

## Problems of Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek: The Perfect Participle

In recent years, several scholars have devoted books to the topic of verbal aspect in New Testament Greek (Porter 1989, Fanning 1991, Olsen 1996, Campbell 2006 and 2009). All four scholars are in agreement on the aspects of the present, imperfect, and aorist tenses, yet they posit three different explanations of the perfect tense's aspect. According to these scholars, the aspect of the perfect tense may either be imperfective, perfective, or stative. In this paper, I attempt to explain why such a preponderance of views exist while positing a more nuanced explanation of the perfect tense's aspect. Stativity includes both a perfective component (a completed past action, viewed externally) and an imperfective component (a present reality, viewed internally). When viewed in context, however, perfect verbs do not always denote stativity, and in these instances context calls for either a perfective or imperfective interpretation.

In order to reach this conclusion and make it applicable to issues of interpretation, the paper follows three steps. First, I briefly discuss the differing views of scholars on the issue of aspect in New Testament Greek. I then focus my study on examples of perfect participles in *Mark* and *1 Corinthians*, which provide examples of both narrative and epistolary texts. Participles, timeless outside of indirect discourse, allow the paper to avoid a lengthy digression into the contested issue of tense in the indicative and focus on the specific issue of aspect. Finally, I apply my findings to a few contested examples of verbal aspect in interpretive and textual critical work in *1 John* (especially interpretations of 3.6 and 3.8 and a textual issue in 5.18; Brown 1982, Metzger 1994). Numerous commentators employ simplistic views of verbal aspect as a primary means of interpreting these difficult passages. While showing that these interpretations are mostly incorrect or misleading, I demonstrate that by adopting a more

nuanced view of verbal aspect, particularly the perfect tense's verbal aspect, scholars can avoid unnecessary interpretative and textual critical pitfalls.

#### Bibliography

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