<http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/participles.htm>  
Corey Keating

**Greek Participles**

**Simple Definition of the Participle**(From the '[Terms](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#PARTICIPLE)' page): A participle is considered a "verbal adjective". It is often a word that ends with an "-ing" in English (such as "speaking," "having," or "seeing"). It can be used as an [adjective](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADJECTIVE), in that it can modify a [noun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) (or substitute as a noun), or it can be used as an [adverb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADVERB) and further explain or define the action of a [verb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#VERB).  
For example:  
    Adjectival use: "The *coming One* will come and will not delay." Heb 10:37  
    Adverbial use: "But *speaking truth* in love, we may grow up into Him in all things." Eph 4:15

**Introduction and Importance of the Greek Participle**  
Greek has been called a 'participle-loving language'. "There are few languages which have equaled the Greek in the abundance and variety of its use of the participle, and certainly none has surpassed it.... This wealth of significance which belonged to the Greek participle at the zenith of its development lies undiminished before the student of the New Testament, and becomes a valuable asset in interpretation when adequately comprehended." (Quote by [Dana and Mantey](http://www.ntgreek.org/books/other_intermed_grammars.htm#dana_and_mantey), 220.)

**Use of the Greek Participle**  
A participle is called a 'verbal adjective' because it is formed from a verb, yet often modifies other words. Oftentimes it may be hard to to translate a participle into English and still bring out the same force as it has in the Greek. First try to understand the meaning of the Greek participle is trying to convey, then worry about an appropriate English translation. The translation may have to be as an English relative clause when used adjectivally in Greek.  
The participle can be used in one of three major categories of use:

1. Adjectivally  
   A participle can be used as an [adjective](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADJECTIVE) to modify a noun or assert something about it. This is a common use of the adjective in Greek.   
   E.g. Colossians 1:12 "to the Father who made us sufficient". The word 'made sufficient' is a participle in Greek, but it needs to be translated into a [relative clause](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/more_terms.htm#RELATIVE_CLAUSE) in English to make sense.
2. Substantively (This category is really a subset of the adjectival use.)  
   A participle can be used as a '[substantive](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SUBSTANTIVE)' to take the place of a noun.
3. Adverbially  
   Participles can also be used in the same way that an [adverb](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADVERB) is, to modify a verb. There are different classifications and uses of adverbial participles. (These are also referred to as 'Circumstantial participles'.) One of the most exciting and enlightening areas of Greek grammar for the student of the New Testament comes in identifying the use of these adverbial participles. Listed below are some of the most common uses found in the New Testament. For a complete list of all adverbial participles (and all non-adjectival uses), please view the [chart at the bottom of this page](http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/participles.htm#Participle_PDF).  
    A. Temporal Participle  
       i)     Translated with English words ‘while’ or ‘after’  
       ii)    Shows ‘when’ something happened.  
       iii)   Mark 9:5 ‘All the crowd, seeing Him, were amazed.’   
             (“When all the crowd saw Him, they were amazed.”)  
   B)      Causal Participle   
       i)  Indicates the Cause or Reason  
       ii) Answers the question “Why?”  
       iii) Translated by ‘because’ (or ‘since’)  
       iv) John 4:6 “Jesus, being wearied, sat.” (‘Because Jesus was wearied, He sat.’)  
       v) Perfect Adverbial participles very often belong to this category (i.e. convey this meaning).  
   C)    Instrumental Participle (Participle of Means)  
       i) Shows “How?”  
       ii) Translated with ‘by’ or ‘by means of’  
       iii) Matt. 27:4 – “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”  
   D)    Participle of Purpose (Telic Use)  
       i) Indicates the purpose of the action of the finite verb  
       ii) Answers the question ‘Why?’  
       iii) Should be translated with the English ‘infinitive’ or ‘with the purpose of’ or ‘in order to’. A simple ‘-ing’ translation misses the point.  
       iv) (A future adverbial participles always belong here.)  
       v) Luke 10:25 “A certain lawyer stood up testing Him (in order to test Him), saying, ‘Teacher, what must I do to gain eternal life?’”  
   E)    Participle of Concession  
       i) Indicates that the action of the main verb is true in spite of the state or action of the participle.  
       ii) Usually translated 'although'  
       iii) Romans 1:21 “although they knew God, they did not glorify (honor) Him as God.”  
       iv) 1 Peter 1:8 “whom having not seen (although you have not seen Him), you love”