

# The Perfect Tense in Pauline Discourse

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## Introduction:

Prominence  
Stanley E. Porter  
Stephen H. Levinsohn  
Steve E. Runge

## Examples:

### 1. Acts 16:1-5,

<sup>1</sup> Paul went [Aor Ind] on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was [Aor Impv] a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek.

Narrative/ Background  
Narrative/ Background

<sup>2</sup> He was well spoken [Impf Ind] of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium.

Highlighted/ Foreground

<sup>3</sup> Paul wanted [Aor Ind] Timothy to accompany him; and he took [Aor Inf] him and had him circumcised [Aor Ind] because of the Jews who were [Pres Ptcp] in those places, for they all knew [Plup Ind] that his father was a Greek.

Narrative/ Background  
Narrative/ Background  
Narrative/ Background  
Highlighted/ Foreground  
Selected/ Frontground?

<sup>4</sup> As they went [Impf Ind] from town to town, they delivered [Impf Ind] to them for observance the decisions that had been reached [Pf Ptcp] by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.

Highlighted/ Foreground  
Highlighted/ Foreground  
Selected/ Frontground

<sup>5</sup> So the churches were strengthened [Impf Ind] in the faith and increased [Impf Ind] in numbers daily. (Acts 16:1-5 NRSV)

Highlighted/ Foreground  
Highlighted/ Foreground

### 2. Rom 5:1-2,

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are justified [Aor Ptcp] by faith, we have [Pres Ind] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Narrative/ Background  
Highlighted/ Foreground

<sup>2</sup> through whom we have obtained [Pf Ind] access to this grace in which we stand [Pf Ind]; and we boast [Pres Ind] in our hope of sharing the glory of God. (Rom 5:1-2 NRSV)

Selected/ Frontground  
Selected/ Frontground  
Highlighted/ Foreground?

### 3. Luke 2:41-43,

- <sup>41</sup> Now every year his parents went [Impf Ind] to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. Narrative Setting/ Background
- <sup>42</sup> And when he was [Aor Ind] twelve years old, they went up [Impf Ind] as usual for the festival. Narrative Progression/ Foreground  
Narrative Setting/ Background
- <sup>43</sup> When the festival was ended [Aor Ind] and they started to return [Pres Inf], the boy Jesus stayed behind [Aor Ind] in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know [Aor Ind] it. (Luke 2:41-43 NRSV) Narrative Progression/ Foreground  
?  
Narrative Progression/ Foreground  
Narrative Progression/ Foreground
4. Rom 5:1-2,
- <sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are justified [Aor Ptcp] by faith, we have [Pres Ind] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Narrative/ Background?  
Mainline / Foreground
- <sup>2</sup> through whom we have obtained [Pf Ind] access to this grace in which we stand [Pf Ind]; and we boast [Pres Ind] in our hope of sharing the glory of God. (Rom 5:1-2 NRSV) Means/ Description  
Means/ Correlation  
Mainline/ Foreground?

### My Research:

1 Cor 2:1-12

The Narrative Frame, 1 Cor 2:1-5

- <sup>1</sup> When I came [Aor Ptcp] to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come [Aor Ind] proclaiming [Pres Ptcp] the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. Narrative/ Setting/ Background  
Narrative/ Theme/ Foreground  
Narrative/ Setting/ Background
- <sup>2</sup> For I decided [Aor Ind] to know [Pf Inf] nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified [Pf Ptcp]. Narrative/ Theme/ Foreground  
Narrative/ Description/ Background  
Narrative/ Description/ Background  
Narrative/ Theme/ Foreground
- <sup>3</sup> And I came [Aor Ind] to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. Narrative/ Description/ Background
- <sup>4</sup> My speech and my proclamation ~~were~~ not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
- <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might rest not [Pres Subj] on human wisdom but on the power of God. Logical/ Reason/ Background

## The Discourse, 1 Cor 2:6-12

<sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do speak [Pres Ind] wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed [Pres Ptcp] to perish.

Exhortation/ Theme/ Foreground

<sup>7</sup> But we speak [Pres Ind] God's wisdom, secret and hidden [Pf Ptcp], which God decreed [Aor Ind] before the ages for our glory.

Exhortation/ Description/ Background

<sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood [Pf Ind] this; for if they had [Aor Ind], they would not have crucified [Aor Ind] the Lord of glory.

Exhortation/ Theme/ Foreground

Exhortation/ Description/ Background

Exhortation/ Setting/ Background

Exhortation/ Explanation/ Background

Exhortation/ Reason/ Background

Exhortation/ Result/ Background

<sup>9</sup> But, as it is written [Pf Ind], "What no eye has seen [Aor Ind], nor ear heard [Aor Ind], nor the human heart conceived [Aor Ind], what God has prepared [Aor Ind] for those who love [Pres Ptcp] him"--

Exhortation/ Citation/ Background

Challenge/ Theme/ Foreground

Challenge/ Theme/ Foreground

Challenge/ Theme/ Foreground

Challenge/ Theme/ Foreground

Condition/ Description/ Background

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed [Aor Ind] to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches [Pres Ind] everything, even the depths of God.

Exhortation/ Theme/ Foreground

Exhortation/ Reason/ Background

<sup>11</sup> For what human being knows [Pf Ind] what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends [Pf Ind] what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

Example/ Referential/ Background

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received [Aor Ind] not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand [Pf Subj] the gifts bestowed [Aor Ptcp] on us by God. (1 Cor 2:1-12 NRSV)

Example/ Referential/ Background

Exhortation/ Theme/ Foreground

Exhortation/ Result/ Background

Exhortation/ Description/ Background

### Discussion:

Backgrounding

Perfect as Frontgrounding?

The Function of the Perfect in Discourse

### Conclusion:

Levinsohn's emphasis

Rethinking Porter

Rethinking the relationship between Discourse Function and morphological bulk.