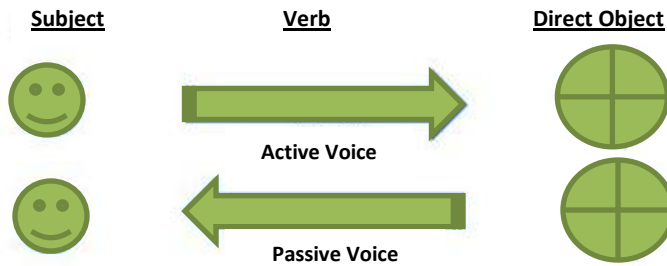


Understanding The Passive Voice Of The NT

The New Testament employs what is called the active and the passive voice. When the subject of the sentence does the action of the verb, then it is in the active voice (i.e. John hit the ball). If the subject receives the action of the verb, the verb is in the passive voice; the direct object acts upon the subject (i.e. John was hit by the ball).



In our modern day Western Civilization, the passive voice sounds foreign to our ears. We are a culture that *does* things; we are neither comfortable nor familiar with being *acted upon*. Even computer word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, flag the passive voice as improper grammar.

Unfortunately, our inclination to the active voice does impact our reading of the New Testament. The result is that we will often interpret New Testament passives as things that *we do*, verbs that *we need to act upon* rather than *what God is doing to and for us*, verbs that *God is doing to us*. The difference is huge because it can change the whole meaning of a passage.

Below are three tables illustrating the use of the passive voice in the New Testament Scriptures. The first chart shows the passive voice being used with the word *Justified*. The second table shows the passive voice being used with the word *Sanctified*. In other words, understanding the words "*justified*" and "*sanctified*" in the passive voice helps us to see that God does the verbs of *justifying and sanctifying* to and for us! The third table consists of miscellaneous passives.

The Passive Voice with Justification

Reference	Verse	Parsing
Rom. 3:24 & 28	(24) and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (28) For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.	Justified: present, passive
Rom. 5:1 & 9	(1) since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) ...we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.	Justified: aorist, passive
1 Cor. 6:11	...you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.	Justified: aorist, passive
Titus 3:7	so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.	Justified: aorist, passive

The Passive Voice with Sanctification

Reference	Verse	Parsing
John 17:19	And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.	Sanctified: perfect, passive
Acts 20:32	..of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified .	Sanctified: perfect, passive
Acts 26:18	...that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'	Sanctified: perfect, passive
Rom. 15:16	...so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.	Sanctified: perfect, passive
1 Cor. 1:2	To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together...	Sanctified: perfect, passive
1 Cor. 6:11	And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified , you were justified in the name...	Sanctified: aorist, passive
Heb. 2:11	For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he...	Sanctified: present, passive
Heb. 10:10	And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.	Sanctified: perfect, passive
Heb. 10:14	For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified .	Sanctified: present, passive

Other Notable Verses With The Passive Voice

Reference	Verse	Parsing
Matt. 18:3	... I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.	Turn: aorist, passive
Mark 2:5	And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven ."	Forgiven: present, passive
John 3:3	Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom...	Born: aorist, passive
Rom. 8:14	For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.	Led: present, passive
Rom. 12:2	Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you...	Be Transformed: pres, imp, pass
2 Cor. 5:20	...God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.	Be Reconciled: aor, imp, pass
Gal. 3:6	just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?	Counted: aorist, passive
Gal. 5:18	But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.	Led: present, passive
Eph. 5:18	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,	Be Filled: pres, imp, pass
Eph. 6:10	Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.	Be Strong: pres, imp, pass
Col. 2:6-7	...received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith...	Rooted: perfect, passive Built Up/Established: pres, pass
2 Tim. 2:1	You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,	Be Strengthened: pres, imp, pass