

Chapter 13

Verbal System: Primary Middle Endings, Indicative Mood; Deponent Verbs; Future of εἶμι; Nominal System: Reciprocal Pronouns

THE BASICS

- ✓ Significance of Middle and Passive Voices
- ✓ Formation and Translation of Primary Middle and Passive Voices
- ✓ Deponent Verbs
- ✓ εἶμι: Future Tense
- ✓ Reciprocal Pronouns

A STEP BEYOND

- ✓ Aspect and Verb Formation

13.1 Vocabulary

13.1.1 Nouns

ἱμάτιον, -ου, τό	garment
καιρός, -οῦ, ὁ	time (a particular moment or period in time)
σάββατον, -ου, τό	Sabbath

13.1.2 Reciprocal Pronoun

ἀλλήλων, ἀλληλων, ἀλληλοις, ἀλληλους	of/to/for one another (no nominative forms)
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13.1.3 Conjunction

οὔτε	and not
οὔτε . . . οὔτε . . .	neither . . . nor . . .

13.1.4 Verbs

ἐσθίω, φάγομαι, ἔφαγον
I eat (cf. “esophagus”)
ἐτοιμάζω, ἐτοιμάσω, ἠτοιμάσα, ἠτοιμάκα, ἠτοιμάσμαι, ἠτοιμάσθην
I prepare

13.1.5 Deponent Verbs

ἀποκρίνομαι, —, ἀπεκρινάμην ¹ , —, —, ἀπεκρίθην
I answer, reply (its object takes the dative)
ἅπτομαι ² , ἄψομαι, ἠψάμην, ἦμμαι
I touch, take hold of (used with a genitive object)
ἀσπάζομαι, —, ἠσπασάμην
I greet, welcome
γίνομαι, γενήσομαι, ἐγενόμην, γέγονα, γεγένημαι, ἐγενήθην
I come to be, become, happen (often a substitute for εἶμι)
παραγίνομαι
I come, arrive
δέχομαι, —, ἐδεξάμην, —, δέδεγμαι
I receive, take
ἐργάζομαι, —, ἠργασάμην, —, εἵργασμαι
I work, do, accomplish
ἔρχομαι, ἐλεύσομαι, ἦλθον, ἐλήλυθα
I come, go
ἀπέρχομαι
I go away, depart (with various prepositions following)
διέρχομαι
I go, pass through (with accusative or various prepositions)
εἰσέρχομαι
I enter, come into, go into (with various prepositions)

¹The conjugation of secondary middle endings will be introduced in the next chapter.

²ἅπτομαι is the middle-voice form of ἅπτω (I light, kindle [as with a lamp or a fire]) and is listed under ἅπτω in Greek-English lexica. Active forms occur only four times in the GNT, however, and only in the present and aorist tenses.

ἐξέρχομαι

I come out, go out (with various prepositions)

παρέρχομαι

I pass away, pass by (with various prepositions)

προσέρχομαι

I come to, go to (with the dative)

συνέρχομαι

I come together (with the dative or various prepositions)

κάθημαι, καθήσομαι

I sit, stay, reside

λογίζομαι, —, ἐλογισάμην, —, —, ἐλογίσθην

I reckon, consider, count

πορεύομαι, πορεύσομαι, —, —, πεπόρευμαι, ἐπορεύθην

I go, proceed, travel

ἐκπορεύομαι

I go out

προσεύχομαι, προσεύξομαι, προσηυξάμην

I pray

Recall that the primary tenses are the present, future, and perfect. In this chapter, we will focus our attention on tenses that use the primary-tense *middle-voice* endings. With this set of endings, one constructs the present-tense middle and passive voices (one formation serves for both), the future-tense middle voice, the future-tense passive voice, and the perfect-tense middle and passive voices (one formation serves for both).

13.2 Significance of Middle and Passive Voices

13.2.1 Middle Voice

In the active voice, the subject of the verb performs an action—for example, “he finds” (εὐρίσκει). In the middle voice, the subject of the verb not only performs the action, but the action is performed in the subject’s *interest* or with the subject’s *involvement*. However, the specific manner of the subject’s involvement must be detected from the context. “Middle” does not suggest halfway between the active and passive voices, but, more correctly, that the actor is in the middle of the action (see p. 5, [c] Voice).

The subject may perform an act directly upon itself. This is known as the *direct middle*. It is essentially reflexive in force because the subject is both actor and recipient of the action. The reflexive pronoun is typically used in English to translate the direct middle (for example, Matt 27:5b, “he *hanged himself*”; 1 Cor 6:11, “you *washed yourselves*”; and 2 Cor 11:14, “Satan himself *disguises himself* as an angel”). The direct middle will not be encountered frequently. The GNT more often uses the reflexive pronoun and the active voice to express a reflexive thought.

More often the middle voice will occur when the subject is acting so as to bring about an effect that is in the subject's own interest. This is called the *indirect middle*. In this instance the actor (subject) is emphasized as taking part (in some way) in the action expressed by the verb. Consider the following examples:

You have need of endurance in order that when you have done the will of God, *you may obtain* (or *receive*) [κομίσησθε, aorist middle subjunctive of κομίζω] the promise. (Heb 10:36)

Be on guard [φυλάσσου = present middle imperative] *against him yourself*, for he vigorously opposed our teaching." (2 Tim 4:15)

13.2.2 Passive Voice

When a verb is in the passive voice, it indicates that the subject is *being acted upon* rather than acting. Thus the future passive indicative of λύω means "I will be released" rather than "I will release (someone else)." For all tenses formed on the first and fifth principal parts (present, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect), forms for the middle and passive voice are identical (e.g., λύομαι can mean either "I am loosing (for) myself" [middle] or "I am being loosed [passive]"). Consequently, you must rely upon the context and the lexical meaning of the verb to determine the voice being used.

13.3 Formation and Translation of Primary Middle and Passive Voices

Primary Middle and Passive Endings

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1	-μαι	-μεθα
2	-σαι (or -η)	-σθε
3	-ται	-νται

In most second person singular forms, the "intervocalic" (i.e., between vowels) σ in -σαι drops away and the linking vowel ε contracts with αι, resulting in -η. The perfect middle/passive form does not contract because the -σαι ending is attached directly to the stem.

13.3.1 Present Tense, Middle and Passive Voices

Formation. These tenses are identical in form. To the present active stem (first principal part) is attached the linking vowel ο/ε, followed by the middle/passive endings.

Present Middle/Passive Indicative of λύω

		<i>Middle</i>	<i>Passive</i>
1S	λύομαι	I release/am releasing (in my own interest)*	I am released/ being released
2S	λύῃ	you release/are releasing (in your own interest)	you are released/ being released
3S	λύεται	he/she/it releases/is releasing (in his/her/its own interest)	he/she/it is released/ being released
1P	λύομεθα	we release/are releasing (in our own interest)	we are released/ being released
2P	λύεσθε	you release/are releasing (in your own interest)	you are released/ being released
3P	λύονται	they release/are releasing (in their own interest)	they are released/ being released

*“In ____ own interest” is implied in the Greek but is usually not translated.

13.3.2 Future Tense, Middle Voice

The future tense has separate middle- and passive-voice forms. The middle voice is formed on the future active stem (the second principal part) and is recognized by the following characteristics:

- *the tense suffix -σ-* (or a double consonant containing σ, e.g., -ψ- or -ξ-);³
- *ο/ε linking vowels* (with ε lengthened to η in the second singular); and
- *primary middle/passive endings*.

The following paradigms for the future middle and passive indicative use ἄγω as a reminder of the effects of attaching the suffixes -σ- and -θη- directly to a stem ending with a palatal consonant (ἀγ- + -σ- = ἄξ-; ἀγ- + -θη- = ἄχθη-).

Future Middle Indicative of ἄγω

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
1	ἄξομαι	I will lead (in my own interest)	ἄξόμεθα	we will lead (in our own interest)
2	ἄξῃ	you will lead (in your own interest)	ἄξεσθε	you will lead (in your own interest)
3	ἄξεται	he, she, it will lead (in his/her/its own interest)	ἄξονται	they will lead (in their own interest)

³As with the active voice, this is the sole difference in formation between the middle-voice present and future tenses.

13.3.3 Future Tense, Passive Voice

The future passive is formed on the *aorist* passive stem (the sixth principal part), yet without the past-action augment ε-. So, instead of ἐλύ-, one expects λύ-; instead of ἤγοράσ-, one finds ἀγοράσ-.

To parse a future passive verb:

1. *Identify the passive voice suffix -θη-*. So ἀχθη- (from ἄγω) or ἀγορασθη-.
2. *Locate the tense suffix -σ- and its o/ε linking vowel.* The most distinctive trait of the future passive is the use of *both* tense and voice suffixes, -θη- followed by -σ-. So ἀχθήσεται or ἀγορασθήσομαι.
3. *Identify the primary middle/passive endings.* So πορευθήσομεθα.

Future Passive Indicative of ἄγω

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
1	ἀχθήσομαι	I will be led	ἀχθήσομεθα	we will be led
2	ἀχθήσῃ	you will be led	ἀχθήσθε	you will be led
3	ἀχθήσεται	he, she, it will be led	ἀχθήσονται	they will be led

13.3.4 Perfect Tense, Middle and Passive Voices

The perfect middle and perfect passive voices are identical in form. Like the present middle and passive, they must be distinguished by context. The primary middle endings are added directly to the stem of the fifth principal part, which is given in the verb charts (e.g., ἤγμαι; δέδεγμαι). Observe that no linking vowel or -κ- tense suffix is used. This is one of the distinctive aspects of the perfect middle/passive form. Because there is no linking vowel, the second-person singular ending does not contract; it remains -σαι. A second distinctive trait of these tenses is the reduplication of the stem. This follows the same pattern as the perfect active (see p. 103).

Perfect Middle/Passive Indicative of λύω Stem ending in a vowel

	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Passive</i>
1S	λέλυμαι I have released (in my own interest, and the effect continues)	I have been released (and the effect continues); I am released
2S	λέλυσαι you have released (in your own interest, and the effect continues)	you have been released (and the effect continues); you are released
3S	λέλυται he, she, it has released (in his, her, its own interest, and the effect continues)	he, she, it has been released (and the effect continues); he, she, it is released

1P	λέλυμεθα	we have released (in our own interest, and the effect continues)	we have been released (and the effect continues); we are released
2P	λέλυσθε	you have released (in your own interest, and the effect continues)	you have been released (and the effect continues); you are released
3P	λέλυνται	they have released (in their own interest, and the effect continues)	they have been released (and the effect continues); they are released

Even though the fifth principal part can and should be memorized, there will still be some difficulty when the endings -μαι, -σαι, -ται, etc., are joined to stems ending with consonants. These consonants will undergo changes, but the beginner need not memorize all of them. By noting the stem's reduplication, the primary middle endings, and the lack of a linking vowel, one should be able to parse and translate any given form.

Perfect Middle/Passive Indicative
Changes in stems ending in various consonants

	<i>Stem ending in a palatal</i>	<i>Stem ending in a labial</i>	<i>Stem ending in a dental</i>	<i>Stem ending in sigma</i>	<i>Stem ending in a liquid</i> (λ, μ, ν, ρ)
	ἄγω	πέμπω	πείθω	γινώσκω	αἶρω
1S	ἤγμαι	πέπεμμαι	πέπεισμαι	ἔγνωσμαι	ἤρμαι
2S	ἤξαι	πέπεμψαι	πέπεισαι	ἔγνωσαι	ἤρσαι
3S	ἤκται	πέπεμπται	πέπεισται	ἔγνωσται	ἤρται
1P	ἤγμεθα	πεπέμμεθα	πεπέισμεθα	ἔγνώσμεθα	ἤρμεθα
2P	ἤξθε	πέπεμφθε	πέπεισθε	ἔγνωσθε	ἤρσθε
3P ⁴	ἤγμένοι εἰσί(ν)	πεπεμμένοι εἰσί(ν)	πεπεισμένοι εἰσί(ν)	ἔγνωσμένοι εἰσί(ν)	ἤρμένοι εἰσί(ν)

13.4 Deponent Verbs

Some verbs do not have an active lexical form. Instead, their first principal part is a middle or passive voice form that is active in meaning. These are traditionally called *deponent verbs*.⁵ The term generally refers to verbs that occur in one voice's form but

⁴This combination of verbs, called a periphrastic construction, will be discussed in ch. 21.

⁵The term is derived from the Latin *depono* (to put down or lay aside) since it was once thought that these verbs had "laid aside" their active forms. It is a deplorable term that is tolerated by grammarians, but liked by none.

have a different voice's *function*. The most common examples in the GNT are verbs that occur in a middle and/or passive form but are active in meaning. ἔρχομαι is such a verb. The form ἔρχω does not exist, and ἔρχομαι is conjugated as a middle/passive but translated in the active voice. Thus in John 21:13, ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον would be translated (without context), "Jesus *comes* and takes the bread."⁶

Here are several rules of thumb about deponent verbs to keep in mind:

1. *Some verbs may be deponent in one principal part but not another.* For example, a verb may be deponent in the present tense (ἔρχομαι, "I come") but not in the aorist tense (ἦλθον, "I came"). Several verbs presented in ch. 11 are deponent only in the future tense.⁷ Consult a lexicon to ascertain which principal parts appear as deponents.
2. *All forms of a deponent principal part will be deponent.* Thus the imperfect of ἔρχομαι (I am coming) is ἤρχόμην (I was coming).
3. *Some deponent verbs have aorist and future passive forms that are truly passive, while for others these passive forms also are active in meaning.* The future of γινώσκω is the deponent middle form γνώσομαι, with the active meaning "I will know." But its future passive form γνωσθήσομαι is not deponent and actually has a passive meaning: "I will be known." However, ἀποκρίνομαι, a deponent verb meaning "I reply," is deponent both in the aorist middle (ἀπεκρίνάμην) and in the aorist passive (ἀπεκριθην), both of which have the active meaning "I replied."
4. *Sometimes a verb with a deponent present tense form has no aorist middle form, and the aorist passive form has an active meaning (cf. πορεύομαι).*

The best way to navigate through the confusion that can surround deponents is to learn the principal parts of these verbs well and to note how they are used in context.

13.5 εἶμι: Future Tense

Once you have learned the primary middle endings, the future (deponent) forms of εἶμι should present no difficulties. The only irregularity is the lack of a linking vowel in the third person singular form. Observe the consistent use of the -σ- tense suffix.

⁶In narrative—especially when introducing discourse (speech), but also in the telling of a story—where the aorist or imperfect tense might be expected, the present tense is sometimes used. This is called the "historical present." In context, John 21:13 is typically translated "Jesus *came* and took the bread."

⁷ἀποθανοῦμαι, "I will die" (from ἀποθνήσκω); γνώσομαι, "I will know" (γινώσκω); φάγομαι, "I will eat" (ἔσθιω); λήψομαι, "I will take/receive" (λαμβάνω); πεσοῦμαι, "I will fall" (πίπτω); and φεύξομαι, "I will flee" (φεύγω).

	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
1	ἔσ ο μαί	I will be	ἔσ ό μεθα	we will be
2	ἔσ η	you will be	ἔσ ε σθε	you will be
3	ἔσ ται	he, she, it will be	ἔσ ο νται	they will be

13.6 Reciprocal Pronouns

The middle voice expresses action performed by the subject in its own interest. The passive voice expresses action that is done to the subject. To express action that alternates or *reciprocates* between two or more persons, the active voice and reciprocal pronoun are used. Only the following masculine plural forms are found in the GNT:

G	ἀλλήλων	of one another
D	ἀλλήλοις	to/for one another
A	ἀλλήλους	one another

13.7 Aspect and Verb Formation

It may be of help to recognize that the following three pairs of indicative-mood verb tenses, each of which share a distinct verbal aspect, also share certain peculiarities regarding their formation (despite the primary-versus-secondary affixes that differentiate them).

1. *Durative, incomplete-action tenses.* The imperfect is formed on the present active stem (first principal part). Therefore, because the present has only one form for both middle and passive voices, so also does the imperfect.
2. *Unitary, complete-action tenses.* The two tenses that express unitary aspect, the future and the aorist, share certain distinctive forms that enable the student to recognize them. For instance, although the future and aorist active stems represent different principal parts (second and third), they both have a -σ- tense suffix attached to the stem (when regular and first aorist). Furthermore, *they are the only two tenses to have different middle and passive voice forms.* This is because the future middle is formed on the future active stem (second principal part), whereas the future passive is formed on the *aorist* passive stem (sixth principal part). Therefore only the future and first aorist passive forms have a -θη- suffix (and the future passive also retains its -σ- tense suffix and linking vowels).
3. *Completed, resultative-action tenses.* The pluperfect is formed on the perfect stem (fourth and fifth principal part) and therefore shares its reduplication and -κ- tense suffix. Since the perfect has only one middle/passive form, so, too, does the pluperfect.

EXERCISES*A. Translate the following sentences into English:*

1. γέγονας, δεδεγμένοι εισίν. πεπορευέμεθα. δέδεξεθε. ἀνεώχθησαν. ἀσπάζεσθε.
2. ἐγνώσμεθα πρὸ τούτων τῶν καιρῶν, ἀλλ' οὗτος οὐ βεβάπτισται εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.
3. ὅσοι δὲ ὑπήγαγον εἰς τὴν ἔρημον καὶ ἔφαγον τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ἔπιον τὸ αὐτό· ἦσθιον γὰρ καὶ ἔπινον ἐκ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
4. ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ τοῦ τέκνου σου τὸ δαιμόνιον τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ προφήτου.
5. ὁ λόγος γενήσεται ὅτι ὁ πρεσβύτερος ὁ ἀγαπητὸς λέγει τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς τούτοις.
6. τῇ δὲ ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ εἰμι ὁ εἰμι καὶ ὅτι θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶν ἐσόμεθα λαὸς ἀγάπης.
7. ὁ ἄρτος ὃν φάγεσθέ ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.
8. ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.
9. ἡ δικαιοσύνη ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κηρυχθήσεται ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ κυρίου.
10. γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι Τὸ σάββατον πρῶτον ἔσται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἀνθρώπων.
11. ἀλλὰ βεβάπτισθε ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ.
12. ἄγομαι αὐτοῦ καὶ τότε προσελεύσομαι τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ προσεύξομαι τῷ θεῷ.
13. ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους Νῦν καθησόμεθα ἐν σοφίᾳ καὶ χαρᾷ παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μακαρίῳ.
14. οὐκ ἦλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἀλλὰ ὑπήγαγον εἰς Ἀραβίαν, καὶ ἄλιν ἦλθον εἰς Δαμασκόν.
15. ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκηρύχθη· ἐπέισθην· οὐκ ἐθεραπεύθημεν· ἐσώθησαν σὺν ἡμῖν.
16. ἐφάγομεν ἐνώπιόν σου, καὶ ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις ἡμῶν ἐδίδαξας.
17. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι, Κύριε, ὅτε σε ἐβλέψαμεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ ἦλθομεν πρὸς σε;
18. Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος (Antichrist or an antichrist) ὑπάρξει, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι γεγόνασιν· νῦν γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

B. Translate the following sentences into Greek:

1. Then the ruler came out from the midst of the crowd and persuaded him.
2. The holy one (fem.) of the Lord will be tested by the evil one.
3. John said to his disciples, "I have received joy and peace as a gift of God.
4. The Son has received God's authority; signs are being seen on earth.
5. The beloved child spoke in parables on the Sabbath.