THE PERFECT TENSE-FORM IN RECENT DEBATE: GALATIANS AS A CASE STUDY

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Based on the analysis of the perfect tense in the epistle to the Galatians, the author claims that it is not possible to maintain a dual time reference in the perfect form. So, he argues in favour of Porter’s position on the matter as better than Fanning’s position.

The recent publications by S. E. Porter[[1]](#footnote-1)1 and B. M. Fanning[[2]](#footnote-2)2 on verbal aspect in the Greek of the N[[3]](#footnote-3)T have not only contributed significantly to the study of Greek grammar, but they have already inspired some much welcomed debate among the critics[[4]](#footnote-4)3. In this paper, I wish to enter into the debate by focussing specifically on the semantic and pragmatic value of the perfect tense-form in the epistle to the Galatians. As a case study, Galatians is well suited because of its length, focussed argument, and its relatively high concentration of perfect forms. After assessing the two scholars’ descriptions of the perfect in light of a brief historical survey, I argue that Porter’s position is the better option. Since an attempt is made to discuss every occurrence of the perfect in Galatians, brevity, unfortunately, is the corollary.

I. the meaning of the perfect tense-form: from winer to the porter/fanning debate

A survey of the study of the perfect tense-form from the 19th century to the present shows a significant change of thought, particularly of late. Most notable is the three-fold shift which has taken place in the establishment of undergirding grammatical models through which the grammaticalization of the perfect tense-form can be viewed. The first model treated verbal tense-forms as being absolutely temporally based[[5]](#footnote-5)4. The perfect form was understood as expressing a past action which has come to completion in the present. Commonly, the result of the action was viewed as having enduring significance[[6]](#footnote-6)5. In the middle of the 19th century, the work of G. Curtius resulted in a shift of grammatical models[[7]](#footnote-7)6. Curtius concluded that the Greek verb should be understood as primarily expressing «kind of action». Subsequent grammarians and comparative philologists followed suit in abandoning a time-based model in favour of what eventually came to be termed an *Aktionsart* -based model[[8]](#footnote-8)7. The time element, however, did not disappear, but was relegated to a subordinate position[[9]](#footnote-9)8. From the *Aktionsart* perspective, the perfect tense-form was generally understood as expressing a completed action, incorporating both the punctiliar force of the aorist and the durative force of the present, although the emphasis in a given situation may be on either one of the forces[[10]](#footnote-10)9. This model remains most prominent among N[[11]](#footnote-11)T exegetes particularly because of their continued reliance on traditional grammars.

The third model is based on verbal aspect and claims to offer the most consistent explanation of tense-forms, leaving the fewest number of anomalies. The contemporary development of verbal aspect in Greek can be traced to the work of J. Holt in 1943 which drew attention to the differentiation between a language’s form and function1[[12]](#footnote-12)0. His structural linguistic approach was critically embraced, improved upon and applied by subsequent scholars, most notably J. Mateos1[[13]](#footnote-13)1 and K. L. McKay1[[14]](#footnote-14)2 in their studies of the verbal system in the Greek of the N[[15]](#footnote-15)T. This sets the stage for the almost simultaneous publications by Porter and Fanning. Both agree that verbal aspect is concerned with the language user’s viewpoint of how an action is represented by the verb1[[16]](#footnote-16)3. It is important to note this difference between aspect, which indicates how the language user perceives a given action regardless of how the action transpires in reality, and *Aktionsart*, which supposedly conveys how an action occurs objectively1[[17]](#footnote-17)4.

The fundamental difference between Porter and Fanning, as I read them, has to do with the meaning which is conveyed by verbal tense-forms. Porter argues that verbal forms only grammaticalize aspect, regardless of the mood, and not temporal or *Aktionsart* features1[[18]](#footnote-18)5. Temporal reference, in particular, is determined by deictic indicators, such as temporal adverbs, references to person, place and time, and discourse features1[[19]](#footnote-19)6. Fanning, on the other hand, while maintaining a theoretical distinction between aspect and *Aktionsart*, argues that the meaning of a verbal tense-form is determined by a variety of interacting features which are part of the verbal form, such as lexical meaning carried by the verb, singular versus plural references, contextual elements, discourse-structuring (such as articles, personal pronoun references and mood), and most importantly for our purposes, time-values of the verb in the indicative forms1[[20]](#footnote-20)7.

When we focus specifically on the perfect tense-form, the differences between Porter and Fanning become more apparent. In particular, however, I wish to limit the debate to one element of meaning, namely time-value. Porter describes the perfect form (as well as the pluperfect) as expressing a state of affairs (i.e. stative aspect) as conceived by the language user1[[21]](#footnote-21)8. Since the stative aspect is most heavily marked it conveys, by itself, more information than other tense-forms1[[22]](#footnote-22)9. The perfect can also be described as the frontground plane within a discourse, used to introduce the most discrete, defined and contoured elements, as opposed to the background plane of the aorist which forms the basis of a discourse and the foreground plane of the present which introduces semi-significant characters and situations or noteworthy descriptions2[[23]](#footnote-23)0. In essence, the perfect form conveys no temporal indication whatsoever, for that is determined by deixis. When the perfect appears as a participle in a verbal function, it also emphasizes the verbal aspect as the major semantic component, as opposed to time. This notion must be retained, according to Porter, even if the translation cannot fully express it2[[24]](#footnote-24)1.

Fanning argues that the general meaning of the perfect form involves the combination of three elements: «there is an *Aktionsart*-feature of *stative* situation, an internal tense-feature of *anteriority*, and an aspect-feature of summary viewpoint concerning an occurrence. Put together, these result in a sense usually described as denoting “a condition resulting from an anterior occurrence”». In the indicative forms, adds Fanning, the result of the past occurrence should be understood as the expression of present-time, or the time of speaking2[[25]](#footnote-25)2. With respect to the perfect participle, Fanning claims that it «preserves the basic sense of the other perfect forms in denoting a state or condition resulting from an anterior occurrence … it often emphasizes the *resulting* state and only implies the anterior occurrence2[[26]](#footnote-26)3». The most noteworthy assertion that Fanning makes regarding the perfect form is this: «One element of meaning in the perfect which is clear from a study of usage is the dual “time”-reference inherent in virtually all its occurrences. The forms, with few exceptions, juxtapose two related situations: an occurrence and a consequence of that occurrence2[[27]](#footnote-27)4».

II. the perfect in galatians: applying the distinctions

In the subsequent analysis of the perfect form in Galatians, I argue that Porter’s description of the perfect form, with regard to both semantics and pragmatics, shows a higher level of correspondence to usage than Fanning’s description. Though admittedly broader, Porter’s description of the perfect form provides the flexibility which is often required due to contextual restraints, such as deixis. Additionally, I find that Porter’s view virtually eliminates the temporal tensions which are associated with the use of two or more verbal forms that share a common reference. In other words, when time is a semantic feature of a verbal form, as Fanning suggests, difficulties arise when two different verbal forms are used in reference to the same event. I have divided the analysis of the perfect in Galatians according to R. N. Longenecker’s epistolary structure which shows sensitivity to both argument and form2[[28]](#footnote-28)5. These divisions aid in noticing that the highest concentration of perfect forms occurs in the the Argument Section of the epistle where detail and emphasis are predominant. This observation supports the notion that the perfect functions as the frontground feature within narrative contexts, and extends it to an epistolary context.

*The Salutation (Galatians 1:1–5)*

The only perfect form that appears in this section is in v. 4 where Paul uses the perfect participle τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος as an adjective to describe the «evil age». Although Fanning argues that virtually all perfect participles inherently express a dual temporal reference (i.e. «an occurrence and a consequence of that occurrence»), he does admit that ἕστηκα is an exception2[[29]](#footnote-29)6. Porter’s description of the perfect form, however, fully incorporates this supposed anomaly, thus causing no erosion, even if slight, to the stability of the verbal model2[[30]](#footnote-30)7. On a pragmatic level, it can be argued that the temporal reference associated with τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος points to the present simply because there is no indication in the epistle that «evil age» is a reference to an era other than the current period of tension which Paul is addressing. In this use of the perfect form, contextual restraints prove to establish the temporality. Paul’s choice of the perfect, as opposed to the present, may have been motivated by a desire to underscore the «evil age» within which his converts are struggling.

*The Rebuke (Galatians 1:6–2:21)*

In this first major section, Paul uses several perfect forms in expressing not only his displeasure with some of the Galatian converts, but also in the defence of his authority. Paul’s testimony makes this section quite reminiscent of a courtroom scenario2[[31]](#footnote-31)8. In 1:9, Paul repeats and thus emphasizes the warning that the Galatians should reject every gospel which is contrary to the one which they originally received2[[32]](#footnote-32)9. He begins v. 9 by saying ὡς προειρήκαμεν, καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω («as we have said before, so now again I say»). The past reference of the perfect προειρήκαμεν, is indicated by the deictic features in the context such as ὡς and ἄρτι πάλιν3[[33]](#footnote-33)0, not by the tense-form3[[34]](#footnote-34)1. It would be very awkward in this situation to adopt Fanning’s dual temporal understanding of the perfect form3[[35]](#footnote-35)2. One would have to posit a certain amount of redundancy regarding the use of λέγω, for the sentence would have this nuance: «as we have said before [with a continuing effect], so now again I say». It is best to see Paul comparing his state of having spoken before (ὡς προειρήκαμεν) to his being in the process of speaking again (ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω). Since the perfect conveys the most semantic weight, Paul may have chosen it, instead of the aorist, to draw attention to the previous warning that was given to the Galatians to reject every foreign gospel.

In 2:7, Paul uses the passive perfect πεπίστευμαι to speak of his state of having been entrusted with the gospel. The perfect is used here to refer to a past state of affairs and not to a continuing result. The past temporal reference is introduced at the beginning of this autobiographical section by the construction Ἔπειτα δια; + genitive («Then after …») in 2:1, which acts as a deixis3[[36]](#footnote-36)3. A dual temporal reference would make little sense in a context which is prefaced by a deictic marker indicating a single temporal sphere, namely the past. If we allow for an *Aktionsart* model3[[37]](#footnote-37)4 or even Fanning’s dual temporal reference to function here, we must say that although Paul was entrusted and continues to be entrusted (πεπίστευμαι) with the gospel as James, Cephas and John saw (ἰδόντες) in 2:7, his gift of grace (τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι) which the same disciples recognized (γνόντες) in 2:9 is not likewise perceived to be continuous because it is described using the aorist. Paul’s choice of the perfect may have been motivated by the tense-form’s semantic weight, especially in opposition to the frequent use of the aorist in this mini-narrative. Paul wanted to once again emphasize his authority by giving appropriate weight to the fact that he has been entrusted with the gospel.

Paul continues his autobiographical narrative in 2:11 where he uses a perfect participle in a periphrastic construction to form part of his reason for opposing Peter when he arrived in Antioch. In reference to Peter, Paul writes: ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν («because he was condemned»). The best way to understand the perfect participle (which expresses verbal aspect in the construction as opposed to the aspectually vague form of εἰμί)3[[38]](#footnote-38)5 is from an aspect-based perspective whereby Peter is described as being in a state of condemnation. A past temporal reference must be posited for κατεγνωσμένος on the following grounds: (1) the context is an autobiographical narrative; (2) a dual temporality would result in an inconsistency with the opening deictic indicator ὅτε; and (3) a dual temporality would suggest that Paul understands Peter to continue in a state of condemnation3[[39]](#footnote-39)6. This suggestion proves to be difficult in light of v. 14 where Paul speaks of Peter’s *(et al.)* state of condemnation in reference to the past: ἀλλʼ ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν («But when I saw that they were not straightforward»). Peter is then rebuked by Paul for his inappropriate action in vv. 14–21, and the matter appears to be settled. If Paul believed that Peter remained in a state of condemnation even after the rebuke, there is little doubt, given Paul’s passion for the «truth of the gospel», that he would have expressed this after v. 21.

In 2:16, Paul uses the perfect participle εἰδότες to express the state of knowing with reference to those who are «by nature Jews» (2:15). Fanning admits that οἶδα is one of those exceptions which does not fit into his description of the perfect tense-form, for it only preserves a present state «without any allusion to a past occurrence which produced the state»3[[40]](#footnote-40)7. Perhaps it is best, however, to avoid any reference to time and follow McKay who argues that semantically οἶδα is a perfect tense-form expressing a state of knowledge3[[41]](#footnote-41)8. The same participle is also used in 4:8 (Ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεόν) where it is seen to refer to the past by means of the deictic indicator τότε. The next verse (4:9) provides a contrast by means of νῦν (νῦν δέ γνόντες θεόν) and brings the discussion into the present even though the aorist form is used3[[42]](#footnote-42)9.

The final occurrence of the perfect tense-form in this section of the epistle appears in 2:19 where Paul metaphorically says in reference to dying to the law: Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι («I have been crucified with Christ»). On the surface, this use of the perfect appears to reflect Fanning’s dual temporality. If this indeed is the case, one can echo Longenecker’s comment regarding συνεσταύρωμαι: «The perfect tense of the verb signals the believer’s once-for-all act of commitment, with that act having results and implications for the present»4[[43]](#footnote-43)0. If we take into consideration, however, the temporal indicators in the context, it would appear that συνεσταύρωμαι is used here to refer to a state in the past, perhaps metaphorically referring to the experience of dying on the cross. The first temporal indication appears in v. 19 (ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω) where the ἵνα clause, which acts as a future indicator, draws a contrast between dying to the law (to which συνεσταύρωμαι refers) and the future living unto God. The second temporal indicator is νῦν in v. 20 which brings the future life (referred to in v. 19) of living unto God into the present. Paul is no longer in a state of crucifixion, for he says, ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ … («and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God»). If the metaphorical state of crucifixion refers to a limited time frame in the past, as the temporal indicators in the context suggest, then the supposed inherent dual temporal quality of the perfect is once again difficult to establish. The choice of the perfect over and against the aorist may have been motivated by Paul’s desire to emphasize the importance of identifying with Christ’s crucifixion as the ultimate point of union between Christ and the believer4[[44]](#footnote-44)1.

*The Theological Arguments (Galatians 3:1–4:11)*

This section is central because it offers the most important argumentation of an epistle and often determines whether or not the presentation will be successful. Paul leaves behind the negative arguments and testimonies of 1:11–2:14 and moves ahead by mounting an offensive with positive arguments. Some have compared this section to the *probatio* section in the speeches of antiquity where the main proofs are concentrated4[[45]](#footnote-45)2. Given the importance of this section, it is not at all surprising that the greatest concentration of perfects occurs here. The perfect has been described by several scholars as the tense-form which conveys the appearance of emphasis in relation to other tense-forms4[[46]](#footnote-46)3.

In 3:1, Paul incorporates the perfect participle ἐσταυρωμένος in his question to the Galatians: «Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified [ἐσταυρωμένος]?» The reference to Jesus being publicly portrayed as crucified may be a reminder to the Galatians of some display or concrete medium which Paul used when he formerly preached the gospel to them (cf. 1:9)4[[47]](#footnote-47)4. The question in 3:1 resumes 1:6–9 where Paul voices his astonishment at how the Galatians turned so quickly from his gospel. If this is the context, then the use of ἐσταυρωμένος must be in reference to the past. If Paul is reminding the Galatians of a past preaching event, it is arduous to maintain that the participle is expressing an existing result or state4[[48]](#footnote-48)5. The perfect tense-form not only describes the crucifixion as a whole affair which is established as complete, but it also, unlike an aorist form, highlights the importance of the cross.

In 3:10, Paul provides support for his contention that «all who are of the works of the law are under a curse» by appealing to scripture, specifically Deut 27:26. In his citation formula Paul uses the perfect passive γέγραπται as he does in 3:13; 4:22, 27. It is doubtful that all four uses of γέγραπται express Fanning’s dual temporal reference which would have the nuance: «as it was written and continues to be in effect»4[[49]](#footnote-49)6. First, there is no indication that Paul ever argues for the relevance of scripture since it is always assumed. Scripture forms the undeclared foundation to Pauline thought4[[50]](#footnote-50)7. And second, Paul also uses the present tense-form (e.g. 3:16; 4:30) in reference to the content of scripture. Does Paul consciously choose the present form, as opposed to the perfect, to abrogate that which scripture said in the past? Since there is no specific temporal reference indicated in the context, the perfect is best understood as expressing timelessness; the scripture simply stands written. The markedness of the perfect adds emphasis to the scriptural reference4[[51]](#footnote-51)8, as if to almost set the citation in bold print against the rest of the text.

There is an additional perfect form found in 3:10 within the bounds of the quotation from Deut 27:26. Though the quotation does not agree verbatim with the LX[[52]](#footnote-52)X or the MT, it does come closest to LX[[53]](#footnote-53)XA. Paul replaces the LX[[54]](#footnote-54)X reading πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου with πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου. Particularly significant for our purposes is Paul’s addition of the articular perfect passive participle τοῖς γεγραμμένοις4[[55]](#footnote-55)9. The use of the perfect reflects the preceding use of γέγραπται. That the perfect form was added for emphasis would be completely consistent with Paul’s argument against the Judaizers who are misleading the Galatian congregations. Since the Judaizers and the Galatian congregations both have the same authoritative basis, namely scripture, Paul can argue from particular texts against the opposition. In so doing, Paul intensifies Deut 27:26, a text which he thought would deliver a mortal blow to the Judaizers’ practices and persuasion, since they were the ones who lived by works of the law. The intensification would further lend support to Paul’s main thrust that justification is by faith.

In 3:15 Paul uses the perfect passive participle κεκυρωμένην as an adjective to describe διαθήκην. It is doubtful that the choice of the perfect was governed by its supposed inherent reference to a resulting state, as Fanning has described the perfect passive participle. When the text is approached from Fanning’s understanding, it expresses the following nuance: «no one annuls or adds to a man’s covenant once it has been ratified (or legally confirmed) and continues in the resulting state of ratification». Although there is a sense of a continuing force expressed, it is not determined by the form of the participle, but by the context. I would maintain that the participle is primarily used in the context to refer to the past state of ratification of the covenant. This is supported by the deixis in v. 17 where the ratification (προκεκυρωμένην) of a covenant is described as having occurred 430 years prior to the giving of the law. If v. 17 further clarifies v. 15, as τοῦτο δὲ λέγω in v. 17a suggests, then the primary pragmatic use of the perfect is in reference to the past. In other words, the use of the perfect participle in v. 15 (κεκυρωμένην) corresponds to the use of the perfect participle in v. 17 (προκεκυρωμένην). I do not, however, wish to eliminate altogether the connotation to the resulting state of the ratified covenant in v. 17, for this sense is implied by the phrase νόμος οὐκ ἀκυροῖ. It is noteworthy that this connotation would remain even if the perfect participle were replaced by an aorist, suggesting further that the tense-form itself does not determine temporality. The choice of the perfect may once again be motivated by Paul’s concern to spotlight the quality of the covenant.

Paul opts for a second perfect form in 3:17. This time Paul uses the perfect participle γεγονώς to describe ὁ … νόμος. It is easier here to see the stative aspect being used pragmatically to express a past temporal reference. In translation the perfect would thus read: «the law which came», and not «the law which came and continues in its coming [or in its results]». There is a definite time frame established for the law according to the deixis in the context. First, v. 17 states that the law came at a specific time, 430 years after the covenant. And second, the law is described in v. 19 as being ordained until (ἄχρις) the seed should come, namely Christ. An aorist participle would have been equally adequate grammatically and would not have altered the temporal nuance in the slightest. In fact, Paul uses the aorist form in v. 19 in reference to the law: Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη. It is difficult to maintain on the basis of tense-forms alone that one reference to the law implies a continuing force, while the other reference does not. The choice of the perfect form may have been motivated by other factors such as planes of exposition (or of discourse), whereby tense-forms are used as clues for interpreting the language user’s verbal picture5[[56]](#footnote-56)0. As a result, the perfect form, on the basis of its markedness, takes the place of prominence or «frontground», expressing more detailed and contoured elements in the discourse against the «background» of the aorist tense-form5[[57]](#footnote-57)1. This suggestion would further support the notion that the perfect expresses emphasis when contrasted with the aorist or the present forms5[[58]](#footnote-58)2.

In 3:18, Paul continues to incorporate the perfect form in his comparison between the law and the promise of inheritance. With respect to the promised inheritance (ἡ κληρονομία) Paul says: τῷ δέ Ἀβραὰμ διʼ ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός («but God granted it to Abraham by a promise»). The pragmatic use of the perfect κεχάρισται best suits a past temporal reference, recounting the promise that God originally made to Abraham. In my estimation, there is no indication in the context that κεχάρισται expresses dual temporal reference, for the granting of the inheritance is specifically directed toward Abraham. Once again, an aorist form would have been well suited grammatically. Although Fanning agrees that the perfect κεχάρισται does refer to an incident in the past, he also wants to retain a dual temporality which would make the event relevant5[[59]](#footnote-59)3. This, however, introduces a difficulty in Paul’s line of argumentation. If Paul consciously chose a perfect form in v. 18 to express a dual temporality associated with the granting (κεχάρισται) of the inheritance to Abraham, why did he not also use the perfect form in v. 16 where it would have not only been consistent, but more appropriate? Instead, in v. 16, Paul is content in simply using the aorist ἐρρέθησαν to describe the promises that were spoken not merely to Abraham (as in v. 18), but also to his seed, namely Christ. Is one to conclude, therefore, on the basis of tense-form alone that the inheritance granted to Abraham (v. 18) is more relevant than the promises spoken to Abraham and his seed (v. 16)? The choice of the perfect in v. 18, as opposed to the aorist in v. 16, may be motivated by the form’s emphatic character since it functions as the frontground in the planes of exposition (or of discourse). When this explanation is applied to Gal 3:16–18, it is assumed that Paul wanted to convey that the granting of the inheritance to Abraham is more defined and contoured than the general promises spoken to him and his seed.

The same situation arises in 3:19 where Paul uses the perfect ἐπήγγελται to refer to the promise made to Abraham’s seed. If a dual temporality is assigned to the perfect form, as Fanning suggests, how is it then reconciled with the use of the aorist in v. 16 which also speaks of the promises spoken to Abraham’s seed?5[[60]](#footnote-60)4 I would argue that once again the perfect serves to further define or contour certain elements in the discourse. In this case God’s promise to Abraham’s seed stands in the frontground against the background of the general promises spoken to Abraham and his seed in v. 16.

In 3:24, Paul uses the perfect γέγονεν in a further comment about the law, stating, ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν («Therefore the law was our tutor until Christ»). It is difficult to maintain that γέγονεν expresses a dual temporality because of what has already been said about the law previously in vv. 17 and 19, where the law is restricted by deixis to a certain time frame (i.e. 430 years after the covenant until the coming of the seed). Furthermore, the past pragmatic use of the perfect may also be indicated by the temporal use of εἰς which can be translated as «until [Christ]». Any other use of the preposition would be inconsistent in the context where Paul is arguing for the displacement of the period of the law by the coming of Christ (cf. vv. 19, 23 and 25)5[[61]](#footnote-61)5. Although the aorist ἐγένετο would have been suitable grammatically and contextually, the perfect form was probably chosen to express the special significance of the law as a παιδαγωγός.

In 4:3, Paul uses the perfect passive participle δεδουλωμένοι in a periphrastic construction to metaphorically describe the state of affairs of God’s people prior to Christ. Paul uses the analogy of being enslaved under the elemental things of the world, comparing it to a child under a guardian’s care until a date set by the father (4:1–2), to refer to the period of the law. That δεδουλωμένοι is being used pragmatically to refer to a past situation is well supported by deictic indicators. First, the context has already made clear that the period under law, to which the analogy is assigned, refers to a time frame prior to the coming of Christ. Second, Paul compares the period of a child who is under a guardian until (ἄχρι) a date set by the father (4:2) with the period of enslavement to the elemental things of the world in v. 3. The comparison of two past-referring periods is established in v. 3 by οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπτιοι («So also we, when we were children»). And third, v. 3 is chronologically prior to v. 4 which introduces the arrival of the fulness of time when God sent Jesus (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου …). Contrary to Fanning, it is very difficult to attribute any sense of a «resulting state» to the passive perfect participle in this text. Most likely, Paul chose the perfect participle in the periphrasis, as opposed to a present or aorist, to draw attention to the state of enslavement in which «we» were prior to the coming of Christ. This is yet another argument that Paul sets forth to explain why the Galatians should return to the gospel they have originally received (cf. 1:6–9).

Paul concludes his series of arguments and proofs in 4:11 with an expression of frustration and concern: φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῇ κεκοπίακα («I fear for you, that perhaps I have laboured over you in vain»). While I agree with the majority of commentators who understand the use of the perfect κεκοπίακα as an expression of Paul’s past ministry prior to the writing his letter, I disagree that the perfect in and of itself also expresses an existing result5[[62]](#footnote-62)6. This does not deny a connotation of an existing result of Paul’s labour in the context, for Paul definitely recounts the consequences of his past ministry, especially in 4:9. My difficulty is in maintaining this notion on the basis of tense-form alone. If Paul instead opted for an aorist tense-form would we have to deny any connotation to consequence, even in light of 4:9? If we suppose for a moment that Paul chose the perfect form because of its dual temporal nature, then the resulting state would have to refer either to the Galatians’ existing condition (i.e. object), or to the continuing state of Paul’s labour (κοπιάω) (i.e. subject) which probably largely consisted of preaching the gospel as 1:8, 11 indicate. The latter possibility can be glossed in this way: «I fear for you, that perhaps I laboured and continue to labour over you in vain». This suggestion seems strained in light of Paul’s endurance of birth-pangs on his converts’ behalf (4:19) and in light of his confidence that the Galatians will not adopt a view on circumcision contrary to Paul’s (5:10). Moreover, if Paul’s labour is connected to his preaching, it raises the question of the relation between the perfect in 4:11 and the aorist participle εὐαγγελισθέν in 1:11 which refers to Paul’s original preaching of the gospel. The former possibility (where the object receives the verbal action) would approximately read, «I fear for you, that perhaps I laboured over you in vain because of the existing results of that labour»5[[63]](#footnote-63)7. This suggestion is very problematic grammatically. Although the notion of result may be found in the context, it cannot be derived from the perfect form since this would introduce a measure of discord with those passages that use the aorist form to refer to a similar condition among the Galatians. One example is 3:1 which reads, Ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν …? («O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you …?»). Are we to maintain, on the basis of the aorist form, that the Galatians did not continue in the result of being bewitched? The entire letter, of course, describes a converse situation. Most significantly, I find it exceedingly difficult to attribute the resulting state of κεκοπίακα to the Galatian audience. McKay has been quite persuasive in responding to many traditional grammars which advocate that the object receives the verbal action of a perfect transitive verb5[[64]](#footnote-64)8. Instead, McKay argues that the most compelling way to explain transitive perfects is in reference to the state of the subject5[[65]](#footnote-65)9. I would therefore suggest that the perfect κεκοπίακα expresses Paul’s state of labour. Pragmatically, the tense-form is being used to refer to Paul’s past labour which he now fears may have been in vain.

*The Request (Galatians 4:12–6:10)*

In this substantial section, Paul shifts his argumentation from the forensic rhetoric of the previous section, where a judicial or defensive program dominated, to deliberative rhetoric by which he tries to persuade his converts to embrace a certain course of action. The shift in rhetoric is particularly noticeable in 4:12–20 where Paul clusters a series of appeals6[[66]](#footnote-66)0. It is interesting that while the perfects in the previous section were primarily used to refer to the past, in this section they are predominantly used to refer to present time. This can partly be explained on the basis of this section’s nature, which is more deliberative and focussed at the Galatian situation.

In 4:13, Paul uses the perfect οἴδατε to remind the Galatian converts of their acceptance of him when he first preached the gospel, despite his bodily illness. As I mentioned above with reference to Gal 2:16, Fanning views οἶδα as an exception to his assessment of the perfect, claiming that οἶδα only preserves a present state «without any allusion to a past occurrence which produced the state»6[[67]](#footnote-67)1. Perhaps it is best, however, at the level of semantics to avoid even a reference to present time and follow McKay who argues that οἶδα is a perfect tense-form expressing a state of knowledge6[[68]](#footnote-68)2. Admittedly, however, any English translation will convey a present temporal reference, as is the case here.

In 4:16, Paul use the perfect γέγονα in asking the rhetorical question: ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν («have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?»)6[[69]](#footnote-69)3. Unlike the perfect forms of γίνομαι in 3:17, 24, which are used pragmatically to refer to the past, the form in 4:16 is most likely used in reference to Paul’s current plea for his converts to shun the Judaizers (4:17). The warning recalls 1:6–9 where Paul lays out his understanding of the current situation among the Galatians. While I agree with Burton that γέγονα denotes a present state, I disagree that it is «the result of a past act of becoming»6[[70]](#footnote-70)4. There is nothing in the context to express a dual temporality. Moreover, I fail to see what a past act of becoming actually means. Paul, in 4:13–15, contrasts the past devotion of the Galatian converts with their current state of indifference. The temporality is primarily indicated by τὸ πρότερον in v. 13 which points to the past, and by ποῦ οὖν … in v. 15 which brings the discourse into the present. The perfect γέγονα thus follows Paul’s inquiry in v. 15 about the present absence of the blessing that was once extended to him. A further indication that γέγονα is being used pragmatically in reference to a current situation may be found in v. 19 where Paul metaphorically adopts the role of a pregnant mother desiring again (πάλιν), as it were, for the Galatians to repeat the conversion to Christ. If Paul’s devotion in v. 19 closely reflects his honesty in v. 16, then on the basis of πάλιν, v. 16 would indicate a current situation.

In the allegory about Hagar and Sarah, Paul uses three perfect forms: γέγραπται in 4:22 and 27, and γεγέννηται in v. 23. Since I have already treated the two uses of γέγραπται above (see Gal 3:10), I will limit my inquiry to the perfect form in v. 23. Fanning cites the perfect in 4:23 as an example of what Moule calls «the perfect of allegory», which supposedly recalls a past occurrence from the OT, and yet retains its relevance6[[71]](#footnote-71)5. Although Fanning endorses the designation, I do not see how it differs from his general definition of the perfect. Burton likewise claims that Paul uses the perfect instead of the aorist because he «is thinking not simply of the historical fact, but of the existing result of that fact»6[[72]](#footnote-72)6. If Paul indeed is using the perfect to express the existing result of the two births, why does he use the aorist ἔσχεν in the previous verse to refer to the same two births? Is Paul not thinking of the existing result at this point? The difficulty is compounded in v. 29 where Paul uses the aorist participle γεννηθείς in reference to the same births. Has Paul again stopped thinking in terms of existing result? To argue for temporality solely on the basis of tense-form results in much confusion. I would argue to the contrary, that the perfect is used here pragmatically to refer to the past only, especially since γεγέννηται is directly recalling the births of two historical personages, Isaac and Ishmael. A substitution of the perfect for an aorist would not hinder whatever temporality is indicated by the context, and certainly would not hinder the allegorical comparison Paul is drawing between the past and present, but it would remove the emphasis and particularity that is conveyed by the perfect tense-form. It must be noted that although it is tempting to see an existing result of the two births, Paul is simply drawing a comparison by means of an allegory between the historical situation of Sarah and Hagar, and the two covenants. He is not showing a line of development from the historical to the present.

In 5:10, Paul shares his confidence that the Galatian converts will not capitulate to other views, saying, ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φρονήσετε («I have confidence in the Lord with regard to you that you will adopt no other view»). It is difficult to see in this context how the perfect πέποιθα could express a dual temporal reference6[[73]](#footnote-73)7. It seems most appropriate that the perfect is being used pragmatically in reference to the present situation. Paul begins the discussion in 5:2 where he warns his converts that if (ἐάν) they receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit. The conditional particle ἐάν conveys the notion that some of Paul’s converts have not as yet surrendered to the pressure of the Judaizers. From 5:3 to 5:9, Paul elaborates on the negative aspects of submitting to the demands of those who posit the necessity of circumcision. Then in 5:10, Paul expresses his confidence that his converts will not adopt these views of the Judaizers. There is nothing in the context that would point to Paul’s past confidence. If we adopt for a moment Fanning’s notion of the perfect, the flow of the discourse from 5:2 to 5:10 would read something like this: «Behold, I Paul say to you that if you receive circumcision [future temporal reference], Christ will be of no benefit to you … I had confidence [past temporal reference] and continue to have confidence [present temporal reference] in the Lord with regard to you that you will adopt no other view [future temporal reference]». The entire flow of the discourse is disrupted if the past temporal referent is retained because there is nothing in the context to which a past state of confidence corresponds. Other difficulties also arise with regard to the use of other tense-forms in the context if the perfect expresses dual temporality. For example, one wonders why Paul did not also choose the perfect participle instead of the present when he spoke of God’s calling in 5:8. Certainly a perfect would have been more appropriate in conveying God’s past (cf. 1:6) and present calling. Additionally, if Paul’s confidence in the Lord regarding the Galatians in 5:10 is somehow tied to God’s calling in 5:8, then a consistency in tense-forms would likewise seem appropriate. These difficulties are, however, removed if dual temporality is not attributed to the nature of the perfect form. The perfect form in 5:10 simply expresses Paul’s state of confidence (in present-time according to the context). The present form would have been appropriate, but it would have lacked the emphasis which Paul probably wanted to convey via the markedness of the perfect.

In 5:11, Paul uses the perfect κατήργηται in reference to the stumbling block of the cross. The text reads: ἐγὼ δὲ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ («But if I, brothers, am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Therefore [in this way; then], the stumbling block of the cross stands abolished»). Once again it is very difficult to attribute a dual temporal reference to the perfect form. While this verse is somewhat of an anomaly with regard to its relation to the immediate context6[[74]](#footnote-74)8, it retains its own deictic indicators that help to determine the temporal reference of κατήργηται. Paul’s deictic structure can be reduced to the following: εἰ … ἔτι …, ἄρα («if … still, then»). The presence of ἔτι, which occurs twice brings the discourse into present time. The subsequent inferential particle ἄρα continues the same time reference. If we adopt Fanning’s notion of the perfect form, the translation would awkwardly read: «But if I, brothers, am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Therefore [in this way; then], the stumbling block of the cross was abolished and continues in the results of that abolishment.” The past referent, which is supposedly inherent in the perfect, makes no sense here. Paul most likely chose the perfect to emphasize the dreadful consequential state of the cross when circumcision is preached instead of the gospel of Christ.

The final use of the perfect form in this section of the epistle is πεπλήρωται in 5:14. It is used here to introduce a scriptural citation and closely resembles previous uses of γέγραπται. The arguments offered above regarding the use of γέγραπται (see 3:10) along with the fact that there seems to be no specific temporal reference indicated in the context, suggest that the perfect here is used in a timeless manner; the scripture simply stands fulfilled. Once again, the markedness of the perfect adds emphasis to the scriptural reference6[[75]](#footnote-75)9.

*The Subscription (Galatians 6:11–18)*

Many scholars have agreed that the subscription is important for the overall interpretation of the epistle since it is here where Paul summarizes the issues that have been of concern. Betz, from the perspective of rhetorical criticism, has even suggested that this section contains the hermeneutical key to Paul’s intentions7[[76]](#footnote-76)0.

In this closing section, Paul uses only one perfect tense-form, ἐσταύρωται in v. 14. With reference to Christ or the cross of Christ, Paul says, διʼ οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ («through whom [or which] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world»)7[[77]](#footnote-77)1. It is difficult here to assess the pragmatic use of the perfect. On the one hand, it can be argued that the perfect is used to refer to the past since that is how Paul uses the perfect form of σταυρόω on two other occasions (2:19; 3:1). On the other hand, one can argue that since there is no definite temporal indication in the immediate context, the perfect is used pragmatically in a timeless manner. In this latter sense, the text can be glossed in this way: «through whom [or which] the world stands crucified to me, and I to the world». The notion expressed here is one of permanence whereby the cross stands as a barrier that separates Paul from the world, since he has been «crucified with Christ» (2:19)7[[78]](#footnote-78)2. This latter option seems more appropriate for a subscription, since it is in the closing sentences where one would anticipate a stress on relevance. Whatever the temporal reference, it can be said that Paul once again reveals his emphasis on the crucifixion of Christ. And since this is the focus of the gospel he preaches, the reader is brought back to Paul’s opening warning in 1:6–10, that the Galatian converts not receive a foreign gospel.

III. assessment

This analysis of perfect forms in Galatians brings into question the tense element as a semantic feature of the perfect. Fanning’s claim that a dual temporal reference is inherent in virtually all perfect forms becomes problematic on two levels. First, in the majority of occurrences, the dual time reference is difficult to maintain on the basis of deixis. In fact, most of the perfect forms are used in context to refer to either past-time or present-time, rarely both. In those occurrences where the perfect is used in reference to the present, it is an arduous task to find a corresponding past action. Likewise, when the perfect is used to refer to the past, it is often difficult to find a corresponding result. And second, if tense is a semantic feature of verbal forms, it is almost impossible to escape temporal tension. When Paul, for example, uses two or more different verbal forms to refer to the same event, is he being consistent? A broad criticism which can be leveled against Fanning’s approach is his apparent lack of distinguishing between semantics and pragmatics. On what basis does the perfect tense-form inherently express dual temporality? Certainly, if Galatians is any indication, it cannot be based on usage.

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ENGLAND[[79]](#footnote-79)

1. 1 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). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 B. M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. NT New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 3 See, for example, S. E. Porter and D. A. Carson (eds.), *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* (JSNTSup 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); K. L. McKay, «Time and Aspect in New Testament Greek», *NovT* 34 (1992) 209–228. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 4 See, for example, G. B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek, Regarded as a Sure Basis for New Testament Exegesis* (tr. W. F. Moulton; 3rd edn. rev.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882) 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 5 Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 338. Winer’s first edition appeared in 1822. This model can be found operating among several hellenistic grammarians (see J. Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968] 313). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 6 G. Curtius, *The Greek Verb: Its Structure and Development* (tr. A. S. Wilkins and E. B. England; London: John Murray, 1880). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 7 J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol. 1: Prolegomena* (3rd edn.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906) 140; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934) 823–24; H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1957) 178; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (2nd edn.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) 13–14; F. Blass, A. Debrunner and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (10th edn.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) §342. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 8 Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 6; E. D. W. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (2nd edn.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1894) 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 9 F. Blass, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (tr. H. Thackeray; London: Macmillan and Co., 1898) 198; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 893. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. NT New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 10 J. Holt, *Etudes d’aspect* (Acta Jutlandica Aarskrift for Aarhus Univeritet 15.2; Copenhagen: Universitetsførlaget I Aarhus, 1943). Prior to Holt, verbal aspect theory was commonly applied to Slovanic languages. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 11 J. Mateos, *El aspecto verbal en el nuevo testamento* (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 12 K. L. McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students: A Concise Grammar of Classical Attic with Special Reference to Aspect in the Verb* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1974 & 1977); idem, «Syntax in Exegesis», *TynBul* 23 (1972) 39–57; idem, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri», *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 27 (1980) 23–49; idem, «The Use of the Ancient Greek Perfect down to the End of the Second Century AD», *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 12 (1965) 1–21; idem, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», *NovT* 23 (1981) 289–329; idem, «Time and Aspect in New Testament Greek», 209–228. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. NT New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 13 Consequently, verbal aspect as a grammatical model for the study of the Greek verbal system can be described as follows using Porter’s (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 88) more concise definition: «Greek verbal aspect is a synthetic semantic category (realized in the forms of verbs) used of meaningful oppositions in a network of tense systems to grammaticalize the author’s reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process». Similar definitions have been offered in McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 290; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 31–33, 84–85; B. Comrie, *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 14 Both Moule (*An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 5–6) and N. Turner (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol. 3: Syntax* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963] 59) recognize the subjectivity involved in the choice of verbal tense-forms by the language user; however, they maintain the label *Aktionsart.* M. Zerwick (*Biblical Greek* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963] 77–78) is among the standard reference grammars of NT Greek to properly use «aspect». [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 15 Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 75–97. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 16 Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 98–102; idem, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Biblical Languages: Greek 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 25–26; McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 17 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 126–96. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 18 Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 251–59. J. P. Louw’s (“Die Semantiese Waarde von die Perfektum in Hellenistiese Grieks», *Acta Classica* 10 [1967] 27) definition of «stative” is noteworthy: «By *stative* I mean that *not the events but the whole affair is established as completed*’ (translation of the Afrikaans is taken from Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 258 n. 9). The stative aspect is one of three aspects which Porter proposes. The other two include: (1) the perfective aspect (aorist) in which the language user conceives the action as a complete and undifferentiated process; (2) the imperfective aspect (present and imperfect) in which the language user conceives the action as being in progress. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 19 Porter (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 245–51) distinguishes four ways in which markedness can occur: (1) distributional markedness shows the relative infrequency of the tense-form; (2) material markedness lends attention to the perfect’s morphological bulk; (3) implicational markedness points to the morphological regularity in comparison to the aorist and present forms; and (4) semantic markedness takes into account the consistent function, described as «resultative state» which subsumes either or both the aorist and the present. In general, more heavily marked structures appear less frequently, are less prone to change in form and structure, and indicate greater semantic significance. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 20 Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 23; idem, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 21 Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 22 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 290–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 23 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 416. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. 24 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 25 R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word Books, 1990) cix. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. 26 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 112 n. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 27 Porter’s endorsement of the non-temporal semantic character of the participle is consistent with many grammarians. See, for example, K. L. Mckay, «Aspect in Imperatival Constructions in New Testament Greek», *NovT* 27 (1985) 224; Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 221; Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 54, 71; Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 28 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 11–12. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. 29 F. F. Bruce (*Commentary on Galatians* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982] 84) argues that Paul is here referring to v. 8. E. D. W. Burton, (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921] 28–29) argues that προειρήκαμεν instead refers to a former occasion, not to v. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. 30 Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 98–102; B. Comrie, *Tense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 13–18; J. Lyons, «Deixis and Subjectivity: *Loquor, ergo sum?*» Speech, Place and Action (ed. R. J. Jarvella and W. Klein; New York: Wiley, 1982) 201–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 31 Several traditional reference grammars (e.g. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 111–15) have argued that the prepositional prefix attached to a verb tense-form results in the perfectivizing of the action, making the tense-form function essentially as an aorist. This notion, however, does not hold up under the verbal aspect model (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 98–102; B. Comrie, *Tense*, 66–70). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. 32 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 112. Burton (*Epistle to the Galatians*, 29–30) also wants to retain the dual temporal reference. He argues for the continuing results of the perfect by claiming that the tense «conveys an appeal to their [audience’s] memory of the utterance». The closest nuance for Burton is «as we told you and you remember». [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. 33 Blass, Debrunner and Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, § 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. 34 Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. 35 Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. 36 Longenecker (*Galatians*, 72) suggests that the periphrastic construction, using the perfect, heightens the idea of a past existing state. Burton (*Epistle to the Galatians*, 103) calls the construction a «pluperfect of existing state». [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. 37 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 112 n. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 38 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 302–303. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. 39 I will not be discussing εἰδότες in the subsequent section of the paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. 40 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. 41 Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. 42 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 97; H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. 43 Louw, «Die Semantiese Waarde von die Perfektum in Hellenistiese Grieks», 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. 44 Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 148; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 100–101; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 143–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. 45 Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 101; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 145. Fanning (*Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 416) claims that perfect passive participle often emphasizes a resulting state. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. 46 Unlike other traditional grammarians (e.g. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 895), Burton (*Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 37) argued that γέγραπται expresses an existing state without an implication to a past inception. He unfortunately does not explain why the perfect form is used instead of the present. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. 47 See, for example, E. E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957); R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); D. M. Smith, «The Pauline Literature», *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars* (eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 265–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. 48 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. LXX Septuagint [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. LXX Septuagint [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. LXX Septuagint [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. 49 It is also possible that Paul chose a version, no longer extant, which contained the participle. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. 50 S. Wallace, «Figure and Ground: The Interrelationships of Linguistic Categories», *Tense-Aspect: Between Semantics and Pragmatics* (ed. P. J. Hopper; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1982) 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. 51 Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 22–23, 301–303. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. 52 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. 53 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 305. A dual temporal reference is also endorsed by Longenecker, *Galatians*, 134; Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 174; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. 54 Longenecker (*Galatians*, 139), for example, states that «the perfect tense of the deponent verb ἐπαγγέλλομαι (“promise”) signals a past action with present results, thereby suggesting that the promise is still in effect». It must be asked, however, whether the promise is considered to be in effect in v. 16 where an aorist is used. See also Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. 55 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 148–49; Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 158–61; Betz, *Galatians*, 178; G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 134–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. 56 See, for example, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 183; Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. 57 Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 235; Longenecker, Galatians, 183 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. 58 See, for example, Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 895–96; Turner, *Syntax*, 83–84; Blass, Debrunner and Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, §342.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. 59 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 314. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. 60 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 184–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. 61 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 112 n. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. 62 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 302–303. With respect to the past acquisition of «knowledge», McKay (p. 299) writes, «As a perfect, οἶδα is remarkable in that although it is one of the most commonly used perfects it rarely, if ever, conveys any clear implication of the action by which its state (of knowledge) was established». [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. 63 While the majority of commentators treat 4:16 as a rhetorical question, a few, such as Longenecker (*Galatians*, 193) and Burton (*Epistle to the Galatians*, 244–45) argue for a statement of inference, translating the verse as «so, [it seems,] I have become your enemy because I am telling you the truth!». [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. 64 Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. 65 Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. 66 Burton, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. 67 Longenecker (*Galatians*, 231), for example, states, «The verb πέποιθα (“I am confident”) reflects Paul’s past attitude toward his converts, but also the perfect tense signals his present confidence regarding them». [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 68 Bruce (*Commentary on Galatians*, 236) claims that the argument in 5:11 can only be explained as a response to an allegation made about Paul, which he suspected may hinder his converts. The reference to Paul preaching circumcision may be a recollection by someone of Paul’s proselytization of Gentiles prior to his conversion. Or it may have been the result of a misinterpretation of Paul’s acceptance of circumcision as a Jewish custom. See also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 232–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. 69 McKay, «On the Perfect and Other Aspects in New Testament Greek», 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. 70 Betz, *Galatians*, 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 71 As Betz (*Galatians*, 318) suggests, it is not that significant whether the genitive relative pronoun refers to the cross or to Christ, since Paul usually views Christ as the crucified redeemer. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. 72 Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Hatina, Thomas R. [“The Perfect Tense-Form in Recent Debate: Galatians as a Case Study.”](https://ref.ly/logosres/filoneotesta-8a?ref=biblio.at%3dThe%2520Perfect%2520Tense-Form%2520in%2520Recent%2520Debate%3a%2520Galatians%2520as%2520a%2520Case%2520Study%7cau%3dHatina%2c%2520Thomas%2520R.) *Filología Neotestamentaria (Mayo 1995)* VIII.15 (1995): 3–22. Print. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)