

Perfect for Aorist. Subtle Nicety or Indiscrimination?

This lecture begins as follows:

As is well-known, the New Testament contains a number of passages in which the perfect tense is used in places where we would naturally have expected the aorist, while at other places the two tenses are placed side by side in the same sentence and with the same subject. A few of the passages in question are:¹

- Mt 1:22: τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ρηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου
Mt 13:46: εὐρῶν δὲ ἓνα πολύτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον
Mt 25:6: μέσης δὲ νυκτὸς κραυγὴ γέγονεν
Jn 1:15: Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέγραγεν λέγων
Jn 3:32: ὁ ἐώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ
2 Cor 2:12f.: Ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα ... οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου
2 Cor 11: 25: τρὶς ἐρραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρὶς ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα
Rev 5:6 f.: Καὶ εἶδον ... ἀρνίον ἐστηκός ὡς ἐσφαγμένον ... καὶ ἦλθεν καὶ εἴληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθημένου.

The question that arises is: Is the perfect here used as an equivalent and instead of the aorist or is it used intentionally to express a fine nuance that is absent from the aorist? This question appears to have received rather different answers from translators of the New Testament, commentators and grammarians.

¹ Other texts include: Jn 5:33: ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλακτε πρὸς Ἰωάννην, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, Lk 4:18: οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με, κηρῦξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν, Lk 9:36 καὶ οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις οὐδὲν ὧν ἐώρακαν, Acts 6:11: τότε ὑπέβαλον ἄνδρας λέγοντας ὅτι ἀκηκόαμεν αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ῥήματα βλάσφημα εἰς Μωϋσῆν (cf. Acts 15:24: ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν), Acts 7:35: τοῦτον τὸν Μωϋσῆν ... ὁ Θεὸς ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν ἀπέσταλκεν, Acts 21:28: Ἕλληνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ κεκοίνακεν τὸν ... τόπον, 1 Cor 1:9: ἀλλὰ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχήκαμεν, 2 Cor 7:5: καὶ γὰρ ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν, 2 Cor 12:8 f.: ὑπὲρ τούτου τρὶς τὸν Κύριον παρεκάλεσα ... καὶ εἴρηκέν μοι, Jas 1:24: κατενόησεν καὶ ἀπελήλυθεν καὶ εὐθέως ἐπελάθετο, Mk 5:19: καὶ ἀπάγγειλον ὅσα ὁ Κύριος σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε, (Rm 16:7: ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν ... οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ γέγοναν cited by Moulton, *Proleg.* 141, does not occur in a historical narrative, and so does not skew).