

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 **γέγραπται** = "**it has been written**" (Aorist Passive of γράφω) used in reference to Scripture - it has been written (in the past), and it is 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	λύω		λέλυκα	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 λύω, this becomes

I have loosed	λέλυκα	λελύκαμεν	we have loosed
you have loosed	λέλυκας	λελύκατε	y'all have loosed
he/she/it has loosed	λέλυκεν	λέλυκαν	they have loosed

Possibilities for weirdness :

Contract verbs (including καλέω 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 ἐ- as a prefix.

Examples	Present		Perfect Active	
I honor	τιμάω		τετίμηκα	I have honored
I do, act, make	ποιέω		πεποίηκα	I have done, acted, made
I fulfil	πληρόω		πεπλήρωκα	I have made fulfilled
I love	φιλέω		πεφίληκα	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 ΚΟΙΝΉ 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)	σέχω	ἔχω	ἔξω	ἔσχον	ἔσχηκα
I see	φοράω	ὁράω	ὄψομαι	εἶδον	έώρακα or έόρακα

ἴστημι, (I stand, put) was originally σίστημι. 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	γίνομαι	γέγονα	I have become
	I write	γράφω	γέγραφα	I have written
	I shout	κράζω	κέκραγα	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

1. τῆ τε γυναικὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλιὰν πιστεύομεν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου.
(*οἶδαμεν 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)
2. τὰ ἔργα ἃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ . . .

The works which the Father has given to me .
(John 5:36)
3. αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιῶ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι ὁ πατήρ με ἀπέσταλκεν.

The very same works which I do testify about me, that the Father has sent me. (John 5:36)
4. καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ ἐκεῖνος μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ.
(*"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)
5. οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ὡποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακατε.
(John 5:37)

You have neither heard his voice at any time nor have seen his appearance (form).
(John 5:37)
6. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι, οἶδα γὰρ ᾧ πεπίστευκα καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν.
(*ἡ παραθήκη - "something entrusted", trust deposit, from παρατίθημι - 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)
7. ἐγὼ φῶς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθα.

I have come (as) a light into the world.
(John 12:46)
8. ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πιλάτος, Ὁ γέγραφα, γέγραφα.

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." (John 19:22)
9. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Παῦλος, . . . Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀδικῶ καὶ ἄξιον θανάτου πέπραχά τι, οὐ παραιτοῦμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν.

Paul said, "If I am guilty and have done anything worthy of death, I do not decline to die. (Acts 25:10-11)
10. καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.
(John 6:69)

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 εἰσί(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 εἰσίν	they

For λύω, this becomes

I have been loosed	λέλυμαι	λελύμεθα	we have been loosed
you have been loosed	λέλυσαι	λέλυσθε	y'all have been loosed
he/she/it has been loosed	λέλυται	λελυμένοι εἰσίν	they have been loosed

In the case of λύω, 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, -όμεθα, -εσθε, -ονται

Possibilities for weirdness

Some verbs whose stem now ends in a short vowel, e.g. τελέω (I complete, accomplish) originally ended with a sigma, e.g. τελέω was originally τελέσω. The sigma may re-appear in the Perfect, giving τετέλεσμαι etc. Verbs ending in a sigma will drop one sigma in the Second Person Singular (τετέλεσαι, not τετέλεσσαι)

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 Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρεδώκων τὸ πνεῦμα. | Jesus said, "It is finished", and having bowed his head he gave up the spirit. (<i>John 19:30</i>) |
| 2. Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν . . . καὶ . . . ἐτάφη καὶ . . . ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς. | 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. ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀπόστολοι ὅτι δέδεκται ἡ Σαμάρεια τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτοῦς Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην. | 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. καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι Θεάμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν. | 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. τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγώνισμαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα. | I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (<i>2 Tim. 4:7</i>) |
| 6. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι, Ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται. | 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 γέγραπται,
Οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν 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 τεθεάμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν
ὅτι ὁ πατήρ ἀπέσταλκεν 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
Πεπλήρωται 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 ἐντέταλται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος,
Τέθεικά 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 λύω is λελυκώς, λελυκυῖα, λελυκός

The Perfect Participle Middle / Passive of λύω 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-κέναι	e.g. λελυκέναι to have loosed
Perfect Infinitive Middle / Passive	PSTEM-σθαι	e.g. λελύσθαι 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. Ἀγρίππας δὲ τῷ Φήστῳ ἔφη,
Ἀπολελύσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος
εἰ μὴ ἐπεκέκλητο 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 διάκονον 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. εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι,
οὐπω ἔγνω 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 ὑπηντήσεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος
ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποιηκέναι
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 κατελαβόμεν μηδὲν
ἄξιον αὐτόν θανάτου πεπραχέναι. | I found out (that) he had done nothing
worthy of death. (<i>Acts 25:25</i>) |
| 6. λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι
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
πεφανερωῦσθαι. | I hope (that) it has been revealed
to your consciences also. (<i>2 Cor. 5:11</i>) |
| 8. τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου,
μήπω πεφανερωῦσθαι
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 ἔμαυτὸν
οὐ λογίζομαι κατειληφέναι. | Brethren, I do not reckon myself
to have obtained (it). (<i>Philip. 3:13</i>) |
| 10. τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν
πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι
τοῦ ἐμπεσόντος εἰς τοὺς ληστὰς ; | 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 εἰμί .

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

So for λύω we have

λελυκὼς ἴσθι = Be "having loosed" (singular)	λελυκὼς ἔστω = let him be having loosed
λελυκότες ἔσθε = Be "having loosed" (plural)	λελυκότες ὄντων = let them be having loosed
λέλυσο = Be in a state of having been loosed (singular)	λελύσθω = let him be "having been loosed"
λέλυσθε = Be in as state of having been loosed (plural)	λελύσθων = let them be having been loosed

Note : ἔρρωσο (singular) or ἔρωσθε (plural), the Perfect Imperatives of ῥώννυμαι (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 ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ
εἶπεν τῇ θαλάσῃ, Σιώπα, περιμίωσο. | And having awakened, he rebuked the wind
and said to the sea, "Be calm, be silent."
(<i>Mark 4:39</i>) |
| 2. ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος
καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας,
ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς
εὖ πράξετε. ἔρρωσθε.
(τὸ εἰδωλοθύτον = 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

1. ὁ οὖν ὄχλος ὁ ἐστὼς καὶ ἀκούσας ἔλεγεν βροντὴν γεγονέναι,
ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον, Ἄγγελος αὐτῷ λελάληκεν. (*John 12:29*)
(ἐστὼς = "standing", Perfect Participle Active of ἵστημι - see Chapter 69)
2. ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν,
Μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. (*Matt. 4:17*)
3. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ δοῦλος, Κύριε, γέγονεν ὁ ἐπέταξας. (*Luke 14:22*)
4. εἰ δέ τις λελύπηκεν, οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, ἀλλὰ . . . πάντας ὑμᾶς. (*2 Cor. 2:5*)
5. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ παρρησία λελάληκα τῷ κόσμῳ. (*John 18:20*)
6. Περιτομὴ μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης, ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς,
ἡ περιτομὴ σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν. (*Rom. 2:25*)
(ὁ παραβάτης = transgressor, one who disobey a law, from παραβαίνω = I break, disobey)
7. οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ 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")
8. οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν
ἵνα γινώσκωμεν 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)
9. ὁ γὰρ εἰπὼν, Μὴ μοιχεύσης, εἶπεν καὶ, Μὴ φονεύσης,
εἰ δὲ οὐ μοιχεύσεις, φονεύεις δέ, γέγονας παραβάτης νόμου. (*James 2:11*)
(ὁ παραβάτης = transgressor, one who breaks the law)
10. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφεὶς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν,
Θάρσει, θύγατερ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν 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, κύριε,	Who shall not fear thee, Lord,
καὶ δοξάσει τὸ ὄνομά σου ;	and glorify thy name?
ὅτι μόνος ὅσιος,	Because (thou) alone (art) holy,
ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἤξουσιν	because all the nations shall have come
καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν 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>)
ἐψηλάφεσαν	(they) touched (<i>Aorist of ψηλάφω - I touch, feel</i>)
ἥ	(it) may be (<i>Third Person singular Present Subjunctive of εἶμί - I am</i>)
πεπληρωμένη	have been filled/fulfilled
	(<i>Feminine Nominative singular Perfect Participle Passive of πληρόω - 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>)
παραιτέομαι	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
τὸ 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
πώποτε	at any time, ever
κοινός, -η, -ον	common, unclean (by Jewish law)