

An Analysis of the Tense Usage of Non-Indicative Moods of the Greek Verb Κρίνω and Its Implications

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1. Introduction

The verbal aspect theory has been widely accepted among scholars and is considered useful for interpreting various New Testament texts. While recent studies on verbal aspect have shed light on the author's choice of tense, offering theories and grammatical perspectives that differ from traditional approaches,¹⁾ relatively few research has been conducted on the non-indicative mood of the Greek verbs.²⁾ One possible reason for this is that applying verbal aspect theory to non-indicative verbs is significantly more complex and even problematic.

This paper explores the question of why the author chooses different tenses when using verbs in the non-indicative moods. As a test case, this research will analyze the tense usage of the non-indicative moods of the Greek verb κρίνω in

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1) See S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); B. M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); C. R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

2) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

the Septuagint (LXX), the New Testament, *Philo*, and *Josephus*. Specifically, I will attempt to explicate differences in the tense usage of κρίνω in the non-indicative moods, focusing on the author's choice of tense and the semantic values of the term, while seeking to understand how non-indicative verb κρίνω should be interpreted. The verb κρίνω is common in the Greco-Roman context, yet it often carries significant theological implications, particularly in reference to final judgment in the LXX and New Testament texts.

To this end, I will consider 'verbal aspect'³⁾ and *Aktionsart*⁴⁾ — namely, 'lexical aspect'⁵⁾ — in connection with four distinctive categories: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements, in light of their contextual factors. In my analysis, out of a total of 140 occurrences, the verb κρίνω in the non-indicative is employed 41 times in the imperative, 72 in the infinitive, and 27 in the subjunctive.⁶⁾ Most instances appear in either the aorist or present tense, while the perfect tense is quite rare (only three occurrences). As we analyze the non-indicative forms of κρίνω below, it should be noted, first, that in terms of aspectual values, while the spatial value of 'remoteness and proximity'

3) In terms of aspectual values, the aorist tense has to do basically with the spatial value of 'remoteness', the present tense with 'proximity', and the perfect tense with 'heightened proximity'.

4) For the difference between verbal aspect, C. R. Campbell states:

Verbal aspect refers to the manner in which verbs are used to view an action or state. An author/speaker will portray an event either from the inside, as though it is seen as unfolding (imperfective aspect), or from the outside, as though it is seen as a whole (perfective aspect). In contrast to aspect, *Aktionsart* refers to procedural characteristics, which are the ways in which verbs behave in particular settings, according to lexeme and a variety of contextual factors. Aspect is regarded as a semantic category, inherent to the grammatical nature of the verb, while *Aktionsart* is a pragmatic category *Aktionsart* (C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 6).

5) See Z. Vendler, "Verbs and Times", *PhR* 66 (1957), 143-160; C. J. Thompson, "What is Aspect?: Contrasting Definitions in General Linguistics and New Testament Studies", S. E. Runge and C. J. Fresch, eds., *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016), 13-80.

6) The usage of non-indicative forms of κρίνω in the LXX, NT, *Philo*, and *Josephus* searched in Accordance 12:

		LXX Rahlfs			NTG ²⁸			<i>Philo</i>			<i>Josephus</i>			Total
Tense		Aor	Pres	Perf	Aor	Pres	Perf	Aor	Pres	Perf	Aor	Pres	Perf	-
Mood	Imperative	25	2	0	5	6	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	41
	Infinitive	10	16	0	4	9	0	0	7	1	7	16	2	72
	Subjunctive	9	1	0	8	2	0	4	0	0	3	(2)	0	27(29)

or ‘perfective and imperfective aspect’ is critical in the indicative mood,⁷⁾ κρίνω in the non-indicative moods is more closely related to categories of ‘general and specific instruction’⁸⁾ and their pragmatic implicatures, and second, that in terms of lexical aspect, κρίνω, both transitive and intransitive, should be considered under the following categories according to Vendler’s taxonomy: (1) activities [+durativity: “I judge” or “I criticize”]; (2) accomplishments [+durativity and +telicity: “He has judged until today”]; or (3) achievements [+telicity: “He was judged at a court”].⁹⁾

In this paper, I will analyze the tense usage of κρίνω in the imperative mood first, then in the infinitive mood, and finally in the subjunctive mood. I will then summarize the findings of this analysis and conclude by pointing out some implications of this research. This study may contribute to understanding how verbal aspect theory should be applied when interpreting non-indicative Greek verbs.

2. Imperative of κρίνω

2.1. Aorist Tense

The usage of the aorist imperative κρίνω can be semantically divided into four main categories: (1) “to judge” in a judicial setting;¹⁰⁾ (2) “to make a decision/to consider” without a judicial sense;¹¹⁾ (3) “to dispute/to plead” with a passive form (e.g., κρίθητε);¹²⁾ and (4) “to interpret”.¹³⁾

With regard to verbal aspect, the aorist imperative signifies specific commands in particular situations that possibly fit the perfective aspect.¹⁴⁾ For instance,

7) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 6-7.

8) As the ‘general and specific rule’ is closely related to the author’s tense usage in the imperative mood, the aorist tense is typically chosen for specific situations, as it conveys a perfective aspect, whereas the present tense is used for general or axiomatic situations, as it implies an imperfective aspect.

9) Z. Vendler, “Verbs and Times”, 143-160; C. J. Thompson, “What is Aspect?”, 49.

10) Deu 1:16; 2Ch 24:22; 1Ma 7:42; Psa 5:11; 7:9; 9:20 (passive); 25:1; 34:24; 42:1; 53:3; 81:3, 8; 118:154; Hos 13:10; Zec 7:9; 8:16; Isa 1:17; Jer 21:12; Eze 7:14; Joh 18:31.

11) Isa 5:3; Ode 10:3; Act 4:19; Rom 14:13; 1Co 10:15; 11:13; *Ant.* 4.191; *Life* 430; *Spec.* 3.54.

12) Job 35:14; Hos 2:4; Mic 6:1.

13) Dan 2:6.

14) K. L. McKay, “Aspect in Imperative Constructions in New Testament Greek”, *Novum*

commands in the NT occur in specific contexts: “Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and judge (κρίνατε) him according to your law’” (Joh 18:31a); “Let us therefore no longer judge (κρίνωμεν) one another, but rather consider (κρίνατε) this, that is, not to put an obstacle or stumbling block before your brothers and sisters” (Rom 14:13); “I speak as to sensible people. Consider (κρίνατε) for yourselves what I say” (1Co 10:15); “Consider (κρίνατε) for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled?” (1Co 11:13).

In John 18:31, the aorist imperative κρίνω is clearly used in a judicial context. Other examples, however, pertain to food disputation (τοῦτο) in Romans 14:13, an idolatry issue (ὁ φημι) in 1 Corinthians 10:15, and women’s head-covering debate in 1 Corinthians 11:13, which are far from a juridical setting. Nonetheless, whether the context involves judicial judgment or not, most of them exhibit telicity, as they refer to specific situations. Particularly in Romans 14:13, the author employs the aorist imperative κρίνατε in verse 13b for a specific action, while using the present tense subjunctive κρίνωμεν in verse 13a, where no telicity is implied, which will be discussed shortly.

In terms of lexical aspect, most instances of κρίνω (1) – especially in the Septuagint – occur in judicial contexts, though these settings are often imaginative rather than literal courtrooms. Similarly, in category (3), the passive form κρίθητε is frequently accompanied by prepositions such as πρὸς or ἐναντίον, implying a juridical scenario without necessarily involving an actual courtroom. These instances often lack explicit object, but the implied parties include God (Job 35:14), a mother (Hos 2:4), or mountains (Mic 6:1).

The semantic meaning of the aorist imperative κρίνω, however, is not determined by the lexeme alone, but by contextual factors and pragmatic situations. For example, in Deuteronomy 1:16 (“Judge righteously between man, brother, and his resident alien”), the command carries no positive or negative connotation in and of itself. In contrast, phrases like κρίνόν με, Κύριε (or ὁ θεός) in several psalms (e.g., Psa 5:11; 7:9; 25:1; 34:24; 42:1; 53:3; 118:154) take on a positive connotation, often translated as “vindicate me” or “save me”, reflecting the speaker’s petition. Similarly, in Psalms 82:3 (“Judge [κρίνατε] to the weak and the orphan” [LXX Psa 81:3]), the NRSV fittingly renders κρίνατε here as

Testamentum 27 (1985), 201-226, at 207; C. R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 92; C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 84-86.

“give justice”. Here, “judge” in Psalms 82:3 denotes administrative justice in the context of the royal governance. Other biblical instances can be more or less understood in the same way (e.g., Zec 7:9; 8:16; Isa 1:17; Jer 21:12).

Conversely, some instances embrace a negative connotation, implying punishment or destruction for the recipient: “Rise up, O LORD! Do not let man prevail. Let the nations be judged (κριθήτωσαν) before you” (Psa 9:20); “Rise up, O God, judge (κρίνον) the earth; for your will take possession of all the nations!” (LXX Psa 81:8; Psa 82:8); “Judge (κρίνον) him [Nicanor] according to his wickedness.” (1Ma 7:42)

2.2. Present Tense

The meaning of the present imperative κρίνω can be categorized as: (1) “to judge” primarily in a judicial context;¹⁵⁾ and (2) “to criticize/to condemn” mainly in a social context.¹⁶⁾

The present tense, which encodes imperfective aspect, expresses a general instruction, often used without any given contexts.¹⁷⁾ This is evident in Proverbs, where the present imperative κρίνω appears exclusively in the LXX: “Open your mouth to the word of God and judge (κρίνε) all soundly; open your mouth and judge (κρίνε) righteously but defend the poor and the weak.” (Pro 31:8-9)

In addition, “do not criticize” (μὴ κρίνετε) in the taxonomy (2), which employs the present imperative, lacks specific boundaries or contexts (e.g., Mat 7:1; Luk 6:37). This usage entails ‘gnomic’ or ‘iterative *Aktionsart*’. In Romans 14:3, likewise, Paul talks about a principle in general terms, although the text is situated within a particular context (i.e., a food dispute). In other cases, there are direct object, such as τις or τι within specific situations, but these still convey general commands, since the direct object implies generality. For instance, “Therefore do not let anyone criticize you about food and drink, or about a matter of festival, new moon festival, or sabbaths.” (Col 2:16)

All these instances nicely fall into activity category [+durativity, -telicity], denoting ongoing or repeated activities without specific contextual boundaries.¹⁸⁾

15) Pro 31:8, 9.

16) Mat 7:1; Luk 6:37; Joh 7:24(x2); Rom 14:3; 1Co 4:5; Col 2:16.

17) W. G. Morrice, “Translating the Greek Imperative”, *Bible Translator* 24 (1973), 129-134, at 129-130; C. R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 70, 91.

However, the final meaning of the present imperative of κρίνω is not determined solely by its aspectual features, but depends heavily on pragmatic and contextual factors. Some challenging cases include John 7:24 and 1 Corinthians 4:5: “Do not judge (κρίνετε) according to appearance, but judge (κρίνετε) with the righteous judgment” (Joh 7:24); “Thus do not judge (κρίνετε) before the time until the Lord comes” (1Co 4:5). Although these examples are, strictly speaking, not dicta or principles per se, they should be understood as conveying general opinions with continuous or iterative *Aktionsart* in view.

2.3. Summary

The verb κρίνω in the imperative mood appears only in the aorist tense and present tense. In the imperative mood, the use of tense does not primarily convey *temporality*, but it is instead associated with perfective or imperfective aspect embedded with pragmatic implicature in context. As such, it follows, for the most part, the ‘general and specific rule’ proposed by W. G. Morrice, K. L. McKay, S. E. Porter, and C. R. Campbell. According to this principle, one can expect the author’s tense usage where the aorist tense would be used in the specific situation, or the present tense shall be employed in the general situation as an axiom or maxim. What is more, while the basic semantic meaning of the verb κρίνω is “to judge”, “to consider”, “to dispute”, “to criticize”, its meaning can extend to “to vindicate”, “to save”, “to condemn”, and “to give justice”, depending upon its *Aktionsart* and contextual factors.

3. Infinitive of κρίνω

3.1. Aorist Tense

The meaning of the aorist infinitive κρίνω can be lexically sorted into three groups: (1) “to judge” in a judicial setting;¹⁹⁾ (2) “to dispute/to go to court” with passive form κριθῆναι in a judicial sense;²⁰⁾ (3) “to make a decision/to

18) K. L. McKay, “Aspect in Imperative Constructions”, 208.

19) 1Ch 16:33; Psa 9:39(10:18); 95:13; 97:9; Pro 31:5; Epj 63; 1Pe 4:5; War 5.386; 6.284.

20) Ecc 6:10(passive); Job 9:3(passive); Mat 5:40(passive); Act 25:9; Rev 11:18.

consider”,²¹⁾ and (4) “to interpret”.²²⁾

The aorist infinitive semantically encodes perfective aspect, presenting an undefined and summary viewpoint.²³⁾ If this is the case, then the aorist infinitive of κρίνω is more likely to be used in specific situations, although this is not an absolute rule. For instance, in several biblical texts (Gen 19:19; 2Ma 13:13; 15:17; 1Pe 4:5; Act 25:9) and all of *Josephus* texts (*Ant.* 3.201; 9.65; 10.272; 13.79; 13.224; *War* 5.386; 6.284), the aorist infinitive κρίνω appears in clearly defined contexts.

Nonetheless, several other biblical texts lack situational contexts, as their authors seem to speak in aphorisms or general principles (1Ch 16:33; Psalms 9:39[10:18]; 95:13; 97:9; Pro 31:5; Ecc 6:10; Job 9:3; Epj 63; Mat 5:40; Rev 11:18). For instance, “... so that they would never be able to judge (κρίναι) the weak correctly (Pro 31:5); “... and they will not be able to dispute (τοῦ κριθῆναι) with the one who is stronger than him” (Ecc 6:10c); “If whoever wants to go to court (κριθῆναι) with you to take your tunic, give up your garment to him” (Mat 5:40). These examples, among others, unmistakably reflect proverbial wisdom or maxims, where the ‘general and specific rule’ does not adequately account for the tense differences.

Other factors may affect the tense usage of the infinitive κρίνω, such as, temporality, verbal constructions, unreality, and direct/indirect speech.²⁴⁾ In the case of Proverbs 31:5 and Ecclesiastes 6:10, for instance, the texts convey impossibility, strongly implying irrealis. By contrast, Matthew 5:40 does not depict an unrealistic situation. Instead, it might refer to the distant future, aligning with “the mild degree of remoteness” inherent to perfective aspect.²⁵⁾

Grammatically, further, most occurrences of the aorist infinitive κρίνω appear in the [verb + infinitive] construction as complements.²⁶⁾ As C. R. Campbell

21) 2Ma 13:13; 15:17; *Ant.* 3.201; 13.79; 13.224.

22) *Ant.* 10.272.

23) C. R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 95.

24) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 101-120. For example, Toshikazu Foley posits that substantial use, complements, indirect discourse, catenative constructions, appositional/ expository, purpose or result, and command are key elements to take into consideration when translating the infinitive verbs in light of aspectual features. See T. S. Foley, *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek Verbal Aspect in Theory and Practice*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 208-218; cf. P. Stork, *The Aspectual Usage of the Dynamic Infinitive in Herodotus* (Groningen: Bourma, 1982).

25) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 115.

notes, “aorist infinitival usage is often determined by its function within certain constructions that are predisposed to it.”²⁷⁾ So, these verbal infinitival constructions yield various semantic nuances. For example, [ἔρχομαι / ἦκω / θέλω / βούλομαι + infinitive] has (a) ingressive *Aktionsart*, referring to the starting point of a judgment, or (b) summary *Aktionsart*, reflecting a final decision. In addition, the verbal constellation ἔχοντι κρίναι ζώντας καὶ νεκρούς in 1 Peter 4:5 expresses an inherent endpoint implying eschatological judgment in terms of summary or completeness.

3.2. Present Tense

The usage of the present infinitive κρίνω can be semantically classified as follows: (1) “to judge” in a judicial and social setting;²⁸⁾ and (2) “to dispute/to go to court” with the passive form κριθῆναι in a judicial sense;²⁹⁾ and (3) “to rule justly/to give justice” in a broader social and administrative setting.³⁰⁾

Concerning verbal aspect, the present infinitive semantically encodes the imperfective aspect, offering an unfolding/internal viewpoint.³¹⁾ R. W. Klund observes that the present infinitive is often determined by lexical and/or syntactical constraints.³²⁾ Consequently, as in the aorist, most cases of the present infinitive fall in either (1) verbal constructions, or (2) prepositional phrases.³³⁾ This pattern helps explain why certain verbs, such as μέλλω, and prepositional phrases, such as [ἐν τῷ + infinitive], tend to take the present infinitive. In terms of *Aktionsart*, these constructions imply either ingressive

26) E.g., ἔρχομαι + inf (1Ch 16:33; 2Ma 13:13; Psa 95:13; possibly, Rev 11:18), ἦκω + inf (Psa 97:9), δύναιμαι + inf (2Ma 15:17; Pro 31:5; Ecc 6:10; Epj 63), προσέχω + inf (Psa 9:39), βούλομαι + inf (Job 9:3), θέλω + inf (Mat 5:40; Act 25:9), and ἔχω + inf (1Pe 4:5).

27) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 110.

28) Gen 19:9; Exo 18:13; 1Ma 9:73; Psa 50:6; Pro 29:7; Sir 45:26; Lam 3:36; Sus 53; Joh 8:26; Act 17:31; Rom 3:4; 1Co 5:12; 2Ti 4:1.

29) Jdg 4:5; 21:22; Psa 108:7; Act 25:10, 20; 1Co 6:1; Jam 2:12.

30) Rut 1:1; 1Ki 3:9; 2Ch 19:8; Psa 71:2; Sir 4:9.

31) C. R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 72-73.

32) R. W. Klund, “The Use of the Infinitive of Purpose in the New Testament”, M.Th. Dissertation (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1994), 15.

33) E.g., (1) verb + infinitive constructions: δύναιμαι + inf (1Ki 3:9), ἔχω + inf (Joh 8:26), μέλλω + inf (Act 17:31; 2Ti 4:1; Jam 2:12), δεῖ + inf (Act 25:10), βούλομαι + inf (Act 25:20), τοιμᾶω + inf (1Co 6:1); and (2) preposition + infinitive constructions: ἐν τῷ + inf (Rut 1:1; Psa 50:6; 108:7; Sir 4:9; Lam 3:36; Rom 3:4).

action (especially with verb μέλλω) or iterative action (particularly with ἐν τῷ phrase): “Because he set the day on which he is about to judge (μέλλει κρίνειν) the world by righteousness” (Act 17:31); “When the judges ruled (ἐν τῷ κρίνειν), there was a famine” (Rut 1:1).

What is more, the imperfective aspect can be used with verbs that indicate repetition to describe an ongoing situation.³⁴⁾ Regardless of the verbal or prepositional construction, the authors employ the present infinitive when contextual cues suggest iterativity in the case of type (3). For example, in 1 Kings 3:9, the present infinitive κρίνειν is chosen because it implies ongoing action without a defined endpoint, hence the translation “to rule justly”. Similarly, LXX Psalms 71:1-2 illustrates this well, where the author uses κρίνειν to describe the king’s social and administrative justice in the context of royal governance: “Give the king your justice (τὸ κρίμα σου), O God, and your righteousness to the king’s son. May he judge (κρίνειν) your people with righteousness, and the poor of yours with justice to the people.” These examples show ongoing activities rather than a one-time court judgment.

A more intricate case arises in the dialogue between Festus and Paul in Acts 25:9-10, where the passive infinitive form of κρίνω is used in two different tenses: the aorist in verse 9 and the present in verse 10:

Festus: θέλεις ... περὶ τούτων κριθῆναι[aor] ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ;

Do you want ... to go to court concerning these matters upon me? (Act 25:9)

Paul: ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἐστὼς εἰμί οὗ με δεῖ κρίνεσθαι[pres].

I will be standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I must dispute (Act 25:10)

Although both usages share the same lexical feature and context, the author’s choice of different tenses in immediate context raises questions. Two possible explanations can be proposed: First, lexical preference: it might be suggested that δεῖ tends to take the present infinitive in the biblical texts, *Philo*, and *Josephus*. However, this is unlikely, as δεῖ frequently takes the aorist infinitive as well. Second, viewpoint: a more plausible explanation lies in the author’s

34) C. J. Thompson, “What is Aspect?”, 65; On a more detailed discussion on the lexical sense of κρίνω, see Y. Lee, “Judging or Ruling the Twelve Tribes of Israel? The Sense of κρίνω in Matthew 19:28”, *The Bible Translator* 66 (2015), 138-150.

deliberate choice of viewpoint. In the context of Paul's trial, Paul is directly involved in this affair, whereas Festus is not. Thus, the aorist infinitive (κριθῆναι) indicates Festus's external, detached perspective, encoding a perfective aspect. In contrast, the present infinitive (κρίνεσθαι) highlights Paul's internal, active involvement, encoding an imperfective aspect. This distinction underscores the nuanced use of aspect to convey differing perspectives within the narratives.

3.3. Perfect Tense

The passive perfect infinitive κεκρίσθαι occurred only once in *Philo* and twice in *Josephus*. The usage of the perfect infinitive κρίνω can be either (1) "to judge" in a judicial setting³⁵⁾ or (2) "to consider" in a social setting.³⁶⁾

The verbal constellations with the passive, as illustrated in *Philo's Mut.* 141 and *Josephus' Ant.* 4.217 and *Life* 237, have no explicit telicity.³⁷⁾ My translation of these texts is as follows: " ... supposing that it is best to have been considered (κεκρίσθαι) by the correct word" (*Mut.* 141); "For otherwise God would seem to be despised and weaker than those to whom assign the sentence (ψηφον, lit. voting-pebble), out of fear of power, to be judged (κεκρίσθαι)" (*Ant.* 4.217); " ... so that the ones who recognized that I have been considered (κεκρίσθαι) an enemy by the Galileans might reckon themselves" (*Life* 237).

Given the rarity of this form, it is more complicated than other tenses to explicate why the author chooses the perfect tense in each case. However, the basic semantic value of the imperfective aspect is evident in connection with its pragmatic implicature. The verbal constructions suggest that the temporal procedure can be understood from the context as involving a stative *Aktionsart* (generic state) in the sense that the subject is "to have been considered" up to the point when it was written. Additionally, the perfect infinitive κεκρίσθαι in *Life* 237 is employed in a juridical context. Contextually, *Josephus* points to the judge who executes an incorrect judgment out for fear. In this case, the semantic value of κεκρίσθαι is negative, and thus it can be translated into "have been

35) *Ant.* 4.217.

36) *Mut.* 141; *Life* 237.

37) cf. C. J. Thompson, "What is Aspect?", 57-58.

condemned”.

3.4. Summary

The verb κρίνω in the infinitive mood is deployed with aorist, present, and perfect tenses. After analyzing several texts, it remains a vexed question as to why the author chooses different tenses for the infinitive κρίνω. A few remarks can be made: First, as a compliment, the tense of the infinitive κρίνω is often determined by the main verb and its verbal construction (e.g., μέλλω, ἄρχω plus infinitive). Second, it is also frequently determined by the prepositional construction (e.g., ἐν τῷ plus infinitive). Third, contextual cues and *Aktionsarten* are much more crucial than in the case of imperative in deciding its tenses. Fourth, in terms of aspectual feature, direct or indirect speech should also be considered in connection with its viewpoint within the narratives. Fifth, given the paucity of the perfect infinitive κρίνω, the goal of providing a coherent account for the author’s choice of the perfect tense seems elusive. Nevertheless, temporality, aspectual and lexical factors, and contextual cues could be keys to understanding the tense usage.

4. Subjunctive of κρίνω

4.1. Aorist Tense

There are five lexical meanings of the aorist subjunctive κρίνω: (1) “to judge”;³⁸⁾ (2) “to dispute/to go to court”;³⁹⁾ (3) “to decide”;⁴⁰⁾ (4) “to rule”;⁴¹⁾ and (5) “to criticize/to condemn”.⁴²⁾ The aorist subjunctive of κρίνω is mostly used in the [μὴ, ἵνα, ἕως + subjunctive] forms in dependent clauses. Statistically, the authors of biblical texts, *Philo*, and *Josephus* prefer the aorist (24 times) in the subjunctive mood over the present (3 times). What complicates the matter is

38) Deu 25:1; Sir 35:23; Eze 35:11; *War* 6.134; Joh 3:17; 8:16; 12:47; 2Th 2:12; Jam 5:9; 1Pe 4:6.

39) Psa 36:33; Isa 43:26.

40) 1Es 3:9; 6:22; 2Ma 15:21; *Legum.* 1.99; *Her.* 7; *Spec.* 4:173; *Praem.* 87; *Ant.* 4.34.

41) 2Ch 1:11.

42) Mat 7:1; Luk 6:37; *War* 1.622.

identifying the form of the active and middle present subjunctive κρίνω, which is identical to that of the aorist. In other words, only the passive aorist subjunctive κρίνω is distinguishable in its grammatical form.

While the subjunctives typically “play a rhetorically supportive role”, as J. T. Reed suggests,⁴³⁾ the perfective aspect generally represents an external viewpoint germane to the specific situations.⁴⁴⁾ When the usage of κρίνω means “to judge” in a specific situation, it nicely fits the ‘general and specific rule.’ Let us see some examples in the Septuagint: “If there is lawsuit among peoples, let them come to the court, they may judge (κρίνωσιν), and give justice to the righteous and condemnation to the ungodly” (Deu 25:1); “... but ask yourself wisdom and understanding, in order that you may rule (κρίνῃς) my people, upon whom I have made you king” (2Ch 1:11). There are more examples in the NT: “... in order that all who do not trust in the truth but take delight in unrighteousness will be condemned (ἵνα κριθῶσιν)” (2Th 2:12); “For this reason, the gospel was proclaimed to the dead, so that they might be condemned (ἵνα κριθῶσιν) according to peoples by flesh, but may live according to God by spirit” (1Pe 4:6). The tense of κρίνω in all of these texts takes the aorist situated within a juridical setting, although the specific situations vary.

Some cases can be accounted for by other factors, such as a grammatical construction. For example, the preposition ἕως almost always takes the aorist subjunctive, and “never the present.”⁴⁵⁾ Sirach 35:23 is a good example: “... until he judges (ἕως κρίνῃ) the case of his people and will make them rejoice in his mercy.”

Three instances in John’s Gospel are more complex because the tense of κρίνω here can be taken both as the aorist and the present. In my view, it should reasonably be considered that κρίνω in John 3:17 and 12:47 is the aorist, since the specific context refers to the final judgment which cannot be repetitive: “Therefore, God did not send the son into the world to condemn (ἵνα κρίνῃ) the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (Joh 3:17); “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I will not condemn (κρίνω) him

43) J. T. Reed, “Identifying Theme in the New Testament: Insights from Discourse Analysis”, S. E. Porter and D. A. Carson, eds., *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, JSNTSup 113 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 86.

44) C. R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 56.

45) Ibid., 59.

because I came not to condemn (ὅνα κρίνω) the world, but to save the world” (Joh 12:47). The semantic value of κρίνω means “to judge” or “to condemn” in stark contrast to “to save” (σώζω). In these texts, Jesus is described as the agent of eschatological judge and savior in the context of the final judgment. On the other hand, κρίνω in John 8:16 should be taken as the present, since the action of “judging” in the conditional clause has no specific boundaries or contexts: “But even if I judge (ἐάν κρίνω), my judgment is true because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me” (Joh 8:16).

More problematic are the cases of Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:37, and James 5:9, where the aorist tense seems inappropriate for describing the general situation: “Do not criticize, so that you might not be criticized (ὅνα μὴ κριθῇτε)” (Mat 7:1); “Do not criticize, then you will never be criticized (οὐ μὴ κριθῇτε)” (Luk 6:37); “Beloved brothers, do not complain against one another, so that you may not be judged (ὅνα μὴ κριθῇτε)” (Jam 5:9). On this matter, Campbell’s comment is quite helpful: “It is probable that the reason for which the aorist subjunctive — and not the present — is employed in emphatic future negative construction is that perfective aspect suits the portrayal of future events that will not occur.”⁴⁶⁾

Additionally, M. Aubrey’s analysis sheds light on this phrase. According to Aubrey, the prohibition “DO NOT STRAT X” in a complex construction requires the combination of the perfective aspect and the subjunctive mood in a general situation.⁴⁷⁾ If this is the case, the sentence “... in order that you may not be criticized” in Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:37, and James 5:9 can be translated as “... in order that they may not start to criticize you.” Of course, this is just one possible way to understand it.

4.2. Present Tense

The meaning of the present subjunctive κρίνω is: (1) “to judge”⁴⁸⁾ and (2) “to criticize/to condemn”.⁴⁹⁾ The present subjunctives of κρίνω are found in only

46) Ibid., 58.

47) M. Aubrey, “Greek Prohibition”, S. E. Runge and C. J. Fresch, eds., *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016), 486-538, at 534-535.

48) Wis 9:3; Joh 8:16.

49) Rom 14:13.

three places (Wis 9:3; Joh 8:16; Rom 14:13).

In the LXX, the only instance of the usage of the present subjunctive κρίνω is Wisdom 9:3, where it is well suited to the ‘general and specific rule’. It thus serves as an axiom in a general situation: “... in order to administer the world by holiness and righteousness and to judge the judgment (ἵνα ... κρίσιν κρίνῃ) by the uprightness of soul.” The context speaks of the cosmic reign of God, and his right judgment is portrayed as the royal mandate for ruling regarded as a general principle. In addition, there are two instances in the NT: one is John 8:16 discussed above, and the other is Romans 14:13.

The prohibition “Do not judge” in Romans 14:13 fits with the imperfective aspect, denoting that it is an ongoing action without boundaries. However, another explanation is available. Based on Aubrey’s argument, ἔτι in the prohibition Μηκέτι κρίνωμεν in Romans 14:13 suggests that this element follows the “STOP DOING X” category, which requires the imperfective aspect, even though it is not the imperative but the subjunctive.⁵⁰⁾ If this is the case, Romans 14:13 can be translated as follows: “Let us therefore stop judging (κρίνωμεν) one another any longer, but rather consider (κρίνατε) this, that is, not to put an obstacle or stumbling block” (Rom 14:13). This translation implies a situation where the Christ-followers in Rome had already criticized one another, which was probably one of the problems therein.

4.3. Summary

For the most part, the subjunctive κρίνω takes the aorist tense, which is often used in a specific situation. Given the specific legal context, the aorist tense is aptly suited with the perfective aspect, combined with its *Aktionsart*. As in the case of the infinitive, certain prepositions require the aorist tense (e.g., ἕως), providing the boundaries of its semantic value. The aorist tense used in Matthew 7:1; Luke 6:37; James 5:9 might be explained by “emphatic future negative construction” which requires the perfective aspect, or, compatibly, by “DO NOT STRAT X” prohibition offered by Aubrey. Aubrey’s “STOP DOING X” prohibition also casts light on another possible interpretation of Romans 14:13.

50) M. Aubrey, “Greek Prohibition”, 534.

5. Conclusion

As we have examined the non-indicative tense usage of κρίνω in the LXX, the NT, *Philo*, and *Josephus*, it is reasonable to state that the aspectual and lexical elements significantly affect the author's tense choice. The tenses of the non-indicative κρίνω are not just determined by temporality and viewpoint, but also by verbal and prepositional constructions, contextual cues, and pragmatic implicatures.

In the case of the imperative, the 'general and specific rule' provides a fairly coherent explanation for understanding the author's use of the aorist and present tenses. For example, when κρίνω denotes "to judge" in a specific situation (telicity), such as a judicial context, one can expect the author to employ the aorist tense. By contrast, when κρίνω indicates "to criticize" in a general situation (atelicity), such as a maxim or proverb, one can expect the author to use the present tense. This cannot be an absolute rule, however, since there are more complicated cases that are not fully explained by this rule. For the most part, while in the case of the subjunctive the 'general and specific rule' can also be applied not without various exceptions, the infinitive seems not to follow this explanation.

In terms of the semantic value of the verb κρίνω, it is also reasonable to state that the meaning of κρίνω in the non-indicative mood is more closely related to its *Aksionsart* and contextual cues than its viewpoint. For instance, one can expect the author to choose the present tense for "to rule", since the term has an ongoing semantic value (durativity). The specific contexts and pragmatic implicatures strongly determine the semantic value of κρίνω, rendering various glosses, such as "judge", "criticize", "consider", "dispute", "interpret", "to condemn", "to save", "to vindicate", "to give justice", and "to rule justly."

For further study, while recent studies on verbal aspect, suggested by Thompson, Aubrey, among others, offer fresh insights into alternative ways to interpret the author's choice of tense and semantic values, other factors, such as prominence, genre, author's writing habits, and translation technique (particularly in the LXX), should be considered as they play a significant role in deciding the tense of κρίνω in the non-indicative mood.

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<Abstract>

**An Analysis of the Tense Usage of Non-Indicative Moods of
the Greek Verb Κρίνω and Its Implications**

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The verbal aspect theory has been widely accepted among New Testament scholars and is considered a useful tool for interpreting various New Testament texts. While recent studies on verbal aspect have shed light on the author's choice of tense, offering theories and grammatical perspectives that differ from traditional approaches, relatively few research has been conducted on the non-indicative mood of the Greek verbs. One possible reason for this is that applying verbal aspect theory to non-indicative verbs is significantly more complex and even problematic. This paper explores the question of why the author chooses different tenses when using verbs in the non-indicative moods. As a test case, this research analyzes the tense usage of the non-indicative moods of the Greek verb κρίνω in the Septuagint (LXX), the New Testament, *Philo*, and *Josephus*. Specifically, this paper attempts to explicate differences in the tense usage of κρίνω in the non-indicative moods, focusing on the author's choice of tense and the semantic values of the term, while seeking to understand how non-indicative verb κρίνω should be interpreted. Additionally, in this research, 'verbal aspect' and *Aktionsart* — namely, 'lexical aspect' — should be considered in connection with four distinctive categories: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements, in light of their contextual factors. Thus, the tense usage of κρίνω is explored in the imperative mood first, then in the infinitive mood, and finally in the subjunctive mood.

Based on this in-depth analysis, the paper suggests that the aspectual and lexical elements significantly affect the author's tense choice. The tenses of the non-indicative κρίνω are not just determined by temporality and viewpoint, but also by verbal and prepositional constructions, contextual cues, and pragmatic implicatures. For example, in the case of the imperative, the 'general and specific rule' provides a fairly coherent explanation for understanding the author's use of the aorist and present tenses, although this cannot be an absolute

rule. While in the case of the subjunctive the ‘general and specific rule’ can also be applied not without various exceptions, the infinitive seems not to follow this explanation. What is more, regarding the semantic value of the verb κρίνω, the paper proposes that the meaning of κρίνω in the non-indicative mood is more closely related to its *Aksionsart* and contextual cues than its viewpoint. For instance, one can expect the author to choose the present tense for “to rule”, since the term has an ongoing semantic value (durativity). Likewise, the specific contexts and pragmatic implicatures strongly determine the semantic value of κρίνω, thereby rendering various glosses, such as “judge”, “criticize”, “consider”, “dispute”, “interpret”, “to condemn”, “to save”, “to vindicate”, “to give justice”, and “to rule justly”.