

USES AND TRANSLATION OF:
THE SUBJUNCTIVE MODE

Uses and Translation

1. *ἵνα* + *Subjunctive* mode to indicate **purpose**: “. . . *in order that* . . . *may/might* . . .”

With this use of the Subjunctive Mode, when the leading (Indicative Mode) verb is in past time (e.g., Imperfect, Aorist, etc.), denoting something which has already taken place, the English word “*might*” is used in translating the Greek subjunctive verb form. The English word “*may*” is used to translate the Greek subjunctive verb form when the tense of the leading verb of the main clause is *Present* or *Future Indicative*. The Greek word *ἵνα* (a clear indication to the reader that the Subjective Mode is occurring) is translated “*in order that*.”

Examples:

- ἦλθεν ἵνα σώζη αὐτούς. (Leading verb is *Aorist Indicative*)
He came in order that He might be saving them.
- ἀποθνήσκει ἵνα σώζη αὐτούς. (Leading verb is *Present Indicative*)
He is dying in order that He may be saving them.

2. *ἵνα* + *Subjunctive* mode to express **result**: “. . . *so that* . . . *may/should* . . .”

In this Subjunctive mode construction using *ἵνα*, either the English word “*may*” or “*should*” is used to translate the subjunctive verb form, with *ἵνα* being translated “*so that*.”

Example:

μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα σχῶμεν παρρησίαν ἐν παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.
Be remaining in Him, so that we may have confidence at His coming.
(1 John 2:28)

3. *Sub-Final Use of ἵνα + Subjunctive mode: “. . . that . . . might/should . . .”*

Example:

εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα διαβόλου.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

4. *1st Person Plural Subjunctive as an exhortation: “We should . . .”*

Example:

ἔλθωμεν ἰδεσθαι.

We should go to see for ourselves.

(NOTE: Many grammarians render the exhortation as “Let us . . .” While technically correct, “Let’s” may not be as strong culturally today as “We should . . .”)

5. *Questions of Doubt as to what the speaker (1st person singular or plural) “should” say or do.*

Examples:

- *τί εἶπω;*
What should I say?
- *ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ;*
Should we be remaining in sin?

6. *ἔαν + Subjunctive mode to indicate purpose: “If . . . should . . .”*

This is also known as the 3rd Class Conditional sentence, where the condition “undetermined,” but with the “prospect of determination.”

Examples:

- *ἐάν παραλάβητε ἐμέ, ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθε οἱ μαθηταί μου.*
If you should receive me, you will be my disciples.
- *ἐάν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.*
If we should say that we are not having sin, the truth is not in us. (1 John 2:9)

7. *μή* + Aorist Subjunctive mode to express a **prohibition** of the beginning of something:

This use of the subjunctive usually finds the subjunctive verb form in the 2nd person, although it is also found (less often) in the 3rd person.

Examples:

- *μή εἴπητε . . .*
Do not begin to say . . . (2nd person plural)
- *μή ἀπελθῆς ἀπό τοῦ κυρίου.*
Do not begin to go away from the Lord. (2nd person singular)
- *μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ.*
Let no one cause you to err. (3rd person singular)
- *μή λύσῃ.*
Let him not begin to loose. (3rd person singular)

8. *ὅταν* + Subjunctive mode: “Whenever . . . should . . .”

Example:

ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν τὸν λόγον, μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνουσιν αὐτόν.
Whenever they should hear the word, they are receiving him with joy. (Lk. 8:13)

9. *οὐ μή* + Aorist Subjunctive (rarely Present) with an **emphatic negative future** translation.

Example:

Και τὸν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς με οὐ μή ἐκβάλω ἐξω.
And the one who comes to me I will not cast out. (John 6:37)

10. *ὅς, ἧ, ὅ* (Relative Pronoun) + *ἄν* or *εἰάν* + Subjunctive mode: “Whoever . . . should . . .”

Example:

ὅς δ' ἄν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται.
But whoever should be keeping his word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. (1 John 2:5)

11. ὅπως (+ ἄν) + Aorist Subjunctive expressing **purpose**: “in order that . . . may . . .”

Example:

ἐπὶ ἄν δὲ εὗρητε ἀπαγγείλατέ μοι, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν
προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ.

*As soon as you should discover report to me, in order that I also, having come,
may worship Him. (Matt. 2:8)*

* NOTE: The leading clause in this verse includes yet another use of the Subjunctive Mode: ἐπὶ ἄν + Subjunctive (εὗρητε) = “As soon as . . . should . . .” used only three times in the New Testament. (See also: Luke 11:22, 34)