

Σὼ φαρ, σὼ γοῶδ.

An Overview of the Greek Verb: Present & Future

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o **Parsing a Verb** (also see, “What You Can Get From a Verb” handout)

Be sure to give all the following information:

- 1) Lexical Form – if you do this first it will help you determine other elements
- 2) Tense – Present, Imperfect, Future, Aorist (1st or 2nd), Perfect, Pluperfect
- 3) Voice – Active, Middle, Passive, (also “Deponent” better known as “Middle Only”)
 - In tenses other than Future and Aorist, the Middle and Passive forms are the same, so you can say, “Middle/Passive”
 - If the verb is Middle Only this means that it only occurs in the NT in the middle form, and thus the lexical form of the verb will occur in the middle. When translating into English, the verb will look active in voice, though for the Greek speaker, the middle would have communicated some degree of “subject affectedness.” Pennington’s Rule of Middle Only’s says that when you see a Middle/Passive form, you can usually assume it is truly passive if you know the verb in its active form. On the other hand, it will generally be middle if you know the lexical form as a Middle Only (e.g., ἐρχομαι). Finally, remember also that a word can be middle only in one tense form and not in another, e.g. ὀράω, ὄψομαι.
- 4) Mood – Indicative, Imperative, Subjunctive, Optative (very rare in NT)
- 5) Person – First, Second, Third
- 6) Number – Singular, Plural
- 7) Lexical Meaning

e.g. λύομεν = λύω, Present Active Indicative 1st person plural, I loose, I destroy

o **The Present Tense**

The Present tense form (along with the Imperfect form) is the way Greek communicates the Imperfective Aspect (i.e. the author is viewing the action as in process). It may or may not communicate *present time*, but for our purposes this year, we can usually translate it this way.

o The Verbal Root and Verbal Stems – Each verb has only one verbal root but may have different stems in different tenses. So, the Present tense verbal stem may or may not be the real verbal root of the word. Often the present stem has undergone some change from the verbal root. This will affect the formation of other tenses (like the Future) which are based on the verbal root and not the present stem.

+ Example of present stem and verbal root the same:

λύω (stem and root are both λυ)

+ Example of present stem and verbal root different

βάλλω (present stem is βαλλ, verbal root is βαλ)

βαπτίζω (present stem is βαπτιζ, verbal root is βαπτιδ)

o Forms of the Present Tense:

	Active Indicative	Middle/Passive Indicative
1s	- ω	- ομαι
2s	- εις	- η
3s	- ει	- εται
1p	- ομεν	- ομεθα
2p	- ετε	- εσθε
3p	- ουσι(ν)	- ονται

o Contract Verbs – Verbs whose stems end in the vowels ε,α,ο are called contract verbs because that ending vowel will cause certain *contractions* when the personal endings are added. Because the ε type are by far the most common, the most important rules of contraction to know are:

ε + ε → ει

ε + ο → ου

Another helpful thing to remember is that -εω contractions will generally *not* occur when the ending is already long in value (a long vowel like η,ω, or a diphthong). Hence, when the Present Active Indicative personal endings are added to a verb like ποιέω, the only noticeable changes that will occur are in the 1p and 2p, because these two endings alone have short vowels. On the other hand, when the Present Middle/Passive endings are added to an -εω verb, contraction will occur in all but one of the endings, 2s. In all cases except the 1p, a circumflex accent will show that a contraction has occurred. See the paradigms.

For -αω and -οω contractions, see full paradigms.

o **The Future Tense**

The future tense form “is used to express intention and consequently simple futurity, and it is often difficult to distinguish between these” (McKay). The future tense form usually refers to events in the future, but not invariably so. For example, it is often used with an imperatival sense, “you *shall* love the Lord your God...”

o The Verbal Root and Verbal Stems – As stated above when discussing the Present tense, the verbal stems on which different tenses are built may vary in each tense. This becomes especially important for the future tense which is built on the verbal root, not the present stem of the lexical form. The verbal root may be the same as the present stem but is often different.

+ Example: βάλλ is the present stem, while βαλ is the future stem

There are some predictable patterns as to when stems change:

a) λλ → λ – e.g. βάλλω (present) → βαλῶ (future) and ἔβαλον (2nd aorist)

b) the ι in present stem diphthongs often drops out – e.g. αἶρω (present) → ἄρῶ (future)

c) present stems ending in ιζω (and αζω) are usually dental root endings so the future goes to a σ – e.g. βαπτίζω (present) → βαπτίσω (future)

d) present stems ending in σσω are usually guttural (or velar) root endings (κ,γ,χ) so the future goes to ξ – e.g. κηρύσσω (present) → κηρύξω (future) AND πρασσω (present) → πραξω (future)

e) πτ → π – e.g. κρύπτω (present) → κρύψω (future)

We must also remember that for historical-linguistic reasons, some verbs form their futures on totally different roots. These must simply be memorized.

+ Examples: ἔρχομαι (present) → ἐλεύσομαι (future)
λέγω (present) → ἐρῶ (future)

o Forms of the Future tense – In the Active and Middle voices, the future tense uses the same endings as the present tense with the addition of the “tense formative” σ. The Passive voice for the future is *usually* (we will explain later) formed by the addition of the tense formative θησ plus the regular passive endings. Hence, the endings for a regular verb like λύω are as follows:

Future	Active Indicative	Middle Indicative	Passive Indicative
1s	- σω	- σομαι	- θησομαι
2s	- σεις	- ση	- θηση
3s	- σει	- σεται	- θησεται
1p	- σομεν	- σομεθα	- θησομεθα
2p	- σετε	- σεσθε	- θησεσθε
3p	- σουσι(ν)	- σονται	- θησονται

o Three Wrinkles – There are three situations in which the above endings will be slightly modified.

a) *Contract verbs*

Because of the addition of the tense formative σ, the normal vowel + vowel contractions that occur in the present tense will no longer occur. Rather, the vowel on the end of the stem lengthens, and then the normal σ + appropriate personal endings are added.

The rules for lengthening are:

ε → η
α → η
ο → ω

Hence, the future active and middle indicative forms of ποιέω are as follows:

	Future Active Indicative		Future Middle Indicative
1s	ποιε + σ + ω → ποιήσω	ποιε + σ + ομαι	→ ποιήσομαι
2s	→ ποιήσεις		→ ποιήση
3s	→ ποιήσει		→ ποιήσεται
1p	→ ποιήσομεν		→ ποιήσομεθα
2p	→ ποιήσετε		→ ποιήσεσθε
3p	→ ποιήσουσι(ν)		→ ποιήσονται

b) *Verbal stems ending in stops*

Because the tense formative for the future is σ , when it is added to verbal stems which end in a stop (see below), normal σ + stop contractions occur. We saw this already in the Third Declension of nouns.

Square of Stops

Labial		π	β	ϕ	\rightarrow	ψ
Velar	κ	γ	χ		\rightarrow	ξ
Dental	τ	δ	θ		\rightarrow	σ

For example: + βλέπω \rightarrow βλέψω, εις, ει etc.

+ γράφω \rightarrow γράψω, εις, ει

+ ἄγω \rightarrow ἄξω, εις, ει

+ βαπτίζω \rightarrow βαπτίσω, εις, ει Note: The verbal root is βαπτιδ, thus $\delta + \sigma = \sigma$.

c) *Verbal stems ending in liquids (λ, μ, ν, ρ)*

Some verbal stems end in liquid (or nasal) consonants, e.g. μένω, I remain. In the present tense, this creates no problems, the personal endings are added normally. But in the future tense, the tense formative σ again causes some changes. *The changes are just like those that occur in a present tense*

-εω verb, i.e. vowel contraction when possible and the switch to the circumflex accent.

For example: μένω (present tense) is formed thus:

Future	Active Indicative	Middle Indicative	Future Indicative (more on this later)
1s	μενῶ	μενοῦμαι	μενήσομαι
2s	μενεῖς	μενηῖ	μενήσῃ
3s	μενεῖ	μενεῖται	μενήσεται
1p	μενούμεν	μενούμεθα	μενήσομεθα
2p	μενεῖτε	μενεῖσθε	μενήσεσθε
3p	μενοῦσι(ν)	μενοῦνται	μενήσονται