

The First 95 Subjunctive Verbs in the New Testament

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This list started as just an experiment to see how the New Testament would change in sound if we introduced the subjunctive to its pages. (I've been a serious Septuagint student for the last three years.) I had no idea when I started that there are over 1,800 subjunctive verbs in the New Testament. (A morphology search of the Greek text I'm using—*The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005*—shows 1,893.) The subjunctive is a “maybe” tense of a verb. “Maybe I will do such-and-such—maybe I won't.” English Bibles are horridly lacking this verb tense from their pages. (The only English translation I've come across which shows signs of any sincere attempt to render the subjunctive is *Young's Literal Translation* by Robert Young, where he uses “may”—presumably meaning “may possibly”.)

A difficulty with the subjunctive (and I think in general with the Greek language) is how to handle μή (“not”) and οὐ (“not” or “not so that”). The best sense I can make of these is that μή is strongly attached to the following subjunctive verb. It latches onto the verb and then turns the verb on its head making it a negative verb (“to maybe not do something”). φοβηθῆς is “you maybe fear”; μὴ φοβηθῆς (Matthew 1:20) is “you maybe do not fear”. When the subjunctive is preceded by οὐ, the meaning is “not-so-that it-maybe-happens”. Matthew 25:9 οὐκ ἀρκέσει ἡμῖν καὶ ὑμῖν “not so that it maybe is enough to us and to you all”. When we know how to handle μή and οὐ on their own, it should be plain how to handle them when they're together as οὐ μὴ. Matthew 5:18 οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ (KJV “shall in no wise pass”): παρέλθῃ “it maybe comes alongside” (“come alongside” is a better English rendering than “pass”); μὴ παρέλθῃ “it maybe does not come alongside”; οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ “not so that it maybe does not come alongside”. This, of course, is in contrast to the conventional approach of ignoring the subjunctive entirely and rendering the “double negative” (and it's really not a “double negative”, since the second negative is absorbed into the verb) as “most certainly will not happen”.

Another difficulty I've had to work through (in the examples I've so far spent time with) is when μή is separated from the verb. “μὴ οὖν [verb]” (οὖν is “therefore”) should be handled like “οὖν μὴ [verb].” “μηδὲ [verb]” is not so simple. μηδέ seems to typically anchor on a preceding μή. δέ I think is best understood as “furthermore” (not “but”), and μηδέ (“not furthermore”) carries the previous μή to the following verb (it can also carry the previous “μὴ [verb]” to the following noun). So in Matthew 7:6 μηδὲ in μηδὲ βάλητε (rKJV “neither cast, you all”) is anchored back in Μὴ δῶτε

(rKJV “Do not give”). The *μηδὲ* brings the preceding *Μὴ* to *βάλητε*. So what you’re really getting is *Μὴ...βάλητε* for the second subjunctive in that verse (preceded by a *δὲ*). In the list below, I’ve decided to use *μηδὲ βάλητε* since the anchor *Μὴ δῶτε* is also in that line.

μήποτε, in contrast to *μηδέ*, seems to stand on its own. The literal rendering “not at any time” I think translates best into “never when”—and that is my current best guess at how holistically to handle the word. (Culturally we need to rethink how we’re hearing that word in certain New Testament verses.) When I started this subjunctive excursion I was compelled to handle *μήποτε* as “πότε μή [verb]” (similar to *μηδέ*). I now think that to be wrong. It’s just a stand-alone *μήποτε*.

As an overall reflection, when you’re taking a removed *μή* and connecting it with the verb, try to make sure that you’re not stealing the *μή* from its rightful partner. I know I made that error (beyond *μήποτε*) somewhere as I was initially working the list below.

The English translation in this list is principally a revised King James Version (rKJV) which I put together for these verses. (The King James Version (KJV) is a public domain translation. The KJV text I took from the *Authorized Version* in Logos Bible Software.) I corrected the rKJV text to reflect the subjunctive and made a conscious effort to not change the overarching grammar or vocabulary approach of the KJV/rKJV text. So for example when the aorist tense has been rendered as a future tense, I have made an effort to keep it that way. The exception to this is when an imperative feel is given to the subjunctive verb. The subjunctive is *not* an imperative, even if in context it conveys (or seems to convey) that meaning. (That is a question for exposition.) All imperative renderings have been replaced with a more “indicative” approach.

Also when I started this excursion I assumed the KJV to render the subjunctive in certain places with “might” or “may”. Each of these occurrences I’ve investigated I think rather come from a preceding *ἵνα* (1:22; 2:15; 4:14; 9:6), *ὅπως* (2:8,23; 5:16,45; 6:2,4,5,16; 8:17), or *εἰάν* (9:21). Also note in 2:8 the “may” is on the participle “come” and not on the subjunctive “worship”. For *ἵνα* and *ὅπως*, “so that” becomes KJV “that...may” or “that...might” (*ἵνα* also is “that...should/shouldest” in 5:29,30, 7:12, and 8:8; *ὅπως* is “that...will/would” in 8:34 and 9:38); for *εἰάν* “if perchance” becomes KJV “if...may”. I’ve therefore left the “may”s and “might”s as they are.

The Greek word or phrase is from *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005* (a public domain text) in Logos Bible Software (I typed these up manually using a different data entry approach than Logos). These are the first 95 subjunctive verbs in Matthew and therefore the first 95 in the New Testament.

1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, you son of David, you maybe do not fear *μή φοβηθῆς* to take to you Mary your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

- 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might maybe be fulfilled πληρωθῆ what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
- 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when you all have maybe found εὔρητε *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and maybe worship προσκυνήσω *him* also.
- 2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be, you, there until I maybe bring you word εἶπω: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
- 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might maybe be fulfilled πληρωθῆ what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I have called my son.
- 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might maybe be fulfilled πληρωθῆ what was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.
- 3:9 And you all maybe do not think μὴ δόξητε to say within you all's selves, We have Abraham for *our* father: for I say unto you all, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
- 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If you are the Son of God, command that these stones maybe be made γένωνται bread.
- 4:6 And says unto him, If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and in *their* hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you maybe dash προσκόψης your foot against a stone.
- 4:9 And says unto him, All these things I will give you, if you will fall down and maybe worship προσκυνήσης *me*.
- 4:14 That it might maybe be fulfilled πληρωθῆ what was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
- 5:11 Blessed are you all, when *men* shall maybe revile ὀνειδίωσιν you all, and maybe persecute διώξωσιν *you all*, and shall maybe say εἰπωσιν all manner of evil against you all falsely, for my sake.
- 5:13 You all are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has maybe lost his savour μωρανθῆ, by what shall it be salted? it is from that time forward good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men.
- 5:16 Let you all's light so shine before men, that they may maybe see ἴδωσιν you all's good works, and maybe glorify δοξάσωσιν you all's Father which is in heaven.
- 5:17 You all maybe do not think Μὴ νομίσητε that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I have not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

- 5:18 For truly I say unto you all, Until heaven and earth maybe pass *παρέλθῃ*, it is not so that one jot or one tittle shall maybe not pass *οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ* from the law, until all maybe is fulfilled *γένηται*.
- 5:19 Whoever therefore shall maybe break *λύση* one of these least commandments, and shall maybe teach *διδάξῃ* men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall maybe do *ποιήσῃ* and maybe teach *διδάξῃ* *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- 5:20 For I say unto you all, That if perchance you all's righteousness shall maybe not exceed *μὴ περισσεύσῃ* *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, it is not so that you all shall maybe not enter *οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε* into the kingdom of heaven.
- 5:21 You all have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whoever shall maybe kill *φονεύσῃ* shall be in danger of the judgment:
- 5:22 But I say unto you all, That whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whoever shall maybe say *εἶπῃ* to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whoever shall maybe say *εἶπῃ*, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.
- 5:23 Therefore if you maybe bring *προσφέρῃς* your gift to the altar, and there maybe remember *μνησθῆς* that your brother has anything against you;
- 5:25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary maybe delivers *παραδῶ* you to the judge, and the judge maybe delivers *παραδῶ* you to the officer, and you are cast into prison.
- 5:26 Truly I say unto you, It is not so that you shall maybe not come out from *οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃς* there, until you have maybe paid *ἀποδώς* the uttermost farthing.
- 5:29 And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast *it* from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should maybe perish *ἀπόληται*, and not *that* your whole body should maybe be cast *βληθῆ* into hell.
- 5:30 And if your right hand offends you, cut it off, and cast *it* from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should maybe perish *ἀπόληται*, and not *that* your whole body should maybe be cast *βληθῆ* into hell.

- 5:31 It has been said, Whoever shall maybe put away ἀπολύση his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
- 5:32 But I say unto you all, That whoever shall maybe put away ἀπολύση his wife, save for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery: and whoever shall maybe marry γαμήση her that is divorced commits adultery.
- 5:36 Neither do you maybe swear ὀμόσης by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.
- 5:42 Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you, you maybe do not turn away μὴ ἀποστραφῆς.
- 5:45 That you all may maybe be γένησθε the children of you all's Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- 5:46 For if you all maybe love ἀγαπήσητε them which love you all, what reward do you all have? do not even the publicans do the same?
- 5:47 And if you all maybe salute ἀσπάσησθε you all's brothers only, what do you all do more *than others*? do not even the publicans do so?
- 6:2 Therefore when you maybe do ποιῆς your alms, you maybe do not sound a trumpet μὴ σαλπίσης before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may maybe have glory δοξασθῶσιν of men. Truly I say unto you all, They have their reward.
- 6:4 That your alms may maybe be ἦ in secret: and your Father which sees in secret, himself shall reward you openly.
- 6:5 And when you maybe pray προσεύχη, you shall not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may maybe be seen φανῶσιν of men. Truly I say unto you all, They have their reward.
- 6:6 But you, when you maybe pray προσεύχη, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly.
- 6:7 But when you all pray, maybe do not use vain repetitions μὴ βαττολογήσητε, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- 6:8 Therefore you all maybe are not likened Μὴ...ὁμοιωθῆτε unto them: for you all's Father knows what things you all have need of, before you all ask him.
- 6:13 And you maybe do not lead μὴ εἰσενέγκης us into temptation, but deliver, you, us from evil: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

- 6:14 For if you all maybe forgive ἀφῆτε men their trespasses, you all's heavenly Father will also forgive you all:
- 6:15 But if you all maybe do not forgive μὴ ἀφῆτε men their trespasses, neither will you all's Father forgive you all's trespasses.
- 6:16 Moreover when you all maybe fast νηστεύητε, do not be, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may maybe appear φανῶσιν unto men to fast. Truly I say unto you all, They have their reward.
- 6:18 That you maybe do not appear μὴ φανῆς unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly.
- 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore your eye maybe is ἕν single, your whole body shall be full of light.
- 6:23 But if your eye maybe is ἕν evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
- 6:25 Therefore I say unto you all, Do not give thought to you all's life, what you all shall maybe eat φάγητε, or what you all shall maybe drink πίητε; nor yet for you all's body, what you all shall maybe put on ἐνδύσησθε. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
- 6:31 Therefore maybe do not give thought Μὴ...μεριμνήσητε, saying, What shall we maybe eat φάγωμεν? or, What shall we maybe drink πίωμεν? or, With what shall we maybe be clothed περιβαλώμεθα?
- 6:34 Therefore you all maybe do not give thought to Μὴ...μεριμνήσητε tomorrow: for tomorrow shall give thought to the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil of it.
- 7:1 Do not judge, so that you all maybe are not judged μὴ κριθῆτε.
- 7:4 Or how will you say to your brother, Let me maybe pull out ἐκβάλω the speck out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye?
- 7:6 You all maybe do not give Μὴ δῶτε that which is holy unto the dogs, furthermore you all maybe do not cast μηδὲ βάλητε you all's pearls before swine, lest they maybe trample καταπατήσωσιν them under their feet, and turn again and maybe rend ῥήξωσιν you all.
- 7:9 Or what man is there of you all, whom if his son maybe asks αἰτήσῃ bread, will he give him a stone?
- 7:10 Or if he maybe asks αἰτήσῃ a fish, will he give him a serpent?

- 7:12 Therefore all things whatever you all maybe will θέλητε that men should maybe do ποιῶσιν to you all, do, you all, even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.
- 8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if you maybe will θέλης, you can make me clean.
- 8:4 And Jesus says unto him, See, you, maybe tell εἴπης no man; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.
- 8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should maybe come εἰσέλθης under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.
- 8:17 That it might maybe be fulfilled πληρωθῆ what was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.
- 8:19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow you to wherever you maybe go ἀπέρχη.
- 8:20 And Jesus says unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man does not have where he maybe lays κλίνη *his* head.
- 8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they implored *him* that he would maybe depart μεταβῆ out of their coasts.
- 9:6 But that you all may maybe know εἰδῆτε that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins (then he says to the paralyzed), Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house.
- 9:15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall maybe be taken ἀπαρθῆ from them, and then shall they fast.
- 9:21 For she said within herself, If I may but maybe touch ἄψωμαι his garment, I shall be whole.
- 9:38 Therefore implore, you all, the Lord of the harvest, that he will maybe send forth ἐκβάλη laborers into his harvest.

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