ τὴν γυναῖκα σου. | Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife. (<i>Matt. 1:20</i>) |
| 2. Γεννηματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπο τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς ; | Generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the approaching wrath? (<i>Matt. 3:7</i>) |
| 3. Ῥαχὴλ . . . οὐκ ἠθέλεν παρακληθῆναι. | Rachel . . . did not wish to be comforted (<i>Matt. 2:18</i>) |
| 4. Ἄξιός εἰ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσας τὰ πάντα. καὶ διὰ τὸ θελημα σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.
(ἐκτίσθησαν - Third Person Plural, Aorist Passive of κτιζῶ - I create) | You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power because you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. (<i>Rev. 4:11</i>) |
| 5. ἀπο τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς δεῖκνυειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν καὶ πολλὰ παθεῖν. | From then, Jesus began to show his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things. (<i>Matt. 16:21</i>) |
| 6. ἐλπίζω γενεσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ στομα πρὸς στομα λαλῆσαι. | I hope to be with you and to talk "mouth to mouth" (face to face) with you. (<i>2 John 12</i>) |

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| 7. Πυρ ἤλθον βαλεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν . . . | I came to throw fire on the earth. (<i>Luke 12:49</i>) |
| 8. εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχυεῖ ἐτι εἰ μὴ βληθῆναι ἐξω
καὶ καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. | It is fit for nothing except to be thrown out
and trodden underfoot by men. (<i>Matt. 5:13</i>) |
| 9. τοῦτο μόνον θελω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν . . . | I want to learn this one thing from you .
(<i>Gal. 3:2</i>) |
| 10. καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες,
Τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λεγούσιν ὅτι
Ἰησὺν δεῖ ἔλθειν πρῶτον ; | And the disciples asked him, saying,
"Why, then, do the scribes say that
Elijah must come first?" (<i>Matt. 17:10</i>) |

48.6 Aorist Infinitives of the Dinosaur verbs

Although the -μι verbs have different Present and the Aorist stems, they use a -ναι ending for the Aorist Infinitive Active. Note the interaction of -σ- with stems ending in gutturals, labials, dentals or liquids.

εἶμι	εἶναι to be	-	-
δίδωμι	δουναί to give	δοσθαι to give oneself	δοθῆναι to be given
τιθημι	θεῖναι to put in place	θεσθαι to place oneself	τεθῆναι to be placed
ἴστημι	στηναί to cause to stand	στησασθαι to stand oneself	στηθῆναι to be stood
	στησαι (with First Aorist ending)		
δεικνυμι	δειξάι to show	δειξασθαι to show oneself	δειχθῆναι to be shown

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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|---|---|
| 1. ὅθεν μεθ' ὄρκου ὠμολόγησεν αὐτὴ
δουναί ὅ ἐάν αἰτησεται. | So he swore with an oath to give to her
whatever she might ask. (<i>Matt. 14:7</i>) |
| 2. ὁ βασιλεὺς δια τοὺς ὄρκους
καὶ τοὺς συνανακειμένους
ἐκέλευσεν δοθῆναι. | Because of the oaths and
the dinner-guests the king commanded
(it) to be given (to her). (<i>Matt. 14:9</i>) |
| 3. καὶ ἴδου ἄνδρες φερόντες ἐπὶ κλίνης
ἀνθρώπου . . . καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν
εἰσενεγκεῖν καὶ θεῖναι αὐτὸν ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. | Behold, men carrying a man on a mattress
. . . and they were seeking to bring him in
and to lay him in front of him. (<i>Luke 5:18</i>) |
| 4. οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐχαρήσαν καὶ
ἐπηγγείλαντο αὐτῷ
ἀργυρίον δοῦναι. | Those who heard (the ones having heard)
rejoiced and promised
to give money to him. (<i>Mark 14:11</i>) |
| 5. καὶ ἐπεστρεψεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς,
καὶ ἀνεστή παραχρημα, καὶ διεταξεν
αὐτὴ δοθῆναι φαγεῖν. | And her spirit returned, and she rose up
immediately, and he ordered (something)
to be given to her to eat. (<i>Luke 8:55</i>) |
| 6. τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτήρα ὑψώσεν
τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, δοῦναι μετανοίαν
τῷ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἀφεσὶν ἁμαρτιῶν. | God exalted this (man) (as) a ruler and savior
to his right hand, to give repentance to Israel
and forgiveness of sins. (<i>Acts 5:31</i>) |
| 7. καὶ ἐζήτηε εὐκαιρίαν
τοῦ παραδοῦναι αὐτόν. | And he sought a good time
to betray him (<i>Luke 22:6</i>) |
| 8. καὶ ἐκαυματίσθησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι
καυμά μεγα, . . . καὶ οὐ μετενοήσαν
δοῦναι αὐτῷ δοξάν. | And the men were burned by a great heat
and they did not repent (and) give
glory to him. (<i>Rev. 16:9</i>) |
| 9. καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα
τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου . . . | And he was granted (power) to give a spirit
to the image of the beast . . . (<i>Rev. 13:15</i>) |
| 10. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν ταῖς γυναῖκας λέγων
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ δοθῆναι
εἰς χεῖρας ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι
καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι. | Jesus spoke to the women, saying (about)
the Son of Man, that it was (is) necessary
for him to be betrayed into the hands
of sinners, and to be crucified, and on
the third day to rise again. (<i>see Luke 24:7</i>) |

48.7 Sentences for reading and translation

1. πολλά είχαν γραψαι σοι, ἀλλ' οὐ θέλω δια μελανος και καλαμου σοι γραφειν.
(3 John 13)
2. Δει τον υἱον του ἀνθρωπου πολλα παθειν και αποδοκιμασθηναι απο των πρεσβυτερων και ἀρχιερων και γραμματεων και αποκτανθηναι και τη τριτη ἡμερα ἐγερθηναι.
(Luke 9:22)
3. ἐξανεστησαν δε τινες των . . . Φαρισαιων . . . λεγοντες ὅτι δει περιτεμνειν αὐτους παραγγελλειν τε τηρειν τον νομον Μωϋσεως.
(Acts 15:5)
4. και ἐγενετο ἐν τῷ ὄμιλειν αὐτους και συζητειν και αὐτος Ἰησους ἐγγισας συνεπορευετο αὐτοις.
(Luke 24:15)
5. και αὐτος εἶπεν προς αὐτους, Ὡ ἀνοητοι και βραδεις τη καρδια του πιστευειν ἐπι πασιν οἷς ἐλάλησεν οἱ προφηται.
(Luke 24:25)
6. οὐχι ταυτα ἐδει παθειν τον Χριστον και εἰσελθειν εἰς την δοξαν αὐτου ;
(Luke 24:26)
(οὐχι is used to introduce a question to which the answer expected is "Yes, of course".
A good way to translate such a question is to translate the sentence as if it were a statement, and then end with something like "aren't they?", "didn't he" etc. e.g. "The book is good, isn't it?")
7. και ἐγενετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθηναι αὐτου μετ' αὐτων . . .
(Luke 24:30)
8. ἐμφοβοι γενομενοι ἐδοκουν πνευμα θεωρειν.
(Luke 24:37)
9. λεγει αὐτοις Σιμων Πετρος, Ὑπαγω ἀλιευειν.
(John 21:3)
10. Ἐκαθισεν ὁ λαος φαγειν και πειν, και ἀνεστησαν παιζειν.
(1 Cor. 10:7)

48.8 Writing Practice : Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud (Rev. 15:3)

Μεγαλα και θαυμαστα τα ἔργα σου, Great and wonderful (are) thy works

48.9 New Testament Passage for reading and translation : Matt. 20:20-28

In your Greek New Testament, read the passage aloud several times until you can read it without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the helps to translate it.

ἀποκριθεις	having answered (<i>Aorist Middle Participle of ἀποκρινομαι - I answer</i>)
οἶδατε	you know (see chapter 59)
αἰτεισθε	you ask, request (<i>Present Middle Indicative of αἰτεω</i>)
ἀγανακτεω	I am angry, indignant at
το λυτρον	ransom, price of redemption (<i>literally, a "loosener"</i>)

48.10 Vocabulary to learn

ἀλιεύω	I fish, go fishing
ἀποδοκιμάζω	I reject
δειγματίζω	I expose, exhibit
κατακλίνω	I make (something/someone) lie down (<i>Passive - I lie down, recline</i>)
καταπατέω	I trample down, tread underfoot
καυματίζω	I burn
κτίζω	I create
λατρεύω	I worship
το καῶμα	heat
ἡ οἰκουμένη	the inhabited earth, humanity
ἡ ὕβρις, -εως	hubris, insolence, impudence, disaster (<i>insolence to the gods brings disaster</i>)
ἔμφοβος	terrified - pushed into fear
λάθρα	secretly