Chapter 60

The Optative

60.1 There are four "Moods" of a verb - the Indicative, Subjunctive, Optative, and the Imperative. These are described as "finite", because the endings "define" the person doing the action (First - I, we; Second - you; Third - he, she, it, they) Sometimes the Infinite is also classed as a Mood, although it may be better to class it as a Verbal noun.

So far we have dealt with the Indicative Mood - used to indicate facts, make definite statements, or to ask questions, and with the Subjunctive - used when there is an element of doubt, and with the Imperative - used to give orders

Now we come to the Optative - used mainly to express a wish that something may, or may not, happen. In the New Testament, the most frequently-occurring Optative is $\mu\dot{\eta}$ $\gamma\dot{\epsilon}$ votto = "may it not happen", with the feeling "Oh Please, Please, may it not happen." translated in the KJV as "God forbid" The Optative has five tenses - Present, Future, Aorist, Perfect, and Future Perfect.

60.2 Uses of the Optative

1. **To express a wish** that something may or may not happen. Because the Optative is expressing a wish for something to happen, or not happen, when used in direct discourse it refers to future time. Therefore the tenses do not indicate points along a time-line, but the state of the action. The Present tense has a continuing or repeating sense "May something always happen". The Aorist tense refers to a simple action "May something happen (once)". The Perfect refers to something being completed, with a permanent result "May they be in the state of having done something."

e.g. μὴ γένοιτο may it not happen By no means! God forbid!

- 2. The **Potential Optative**, used with αv to express the opinion of the writer or speaker as to the future possibility or likelihood of an action. It may be translated by may, might, can, must, would, should etc. The Potential Optative may also be used in purpose clauses, result clauses, causal clauses, object clauses after verbs of fearing or effort, and dependent sentences.
 - 3. **To express a command or exhortation** less forcefully than the Imperative.
- 4. Used without αv in relative sentences, conditional sentences, purpose clauses, after secondary tenses in purpose clauses and clauses of fearing.
- 5. In **Indirect Discourse** (see Chapter 61), the Optative may be used to represent the Indicative or Subjunctive after secondary tenses. **Secondary**, or **Historic**, **tenses** are those used for past time the Imperfect, Pluperfect, and Aorist expressing past time. Primary, or Principal tenses, are those used for present time the Present, Perfect expressing a present state of affairs, and those expressing future time the Future and the Future Perfect.

When the Optative is used in indirect discourse the tenses do imply a period in time. This is the condition in which one might meet a Future Optative e.g. "He said that he wished that **they would do** something"

e.g. ἐφοβούμην μὴ γένοιτο I was afraid (that) it might happen (lest it happen) ἐφοβούμην μὴ οὐ γένοιτο I was afraid (that) it might not happen (lest it not happen)

60.3 The tenses of the **Optative**: Only Aorist and Present Optatives occur in the GNT.

Note the characteristic -01- of the Optative (replaced by $-\alpha 1$ - in the Aorist) Note also that there is no augment on the Aorist.

Person	Present Active	Present Mid/Pass	s. Aorist Active	Aorist Middle	Aorist Passive
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2	SΤΕΜ-οις	STEM-010	STΕΜ-σαις	SΤΕΜ-σαιο	STEM-θείης
3	STEM-ot	STEM-οιτο	STEM-σαι	STEM-σαιτο	STEM-θείη
1	STEM-οιμεν	STEM-οίμεθα	STEM-σαιμεν	STEM-σαίμεθα	STEM-θεῖμεν
2	STEM-οιτε	STEM-οισθε	STEM-σαιτε	STEM-σαισθε	STEM-θεῖτε
3	STEM-01EV	STEM-οιντο	STEM-σαιεν	STEM-σαιντο	STEM-θεῖεν

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ἐν κύριφ. of you in the Lord. (Philem. v.20)												
(\dot{o} ναίμην = Second Aorist Optative Middle of \dot{o} νίνημι - I benefit, enjoy)		•	• •									
		(ὀναίμην =	Second Aorist Op	otative Mi	ddle of	ὀνίνημι - I bene	efit, enjoy)					

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6. εἶπεν δὲ Μαριάμ, Ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη κυρίου,
                                                         And Mary said, "Behold, the handmaid of the
        γένοιτό μοι κατά τὸ ἡῆμά σου.
                                                           Lord, let it be to me according to your word.
        ( Mαριάμ is a variant spelling of Mαρία - both derived from the Hebrew "Miriam") (Luke 1:38)
7. ὡς δὲ ἤκουσαν τοὺς λόγους τούτους...
                                                         When the High Priests heard these words
      οί ἀρχιερεῖς διηπόρουν περὶ αὐτῶν
                                                           they were perplexed about them (and) what
        τί ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτο.
                                                            this might become (where this might lead)
        (\delta i \eta \pi \acute{o} \rho o \nu \nu) = Imperfect of \delta i \alpha \pi o \rho \acute{e} \omega - I am at a loss, cannot work out) (Acts 5:24)
8. (ὁ Φῆστος εἶπεν,) Ἀπορούμενος δὲ ἐγὼ
                                                         (Festus said,) "Being at a loss (as to) how to
    τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν
                                                          investigate (search about) these questions
       ἔλεγον εἰ βούλοιτο πορεύεσθαι
                                                          I said (asked) if he wished to travel to
        είς Ίεροσόλυμα κάκεῖ κρίνεσθαι.
                                                           Jerusalem to be tried there. (see Acts 25:20)
  (\dot{\alpha}\pi o\rho o\dot{\nu}\mu \epsilon vo\varsigma) = Present Participle Middle of \dot{\alpha}\pi o\rho \dot{\epsilon}\omega - I am at a loss, can't see the way through
     \dot{\eta} ζήτησις = question, dispute. from ζητέω - I seek)
9. Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;
                                                         What then shall we say?
     ὁ νόμος (ἐστιν) ἁμαρτία;
                                                             (That) the Law is sin?
        μὴ γένοιτο.
                                                                 God forbid!
                                                                                 (Rom. 7:7)
10. Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ
                                                         May God our Father himself and
     ό κύριος ήμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι
                                                            our Lord Jesus prosper our road (journey)
        τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
                                                                                 (1 Thess. 3:11)
        ( κατευθύναι = Aorist Optative of κατευθύνω - I straighten out, prosper a journey )
60.4 Sentences for reading and translation
1. αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἁγιάσαι ὑμᾶς.
                                                                                  (1 Thess. 5:23)
2. Τί οὖν, ἁμαρτήσωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ γαριν;
        μὴ γένοιτο.
                                                                                  (Rom. 6:15)
3. ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ. (2 Thess. 3:5)
        ( κατευθύναι = Aorist Optative of κατευθύνω - I straighten out, prosper a journey)
4. νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο.
                                                                                  (Rom. 3:31)
5. ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλω διακρινόμενος, . . .
        εἶπεν, Ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος.
                                                                                  (Jude v.9)
                ( Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος - Michael the archangel )
6. Λέγω οὖν, Μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο.
                                                                                  (Rom. 11:1)
                (\dot{\alpha}\pi\dot{\omega}\sigma\alpha\tau o = Aorist Middle of \dot{\alpha}\pi\omega\theta\dot{\varepsilon}\omega - I push away, reject)
7. τινές δὲ ... τῶν φιλοσόφων ... ἔλεγον,
        Τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὕτος λέγειν;
                                                                                  (Acts 17:18)
                (\dot{o} \varphi i \lambda \dot{o} \sigma o \varphi o \varsigma - philosopher)
                                                         ό σπερμολόγος - babbler)
8. ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
        Ίησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὖ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κάγὼ κόσμω. (Gal. 6:14)
9. αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐπλήσθησαν ἀνοίας καὶ διελάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους
        τί ἂν ποιήσαιεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.
                                                                                  (Luke 6:11)
                (\dot{\eta} \dot{\alpha} voi\alpha - wrath, rage, fury, stupidity διαλαλέω - I discuss, talk about)
10. ἔλεος ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ ἀγάπην πληθυνθείη.
                                                                                  (Jude v.2)
60.5 Writing Practice: Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud: Philippians 4:4-6
        Χαίρετε ἐν κύριω πάντοτε ·
                                                         Rejoice in the Lord at all times;
                πάλιν ἐρῶ, γαίρετε.
                                                                 Again I will say, "Rejoice!"
        τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω
                                                         Let your gentleness be known
                πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.
                                                                 to all men.
        ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.
                                                         The Lord (is) near.
                μηδέν μεριμνᾶτε,
                                                                 Worry about nothing
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60.6 There is no New Testament Passage for reading and translation. The Practice Sentences have given a good over-view of the uses of the Optative.

60.7 Vocabulary to learn

κατευθύνω I straighten out , prosper a journey)

πάρειμι I am present, near, at hand

πληθύνω I fill, fulfil $\tau \alpha \rho \acute{\alpha} \sigma \sigma ω \qquad \qquad I disturb, agitate$

τὸ δεῖπνον supper, dinner, feast \dot{o} τρόπος way, manner, way of life