

## The Future Tense

The Greek future expresses action primarily as the English future does, that is, action that will take place in future time. However, as with all the tenses in Greek, the future may also take one or other aspects depending upon the speaker's expectation of a possible event.

## Uses of the Future

*Predictive future.* The predictive future describes an event that is expected to occur in future time. Examples are found in John 14:26: ὁ δε παρακλητος, το πνεῦμα το ἅγιον, ὃ **πεμψει** ὁ πατηρ ἐν τῷ ὀνοματι μου, ἐκείνος ὑμᾶς **διδάξει** παντα και **ὑπομνησει** ὑμᾶς παντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ] (But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father **will send** in My name, **He will teach** you all things, and **He will remind** you all things that I said to you). Mark 1:8: ἐγὼ ἐβαπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι, αὐτος δε **βαπτισει** ὑμᾶς ἐν πνευματι ἁγίῳ (I baptized you with water, but He **will baptize** you with the Holy Spirit).

*Progressive future.* The progressive future expresses the action as progressive in the future. For example, in Phil. 1:18 Γι γαρ πλην οτιπ αντι τροπῶ, εἴτε προφασει εἴτε ἀληθεια, Χριστος καταγγελλεται, και ἐν τουτῶ χαιρω. Ἴ Αλλα και **χαρησομαι**, (What then? Only in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will **I continue to rejoice**). 2 Thes. 3:4 πεποιθαμεν δε ἐν κυριῳ ἐφ ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἂ παραγγελλομεν και ποιεῖτε και **ποιησετε**. (And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and **will continue to do** the things we command you).

*Imperative future.* The imperative future expresses the action as a command. As Dana and Mantey point out, "since a command necessarily involves futurity, this is a very natural idiom."<sup>1</sup> Examples as Matt. 1:21 τεξετα δε υἱον, και **καλεσεις** το ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν. αὐτος γαρ σωσει τον λαον αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. (And she will bring forth a Son, and **you shall name** him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins). Matt. 22:37 ὁ δε ἔφη αὐτοῦ **ἀγαπησεις** κυριον τον θεον σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδια σου και ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου και ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοια σου (Jesus said to him, "**You shall love** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."). 1 Peter 1:16 διοτι γεγραπται ὅτι ἅγιοι **ἔσεσθε**, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἰμι. (because it is written, "**You shall be holy**, because I am holy."). And negative commands as in Rom. 7:7 Τι ουν ἐροῦμεν ὁ νομος ἀμαρτια μη γενοιτο ἄλλα την ἀμαρτιαν οὐκ ἔγνω εἰ μη δια νομου. την τε

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<sup>1</sup> Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 192

γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἦδεν εἰ μὴ νόμος ἔλεγεν οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. (What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law said, “**You shall not covet.**”).

*Deliberative future.* The deliberative future is used in questions where the answer has some uncertainty. These question may be real or rhetorical. An example of a real question is found in, Rom. 6:2: μη γένοιτο. οἵτινες ἀπεθανομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; (Certainly not! How **shall we**, who are died to sin, **live** any longer in it?). An example of a rhetorical question is found in Rom. 9:14: Τι οὖν ἐροῦμεν μη ἀδικία παρα τῷ θεῷ μη γένοιτο. (What **will we say** then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God?). Dr. Young identifies, “rhetorical questions that challenge the readers or listeners to ponder the implications of the question and to respond appropriately, as in Hebrews 2:3: ‘How shall we escape (ἐκφευξομεθα), if we neglect so great salvation?’ The rhetorical question actually expresses an implicit statement, ‘We will surely not escape.’”<sup>2</sup>

*Gnomic future.* The gnomic future expresses a statement of fact that is true for all time. An example is found in Gal. 6:5: ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει. (For each one **will bear** his own burden.” Rom. 5:7: μόλις γὰρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις ἀποθανεῖται ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ταχὰ τις καὶ τολμᾷ ἀποθανεῖν (For scarcely for a righteous man **will die**; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die).

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), p. 118