

Chapter 56

The Perfect Tense

56.1 So far we have dealt with two Past Tenses of the verb -

the Imperfect, implying continuous or repeated action in the past, built upon the Present Stem,

e.g. οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον ὅτι . . . The Pharisees were saying that . . .

and the Aorist, implying single or completed action in the past, built upon the Aorist Stem.

e.g. οἱ Φαρισαῖοι εἶπον ὅτι . . . The Pharisees said that . . .

Now we come to the **Perfect** (I have done something)

e.g. I have finished my homework, and here it is.

In both English and Greek, the Perfect implies that something happened in the past, with consequences or some effect on present conditions. There is a sequence of events - I finished my homework (some time ago in the past), the finished homework is here as evidence (in the present, or at the time of speaking).

Greek is a bit stronger than English in the implied effect that the Perfect has on the present state of affairs.

One of the most common Greek Perfects in the New Testament is **γεγραπται** = "**it has been written**"

(Aorist Passive of γραφω) used in reference to the Scriptures - they have been written (in the past), and they are still valid today.

NOTE : In many cases where the English translation uses a Perfect, the Greek original has an Aorist.

56.2 The Perfect Indicative Active is built upon the **Perfect Active Stem** of the verb (the **Fourth Principal Part** of the verb. For the majority of a verbs, the Perfect Active Stem is formed by a duplication of the first letter of the Present Stem, followed by an -ε-. This is referred to as "**reduplication**" - it repeats the sound of the first consonant of the stem. In the case of contract verbs, the vowel at the end of the stem is also lengthened.

	Present		Perfect Active	
I loose	λυω		λελυκα	I have loosed

The basic pattern for the Perfect Indicative Active is

I	PSTEM-κα	PSTEM-καμεν	we
you (singular)	PSTEM-κας	PSTEM-κατε	y'all
he/she/it	PSTEM-κεν	PSTEM-καν	they

For λυω, this becomes

I have loosed	λελυκα	λελυκαμεν	we have loosed
you have loosed	λελυκας	λελυκατε	y'all have loosed
he/she/it has loosed	λελυκεν	λελυκαν	they have loosed

Possibilities for weirdness :

Contract verbs (including καλεω and its compounds) broaden the contract vowel.

For compound verbs, the prefix comes before the reduplication of the stem.

Verbs beginning with an aspirate are reduplicated by the smooth consonant : φ by π-, θ by τ-, χ by κ-

Verbs beginning with a vowel lengthen the vowel (as for the addition of the augment)

Verbs beginning with σ-, ζ-, ξ- merely add an augment.

Verbs beginning with γν-, many beginning with γλ-, and some beginning with βλ-, merely add an augment.

Verbs beginning with a ρ- double the ρ and add an ε- as a prefix.

Examples	Present		Perfect Active	
I honor	τιμαω		τετιμηκα	I have honored
I do, act, make	ποιεω		πεποιηκα	I have done, acted, made
I fulfil	πληρωω		πεπληρωκα	I have made fulfilled
I love	φιλεω		πεφιληκα	I have loved

Further examples are given in the table of Principal Parts of Verbs - see Appendix D 01

Some verbs which begin with a vowel (in ΚΟΙΝΗ Greek) originally began with a consonant which had dropped out of use before the time of the New Testament. However, the Perfect had already been formed, and may be encountered in the GNT.

	originally	Present	Future	Aorist	Perfect Active
I have (I hold)	σεχω	έχω	έξω	έσχον	έσχηκα
I see	φοραω	όραω	όψομαι	είδον	έωρακα or έορακα

ίστημι, (I stand, put) was originally σιστημι It will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 69.

Some verbs do not use the -κ- but have the endings -α -ας -εν -αμεν -ατε -εν directly on the stem. These are referred to as Second (or Strong) Perfects. The reduplication will indicate that they are Perfects.

e.g.	I become	γινομαι	γεγονα	I have become
	I write	γραφω	γεγραφα	I have written
	I shout	κραζω	κεκραγα	I have shouted

NOTE : Common Perfects are listed in the table of Principal Parts of Verbs - see Appendix D 01. They should be learned as soon as possible.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

- τη τε γυναικι έλεγον ότι Ουκετι δια την σην λαλιαν πιστευομεν, αυτοι γαρ άκηκοαμεν και οίδαμεν ότι ουτος έστιν άληθως ό σωτηρ του κοσμου.
(οίδαμεν is perfect in form but is translated as a present = "we know", see Chapter 68)

Then they were saying to the woman that
"It's) no longer because of your saying (that) we believe, for we ourselves have heard and we know that this one is truly the Savior of the world. (John 4:42)
- τα έργα ά δεδωκεν μοι ό πατερ . . .

The works which the Father has given to me .
(John 5:36)
- αυτα τα έργα ά ποιω μαρτυρει περι έμου ότι ό πατηρ με άπεσταλκεν.

The very same works which I do testify about me, that the Father has sent me. (John 5:37)
- και ό πεμψας με πατηρ εκεινος μεμαρτυρηκεν περι έμου.
("The having-sent-me Father", that one has born witness . . .)

And the Father who sent me (he) has born witness about me. (John 5:37)
- ουτε φωνην αυτου πωποτε άκηκοατε ουτε ειδος αυτου έωρακατε.

You have neither hear his voice at any time nor have seen his appearance (form).
(John 5:37)
- άλλ' ουκ έπαισχυνομαι, οίδα γαρ ω̃ πεπιστευκα και πεπεισμαι ότι δυνατος έστιν την παραθηκην μου φυλαξαι εις εκεινην την ήμεραν.
(ή παραθηκη - "something entrusted", trust deposit, from παρατιθημι - I entrust)

But I do not feel shamed, for I know in whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted (to him) until that Day. (2 Tim. 1:12)
- έγω φως εις τον κοσμον έληλυθα.

I have come (as) a light into the world.
(John 12:46)
- άπεκριθη ό Πιλατος, "Ο γεγραφα, γεγραφα.

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." (John 19:22)
- ειπεν δε ό Παυλος, . . . Εί μεν ουν άδικω και άξιον θανατου πεπραχα τι, ου παραιτουμαι το άποθανειν.

Paul said, "If I am guilty and have done anything worthy of death, I do not decline to die. (Acts 25:10-11)
- και ήμεις πεπιστευκαμεν και έγνωκαμεν ότι συ ει̃ ό άγιος του θεου.

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

56.3 The Perfect Indicative Middle and Passive are built upon the Perfect Passive Stem - which in most cases is the same, or very similar to, the Perfect Active Stem. The Perfect Middle and Perfect Passive personal endings are the same - one finds out from the rest of the sentence whether the verb is to be translated in a Middle or a Passive sense.

There is one rather weird (though logical) construction - for both the Perfect and Pluperfect Middle and Passive, the Third Person Plural uses the Perfect Participle with εἶσι(ν) (Perfect) and ἦσαν (Pluperfect). The Participle must agree (in gender) with the gender of the subject.

The basic pattern for the Perfect Indicative Active is

I	PSTEM-μαι	PSTEM-μεθα	we
you (singular)	PSTEM-σαι	PSTEM-σθε	y'all
he/she/it	PSTEM-ται	P-Participle εἶσιν	they

For λυω, this becomes

I have been loosed	λελυμαι	λελυμεθα	we have been loosed
you have been loosed	λελυσαι	λελυσθε	y'all have been loosed
he/she/it has been loosed	λελυται	λελυμενοι εἶσιν	they have been loosed

In the case of λυω, the personal endings go directly on the Perfect stem without any problems in pronunciation. However, if the verb stem ends in a consonant a short vowel sound is added to the stem for ease of pronunciation. In the Indicative, an -ο- is added before μ or ν, and an -ε- before other consonants. The vowel is referred to as the thematic, variable, or euphonic vowel. We met it, without realizing it, in the endings of the Present Middle -ομαι, -η (contracted from -εσαι), -εται, -ομεθα, -εσθε, -ονται

Possibilities for weirdness

Some verbs which now end in a short vowel, e.g. τελεω (I complete, accomplish) originally ended with a sigma, e.g. τελεω was originally τελεσω. The sigma may re-appear in the Perfect, giving τετελεσμαι etc. Verbs ending in a sigma will drop one sigma in the Second Person Singular (τετελεσαι, not τετελεσσαί)

The sigma of -σαι and -σθε combines with labials, dentals, mutes, gutturals in ways similar to the sigma of the Future and First Aorist tenses.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ὁ Ἰησους εἶπεν, Τετελεσται, και κλινας την κεφαλην παρεδωκων το πνευμα. | Jesus said, "It is finished", and have bowed his head he gave up the spirit. (<i>John 19:30</i>) |
| 2. Χριστος ἀπεθανεν . . . και . . . ἔταφη και .. ἐγηγερται τη ἑμερα τη τριτη κατα τας γραφας. | Christ died . . . and was buried and has been raised on the third day according to the scriptures. (<i>1 Cor. 15:3-4</i>) |
| 3. ἀκουσαντες δε οἱ ἐν Ἱεροσολυμοις ἀποστολοι ὅτι δεδεκται ἡ Σαμαρεια τον λογον του θεου, ἀπεστειλαν προς αὐτους Πητρον και Ἰωαννην. | The apostles in Jerusalem, having heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, sent Peter and John to them. (<i>Acts 8:14</i>) |
| 4. και ἔμαρτυρησεν Ἰωαννης λεγων ὅτι Τεθεαμαι το πνευμα καταβαινον ὡς περιστεραν ἐξ οὐρανου, και ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτου. | And John bore witness, saying "I saw (have seen) the Spirit coming down like a dove out of heaven and remaining on him. (<i>John 1:32</i>) |
| 5. τον καλον ἀγωνα ἠγωνισμαι, τον δρομον τετελεκα, την πιστιν τηρηκα. | I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (<i>1 Tim, 4:7</i>) |
| 6. ὁ δε ἀποκριθεις εἶπεν αὐτοις ὅτι, Ὑμεις δεδοται γνῶναι τα μυστερια της βασιλειας των οὐρανων, ἐκεινοις δε οὐ δεδοται. | He (having answered) said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them (those) it has not been granted. (<i>Matt. 13:11</i>) |

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| 7. ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πάλιν γεγραπταί,
Οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον τὸν θεὸν σου. | Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written,
"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."
(<i>Matt. 4:7</i>) |
| 8. καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεαμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν
ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπεσταλκεν τὸν υἱὸν
σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου. | We have looked upon and we bear witness
that the Father has sent (his) Son
(as the) savior of the world. (<i>1 John 4:14</i>) |
| 9. ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . . λέγων ὅτι
Πεπληρωταὶ ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν
ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. | Jesus came . . . saying,
The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom
of God has come near. (<i>Mark 1:14-15</i>) |
| 10. οὕτως γὰρ ἐντεταλταὶ ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος,
Τεθεῖκα σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν . . . | For in this way the Lord has commanded us,
"I have put you as a light to the Gentiles ..
(<i>Acts 13:47</i>) |

56.4 The Perfect Participles are built on the Perfect Stem.

The Perfect Participle Active of λῶ is λελυκώς, λελυκυῖα, λελυκός

The Perfect Participle Middle / Passive of λῶ is λελυμένος, λελυμένη, λελυμένον

The participles will be dealt with in Chapter 58

56.5 The Perfect Infinitives are built on the Perfect Stem.

The basic forms are

Perfect Infinitive Active	PSTEM-κεναι	e.g. λελυκεναι to have loosed
Perfect Infinitive Middle / Passive	PSTEM-σθαι	e.g. λελυσθαι to have been loosed

Verbs with a Second Perfect form the Perfect Infinitive Active as PSTEM-εναι

Infinitives (particularly Perfect Infinitives) are often found in Indirect Statements (see Chapter 61), where they take the place of the verb in the statement.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. Ἀγριππᾶς δὲ τῷ Φηστῷ ἔφη,
Ἀπολελυσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος
εἰ μὴ ἐπεκεκλήτο Καίσαρα. | Agrippa said to Festus,
"This man could have been released
if he had not appealed to Caesar."
(<i>Acts 26:32</i>) |
| 2. λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διακονοῦν γεγενῆσθαι
περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ,
εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας
τῶν πατέρων. | For I say that Christ has become a servant
of the circumcision on behalf of God's truth
in order to confirm the promises
of (to) the fathers. (<i>Romans 15:8</i>) |
| 3. εἰ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνώκειν τι,
οὐπω ἐγὼ καθὼς
δεῖ γινῶναι. | If someone supposes to know (that he knows)
something, he has not yet (known) as he
ought to know. (<i>1 Cor. 8:2</i>) |
| 4. διὰ τοῦτο ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος
ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποιηκεναι
τὸ σημεῖον. | Because of this, the crowd went to meet him,
(because) they heard that he had done this
sign (miracle). (<i>John 12:18</i>) |
| 5. ἐγὼ δὲ κατελαβομένην μηδὲν
ἀξίον αὐτοῦ θανάτου πεπραχέναι. | I found out (that) he had done nothing
worthy of death. (<i>Acts 25:25</i>) |
| 6. λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκεναι
τῶν . . . ἀποστόλων. | I reckon (that) in nothing have I fallen short
of the . . . apostles. (<i>2 Cor. 11:5</i>) |
| 7. ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσιν ὑμῶν
πεφανερῶσθαι. | I hope (that) it has been revealed
to your consciences also. (<i>2 Cor. 5:11</i>) |
| 8. τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου,
μηπὼ πεφανερῶσθαι
τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδόν.
(τὸ ἅγιον or τὰ ἅγια = "the holy thing(s)" = the sanctuary) | The Holy Spirit makes (making) this clear
(that) the way of (to) the sanctuary
has not yet been revealed. (<i>Heb. 9:8</i>) |

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| 9. ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ ἐμαυτὸν
οὐ λογιζομαι κατείληφεναι. | Brethren, I do not reckon myself
to have obtained (it). (<i>Philip. 3:13</i>) |
| 10. τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν
πλησιον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονεῖναι
τοῦ ἐμπεσοντος εἰς τοὺς ληστας ; | Which of these three does it seem to you
became (to have become) a neighbor
of the one who fell to the robbers ?
(<i>Luke 10:36</i>) |

56.6 The Perfect Imperatives

The **Perfect Imperative Active** uses a Perfect Participle with Imperatives from εἶμι .

The **Perfect Imperative Middle/Passive** uses the Perfect stem with endings similar to those of the Present Imperative Middle/Passive.

So for λυω we have

λελυκώς ἴσθι = Be "having loosed" (singular)	λελυκώς ἔστω = let him be having loosed
λελυκοτεσ ἔστε = Be "having loosed" (plural)	λελυκοτεσ ὄντων = let them be having loosed
λελυσο = Be in a state of having been loosed (singular)	λελυσθω = let him be "having been loosed"
λελυσθε = Be in as state of having been loosed (plural)	λελυσθων = let them be having been loosed

Note : ἐρρωσο (singular) or ἐρωσθε (plural), the Perfect Imperatives of ῥωννυμαι (I am healthy), were often used at the conclusion of a letter, with the meaning "farewell", "good-bye"

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετιμησεν τῷ ἀνεμῷ καὶ
εἶπεν τῇ θαλάσῃ, Σιωπα, περιμῶσο. | And having awakened, he rebuked the wind
and said to the sea, "Be calm, be silent."
(<i>Mark 4:39</i>) |
| 2. ἀπεχεσθαι εἰδωλοθυτῶν καὶ αἵματος καὶ
πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας,
ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε.
ἔρρωσθε.
(τὸ εἰδωλοθυτὸν = meat offered to idols) | Abstain from meat offered to idols, and blood,
and (things that have been) strangled, and
unchastity, from which, keeping yourselves
you will do well. Farewell. (<i>Acts 15:29</i>) |

56.7 Sentences for reading and translation

- ὁ οὖν ὄχλος ὁ ἑστὼς καὶ ἀκουσας ἔλεγεν βροντην γεγονεῖναι,
ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον, Ἄγγελος αὐτῷ λελαλήκεν. (*John 12:29*)
(ἑστὼς = "standing", Perfect Participle Active of ἵστημι - see Chapter 69)
- ἀπο τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρυσσεῖν καὶ λεγεῖν,
Μετανοεῖτε, ἡγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. (*Matt. 4:17*)
- καὶ εἶπεν ὁ δούλος, Κυριε, γεγονεν ὁ ἐπεταξας. (*Luke 14:22*)
- εἰ δὲ τις λελυπηκεν, οὐκ ἔμε λελυπηκεν, ἀλλὰ . . . παντας ὑμᾶς. (*2 Cor. 2:5*)
- ἀπεκριθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ παρρησια λελαλήκα τῷ κόσμῳ. (*John 18:20*)
- Περιτομὴ μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νομὸν πρᾶσσης, ἐὰν δὲ παραβατῆς νομοῦ ᾄς,
ἡ περιτομὴ σου ἀκροβυστία γεγονεν. (*Rom. 2:25*)
(ὁ παραβατῆς = transgressor, one who disobey a law, from παραβαίνω = I break, disobey)
- οἶδα καὶ πεπεισμαι ἐν κυριῷ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι' ἑαυτοῦ. (*Rom. 14:14*)
(οἶδα is Perfect in form, but is translated as a Present = "I know" - "I have learned")
- οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δεδωκεν ἡμῖν διανοίαν
ἵνα γινωσκώμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν. (*1 John 5:20*)
(οἶδαμεν = "we know" - see Chapter 68 ἦκει = "he has come, he is present"
τὸν ἀληθινόν = "him who is true" - note that the τὸν shows that it refers to a masculine object)
- ὁ γὰρ εἶπων, Μὴ μοιχευσης, εἶπεν καὶ, Μὴ φονευσης,
εἰ δὲ οὐ μοιχευσεις, φονεῦεις δὲ, γεγὼνας παραβατῆς νομοῦ. (*James 2:11*)
(ὁ παραβατῆς = transgressor, one who breaks the law)
- ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφείς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν,
Θαρσεῖ, θυγατερ, ἡ πίστις σου σεσῶκεν σε. (*Matt. 9:22*)

56.8 Writing Practice : Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud : Rev. 15:4

τίς σε οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆ, κυριε,	Who shall not fear thee, Lord,
καὶ δοξάσει τὸ ὄνομα σου ;	and glorify thy name?
ὅτι μόνος ὁσίου,	Because (thou) alone (art) holy,
ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἤξουσιν	because all the nations shall have come
καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον σου,	and (shall) worship before thee,

56.9 New Testament Passage for reading and translation : 1 John 1:1-4

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

ὃ ἦν	"that which was"
ὃ	"which" (<i>the Neuter Nominative/Accusative singular Relative Pronoun</i>)
ἐψηλαφῆσαν	(they) touched (<i>Aorist of ψηλάφω - I touch, feel</i>)
ἥ	(it) may be (<i>Third Person singular Present Subjunctive of εἶμι - I am</i>)
πεπληρωμένη	have been filled/fulfilled (<i>Feminine Nominative singular Perfect Participle Passive of πληροω - I fill, fulfil</i>)

56.10 Vocabulary to learn

Start to learn the first five Principal Parts of the verbs listed in Appendix D 01

ἀγνοέω	I am ignorant, do not understand
διατηρέω	I keep
βεβαιόω	I confirm, strengthen, prove to be true
δηλόω	I make clear, show, inform
διεγείρω	I wake up, awake
ἐμπίπτω	I fall into, fall among
ἐπαισχύνομαι	I feel shame for, am ashamed
ἐπικαλέω	I call, name (<i>Middle - I appeal to, call upon</i>)
ἦκω	I have come, am present, am here (<i>3rd Person plural ἦκασιν</i>)
λυπέω	I grieve, cause pain, injure (<i>Passive - I am sorrowful, sad</i>)
οἶδα	I know (I have learned) (<i>Perfect in form, but translated as a Present.</i>)
παραίτέομαι	I ask to be excused, refuse, reject
πράσσω	I do, practice, act
ῥώννυμαι	I am healthy (<i>Perfect Imperative used at end of a letter = "farewell"</i>)
σέβομαι	I worship
φιμόω	I silence, muzzle
ἡ ἀκροβυστία	uncircumcision
ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχω	I am a Gentile
διάνοια	mind, understanding
ὁ δρόμος	course, race course, course of life
το εἶδος -ους	appearance, view, visible form
ἡ κοινωνία	fellowship
ἡ λύπη	pain, grief, sorrow
ἡ παρρησία	openness, frankness. (<i>Dative παρρησία used as an adverb = openly</i>)
καίπερ	although, though
πῶποτε	at any time, ever
κοινός, -η, -ον	common, unclean (by Jewish law)