

The significance of tense (tenses):

Tenses indicate both time and variety of action.

Time is less important and is often determined by the context.

Progress or variety of action is more important. Burton (MOODS AND TENSES OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK) says.. "The Chief function of the Greek verb is not to denote time, but progress." A bit hard for us to pick up but with some effort we can grip it.

The Moods: There are four moods reflected in New Testament Greek.

--The Indicative sees things as fact or reality

John 1:5: The light shines in the darkness...(L.6, p. 8)

--The Subjunctive sees things as possibilities

John 1:7: in order that all might believe through him (L.10, p. 8)

--The Imperative sees things as desiderative

John 1:46: Come and see

--The Optative sees things as potentialities in either existing or non-existing categories. It is not common in the New Testament and about ½ the optative usages are in the phrase "God forbid" (KJV) "let it not be so" (other translations) Romans 6:1

Many Greek grammarians treat the infinitive as a separate mood but we are not prepared yet for that. And in some grammars the term mood is given as mode...technical stuff for which our souls are not accountable.

The Voices: And Greek offers three voicing possibilities:

--Active voice: the subject is doing the action whether the verb is transitive or intransitive.

John 1:5 "the light shines" (as noted above)

--Passive voice: the subject is being acted upon

John 1:13 "but from God were born" (L.13, p. 8)

--Middle voice: the subject is acting in its own interest

1 Corinthians 16:16 "submit yourselves"

Now in most of these matters of mood and voice the actual syntax is much more complicated. But if the student will note just this much it will prove a great tool of help and is really quite accurate for our purposes. Items of greater sophistication need the background of more formal work in Gree,.