

Chapter 7. The Subjunctive

It's easy to spot subjunctives when they differ from indicatives: the subjunctive verb paradigm is always very simple (see table 7.2). But it is not always easy to know what a subjunctive is doing or how to translate it, for Old English often uses the subjunctive where Modern English uses the indicative. Translate each of the following sentences, paying careful attention to the subjunctive verbs (in **bold type**). Since subjunctives often come in complex sentences, this is an advanced exercise.

1. Hit wæs ġewīteġod þæt Crist on ðære byriġ Bethlehem ācenned **wurde**.
2. Se lārēow his hīeremen¹ tō betran līfe spōn,² ðy lās hīe mid eorðlicre sorge **wurden** ġebundne.
3. **Sy** se man ofslæġen þe³ ðū þīne hāeðenan ġodas mid **finde**.
4. Ġif ðū hwelcne cræft **cunne**, begā⁴ þone ġeorne.
5. Þeah ðe hīe unlybban⁵ **drincen**, hit him ne dereð.
6. Wēne ġē þæt ġē **mæġen** ætwindan þissum rēþan wīte?
7. Ġif ðū earm **weorðe**, ġeþenc þæt ðū hit ēaðe⁶ **ġeþolie**.
8. Mīn hlāford hēt þē biddan þæt þū **cýdde** þis spell mannum.

1 *hīeremen*: servants, hirelings.

2 *spōn*: urged (an alternative past form of *spanan*).

3 Take *mid* with the relative pronoun and translate "with whom you . . ."

4 *begā*: In addition to the meanings given by the glossary for *begān*, it can mean "practice."

5 *unlybban*: poison.

6 *ēaðe*: In addition to the meaning for this adverb in the glossary, it can mean "willingly."

9. Þis ġewrit cȳð hū folces synna ġebētte⁷ bēon **scylen**.
10. Bēon⁸ ġif hīe mannan ācwellað, **cwelle** hīe man⁹ hraðe and **ete** man þæt huniġ þæt hīe worhton.
11. Ġif ðū **wille** ġōdne hlīsan habban, ne fægna ðū nānes yfeles.
12. Ðā ðrīe cempan hine scotodon¹⁰ mid hira strǣlum oð þæt hē **wære** ācweald.
13. Ic ðē bebēode ðæt ðū **bēo** ġestrangod¹¹ and ellenrōf.
14. Ne bēoð ealle untrume for synnum ġeswencte, þēah þe hīe sume **bēon**.
15. Hit is mannum ġepūht swelce sēo sunne and þā tunglas **gangen** westweard.¹²

7 Past participle of *(ġe)bētan*.

8 *Bēon*: bees (nominative).

9 *Man* is the subject of *cwelle* and *hīe* the object.

10 *scotodon*: shot.

11 *ġestrangod*: strengthened (i.e. strong)

12 *westweard*: towards the west.