

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Grace Theological Journal* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_grace-theological-journal.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_grace-theological-journal.php)

# THE CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJUNCTIVES: A STATISTICAL STUDY\*

JAMES L. BOYER

*Besides providing statistical information not easily available elsewhere and offering supporting elements within each classified use, this study seeks to explore two related subjects which are clarified by this inductive study. They are (1) the parallel between the *iva* + subjunctive construction and the infinitive, and (2) the occurrence of future indicatives in many instances where aorist subjunctives might have appeared. Both of these are significant to the exegete.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

IT is not within the intended scope of this article to deal with the theoretical question of the primary significance of the subjunctive mood or with the question of its historical origin and development. I begin with the basic understanding that the subjunctive mood expresses some doubtfulness, contingency, or uncertainty by reason of futurity. My purpose is to classify the various constructions in which

\*Informational materials and listings generated in the preparation of this study may be found in my "Supplemental Manual of Information: Subjunctive Verbs." Those interested may secure this manual through their local library by interlibrary loan from the Morgan Library, Grace Theological Seminary, 200 Seminary Dr., Winona Lake, IN 46590. Also available is "Supplemental Manual of Information: Infinitive Verbs." This augments my article "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 6 (1985) 3-27. I plan to prepare other supplemental manuals as time permits, beginning with one on participles.

This study is one of several published in *GTJ* on related aspects of the grammar of the Greek NT: (1) "Project Gramcord: A Report" (1 [1980] 97-99); (2) "First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?" (2 [1981] 75-114); (3) "Second Class Conditions in New Testament Greek" (3 [1982] 81-88); (4) "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions" (3 [1982] 163-75); (5) "Other Conditional Elements in New Testament Greek" (4 [1983] 173-88); (6) "The Classification of Participles: A Statistical Study" (5 [1984] 163-79); and (7) "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" (6 [1985] 3-27).

the subjunctive appears in the Greek NT, providing statistical information about these structures in general, and about many of the elements which appear in them. The system of classification is the traditional one found in most grammars.

#### THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

##### *Hortatory Subjunctive*

Usually named first of these independent or main verb uses of the subjunctive is the hortatory subjunctive, in which "the speaker is exhorting others to join him in the doing of an action,"<sup>1</sup> as in 1 John 4:7: Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους / 'Beloved, let us love one another'.<sup>2</sup> Thus it serves to supply the deficiency of the imperative mood which like English has no first person forms.<sup>3</sup> It is almost always in the plural (66 of 69 occurrences); the three exceptions seem to express a slightly different sense. Rather than an exhortation addressed to self there is an invitation to someone else to permit the speaker to do something, as in Luke 6:42 (= Matt 7:4); Ἀδελφέ, ἄφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου / 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye'. The other example of a first person singular is Acts 7:34, with similar meaning.

The example just given also illustrates another frequent characteristic of the hortatory subjunctive: the use of an introductory imperatival word immediately before the subjunctive. The words so used in the NT (and their frequencies) are ἄφες (3), ἄφετε (1), δεῦτε (3), and δεῦρο (1).<sup>4</sup> The first two are aorist imperatives but function as mere hortatory particles. The last two are adverbial particles, with the ending inflected as if to show their imperatival nature. All four function elsewhere as equivalents of a full imperative.<sup>5</sup>

##### *Deliberative Subjunctive*

The subjunctive is also used in deliberative questions, in which a person asks himself or another what he is to do,<sup>6</sup> as in Matt 6:31 τί

<sup>1</sup>H. P. V. Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1951) 82.

<sup>2</sup>Unless stated otherwise the translation of biblical examples is from *NASB*.

<sup>3</sup>A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 93.

<sup>4</sup>This usage also characterized this construction in classical Greek, using ἄγε, φέρε, or δεῦρο. It continues in modern Greek in ἄς (shortened from ἄφες).

<sup>5</sup>BAGD, 125, 176.

<sup>6</sup>Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* by J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 98.

φάγωμεν / 'What shall we eat?' Not all examples are deliberative, however, and BDF expands the title to "the Doubtful [Dubitative] or Deliberative Subjunctive"<sup>7</sup> (cf. Matt 23:33: πῶς φύγητε; / 'How shall you escape?'). The use of the subjunctive in these sentences points to the doubtful, hesitating quality of subjective consideration.

Normally questions in the subjunctive use first person, singular or plural (57 of 102), but when these questions are quoted indirectly the first person may change to second or third. Even beyond this there are a few instances where the deliberation is not with one's self, but advice is being asked from another party. Mark 6:24 (τί αἰτήσωμαι; / 'What shall I ask for?') does not mean that Herodias is deliberating with herself—rather she is asking her mother's advice. Matt 27:22 is a similar case.

These may be simple questions or introduced by an interrogative pronoun or adverb, such as τί (54), τίς (1), πῶς (18), ποῦ (6), ὅπου (2), πόθεν (1), and ποῖος (1). Five times the indirect question is preceded by the substantivizing article.

The deliberative question (as the hortatory subjunctive) may be preceded by an introductory word, i.e., θέλεις, θέλετε, or βούλεσθε (as in classical). If these are thought of as proper verbs the subjunctive clause then would be an object clause replacing the frequent infinitive object. But the absence of a conjunction and the parallel with the introductory hortatory particles make it at least possible to consider these as compressed, deliberative, double questions, as in Matt 20:32 τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν / 'What do you want? What shall I do for you?'<sup>8</sup> (In I Cor 4:21 the editors of the *UBSGNT* even punctuate the sentence as two questions.)

There are other ways to express the deliberative question. (1) The future indicative is used, as in Luke 22:49; Rom 3:5; 4:1; 9:14. In Luke 11:5 the future indicative is used first, followed by two subjunctives, each connected with the future indicative by καί. (2) Even the present indicative is used, as in John 11:45. (3) A paraphrastic construction using δεῖ or δύναμαι plus an infinitive may also be used, as in Matt 12:34; Acts 16:30.

### *Aorist Prohibition*

Strange as it may seem to the beginning Greek student, the use of the subjunctive instead of the imperative in aorist prohibitions is native to Greek from earliest times. Robertson says, "It seems clear

<sup>7</sup>BDF, 185.

<sup>8</sup>My translation; *NASB* renders this subjunctive as if it were an infinitive object clause: 'What do you wish me to do for you?'

that originally both in Sanskrit and Greek prohibition was expressed only by the subj. Hence the growth of the imperative never finally displaced it."<sup>9</sup> In the NT as in classical Greek these negative commands are almost always in the subjunctive mood when they use the aorist tense. The exceptions are few<sup>10</sup> and there seems to be no clear difference in sense. All of them are third person, but there are also 6 examples where third person aorist prohibitions are in the subjunctive mood.

Since these subjunctives are substitutes for the imperative, a consideration of them will be included in a later study of that mood. Here it may be sufficient to point out that they sometimes occur with an introductory ὅρα or ὄρατε, as in classical and parallel to introductory words with hortatory and deliberative subjunctives. The prohibition is introduced by μή or one of its compounds.

### *Emphatic Future Negation*

The sense of this construction is clear; the most emphatic way to say that something shall not happen in the future is to use οὐ μή with the subjunctive mood. But it is not so clear by what process this construction arose, nor why it means what it does. The subjunctive does not naturally express such certainty, and the doubling of the simple negative might seem to make an affirmative, but the case is not so simple. The grammarians review the theories with varying conclusions.<sup>11</sup> I prefer to think of it as a form of litotes; i.e., the second negative (μή) negates the subjunctive verb and together they express a doubtful idea; the first negative (οὐ) negates the doubtful clause introduced by μή. As a whole the clause communicates that "there is no doubt about it; it is not an uncertain matter."

The first negative in two instances is a strengthened form of οὐ (οὐχί, Luke 18:30; οὐδέ, Rev 7:16); in two it is preceded by a doubling οὐδέ (Luke 10:19; Heb 13:4).

This category of subjunctive use is not limited to the independent or main clause classification. It may appear anywhere an indicative might appear, in ὅτι substantive clauses (11), in relative clauses (9), or in object clauses (1). In Mark 13:2 it occurs both in the main clause and in the subordinate relative clause.

<sup>9</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 841.

<sup>10</sup>There are 8 aorist imperatives with μή as compared with 88 subjunctives. One is in Matt 6:3; the other 7 are in 3 parallel passages of the synoptic gospels, Matt 24:17-18 = Mark 13:15-16 = Luke 17:31.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 929; J. H. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, vol. I of *A Grammar of NT Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906) 188ff.

Not strictly within the present scope of study but closely related to a major item to be dealt with later is the occurrence of this construction with the future indicative instead of the subjunctive.<sup>12</sup>

### *Doubtful Assertion or Cautious Statement*

Is the subjunctive ever used in the New Testament to express doubtful assertion—what we express in English by “I may do it”? It would seem to be a natural sense, but the answer is not clear. Classical Greek grammars speak of such a use; for example, “the present subjunctive with μή may express a doubtful assertion, with μή οὐ a doubtful negation.”<sup>13</sup> Turner says it is “rare in the NT”<sup>14</sup> and cites three possible examples. Matt 25:9 has a variant reading μήποτε οὐκ ἀρκέση which then could be read ‘Perhaps there might not be sufficient for us and you’. The edited text has instead the οὐ μή + subjunctive construction, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too’. The second example is 1 Thess 5:15 which seems most naturally to be a simple prohibitive subjunctive, ‘See that no one repays another with evil for evil’. If it is indeed a subjunctive of cautious statement the meaning might be, ‘Look, someone might repay with evil’, a rather unlikely choice. The third example is 2 Tim 2:25, an admittedly difficult sentence: μήποτε δώη αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς μετάνοιαν / ‘if perhaps God may grant them repentance’. This translation in *NASB* could be proper for a subjunctive of cautious statement, but *NASB* marginal note points to Acts 8:22 as a parallel in sense, where the grammatical structure is entirely different. Turner translates the phrase ‘perhaps God will give’. *BAGD* makes it elliptical, involving an imbedded deliberative question: ‘(seeing) whether God may perhaps grant’.<sup>15</sup> At any rate, this may possibly be the only example of a subjunctive of doubtful assertion in the NT.

### THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN DEPENDENT CLAUSES

By far the more frequent use of the subjunctive mood is in dependent or subordinate clauses.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>There are 13 examples: Matt 15:6; 16:22; 26:35; Mark 13:31; 14:31; Luke 21:33; John 4:14; 6:35; 10:5; Gal 4:30; Heb 10:17; Rev 9:6; and 18:14. Variant readings would provide more.

<sup>13</sup>H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Schools and Colleges* (New York: American Book Co., 1916) 297.

<sup>14</sup>Turner, *Syntax*, 98.

<sup>15</sup>*BAGD*, 519.

<sup>16</sup>81.5%, or 1513 instances to 344 in “main verb” clauses. Even this is not an accurate representation, for as I have shown above in dealing with the independent

### *In Final (Purpose/Result) Clauses*

The largest group of dependent subjunctives is found in final clauses, those expressing purpose or result, or, as they are referred to in some grammars, telic or ecbatic.<sup>17</sup> One example is Rom 5:20: νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα / 'And the Law came in that the transgression might increase'. These clauses are introduced by a variety of conjunctive expressions: ἵνα (405), ἵνα μὴ (91), ἵνα μηδέ (1), ἵνα μηδεῖς (2), ἵνα μήποτε (1) (total with ἵνα 500); μὴ (3), μὴ πως (5), μήποτε (25) (total with μὴ 33); ὅπως (33), ὅπως ἄν (5), ὅπως μὴ (3) (total with ὅπως 41). These are all consistent with older Greek usage, except that the ἵνα clause is greatly extended because it so often serves as a paraphrase for the infinitive,<sup>18</sup> and ὅπως has lost ground.

The same lack of distinction between purpose and result is to be seen in these clauses as with the infinitives of purpose,<sup>19</sup> though in most cases the context makes the sense clear. The vast majority are true purpose clauses (97%). There are four examples where the sense clearly seems to be result,<sup>20</sup> one of which is especially difficult to understand if it expresses purpose: John 9:2: 'Ραββί, τίς ἤμαρτεν, . . . ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῆ; / 'Rabbi, who sinned . . . that he should be born blind?' In 12 instances<sup>21</sup> I have considered the matter undecided, although I would lean toward their being result. The list of those cases which are not clearly purpose or result could be greatly expanded.

Another parallel with the infinitive of purpose is the frequent use of these subordinate purpose clauses after intransitive verbs of motion, and almost without exception the same verbs are involved (ἀναβαίνω, καταβαίνω, and ἔρχομαι and its compounds). Also transitive verbs (like ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω) use the subjunctive purpose clause and the infinitive of purpose interchangeably.

### *In Substantival or Noun Clauses*

These noun clauses will be treated next because they are closely related to the final clauses—they are not second in frequency of

uses, many of them were found within subordinate clauses, particularly in the deliberative where the question is being quoted indirectly and in emphatic negation which may appear in any clause.

<sup>17</sup>38%, or 574 of 1513.

<sup>18</sup>BDF, 196–202.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. my article, "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 10–12.

<sup>20</sup>John 9:2; 1 Cor 7:29; Phil 1:26; and 1 Thess 5:4.

<sup>21</sup>Matt 23:26, 35; Luke 9:45; 11:50; 12:36; 16:26 (2); John 4:36; 6:5; Rom 11:11; 2 Thess 3:14; and 2 Tim 1:4.

occurrence.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, they are identical with the final clauses in form, using the same conjunctive phrases and the same subjunctive mood. Until NT Greek was recognized as a part of Koine Hellenistic Greek rather than of older, classical Greek, grammarians and commentators went to great pains to insist that these must be interpreted as telic. Now they are recognized as a legitimate idiom of the language of that time and are treated separately.

The following conjunctive phrases are used in these nominal clauses: ἵνα (198), ἵνα μή (15), ἵνα μηδεῖς (2) (total with ἵνα 215); μή (16), μή που (1), μή πως (4), μήποτε (3) (total with μή 24); ὅπως (14). Like the final clauses from which they were derived, these nominal clauses most frequently function in places where infinitives could have been used.

#### As Subject

There are 19 subjunctives in subject nominal clauses. Ten are subjects of an impersonal verb (συμφέρει [9] or λυσιτελεῖ [1]), as in John 16:7: συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω / 'it is to your advantage that I go away'. Four are subjects of the copulative verb ἐστίν (whether expressed [3] or understood [1]), as in Matt 10:25: ἀρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ ἵνα γένηται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ / 'It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher'. Five are subjects of a passive verb (δίδωμι [2], γράφω [2], or ζητέω [1]), as in 1 Cor 4:2: ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις ἵνα πιστός τις εὔρεθῇ / 'It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy'. Elsewhere the infinitive is used commonly.

#### As Object

A very large number of subjunctives appear in clauses which function as the object of a verb. These will be classified according to the different types of verbs which have these clauses as objects. Robertson says that these clauses are "found with verbs of striving, beseeching, commanding, fearing."<sup>23</sup> I will follow that pattern, but supplement it by calling attention to the close parallels with object infinitives.

*With Verbs of Striving.* The first category includes verbs which express effort to bring about an action ('to attempt', 'to accomplish', 'to cause', 'to plan', etc.), as in John 11:53: ἀπ' ἐκείνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐβουλεύσαντο ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτόν / 'So from that day

<sup>22</sup>There are 251 instances (17%), making them fourth in frequency.

<sup>23</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 991.

on they planned together to kill Him'. There are 28 which use a *ἵνα* clause as object: ποιέω\* ('to cause', 7), ἐτοιμάζω (3), τίθημι ('to appoint', 3), ἀγαλλιᾶω (2), ἀγγαρεύω (2), βουλεύω (2), διατίθημι (2), πείθω ('to persuade', 2), συμβουλεύω\* (2), ἀνασεύω (1), ζηλόω (1), and ζητέω\* (1); (total 28). Compare this group with the second category of complementary infinitives. Those marked with the asterisk also use the infinitive object (three more [listed below] have cognates which use the infinitive).

*With Verbs of Wishing.* Θέλω is the only verb of wishing which uses the *ἵνα* clause as object, e.g., 1 Cor 14:5: θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε / 'Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy'. Θέλω is used this way 8 times; there are 3 elliptical constructions in which θέλω probably should be supplied. This usage is parallel to my first category of complementary infinitives which includes θέλω with other verbs of similar meaning. Note that in the example cited the same verb has both an infinitive and a *ἵνα* clause complement.

*With Verbs of Permitting.* Ἀφίημι more frequently uses a complementary infinitive construction, but the *ἵνα* clause can express the same sense, as in Mark 11:16: καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκευὸς διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ / 'And He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple'. In the other example included in this classification, δίδωμι (Mark 10:37) occurs in the sense of "to give [the privilege] to [do something], to grant, to permit." The *ἵνα* clause describes the gift which they were seeking permission to have. This use parallels the third category of complementary infinitives.

*With Verbs of Beseeking.* There are 64 subjunctives in this category. As object clauses of these verbs they express the content of the thing asked or sought and are thus a kind of indirect discourse, as in Col 1:9: προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ / 'to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will'. The following conjunctions are used: ἵνα (49), ἵνα μὴ (6), and ὅπως (9). The verbs which use this construction are παρακαλέω\* (21), προσεύχομαι\* (16), ἐρωτάω\* (15), δέομαι\* (6), αἰτέομαι\* (2), and 4 other instances where there is ellipsis requiring that "pray" or "ask" be supplied.

*With Verbs of Commanding.* The object clause uses the subjunctive (also a form of indirect discourse) to express the content of the command 33 times, as in Luke 4:3: εἶπε τῷ λίθῳ τούτῳ ἵνα γένηται ἄρτος / 'tell this stone to become bread'. The verbs with which the subjunctive is so used are εἶπον\* ('to command', not simply 'to say') (6), ἐπιτιμάω (6), διαστέλλω (4), γράφω\* (4), λέγω\* (3),

ἀπαγγέλλω\* (1), βάλλω (1), διαμαρτύρομαι\* (1), ἐμφαίνω (1), ἐντέλλω\* (1), ἐξορκίζω (1), κηρύσσω\* (1), παιδεύω (1), παραγγέλλω\* (1), and συντίθημι (1). The conjunction is almost always ἵνα (28), or one of its negatives, ἵνα μή (2), ἵνα μηδεὶς (2), or ὅπως (1).

It should be noted that this object clause with a subjunctive verb is used only when it would have been a command or request in a direct quotation, or in the imperative mood. It is not used with an indirectly quoted simple statement, which would usually be ὅτι with the indicative. The infinitive of indirect discourse may be used with either statements or commands. Thus ἵνα with the subjunctive is equivalent to some infinitives, ὅτι with the indicative is equivalent to some infinitives, but a ἵνα clause is never equivalent to a ὅτι clause. The mood is significant—nominal clauses use the subjunctive when they refer to something indefinite, doubtful, subjective, potential, or future.<sup>24</sup>

*With Verbs of Fearing, Apprehension.* A group of verbs which express fear, warning, or apprehension, often in English followed by 'lest', may express the ground for that apprehension by a nominal clause with a subjunctive verb,<sup>25</sup> as in Acts 5:26: ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν, μὴ λιθασθῶσιν / 'for they were afraid of the people, lest they be stoned'. The conjunction characteristically used is μή (15), but these occur also: μήποτε (3), μή πως (4), μή που (1), and even ἵνα (3) and ἵνα μή (1) occur with βλέπω. The verbs used are βλέπω ('watch out for') (11), φοβέομαι\* (10), ἐπισκοπέω (2), προσέχω\* (2), and σκοπέω (1). In one instance the governing verb should be supplied, probably with βλέπω.

#### As Limiting or Exegetic

A nominal clause with a subjunctive verb often explains or limits another substantive (a use termed 'exegetic' when used of an infinitive). The substantive so described may be noun, an adjective, or a pronoun.

*Limiting a Noun.* The ἵνα clause can define the meaning or application of a noun, as with ἐξουσία in Mark 11:28: τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῆς; / 'who gave You this authority to do

<sup>24</sup>This has also been seen in indirect questions; they normally use the indicative, but when they are deliberative in nature they preserve the subjunctive.

<sup>25</sup>The indicative also is used with this construction. "Μὴ in an expression of apprehension is combined in classical with the subjunctive if the anxiety is directed towards warding off something still dependent on the will, with the indicative of all tenses if directed towards something which has already taken place or is entirely independent of the will" (BDF, 188).

these things?' The conjunctions used are ἵνα (30) and ὅπως (4). This usage is parallel to the exegetic infinitive, and 8 of the 16 nouns so described also use the infinitive construction.

*Limiting an Adjective.* The subjunctive can be used in a clause to limit an adjective, as in John 1:27: οὐ οὐκ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἰμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος / 'The thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie'. The adjective ἄξιος is related to 'untying'. The conjunction is always ἵνα (6). Three of the 4 adjectives so limited also occur with the exegetic infinitive (the fourth occurs in its negative form).

*Limiting a Pronoun.* A subjunctive clause can also limit a pronoun, as in John 17:3: αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σε / 'And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee'. The ἵνα clause stands in apposition to and is explanatory of the pronoun αὕτη. The conjunctions used are ἵνα (28), ἵνα μή (1), and μή (1). The pronoun in each case is οὗτος. This same construction also uses the infinitive frequently.

### *In Indefinite Clauses*

"Ordinary relative clauses simply define more exactly a definite antecedent, and take the construction and negative of simple sentences."<sup>26</sup> Thus the mood is indicative and the negative used is οὐ. But when the antecedent is indefinite the relative is accompanied characteristically by the indefinite modal particle ἄν or ἐάν and the mood is subjunctive. These indefinite relative clauses are usually expressed in English by adding '-ever' to the relative: *whoever*, *when-ever*, *wherever*, etc. Strictly speaking the term includes the clauses introduced by the relative adverbs of time, place, etc., and in this larger connotation they comprise the second largest category of subjunctive usage.<sup>27</sup> For clarity, I will deal with them in several categories, using the term 'indefinite relative clauses' for those introduced by a relative pronoun. Those using relative adverbs of time, place, etc., will be labeled accordingly.

<sup>26</sup>Smyth, *Grammar*, 359.

<sup>27</sup>J. Gresham Machen, in his *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (New York: MacMillan, 1950) 175, says "This is one of the commonest uses of the subjunctive," and includes among his examples one indefinite relative clause of place. The actual counts are: indefinite relative 137, indefinite temporal 205, indefinite locational 10, indefinite comparative 6; total 358 or about 24%. Many grammarians term this construction "conditional relative clause," drawing very precise analogies between it and the various patterns of formal conditional clauses. See my discussion in "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 183-84, esp. n. 29.

### Indefinite Relative Clauses

Indefinite relative clauses characteristically use a subjunctive and are introduced by a relative pronoun with the indefinite particle, as in 1 John 4:15 *ὅς ἐάν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* / 'Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God'. The pronouns used are the simple relative *ὅς* (110), the correlative *ὅσος* (14), or the indefinite relative *ὅστις* (12). The indefinite particles used are *ἄν* (82) or *ἐάν* (51).<sup>28</sup> In the 3 cases where an indefinite particle is absent, the pronoun itself is indefinite.<sup>29</sup>

### Indefinite Temporal Clauses

Clauses expressing time constitute a second type of indefinite relative clause which uses the subjunctive mood. The time referred to is indefinite or unknown, always future to the viewpoint of the speaker, as in Matt 2:13: *καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἶπω σοι* / 'and remain there until I tell you'. There is a great variety of introductory expressions, including conjunctions, temporal adverbs, and improper prepositions with a genitive relative pronoun as object.<sup>30</sup> Most of them include the indefinite particle *ἄν* or *ἐάν*. The actual combinations are as follows: *ὅταν* (124), *ἕως* (12), *ἕως ἄν* (20), *ἕως οὗ* (14), *ἕως ὅτου* (4), *ἄχρι* (4), *ἄχρι ἧς* (1), *ἄχρι οὗ* (2), *ἄχρις οὗ* (3), *ἄχρις οὗ ἄν* (1), *μέχρι* (1), *μέχρις οὗ* (2), *ἐπὶ ἄν* (3), *ὁσάκις ἐάν* (4), *ὡς ἄν* (3), *ἀφ' οὗ ἄν* (3), *ἡνίκα ἄν* (1), *ἡνίκα ἐάν* (1), and *πρὶν ἢ ἄν* (1).

A large number of temporal clauses uses the indicative mood, including some which are introduced by the same conjunctive phrases used to introduce the subjunctive. When a temporal clause refers to definite or known time the normal mood is indicative. When the time is indefinite or uncertain because it is still future or not yet known the normal mood is subjunctive.

### Indefinite Local Clauses

In a few instances clauses introduced by relative adverbs of place use the subjunctive, as in Mark 14:14: *ὅπου ἐάν εἰσέλθῃ εἶπατε τῷ οἰκοδεσπότην* / 'wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house'. The adverbs used are *ὅπου* (9) and *οὗ* (1); in every instance it is followed by the indefinite particle *ἐάν* (9) or *ἄν* (1).

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 423; BDF, 57; and Robertson, *Grammar*, 190-91.

<sup>29</sup>*ὅστις* in James 2:10 (twice); in Heb 8:3 the antecedent of the relative is an indefinite pronoun.

<sup>30</sup>*ἧς*, antecedent *ἡμέρας*; *οὗ*, antecedent *χρόνου* (supplied); and *ὅτου* (gen. of *ὅστις*).

### Indefinite Comparative Clauses

Comparative clauses almost always use the indicative mood, but two passages (using 6 verbs) have the comparative particle *ὡς* followed by the subjunctive. 1 Thess 2:7 has *ὡς ἕάν* which clearly is indefinite and understandably takes the subjunctive. In Mark 4:26 *ὡς* is followed by 4 subjunctive verbs and the indefinite particle is missing in the earliest manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> BAGD<sup>32</sup> calls this "gravely irregular fr. a grammatical viewpoint" and suggests textual corruption. BDF points out the need for "the indispensable *ἕάν* or *ὄταν*."<sup>33</sup> But Robertson<sup>34</sup> argues that *ἕάν* is not indispensable with the subjunctive (for example, temporal *ὡς* in some manuscripts of Gal 6:10) and claims that the subjunctive alone makes it indefinite.

### *In Third Class Conditional Clauses*

The third largest group (328, or 21.7%) of subordinate subjunctives occurs in the protasis of the simple future condition which characteristically is introduced by *ἕάν* or *ἄν* and has its verb in the subjunctive. The mood reflects accurately the basic significance of this construction, that of potentiality or indefiniteness by reason of futurity.<sup>35</sup> This construction is usually introduced by *ἕάν* (241),<sup>36</sup> *ἄν* μή (63), *ἄν* (4), *κἄν* (13), *ἕάνπερ* (3) (total with *ἕάν* 324); and by *εἰ* (1), *εἴτε . . . εἴτε* (2), *ἐκτός εἰ μή* (1) (total with *εἰ* 4).<sup>37</sup>

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### *The ἵνα Clause as an Equivalent to the Infinitive*

It is not within the scope of this study to explain or even to trace the historical development by which the Greek language ultimately lost its infinitive before the encroachment of the *ἵνα* clause; rather I will survey the situation as it was in the Greek in the NT. As *ὄτι* with the indicative increasingly became a substitute for the infinitive in indirect statements, so *ἵνα* with the subjunctive became a substitute for the infinitive in indirect commands and requests. But beyond this,

<sup>31</sup>For example, R, B, and D.

<sup>32</sup>BAGD, 897.

<sup>33</sup>BDF, 192.

<sup>34</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 968.

<sup>35</sup>For a full treatment the reader is referred to my previous article, "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions," *GTJ* 3 (1982) 163-75.

<sup>36</sup>The numbers here indicate the times the subjunctive verb occurs in these constructions, not the number of third class conditional sentences.

<sup>37</sup>For a discussion of these anomalous constructions see my articles "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions," 164 and "Other Conditional Elements," 174-75.

the *ἵνα* clause became an alternative expression for almost every function of the infinitive. It seems important at this point to demonstrate this, and to let it impact the interpretive process.

A comparison of the functions of the infinitive with those of the *ἵνα* clause shows their remarkable parallels. Even in older Greek both were used to express purpose, but in the NT the infinitive increases in frequency, particularly with verbs of motion. In contrast with this tendency, the use of the infinitive in its noun-functions shows a sharp decrease in favor of the *ὅτι* or *ἵνα* clause. Every use of the infinitive demonstrates this. In this section I will examine the relationship between the *ἵνα* clause and the infinitive.

The *ἵνα* clause is used as the subject of impersonal, predicative, and passive verbs, as is the infinitive.<sup>38</sup> It is used as the object of many verbs which often use the complementary infinitive, as, e.g., verbs of wishing (*θέλω*), verbs of striving and doing (*δίδωμι*, *ετοιμάζω*, *πειθω*, *ποιέω*, *συμβουλεύω*, *τίθημι*, *ζηλώω*, *ζητέω*), verbs of permitting or granting (*ἀφίημι*, *δίδωμι*), as well as other verbs of like kind which do not use the infinitive in the NT. The *ἵνα* clause also forms the object of verbs of mental action and communication which take the infinitive of indirect discourse, such as verbs of beseeching (*αἰτέομαι*, *δέομαι*, *ἑρωτάω*, *παρακαλέω*, *προσεύχομαι*), and verbs of commanding (*ἀπαγγέλλω*, *διαμαρτύρομαι*, *εἶπον* ['to order, command'], *ἐντέλλω*, *γράφω*, *κηρύσσω*, *λέγω* ['tell to'], *παιδεύω*, *παραγγέλλω*, and *συντίθημι*). Note that the *ἵνα* clause is used in indirect discourse only with verbs of beseeching and commanding, where the direct discourse would have been in the imperative. For indirectly quoted statements *ὅτι* + indicative can be used in place of the infinitive. A clause introduced by *ἵνα*, *ἵνα μή*, or *μή* with a subjunctive verb is also used as object after verbs of fearing and apprehension (*φοβέομαι*, *προσέχω*) where occasionally the object infinitive occurs.

The substantival *ἵνα* clause also substitutes for an exegetical infinitive, one which limits or qualifies or stands in apposition to another substantive. Again it is found frequently with the same words as the infinitive, such as nouns (*βουλή*, *χρεία*, *χρόνος*, *ἐντολή*, *εὐκαιρία*, *ἐξουσία*, *θέλημα*, *ώρα*), adjectives (*ἄξιος*, *δίκαιος*, *ικανός*), and in apposition to the demonstrative pronoun *οὗτος*.

Even the so-called "imperative infinitive" has its counterpart with the "imperative *ἵνα* clause,"<sup>39</sup> although both are probably misnamed and should rather be considered elliptical, with some governing verb to be supplied from the context.

<sup>38</sup>Examples of these and the following will be found above in the various classifications.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Turner, *Syntax*, 94-95. For my discussion of the imperative infinitive see "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 14-15.

That leaves only one infinitive usage without a parallel ἵνα construction, the articular infinitive after prepositions to express various adverbial relationships. Indeed this is one of the two uses of the infinitive which in NT Greek shows an increase, the other being the purpose infinitive.

This very close correspondence between the infinitive and the ἵνα clause must certainly be taken into consideration in the exegetical process. For example, I John 1:9 (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῆ ἡμῖν / 'He is faithful and righteous to forgive') should be understood so that the ἵνα clause is exegetical to the two adjectives. It is not a purpose clause—forgiveness is not the purpose for which God is faithful and just. To see it as result would be clearer ("so that He will . . ."), but the exegetical infinitive provides the clearest sense.

### *The Ambivalence of the Future Indicative with the Aorist Subjunctive*

#### A Definition of the Phenomenon

In places where an aorist subjunctive verb might be expected, occasionally a future indicative is found. This does not happen in the reverse, however; never does an aorist subjunctive occur where a future indicative might be expected.<sup>40</sup> The future functions normally as an indicative, but it also functions in certain situations where the subjunctive (the potential future) might be expected.

#### Historical Background

Grammarians have attempted to explain this ambivalence by resorting to a study of the historical development of the language.<sup>41</sup> Several factors have been suggested. (1) Historically the future indicative may have originated from the aorist subjunctive. (The aorist subjunctive functioned as a simple future in Homer, for example.) (2) There was always some duplication and confusion in form between the two, either in actual identity of spelling (e.g., λύσω, for both fut. ind. and aor. subj.) or in similarity or identity of sound between the long and short thematic vowel (e.g., λύσει and λύση [later written λύση], or λύσομεν and λύσωμεν). (3) This confusion is often demonstrated in variations between manuscripts of the same text. (4) The

<sup>40</sup>For example, there are 4 places where εἰ is followed by a subjunctive verb; in none of these can it be explained as a substitute for a future indicative (εἰ in I Cor 14:5 and Rev 11:5; εἴτε in I Thess 5:10). See my discussion of these in "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 175. In each instance the element of future contingency is present and the subjunctive is the expected mood. It is the conditional particle that needs explanation.

<sup>41</sup>BDF, 183, 186–88; Robertson, *Grammar*, 924–28, 984.

basic significance of the subjunctive is always futuristic; its connotation of doubtful assertion or potentiality is by reason of futurity—it is uncertain because it has not happened. Even when the subjunctive was used to describe an event which was only a possibility to the speaker at that time, the verb would often be changed to the indicative after the fact.

### Survey of the Occurrences

Since a list of subjunctives such as has been the basis of this study is compiled from form rather than function the instances where a future so functions are not included. And a list of future indicatives would have to be subjected to the same type of study as I have attempted here on subjunctives in order to discover which categories of usage are parallel. I have not yet done this, so I have attempted to find these ambivalent future indicatives from the other end—by searching the constructions which normally take the subjunctive in order to find instances where the future is found instead. It would be too much to expect that I have found them all.

This ambivalence occurs in most of the classified functions of the subjunctive. Among the main-clause uses it may be found in deliberative questions<sup>42</sup> but it clearly is present in the emphatic negation category as well: οὐ μή + future indicative.<sup>43</sup>

This ambivalence between aorist subjunctives and future indicatives occurs most frequently in places where the subjunctive would be expected in subordinate clauses. It is rare in conditional<sup>44</sup> and relative clauses,<sup>45</sup> as well as temporal indefinite relative clauses. It normally uses the subjunctive verb but twice the future indicative is found.<sup>46</sup> It

<sup>42</sup>A few possible examples found were Luke 22:49; John 3:12; Rom 3:5; 4:4; 9:14; even a present indicative is found in John 11:47. But not all future questions are deliberative; those so described usually show an element of anxiety or perplexity. The examples just cited may be matter of fact examples of a simple future question.

<sup>43</sup>Matt 15:6; 16:22; 26:35; Mark 13:31; 14:31; Luke 21:33; John 4:14; 6:35; 10:5; Gal 4:30; Heb 10:17; Rev 9:6; 18:14.

<sup>44</sup>Luke 19:40; Acts 8:31. There are also examples of other tenses in the indicative after εἰς: present (1 Thess 3:8) and perfect (1 John 5:15). Cf. my article "Other Conditional Elements," *GTJ* 4 (1983) 175.

<sup>45</sup>In relative clauses the indicative is normal, and only in the category called 'Indefinite Relative' would the subjunctive be expected. But the term 'indefinite' may be a bit confusing. For example, it is not merely that the relative has an indefinite antecedent (in Matt 7:24)—the pronoun is the indefinite relative ὅστις but the mood is indicative, as it is also in 10:32 where the future indicative occurs naturally in an exactly parallel passage. (But cf. Matt 7:12 where the indefinite particle εἰς appears along with a verb in the subjunctive.) This construction looks at the action itself as indefinite or uncertain by reason of futurity.

<sup>46</sup>Luke 13:28; Rev 4:9. The imperfect is also used (Mark 3:11), as well as the present (Mark 11:25) and the aorist (Mark 11:18).

is primarily in the clauses introduced by ἵνα, μή, and ὅπως where the future indicative more frequently takes the place of the aorist subjunctive.<sup>47</sup> It occurs in both the final and nominal clauses introduced by these words.

### Is there a Distinction in Meaning?

All that has been said thus far would not lead one to expect any difference in meaning between the future indicative and aorist subjunctive in these clauses—the difference would seem to be formal, not semantic. But some have insisted upon a distinction in meaning. One of my students in a Greek exegesis class called to my attention the view that in 1 Pet 3:1 the future indicative means that the purpose was guaranteed fulfillment, since the indicative is the mood of actuality. The believing wife who lives a godly life before her unbelieving husband is assured that she will win her husband. Is this claim valid? How can it be checked?

Since the claim is based on a grammatical principle, it can be checked. When the grammars are checked for theoretical statements about the indicative mood, there are claims that it is the mood of certainty, of actual statement, etc.; but there is no claim which applies that principle to this situation. Instead there are explanations such as those reviewed above, but there is no suggestion of a difference in meaning.

A study of all the contexts where the idiom occurs is more decisive, and such a study demonstrates that there are some contexts where the purpose was actually accomplished, although there is no indication that it was guaranteed. In most instances, predictably, there

<sup>47</sup>After ἵνα: Mark 15:20; Luke 14:10; 20:10; John 7:3; Acts 21:24 (2); Rev 3:9 (2); 6:4, 11; 9:4, 5; 13:12; 14:13; after ἵνα μή: Gal 2:4; 1 Pet 3:1; Rev 8:3; 9:20; 22:14; after μή: Luke 11:35; Col 2:8; and after ὅπως: Matt 7:8; Mark 14:2; Heb 3:12.

In addition there are a number of places where the clause contains one or more subjunctives normally, with a καί and a future indicative following: Matt 5:25; 13:16; Rom 3:4 (after ὅπως); Eph 6:3; Rev 2:10. This is capable of two explanations; either it is another ambivalent use of the future and the verb is simply another dependent on the conjunction, or it is a new beginning, an additional comment in which the future indicative stands independently. The latter seems to fit the sense better in most cases.

There are also a number of places where these clauses use indicative verbs other than the future: aorist (Luke 24:20, after ὅπως; Gal 4:17; 1 Thess 3:5); perfect (Gal 4:11); present (1 Cor 4:6; Gal 4:17). These are outside our present consideration, but it may be noted that of those using the aorist and perfect 3 are in contexts expressing apprehension where even older Greek used μή with indicative (cf. BDF, 188) and the other communicates the proper sense although the structure may seem to be irregular. The two showing present indicatives do appear to be standing where subjunctives would be expected. At least they illustrate that in Hellenistic Greek the correspondence between the conjunction and the mood are somewhat relaxed.

is no indication whether the purpose was realized or not. But there are a number of instances where the purpose was *not* realized, and obviously was not guaranteed. For example, in Luke 20:10 the owner of the vineyard sent his servant ἵνα . . . δύσουσιν / ‘in order that they might give him some of the produce’. In Gal 2:4–5 false brethren sneaked in to spy ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν / ‘in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield . . . even an hour’. (See also Gal 4:17 and Mark 14:2.) These examples demonstrate that the principle “usage determines meaning” is as true in syntax as it is in lexicography.