

Present, Imperfect & Future

Chapter 8

Present Tense

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Progressive Present

Highlights the on-going nature of an action taking place at the time of speaking.

Κύριε, σῶσον, **ἀπολλύμεθα**

Lord, save us! **We are perishing!**
(Matt 8:25 NRSV).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Durative Present

Conveys an action that began in the past and continues in the present (there is usually some temporal marker indicating the action began in the past).

ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος **ἁμαρτάνει**

The devil **has sinned** from the beginning
(1 John 3:8).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Iterative Present

An action that is performed repeatedly, regularly, or customarily (add "keep on," "customarily," "normally," or "always").

πολλάκις **πίπτει** εἰς τὸ πῦρ

He often **falls** into the fire
(Matt 17:15).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Gnomic Present

A statement that is timeless, universal, or generally true (add, "always," "ever," or "never").

ἱλαρὸν δότην **ἀγαπᾷ** ὁ θεός

God **[always] loves** a cheerful giver
(2 Cor 9:7).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Instantaneous Present

An action that is done instantaneously, usually by the very fact that it is spoken.

Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι

I appeal to Caesar!
(Acts 25:11).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Historical Present

A past event that adds vividness to the event or gives literary prominence to some aspect of the story.

καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς

Then **he came** to the disciples
(Matt 26:40).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Tendential Present

An action was begun, attempted, or proposed, but not completed (add “trying,” “going,” or “intending”).

οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε

You who **are trying to be justified** by the law
(Gal 5:4).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Futuristic Present

The action will occur in the future. It often adds vividness or indicates certainty.

μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι

After three days **I will rise again**
(Matt 27:63).

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Present Tense

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Perfective Present

Emphasizes the present state of a past action.

ἀπέχουσιν τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν

They have received their reward
(Matt 6:2 ESV).

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Imperfect Tense

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Imperfect Tense

Progressive Imperfect

An action in the past that is in progress from the perspective of the author.

πολλοὶ πλούσιοι **ἔβαλλον** πολλά

Many rich people **were putting** in large sums
(Mark 12:41).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

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Imperfect Tense

Inceptive Imperfect

Emphasizes the beginning of an action or state (also called the “ingressive” imperfect; add “began”).

ἔστη καὶ **περιεπάτει**

He stood and **began to walk**
(Acts 3:8 ESV).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

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Imperfect Tense

Iterative Imperfect

Repeated or customary action in the past (add “kept on,” “repeatedly,” “used to,” and “were accustomed to,” “customarily,” or “continually”).

ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς [αὐτοῦ]

He kept giving [the loaves] to his disciples
(Mark 6:41).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

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Imperfect Tense

Tendential Imperfect

An action was begun, attempted, or proposed, but not completed (add “going,” “intending,” “could,” or “would”).

ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ **ἐπώρθουν** αὐτήν

I intensely persecuted God’s church...and **tried to destroy** it
(Gal 1:13).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

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Future Tense

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Future Tense

Predictive Future

Used to predict a future event.

αὐτὸς **βαπτίσει** ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

He **will baptize** you with the Holy Spirit
(Mark 1:8).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

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Future Tense

Imperative Future

Used to express a command.

ἅγιοι **ἔσεσθε**, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιός [εἰμι]

You shall **be** holy, for I am holy
(1 Pet 1:16 ESV).

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Future Tense

Deliberative Future

Used to ask real or rhetorical questions.

πῶς ἔτι **ζήσομεν** ἐν αὐτῇ;

How **can we**...still **live** in it [= sin]?
(Rom 6:2).

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Future Tense

Gnomic Future

Used to express a timeless truth.

μόλις γὰρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις **ἀποθανέται**

For rarely **will** someone **die** for a just person
(Rom 5:7).

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Future Tense

Progressive Future

An action that was being done will continue into the future.

ἀλλὰ καὶ **χαρήσομαι**

Yes, and **I will [continue to] rejoice**
(Phil 1:18).

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