



## Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν:

## A Lexico-Syntactical Analysis of Matthew 6:13a

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### ABSTRACT

The Prayer of the Lord, commonly referred to as the Lord’s Prayer in both the Matthean and Lukan accounts has received much scholarly attention over the centuries. As much as it is one of the portions of scripture usually recited by Christians especially, there are some posing challenges that need attention. Although several works have been done on it in addressing certain teething issues, it still remains one of the perceived passages of scholarly interest. In this paper, an attempt is made to resolve the issue of why Jesus Christ should ask the Father not to lead us into temptation – *Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*. This study ascertained whether the Father does lead into temptation and Jesus’ request was asking for a prohibition/stoppage or whether the Father never did and that the request is asking Him not to start. By a lexico-syntactical analysis of Matthew 6:13a, it came out clearly that the author used aorist subjunctive in the prohibition, that is, *μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς*. This gives an emphatically strong prohibition. Since the aorist represents a punctiliar action, an action to be done without reference to its continuance or frequency; and also, as the subjunctive’s reality is uncertain, this means leading into temptation by the Father never happened and would never happen. Verily, this uncertainty of the subjunctive mood coupled with the implication of the aorist makes the eventuality of action of the verb very improbable. This paper provides an understanding of the use of the aorist subjunctive in prohibition to show its force with the negative as in *μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς*.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Prayer of the Lord, as it is commonly called, recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 (with some commonalities and disparities) is commonly used and referred to in society especially, in Christendom. For instance, in Ghana, majority of the Basic Schools, even public schools, do recite (rather than pray) the Prayer of the Lord each morning during their assembly period. In spite of its popularity around the globe, several difficulties about the mode, structure, and text of the prayer have been debated over the centuries. This portion of scripture, especially, the line in Matthew 6:13a - *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν* (*kai mē eisenegkēs hēmas eis peirasmon*) translated, “Do not lead us into temptation”, has generated several arguments over the centuries. Although various theological

meanings have been deduced from and adduced on this particular line, there still remain several doubts about the appropriateness and meaning of it. The misunderstanding of this particular line is corroborated by a friend who sarcastically insinuated by saying that God should not and need not lead man into temptation because he/she can find the way on their own. This, even on the lighter side is part of the various views that people hold about this particular line *vis-à-vis* the entirety of the Prayer of the Lord.

Furthermore, the Prayer of the Lord is often touted as and becomes a template of prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to say as a group. This model prayer, as called, came about at the request of a disciple of Jesus to teach them how to pray according to the account of Luke. With this in mind, it gives readers the understanding that Jesus taught Christians how to pray. This, He did with the Prayer of the Lord as part of the Sermon on the Mount. Again, reciting it can edify and build up strength and ensure a strong link with God, the Lord of all creation – all things that exist, physical and non-physical. It is a flawless prayer of realization – a prayer that appeals to mankind’s awareness to feel and experience what God has created.<sup>1</sup> With such relevance, there is the need to study each word as well as the arrangement and connectedness of the words in the formation of this prayer model. It is to this end that this paper applies the lexico-syntactical analysis approach as a methodology in reading this somehow controversial line, Matthew 6:13a in the Prayer of the Lord.

This paper, among other things, looks at a general survey of the place of the Prayer of the Lord in the Matthean context, some readings and general views on the Prayer of the Lord, the lexical-syntactical analysis of Matthew 6:13a with emphasis on the Greek structure, theological implications and then conclusion. It is in the interest of this paper to show the relevance of the use of a lexico-syntactical approach to analyze the text. This would afford the reader to appreciate the meaning of the line as one prays through the Prayer of the Lord. This again would deal with the question, does God tempt believers for Jesus to say He should not lead them into temptation? Secondly, has God ever led anyone into temptation or does God lead man into temptation, and why Jesus should make this part of His model prayer?

### **The Gospel of Matthew - Context and Structure**

The Gospel of Matthew is divided into three main sections: 1-4:16 as the introduction to Jesus’ Ministry; 4:17-16:20 being the development of Jesus’ ministry; and 16:21-28:20 as the climax of Jesus’ ministry.<sup>2</sup> Although titled differently, Kingsbury’s work has argued for the same three large sections of the Matthean Gospel. He called the first section the personality of Jesus as Messiah (1:1-4:16); the second as the Declaration of Jesus as Messiah (4:17-16:20); and the third as the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus as Messiah (16:21-28:20). He developed and tied his view to Christological development in the Matthean narrative.<sup>3</sup> According to him, immediately after each of the first two major sections, came the decisive expression, *ἀπο τότε* (*apo tote*) meaning, “from that time on”. This expression signals advancement in the storyline of Matthean narrative in view of his Christological development. The last two of these segments each contain three summary passages (4:23-25; 9:35; 11:1; and 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19).<sup>4</sup> Several scholarly arguments are raised against this view. For instance, it is observed that *ἀπο τότε* may not be so “redactionally important for Matthew that his entire structure turns on it: after all, Matthew uses it at 26:16 without any break in the flow of the narrative.”<sup>5</sup> One could even add 26:2 and make the case that there are four passion summaries in the third section, but not three. It may be observed that Matthew may have been more influenced by his following of the Markan account than by other considerations in his structural transitions.

To the above observations, the most frequently proposed structure of the Matthean gospel is the view that the author presented five treatises or discourses of which each began in an explicit milieu or context and ended with a formulary found nowhere else in the narrative. “And so it was, when Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Contzen Pereira, “Understanding the Prayer of the Lord,” *Scientific GOD Journal* 5=6, no. 9 (2015): 531–42.

<sup>2</sup> Craig L Blomberg, *Matthew: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, vol. 22 (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> D. A Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*.

had ended these sayings, that...” is the formula to determine the structure. This expression is found in chapters 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1. Bacon suggested his view, by calling these five sections the books in which each narrative appeared with a discourse. According to him, the first book deals with discipleship (narrative, chapters 3-4; discourse, chapters 5-7); the second book deals with apostleship (narrative, chapters 8-9; discourse, chapter 10); the third book focuses on the hiding of the revelation (narrative, chapters 11-12; discourse, chapter 13); the fourth book deals with church administration (narrative, chapters 14-17; discourse, chapter 18); and the fifth book deals with the judgment (narrative, chapters 19-22; discourse, chapters 23-25).<sup>6</sup> This structure makes Matthew 1-2 as a foreword, an opening or prologue and 26-28 as an epilogue. However, it is difficult to accept Matthew 26-28, for instance, as just for the purpose of an epilogue. Rather, it is feasible that Matthew thought of these chapters as the climatic, sixth narrative section, with the corresponding ‘teaching’ section laid on the shoulders of the disciples (28:18-20).<sup>7</sup>

An open-ended labelling of the chapters (1 and 2; 26-28) outside Bacon’s five books may not give the needed weight they deserve based on the matters in these chapters. However, following his argument, a seven-part outline is arrived at. These are: i) the prologue and/or foreword (1:1-2:23); ii) the gospel, simply, the good news of the kingdom (3:1-7:29); iii) the kingdom protracted under Jesus’ dominion (8:1-11:1); iv) didactic and proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom: rising opposition (11:2-13:53); v) the glory and the shadow: progressive polarization (13:54-19:2); vi) opposition and eschatology: the triumph of grace (19:3-26:5); and vii) the passion and resurrection of Jesus (26:6-28:20).<sup>8</sup> The Prayer of the Lord of which a portion is considered in this paper falls within the second portion, the gospel of the kingdom (3:1-7:29). A portion of this section of Matthew’s narrative is often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. This is the first discourse (5:1-7:29) in the Matthean narrative of which the Prayer of the Lord is a part.

### The Prayer of the Lord

Among the world religions, one observes the beliefs of a particular religion and the lifestyle of its believers as found in the content of their prayers.<sup>9</sup> This is no exception to Christianity. The Prayer of the Lord is viewed as at the core of the Christian life. It represents a compendium of the Christian way of life. It is again viewed as revealing the deepest motives, thoughts, objectives, and significant priorities of the Christian faith.<sup>10</sup> The Prayer of the Lord is found in three sources. These are Matthew 6:9–13, Luke 11:2–4, and *Didache* 8:2–3. The *Didache* for instance, is dated from ca. AD 100. It seemed to be a work of a late 1st-century Christian-Jewish community in Syria. The diction and expressions of the *Didache* version appear very close to that of the Matthean account. The most conspicuous feature of this version is that it provided the earliest textual evidence for part of the doxological ending to the prayer, ‘For yours is the power and glory forever’.<sup>11</sup> Luke placed the Prayer of the Lord within the context of a request from a disciple (Lk 11:1), whilst both Matthew and the *Didache* presented Jesus’ teaching on prayer as a contrast to what the hypocrites did as in Matthew 6:5.

The Prayer of the Lord is found in the section of the Sermon on the Mount in the Matthean account. The sermon that Jesus gave on the mount is arguably described as the most renowned, celebrated, stimulating and provocative speech in human history. There is no other well-known discourse that poses a more in-depth challenge to every generation, its religious life, its politics, and its everyday ethos. “It is a direct onslaught on the selfishness, the self-indulgence, the hypocrisy of people, societies and nations; it challenges our lethargy, our timid hesitancy to break out of our comfort zones and to fully accept the cost of discipleship.”<sup>12</sup> Within this portion of the Matthean narrative, the Prayer of the Lord seems to be outstanding and mostly recited part of the Sermon on the Mount. Its

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin W Bacon, “The ‘Five Books’ of Matthew against the Jews,” *The Expositor* 15, no. 8 (1918), 56-66.

<sup>7</sup> Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*.

<sup>8</sup> Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 58, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Amanda Du Plessis, “The Lord’s Prayer as a Paradigm for Restorative Justice in Brokenness,” *In Die Skriflig* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–6.

<sup>10</sup> N. Koopman, “The Prayer of the Lord – An Agenda for Christian Living,” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 1 (2007): 4–10.

<sup>11</sup> A. J. McNicol, “The Prayer of the Lord: The Touchstone of Christian Spirituality,” *Christian Studies* 20, no. 1 (2004): 5–21.

<sup>12</sup> Andrie B Du Toit, “Revisiting the Sermon on the Mount: Some Major Issues,” *Neotestamentica* 50, no.3(2016): 59–91.

use cannot be overemphasized. For instance, people such as St. Augustine and Martin Luther detected that there is nothing more marvelous in the whole biblical text than the Prayer of the Lord. John Calvin also put forward that the petitions in the Prayer of the Lord include the very things that believers rightly desire or seek from God.<sup>13</sup>

It is demonstrably clear that the Sermon on the Mount can be described as wisdom literature.<sup>14</sup> With this perspective in mind, the Prayer of the Lord in this context of wisdom should also be viewed as such. Although it is a prayer, it being a wisdom literature cannot be denied. This is so since the presentation of the Sermon on the Mount of which the Prayer of the Lord is part as described by Witherington, “a paradigmatic homily revealing the essence of the teaching of the sage.”<sup>15</sup> The entirety of Matthew 5-7 is characterized by peculiar wisdom that cannot by any means be denied as coming from someone full of wisdom, a quintessential teacher. It can, therefore, be described as a teaching material of wisdom from a sage. This is also made quite obvious in the way the whole Sermon on the Mount is framed as found in Matthew 5:2 as opening - “Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying” and in Matthew 7:29 closing - “...for He taught them.” Although this point of the Sermon on the Mount, being teaching seems quite clear, some scholars argue that one should not overemphasize the difference between preaching and teaching the gospel.<sup>16</sup>

Another important feature of the Sermon on the Mount is the indication of “continued emphasis at the end of the sermon on antithetical approaches to kingdom living (7:13–27).”<sup>17</sup> This is seen in Jesus’ presentation of two ways (7:13–14), two kinds of fruit (7:15–20), and two foundations (7:24–27). The sermon further typifies the teaching regarding the actions of the wise (7:24) and the foolish (7:26). These kinds of differentiation are typically found in wisdom literature. Again, there are a variety of forms within the sermon that are indicative of sapiential literature.<sup>18</sup> The Beatitudes are the foremost in this aspect of this wisdom literature. These three foregoing observations happened to be particularly outside the Prayer of the Lord which is the focus of this paper. However, such views are not outside the scope of the Sermon on the Mount which the Prayer of the Lord is part.

In a work of Byargeon, he observed that “Over the years the general consensus among many New Testament scholars has been that the Prayer of the Lord is very similar to and perhaps even based upon 1<sup>st</sup>-century synagogue prayers.”<sup>19</sup> This assertion is not made in a vacuum as far as there are tangible observations to that effect. For instance, Dunn asserted a connection between Jewish synagogue prayers and the Prayer of the Lord. He observed that “the *Qaddish* is of particular interest to Christians, since it may well have been used by Jesus in formulating the Prayer of the Lord.”<sup>20</sup> Such an affirmation, as expressed by other scholars was due to the fact that the *Qaddish* starts with the expression, “Exalted and hallowed be his great name,” which parallels “hallowed be your name”; and again in the *Qaddish*, “May he establish his kingdom in your lifetime” which is in line with the expression “your kingdom come” as in Matthew 6:9 and 6:10 respectively. In spite of these parallel lines in the *Qaddish* and the Prayer of the Lord suggesting an influence of the *Qaddish* on the Prayer of the Lord, Heinemann argued for a distinction between the two prayers on the basis of person. He observed that one of the prayers addressed God directly in the second person. Whereas the other, being that of the *Qaddish*, spoke of God indirectly. It did not even identify God by name or appellation.<sup>21</sup> The difficulty in this argument as to whether the *Qaddish* influenced the Prayer of the Lord or not has to do with when it originated. It is not absolutely known whether the *Qaddish* existed by the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Rather, “the first references to the liturgical use of the *Qaddish* do not occur until ca. AD 600 in the post-Talmudic

<sup>13</sup> R. T. Kendall, *The Lord’s Prayer: Insight and Inspiration to Draw You Closer to Him* (Charisma Media, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, “Prayer,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 617-625.

<sup>15</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 224.

<sup>16</sup> D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” *Expositor’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. F. E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 129.

<sup>17</sup> Dunn, “Prayer,” 617-625.

<sup>18</sup> R. Kiefer, “Wisdom and Blessings in the Beatitudes of St. Matthew and St. Luke,” *SE VI*, 1973, 291–95.

<sup>19</sup> R. W. Byargeon, “Echoes of Wisdom in the Prayer of the Lord (Matt 6:9–13),” *JETS* 41, no. 3 (1998): 353–65.

<sup>20</sup> Dunn, “Prayer,” 617-625.

<sup>21</sup> J. Heinemann, “The Background of Jesus’ Prayer,” *The Lord’s Prayer and Jewish Liturgy* (eds. J. J. Petuchowski and M. Brocke; New York: Seabury, 1978), 81.

tractate known as *Sopherim*.”<sup>22</sup> In the foregoing discussion, one may only adduce the fact that there are similarities between the *Qaddish* and the Prayer of the Lord rather than assuming a possible borrowing.

Another important discussion on the Prayer of the Lord among scholars is its relationship with the Eighteen Benedictions of Jewish prayers referred to as the *Shemoneh Esreh*. This is also known as the *hattepillah*, meaning “the prayer” which was prayed three times a day in tandem with the Jewish tradition as recorded in Psalm 55:17.<sup>23</sup> The argued relationship of parallels between the Eighteen Benedictions of Jewish Prayer and the Prayer of the Lord are based on the reasons that the two prayers i) seem to have related content; ii) hypothetical resemblances between the consonantal endings of each of the prayers; and iii) similarity in the whole structure between the two prayers.<sup>24</sup> For instance, it is argued that the Eighteen Benedictions have a three-structured formation comprising praise (1–3), request (4–15) and thanksgiving (16–18). Similarly, the Prayer of the Lord followed the same tripartite outline showing praise in Matthew 6:9, 10, petition in verses 11-13 and thanksgiving in verse 13.<sup>25</sup>

### Lexico-Syntactical Analysis of Matthew 6:13a

The Greek of Matthew 6:13a is *Καὶ μὴ εἰσενεγκῆς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*. This expression can be literally translated, following the text as “And never carry/bring us into temptation. To apply lexico-syntactical analysis to this expression, the words will be analyzed individually to make the needed meaning in relation to how they syntactically stand with others in the phrase.

#### *Καὶ*

*Καὶ* is a conjunction and can be used to mean, and, even, also, namely. The context in which it is used determines the exact sense and meaning of it. Just as it is used in Matthew 6:13a, *καὶ* is never used adversatively. In essence, it is not used in expressing opposition, contrast, or antithesis. According to Thayer, *καὶ* as a conjunction is by far the most frequently used of all the particles in the New Testament. Apart from it not being used adversatively, it serves as a copulative, used in connecting words or clauses linked in a sense or particular way. It, therefore, joins together and coordinates words or groups of words thereby, expressing the addition of their meanings as a copulative conjunction. As a copulative, it joins single words or terms as in Matthew 16:1; Luke 8:15; and Hebrews 1:1. In this same kind of usage, it is repeated before single terms, and to each, its own force and weight is to an extent given. Although it may not be translated as it is in Romans 9:4 (*ἡ νόθευσις καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι*), its weight or usefulness in the Greek cannot be overemphasized. This kind of the use of *καὶ* is also found in Romans 7:12; Matthew 23:23; Luke 14:21; John 16:8; Acts 15:20, 29; Acts 21:25; Hebrews 9:10; Revelation 5:12; Revelation 18:12. In this use again, it joins to partitive words together in a general notion - *ὁ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι* Acts 5:29. In this case, it indicates *Πέτρος* being part of *ἀπόστολοι* being the whole.<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned early on, its use again involves connecting clauses and sentences that are connected in a sense. This use of *καὶ* relates to what is found in Matthew 6:13a. Its presence here denotes a link between the earlier statement in verse 12 to verse 13 and possibly, the rest of the model prayer. Such usage, Friberg mentioned serves as a coordinating conjunction whose use varies according to its circumstances. Here in Matthew 6:13a, it serves as a continuative, joining the immediate clauses or sentences within its sphere. In this instance, it seems to have introduced a result from the preceding request in verse 12 and then, and so.<sup>27</sup> In accordance with ancient popular speeches, expressly, of the Hebrew tongue, they link statement to statement using this conjunction. In this case, the logical relations between such statements in a more sophisticated language are expressed either by more exact particles or by the use of the participial or the relative construction. This is also in line with

<sup>22</sup> B. Graubard, “The Kaddish Prayer,” in *The Prayer of the Lord*, ed. J. J. Petuchowski and M. Brocke (New York:Seabury,1978), 60.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob Petuchowski, *Liturgy of the Synagogue*, 1983; G. J. Bahr, “The Use of the Prayer of the Lord in the Primitive Church,” *JBL* 84 (1965): 159.

<sup>24</sup> Dunn, “Prayer,” 617-625.

<sup>25</sup> Bahr, “Lord’s Prayer,” 158.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Friberg, “Analytical Greek New Testament,” *Baker’s Greek New Testament Library*, 1982.

the *καί* consecutive which annexes what follows from something said before in connection with what is about to be said. This becomes more relevant as it is used in linking two principal senses within the same context.<sup>28</sup>

### **μή**

*Μή* is a particle of negation. Although used for negation just as its counterpart, it distinctly differs from *οὐ* in diverse ways. The general difference between *οὐ* and *μή* is the idea of *οὐ* dealing with facts, that is, it is objective. Whereas *μή* being subjective, involves negating will and thought.<sup>29</sup> For instance, technically, *οὐ* (it also appears as *οὐκ*, *οὐχ* depending on the type of alphabet that it precedes) negates or denies simply the act or the thing itself. In this wise, it must be an existing ongoing action that it negates. However, *μή* on the other hand negates or denies an act or thing indirectly, hypothetically, and subjectively. In this wise, *μή* repudiates the thought of the thing, or the thing according to the judgment, estimation, will, purpose, or preference of someone. It is therefore preferred as the negative of thought. Substantively, whilst *οὐ* negates an action or a thing in progress or what is done before, *μή* on the other hand in a way prohibits or negates the possibility of the action. It would be observed then that *μή* by this understanding of subjectivity, has become the negative for the moods whose actions are highly improbable and thus, does not negate the indicative. It is, therefore, used in the case of supposed, tentative, or unlimited rejection and where *οὐ* refutes the fact, it denies the idea. It is generally used with all moods with the exception of the factual indicative.<sup>30</sup>

### **εἰσενέγκης**

The original verb for *εἰσενέγκης* is *εἰσφέρω* which literally means, to carry in or inward. In its usage, it is translated as ‘I lead into’, ‘bring in’, or ‘announce’ depending on the context. The form that appears in the Prayer of the Lord, as in Matthew 6:13a, *εἰσενέγκης*, is the aorist subjunctive. The aorist although representing the simple past in the English language, the Greek tenses are not necessarily time tenses. They represent the manner of the action more than the time of the action. It is the reason why the aorist can be used in such an instance.<sup>31</sup>

To appreciate the use of the aorist and its negation as in Matthew 6:13a - *μή εἰσενέγκης*, it is appropriate to represent the action of the aorist in comparison with other main tenses in New Testament Greek studies. The three vital kinds of action are: i) temporary, momentary, or punctiliar action and this is when the action is seen as a whole which may be denoted by a dot (.); ii) linear or durative action in which it may be diagrammed by a continuous line ( \_\_\_\_\_ ); and iii) the continuance of perfected or completed action which may be shown as ( . \_\_\_\_\_ ).<sup>32</sup> The aorist tense is essentially the kind of action described as the momentary or punctiliar and represented by a dot (.). Its forms, for instance, in the indicative, subjunctive, or imperative mood show or depict punctiliar action, that is an action to be done once without reference to continuance or frequency.<sup>33</sup> An important distinction to this is not to suggest a temporal quality of singleness. The reason is that time is not of the essence to the aorist tense.<sup>34</sup> This, therefore, implies that the aorist is not necessarily a time tense. The action of the aorist is timeless and it is best defined as action in “its simplest form.”<sup>35</sup> This view is further affirmed by “the fact that the inherent meaning of the Greek tenses is defined as showing aspect rather than time.”<sup>36</sup> In essence, the Greek tenses themselves provide no information about time. This notwithstanding, one infers time awareness from the context for which the future tense is the true time tense.

<sup>28</sup> Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

<sup>29</sup> J. H. Moulton and G. Miligan, “*Μή*,” in *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930).

<sup>30</sup> Friberg, “Analytical Greek New Testament.”

<sup>31</sup> J. W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 96.

<sup>32</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Ravenio Books, 2014), 832.

<sup>33</sup> Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 96.

<sup>34</sup> Randy L Maddox, “The Use of the Aorist Tense in Holiness Exegesis,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 16, no. 2 (1981): 106–18.

<sup>35</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 824.

<sup>36</sup> Robert E Picirilli, “The Meaning of the Tenses in New Testament Greek: Where Are We?,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 3 (2005): 533.

The word *εἰσενέγκῃς* is in the subjunctive mood. The subjunctive mood suggests events whose reality is uncertain. The uncertainty of this mood makes the eventuality of the action of the verb quite improbable. When the subjunctive mood is used with the negative, it strengthens the prohibition since the mood itself makes the action improbable. It, therefore, implies that the aorist subjunctive as found in Matthew 6:13a, *εἰσενέγκῃς* is negated by using *μὴ* to prohibit the action of the verb. Unlike the aorist imperative, in this case, the prohibition here is strong and emphatic. Although not used in Matthew 6:13a as shown above, the prohibition by the aorist subjunctive can further be strengthened with the double negative *οὐ μὴ*.<sup>37</sup>

Mounce advanced this view about the subjunctive indicating that its usage with a verb indicates “a possibility, a probability, exhortation, or axiomatic concept.”<sup>38</sup> He further observed that the subjunctive’s significance is only of aspect rather than time. The aorist subjunctive, therefore, represents an “undefined action” since its action is only a possibility.<sup>39</sup> As the subjunctive describes what may be and as combined with the idea of the aorist, a punctiliar tense, in *εἰσενέγκῃς*, it makes its action less of a possibility.

### *ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμον*

The word, *ἡμᾶς* is the accusative first-person plural of the personal pronoun. In congruence to the opening line of the Prayer of the Lord where Jesus Christ joined Himself to the disciples primarily and all others, in saying “Our Father...”, so again has He identified Himself with us in the first person plural. In the use of *εἰς*, it is a preposition that somehow governs the accusative to express motion that is extension into. This is different from its counterpart, *προς* which also governs the accusative but its use for extension is motion toward rather than into.<sup>40</sup> Although Wallace seems to have overlooked the difference between the use of *εἰς* and *προς*, it stands to make a major theological implication in its use in this text.<sup>41</sup>

*πειρασμόν* is the accusative singular of the masculine noun, *πειρασμος* meaning, temptation. In the context of the text in discussion, it is the item into which one should not be led. This word, *πειρασμος* has nuance meanings being trial, enticement to sin, test, proving, adversity, trouble, affliction.<sup>42</sup> In Matthew 6:13a, it is simply translated as temptation. This, of course, by implication indicates “of a condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to a lapse from faith and holiness.”<sup>43</sup> It is to such that the request is made not to be led or brought into.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

One of the issues of investigation that informed this paper is whether God leads into temptation which the Prayer of the Lord is requesting for its prohibition. James 1:13 reveals that “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” In view of this, one can say that God does not tempt. However, what is not clear is whether God leads or brings us into or toward temptation. The lexico-syntactical reading of Matthew 6:13a provides the basis to obtain a clearer understanding of this issue.

As mentioned above in the analysis, the use of the subjunctive mood makes the eventuality of the action of the verb, *εἰσενέγκῃς* quite improbable. In essence, the subjunctive gives the assumption of only the probability of the action of the verb. So, the action, to lead into temptation, may or may not happen in the first place. It is this kind of uncertainty that is negated with *μὴ*. It, therefore, suggests that the uncertain action which with all probability may never happen is further prohibited. This makes it emphatically strong that God never led into temptation, and He would never lead into temptation.

In view of the above inferences, the researchers have attempted their own translation of which the intent is to closely stick to the text making the Greek relevant in the meaning of this statement in

<sup>37</sup> “The Subjunctive Mood: Hypothetically Speaking,” 2019, <https://www.learngreek.ca/paideia>.

<sup>38</sup> William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 287.

<sup>39</sup> Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 287.

<sup>40</sup> Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 44,45.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel B Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Zondervan Academic, 2009), 167.

<sup>42</sup> Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; Moulton and G. Milligan, “Μῆ.”

<sup>43</sup> Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

the Prayer of the Lord. Hence, *Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν* is translated as “And never lead us into temptation”. The use of ‘never’ instead of ‘do not’ is to emphasize the emphatically strong prohibition indicated by the subjunctive with the negative. The action which may or may not happen is further prohibited. In view of this, the request is to let it never happen what has never happened.

The tense of the *εἰσενέγκῃς* is the aorist. Here also, it is observed in the study thus far that the aorist represents a punctiliar action. That is to say that the action of the aorist is to be done once without any reference to its continuance or frequency. Therefore, the verb, *εἰσενέγκῃς*, which is an aorist subjunctive reveals that the action, which is uncertain and only denotes hypothetically speaking, is to be done once without reference to its continuance. Now that it is negated, then it shows the Father never did it and He will never ever do it. This, then makes certain the view that “God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone” as expressed in James 1:13.

Looking at the Prayer of the Lord in Matthew 6:12, the appeal for forgiveness of sins (as debts in the Matthean account), comes before this request of “And never lead us into temptation”. This request seeks to ask the Father to preserve us from sin and then protect us from all kinds of evil. As indicated, *πειρασμόν*, being trial, enticement to sin, test, proving, adversity, trouble, affliction is simply translated in Matthew 6:13a as temptation. This, of course, by implication indicates a condition of things/situations or a mental state by which Christians are enticed to sin or to fall away from faith and holiness. This makes verses 12 and 13 of Matthew 6 such a composite of the petition in the Prayer of the Lord.

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